



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

CITU WORKING COMMITTEE MEET AT SHIMLA

Unite & Rally working class to defeat capitalist onslaught

A four day meeting of the Working Committee of the CITU, elected at the Kochi Conference was held at Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh, from 25th to 28th October 1997.

This was preceded by a full-fledged meeting of the CITU Secretariat at New Delhi on 24.10.97.

Thousands of workers participated in the mass rally organised by the Himachal Pradesh State Committee on 25th evening. Com. Balanandan, President and Com. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, addressed the meeting, besides others including the leaders of Himachal Pradesh CITU.

E. Balanandan in his presidential address briefly dealt with the present international situation. (His address is published in full in this issue)

M. K. Pandhe in his report covered the national scene and reviewed the activities undertaken by the CITU during the last five months since the Kochi conference. Detailed extracts from the report are also published elsewhere in the issue.

The Working Committee called upon the state committees, affiliated unions and comrades all over the country to unite and rally the working class and build up a powerful movement to resist the offensives of the capitalist class and the government.

Top on the agenda for immediate action are the following campaigns/struggles:

* One day strike by workers of the Fertilizer Corporation and Hindustan Fertiliser, demanding revival of both the PSUs. The call has been given by

the United Platform for Revival of FCI-HFC. The CPSTU has decided to extend support and stage solidarity actions in this regard.

* A massive Delhi dharna before Parliament, on 9th December 1997 in continuation of the struggles against the disastrous economic policies pursued by the Government of India. This is a united call of the National Platform of Mass Organisations comprising central TUs, industrial federations, organisations of peasantry, agricultural workers, youth, women and students.

* A national conference, jointly sponsored by CITU, AITUC, HMS, INTUC and BMS, along with other organisations, on the agricultural workers bill at New Delhi on 15th December, 1997. There will also be a powerful demonstration staged on the same day demanding immediate enactment of the Bill by the UF Government.

* One day nationwide strike on 17th December 1997 against the fraudulent government scheme on pension, and demanding pension as a third retirement benefit. The CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and AICCTU have jointly called this strike, announced on 2nd September march to Parliament.

* One day all India strike on 17.12.1997 by the electricity employees and engineers, under the united banner of National Joint Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers.

These actions are to be preceded by intensive campaign, rallies, conventions, etc, to ensure widest participation.

CITU WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

SHIMLA, 25-28 OCTOBER, 1997

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

By

E Balanandan

Dear Comrades,

This meeting of our Working Committee is being held today five months after our all-India Conference at Kochi held from 20th to 26th of April, 1997. This Conference made comprehensive review of the work done during the period after the 8th Conference and took stock of the national and international developments, besides formulating the immediate tasks ahead. Therefore, we need to take note of the developments in national, international arena and review the work done during the last five months. This is being presented in the General Secretary's report, except the international part which I wish to deal briefly in my Presidential address.

This year the nation is celebrating the 50th year of our independence. The struggle for freedom from the foreign rule, developed into a mighty force through various streams and forms which the imperialist rulers could no longer resist achieved victory in 1947. The working class of the country played its role in the struggle for freedom together with others which nobody can cover up. Let us pay our respectful homage to the memory of those who laid their precious lives braving gallows, bullets of police and military and those who suffered indescribable repression who are no more with us in this glorious struggle.

The 30th anniversary of the martyrdom of the Cuban legendary revolutionary leader Comrade Ernesto Che Guevara is being celebrated not only in Cuba but also world wide including India. Comrade Che was murdered by the CIA trained commandos on the 9th of October, 1967 at the La Higuera village in Bolivia. The great contribution made by Com. Che in the Cuban revolution and his struggle against injustice and social oppression outside made him the symbol of revolutionary action, a great revolutionary hero. His memory is an inspiration for the revolutionaries world over. The Cuban people today are engaged in a fierce struggle to uphold the socialist path of development and freedom from US imperialism. We must enthusiastically join in the Che memory

celebrations being held in various parts of our country, which needs no special stress. We must also demand that the United States should withdraw their blockade against socialist Cuba and to stop encouraging armed gangs to intrude into the Cuban territory.

Developing Tensions

The Clinton administration is continuing its air land and sea blockades of Iraq attempting to overthrow its government by strangling the Iraqi people. Of late, the United State's aircraft carriers and war ships have been sent to gulf area alleging that the Iraqi troops violated the 'no flight zone' in the southern parts. This increased US military presence has heightened the tension in the gulf region. The government of Iran demanded that American military forces should be withdrawn, so that peace in these area can be restored and warned that any military action by the US forces will be countered by the Iranian forces. The Iraqi government dismissed this threat with contempt though the reason given out by US is 'Iraqi violations'. The fact is that they are more worried about the Iranian developments.

The two million Iranian gas field development contract entered into between the Iranian government and the oil companies of France, Russia and Malaysia has enraged USA and they demanded that the French and other companies should not cooperate with Iran which, according to USA, is helping terrorism. The USA is threatening to impose the application of sanctions under "the Lybia and Iran Sanctions Act" (D Amato Law) to impose penalties on these foreign companies doing energy business with Iran. This Act was passed in United States last year to pressurise Europe to fall in line with US policies on Iran. Here we find that just like the "Burtons law" was used for blockade of Cuba, another US law is sought to be imposed on companies which are doing business with Iran. France is determined to isolate United States mustering support from other European powers.

The European powers generally resent this United

State's 'D Amato Law' which mandates sanctions against companies investing more than 20 million dollars in a year in Iran's energy sector. France has taken the lead in challenging this policy in the gulf which is known as 'Dual Containment' which tries to impose financial quarantine on regimes of Iran and Iraq. The French do not agree with this unilateral US prohibition against Iran in the name of alleged terrorist activity which has no legal basis in the international law.

The present pushing up of tension in this area has another connotation. The new government which came to power in Iran after the last general elections takes a liberal view on the erstwhile government's policy of obscurantism and also they tries to take comparatively progressive step in building Arabian unity and defusing tension between Iran and Iraq. In case this attempt gains currency, the American military interference in this region will be resisted jointly by the total Arab world, which means, the early end of American dominance in this oil rich area. The American arm's trade too will be very badly affected. That is the hidden reason for this new offensive.

Israel

The United States at present is encouraging the Israeli government authorities not to abide by the peace agreement signed in forming the Palestinian state for which they were the mediators. As per this agreement, Palestinian free state has to emerge in 1999 which also the United States is not keen to implement. It is reported that the United States have decided to shift their policy in a high level meeting in which President Clinton was present. They decided to support the Israeli demand that Mr. Arafat should launch an all out offensive against those Palestinians who opposed the OSLO agreement in the name of fighting terrorism, which is part of the shift in their middle east policy. Arafat refusing to fall in line with this demand arranged a Palestine Unity Conference in Gaza. The participants included the Left forces such as Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine and Islamic organisations including Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Thus the Palestinians are getting ready to meet the offensive of Israel. The coming days we will see that the US will given signal for an all out war against Palestinians by the Israelis.

MALADIES OF ESI SCHEME

With the arbitrary amendment of the ESI Scheme by the Government raising the salary ceiling limit for coverage under the Scheme to Rs 6,500 a serious problem has arisen. Many public and private sector industries where the workers have been enjoying better medical benefits free of cost, now the managements are forcing the workers to opt for ESI Scheme under the enhanced coverage limit. The benefits offered under the ESI Scheme are far below the medical benefits available under the medical schemes of such industries. Therefore, if the workers of these industries are forced to opt for ESI Schemes, this shall amount to reduction of existing better facilities. Although in some cases at the intervention of CITU centre exemption has been obtained from the Government, generally exemption is refused by the authorities. Another serious matter is that despite objection of CITU the authorities have initiated step to withdraw the ESI (Cashew Workers') Scheme. These issues have created serious discontents among the workers of the concerned industries warranting proper attention by our unions.

Moreover, due to the awfully poor Medicare benefits of the ESI hospitals, deliberate negligence in services, rampant corruption in the administration, enhancement of the rate of subscription unilaterally without increasing the benefits and services, the workers are feeling to have been cheated and getting disillusioned about the ESI Scheme.

The other question is regarding granting effective autonomy to the ESI Corporation. Although the main sources of fund for the Corporation are the subscription of the employees and contribution of the State Governments, the investment decisions are strictly regulated by the Central Government. The result is that the Corporation does not have autonomy to invest its surplus funds.

The Central Government is now proposing to handover the entire current ESI funds to the State ESI Corporations if they are formed. We have to consider our stand on this question so that the matters can be taken up with the Central Government and ESI Board.

We should pay serious attention on the problems relating to the functioning of ESI Scheme.

(From the report to Working Committee)

NATO

The NATO expansion is being faced with new troubles. The expenditure involved for the expanded NATO for the next decade is said to be over 35 billion dollars. The United States wants that the new entrants and the other European powers should bear the major part of this expenditure. The Americans share cannot be more than 2 billions. The European powers, Germany, Britain, France and Netherland are not willing to cooperate with the United States. The American Congress, at the same time, insists that United States cannot bear this "burden". Thus, the NATO expansion plan is facing difficulties. The new French government also take the position that they will not join the European command till proper arrangements are made to ensure them equal powers in the European NATO setup.

The Threat of UN Sanctions Against Congo

The US big business thought that the new Laurent Kabila government would be desperately in search for capital to rebuild Congo's economic infrastructure left in shambles by the 32 years of Mobutu regime could dictate terms to him. They were also expecting that the new government will privatise everything including the state mining company, Gecamines. Therefore, inspite of the repeated large scale killings, the Untied States, refrained from making this as an issue of human rights violation.

But to their surprise indications are that President Kabila may be attempting to exercise some independence and some right to self-determination over the internal affairs of his country despite the pressure of Western imperialist powers, especially the US. President Kabila has taken the stand that the 14 billion dollar debt to imperialist banks accrued under the Mobutu regime, for which the new Congolese government cannot be held responsible. The banks are retaliating by withholding new loans to the government.

Kabila has taken up his case to the rest of Africa and a number of African leaders pledged some short-term financial support without any strings attached to help rebuild Congo. These leaders represented Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Mozambique, Eritrea and Central African Republic. Kabila met President Nelson Mandela in South

Africa to establish closer relations and economic cooperation. This type of solidarity is one way of showing appreciation for President Kabila's role in ousting Mobutu, who was not only despised by the terribly impoverished Congolese people but by the African peoples as a whole. Mobutu's downfall was celebrated throughout Africa and most of the world. But now the US government has woken up with the developing realities in Congo is raising hue and cry of "human rights violations" and trying to use the UN intervention in Congo, which is being resisted by the President saying that it can only be done under the conditions made by his government. Not agreeing with this, the UN Security General, Kafi Annan, is threatening punitive actions against Congo. One cannot forget that the UN was used by the US and other imperialist powers to crush the Lumumba government during 1960s. They have assassinated Lumumba and brought the notorious Mobutu in power. The same drama the US and other imperialist powers are dreaming to repeat in Congo with the threat of UN punitive sanctions. The difference today is that African nationalism is far more developed and the same cannot be easily repeated.

Bosnia

In Bosnia, the US military and US led NATO forces have increased their repression against the Serbian population. The dateline fixed for withdrawing the United State's forces from Bosnia is by June 1998 which seems to be impossible since the confrontation in Bosnia is not under control. The peace keeping forces under NATO, as stated above, are using big repression against the people denying all the basic rights American military forces have conducted. Two weeks long bombing campaign which destroyed large part of Bosnia, both civilian and military targets. Inspite of this peace in Bosnia is still illusory. The increasing expenditure for the NATO operations in Bosnia is also causing dissension in American Congress besides loss of American lives. However, the American military might is being used indiscriminately against the people and the prospect of finding any solution is still not in sight in Bosnia.

World Economy

We have noted in our 9th conference the developments in the world economy. Slower growth, developing inequalities, increasing unemployment

and poverty are the major symptoms we were pointing out based on authentic available reports of the World Bank and the UN Human Development statistics. The trend is again explained by the latest report, 1997 published last month by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which has not only confirmed the above facts but also brought out new data to show that the so-called policy of globalisation and liberalisation is not automatically going to end in human prosperity. On the contrary, the result is negation of human progress. The report stated that "the rich have gained everywhere and not just in comparison to the poorest sections of the society. Also this has led to the 'hallowing out' of the middle class that has become a prominent feature of income distribution in many developing and developed nations". It also stated that "the finances is gaining an upper hand over the industry and 'rentiers over investors' and as a result trading in existing assets has often become more lucrative than creating wealth through new investments. The rising interest charges have eaten into business revenues, corporate re-structuring, labour shedding and wage repression have become the order of the day in much of the developed as well as part of the developing world".

The report also highlighted the growing wage gap between skilled and unskilled labours which is developing into a global problem. Contrary to the much current economic thinking, the increased global competition does not automatically bring faster growth and development, nor do growth and development automatically bring about a reduction in inequality".

There is no economic law which will make developing economies converge automatically towards the income levels of the developed countries, if they merely open the economy. Rather than the "Big Bang" approach widely adopted in recent years in many parts of the world, UNCTAD urges a carefully phased liberalisation into world economy. The report said that the world economy has settled down to an average rate of growth of around 3 per cent per annum, about 2 per centage points lower than that achieved during the 'Golden Age' of 1950-1973. Such a relatively modest rate could solve neither the North's labour market problems nor the

THREAT OF COMMUNAL AND CASTEIST FORCES

The rise of casteist and communal forces disrupting the unity of the people has been a matter of grave concern for the working class movement.

Happenings in the last few months in several parts of the country are indicating a fresh offensive of caste violence and oppression.

The dalits and the backward classes have started asserting themselves and forces in favour of social justice have noted this as a development that needs to be welcomed and nurtured.

But the vested interests and forces of *status quo* are unable to tolerate even this small beginning of effort to fight centuries old caste oppression. They have resorted to letting loose terror and violence against the oppressed castes, particularly against dalits.

The BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra resorted to brutal firing against the dalits in Mumbai, who protested desecration of the statue of Dr Ambedkar. Ten innocent lives were ended by bullets. In the south, Tamil Nadu has been tormenting under the impact of clashes between dalits on the one side and a section of backward castes on the other side. More than 100 have lost their lives. The killing of a dalit president of a tiny panchayat samiti, along with few others, declaring that dalits assuming some social status through democratic process will never be tolerated, is full of ominous portents.

We from the CITU are no doubt concerned about the immense harm such casteist clashes do to the unity of the working class.

But the present situation demands that CITU should intervene in this social turmoil not as a neutral peace maker but as relentless crusaders against caste oppression and its crudest manifestation untouchability.

CITU must campaign amongst the working class belonging to other communities as well on the need to join in a common endeavour to eradicate untouchability and fight all forms of caste oppression. CITU unions must take up this issue and move in coordination with the organisations of the agricultural workers and peasants.

(From the Report to the Working Committee)

South's poverty problem. The increased concentration of national income in the hands of a few has not been accompanied by higher investment and faster growth. The report criticises the notion that, "faced with globalisation forces, policy-makers in developing world might have lost their room to pursue development goals actively" and said that "their role is as important as ever since growth and income distribution depend on how profits are managed".

A whole range of economic formulations are made in this report which needs closer examination. This report which narrating the experience of liberalisation stated that: "the asymmetries of globalisation, is the fact that liberalisation of the world economy has proceeded so far in a lop-sided way that tends to prejudice the growth prospects of developing countries by discriminating against areas in which they could achieve comparative advantage".

A warning is given in the report that, "global efforts to help developing countries could still come to nothing if the slowdown in economic growth in the North is not reversed. A return to faster growth and policies of full employment is not only a pre-requisite for resolving the twin evils of high unemployment and increasing wage inequality in the North, but is also essential for defusing the threat of a popular backlash against globalisation, which might put the gains of global economic integration at risk."

Thus they are worried about the political backlash. About this the World Economic Forum Managing Director, Claude Samadga said recently that "if this backlash is not addressed we will be heading for big troubles at both national and international levels."

The New Development

Within the general stagnation that has gripped the advanced capitalist countries there is uneven development which was not expected earlier. The vibrant Economies of Japan and Germany are in the midst of unprecedented crisis with sagging growth rates, rising and high unemployment, and threatened currencies. While Britain and United States with sick economies in the past have lower and even slightly declining unemployment rates, higher GDP growth than the OECD average, and strong currencies. The reason for this phenomenon has its links with internationally mobile finance capital.

Many countries of South and South Eastern Asia which were considered to be models for the third world countries which had remarkably high growth rate for the last several years are now in the midst of deep crisis. Linked with capital flights reluctance of fresh capital flow into the region and the weakening of currencies. This is true not only of Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines but also of even South Korea as well. In other words, the type of fate that had over taken Mexico a few years ago is now threatening even the 'Dynamic' economies of South East Asia.

The success of east Asian economies was based on the imposition of strict controls over capital flows into or out of their economies, which implied, first, an active role for the State and, secondly, a degree of subordination of financial interests to manufacturing-trading interests. Of late, however, they have been lifting controls over capital flows, which has brought their economies into the ambit of speculative capital movements. This basic fact, combined with specific local happenings, the unwillingness of international capital to finance trade deficit etc., has let pressure on the east Asian currencies, which has reacted back on their growth rates by giving rise to deflationary policies. What is happening even in economies which, till now, were being held up as 'models' of development shows that exposing one's economy to international financial speculation. Which in essence is what 'liberalisation' entails, leads both to deflation-engendered stagnation and to loss of sovereignty.

The IMF and the World Bank working both directly as well as through the 'liberalisation' lobby in India are, however, pushing India precisely in this direction.

The annual meeting of the World Bank

It is important to note the latest decisions of the IMF-World Bank annual meeting held in Hongkong during the last week of September. In this meeting a decision was taken to expand the conditionalities of World Bank and IMF, corruption and good governance of the third world countries. The World Bank and IMF conditionalities hitherto was confined to economy. But now they wish to expand it with 'corruption and good governance' of the third world, which means that they are going directly to intervene in the internal jurisdiction of the third world

governments which will abrogate the sovereignty of these countries. The IMF has already suspended operation in Kenya alleging concern over corruption and also in Congo and Nigeria for the same reason. The question of handling corruption is the duty of the concerned government but now it is sought to be taken over by the IMF and World Bank. Thus, for the imperialist collective, the World Bank and IMF is becoming an apparatus for intervening in the internal affairs of independent states curtailing their independence. This is a new stage in the development of these organisations.

The Asian countries, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia complained about the World Bank and IMF only functioning under the dictates of US and are not helping them properly. The Japanese proposal to institute a fund of 100 billion dollars to help the Asian countries in distress has been summarily rejected by IMF and World Bank saying that this idea is risky. That means, the IMF and the World Bank do not want an independent economic agency to help these developing countries in the Asian region, though Japan has its own interests in making this proposal.

Changing Employment Pattern

The unemployment in the developed countries is on the increase except marginal decline in Britain and USA where the economy has picked up a little. The permanent jobs in industries are being drastically cut and being replaced with part timers and temporary workers. Getting greater production from fewer workers by creating more temporary jobs and low paid workers has become the new pattern for higher profits. Since 1993, 22 million such jobs are created in USA. The proportion of part-time workers in US is said to be 18%, while in European countries it is very much higher. In France, out of the new postings, 66% are temporary or contract labour that last for less than one year. In Spain, it is 90% and only 10% gets permanent jobs. In Netherland, it is 37%, in Germany too the new openings are mainly filled up with temporary and casual workers. All the temporary and part-time workers get lesser emoluments than the permanent workers and they are squeezed out of job at the sweet will of the management. Because of this a two-tier economy is developing in

WORKING WOMEN

There has been some progress in the last five months. In Bihar, a state level conference attended by 800 women was held. In Kerala, the WWCC and work in Anganwadi had been revived. District conferences were held. Sale of Voice of Working Woman is planned to be raised to 1000. In Tamilnadu, the WWCC in association with AIDWA is carrying on systematic work. Conference proposed to be held in Orissa is postponed to Dec. '97. In Tripura also, the WWCC has started functioning.

In Delhi, insurance comrades held a successful conference of women employees working in insurance sector. More than 400 attended. Some work in Noida and Ghaziabad had been taken up by state CITU among working women.

The work of the Anganwadi Federation has improved. The membership for 1996 is more than 60000. For 1997, a target of one lakh membership is planned. The units of the federation affiliated to CITU in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra, Himachal Pradesh are doing good work. In Tamil Nadu, the union is affiliated to government employees' association. Punjab and Rajasthan have to pay attention to overcome the stagnation there in this front. In Bihar a good conference was held at Naveda. The all India Conference of the Federation, due this year, has been postponed to next year.

There is a Samyukta Sangharsh Samiti (SSS) comprising various types of organisations. Call given by the SSS is implemented by our unions seriously. Voice of the Working Woman brought out special issues on the Kochi conference and 50th anniversary of independence. Various issues of concern to women including the Supreme Court verdict on harassment of women at workplace, muslim women defying ban and offering namaz at masjids, struggles of Air India hostesses, two year strike of Hillington hospital in UK etc. have been highlighted in the journal.

In the coming period, the AICCWW has to plan the following: (a) hold meetings of Anganwadi Federation and SSS to draw up future course of action; (b) hold AICCWW meeting along with the ILO workshop (c) initiate follow up action on the Supreme Court judgement on sexual harassment.

(From the report to the Working Committee)

industries. The older workers who effectively have full time jobs and younger workers who are having only work for one year or less and forced to shift wherever openings are there. About 11% of all jobs in France and 30% of the jobs in Spain is filled up with temporary workers. This trend is there more or less in all the developed countries in Europe. In each of the industries, better paid permanent employees and a set of workers with less emoluments working for short period without any protection for work is also there. This in turn disrupts the unity of the workers and weakening the trade unions. In the name of flexibility of jobs, all the existing labour laws are being watered down. In Germany and other countries serious attempts are being made to increase the working time of the workers by various methods in the name of making economy competitive.

Against the reduction of the workforce and the curtailing of existing privileges, many strikes and other actions have taken place during these period in many countries, including United States. The details of which I do not wish to narrate. However, the changing mood of the US workers needs to be noted.

Steel Workers' Strike

The recent two big strike battles led to victory has had electrifying effect among the US workers. The 45,000 strong Wheeling Pitsberg Steel Corporation workers went on strike in October 1996 and continued for ten months till August 1997. Succeeded in getting 99% of the demands they have raised. Wage increase, annual bonus, pensions, medical expenses during the period of strike forcing the management to withdraw their proposal for the dismissal of 200 workers etc. All the usual strike breaking methods were used by the employers including spending multi million dollars for anti-strike propaganda. But in these ten months, union never had to deal with black legs and strike breakers. Large amounts were contributed by the workers for helping the strikes. 2 million dollars were collected within a week. 97% of the total workers voted for the strike. The union leadership stood firm in bringing the strike to victory. Mr. George Becker, the president of the United Steel Workers Union of America said rightly that the struggle waged by steel workers is a model for others. However, they are in

an upbeat mood.

United Parcel Services Strike

The other was the strike of 1,85,000 workers of the United Parcel Service. This was the big organised national action of workers in the last two decades. This was a well-prepared organised strike. The demands included mainly of low paid workers and temporary jobs, pension, job security and issue of safety etc which are the common demands of American workers. This company was earning profits exploiting their workforce. All the facilities company had in 50 states were paralysed by the strike. The employers did all they can to disrupt the strike. Finally had to climb down to agree with the unions demand and settled the strike. Though the strike caused direct public inconvenience, the people sided with the workers. The AFL-CIO organised collection of 10 million dollars a week strike fund from unions throughout the country. This reflected the solidarity for the strike in United States. The firm position taken by the trade union leadership and the organisational unity, they could build together with the militant mood of the workers forced the employers to come down. The victory of this strike has enthused the US workers in a big way.

The Developing Struggle Against NAFTA

A study report on the experience of the working of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) titled '*The Failed Agreement*' NAFTA at three years has been published on June 20th which gives a detailed assessment of its working. The Clinton administration is trying to extent the agreement. A new "fast track" legislation is sought to be passed which will give rights to the government to negotiate trade agreements with other countries. The US Congress can either pass or reject this but cannot amend.

Against the continuation of this agreement, the workers in United States are moving for big agitations. The big business of the country has came out to mobilise support for the passing of this legislation and for the extension of NAFTA. The chief executive officers of the big corporations — Boeing, Caterpillar, Chrysler, General Motors — TRA incorporated have pledged to spent 1,00,000 dollars each to ensure the voice of the business community is heard. They called upon other 35

companies to raise fund to the tune of 3 million dollars for this purpose.

On the other side, the trade unions' economic specialists and others have started a big campaign against it.

The facts marshalled by the 'Failed Experiment Report' is being used as a propaganda tool. According to opinion polls, 54% of the people of US are against the continuation of this agreement. Only the big multinational corporations reaped huge profits for the last three years from this agreement. The report states: "4,00,000 jobs were lost in USA because of the introduction of NAFTA policies and in Mexico its effects was devastative. 2 million jobs have been lost. 20,000 small business have been destroyed. In Canada heavy loss of employment and wage reduction was the effect of this policy". The only beneficiaries are the big business. Their profits were soaring, while the people and the workers were losing heavily.

The trade unions are planning big agitation against NAFTA which has serious political implications. One side, the big business and administration and the other side workers and the people at large. They are trying to ordinate this struggle with Mexican Canadian trade unions. This I need not say is an important development.

The point to be stressed is that the working class in general is under attack and put to greater strain and economic difficulties. They are trying to meet the offensive through strike actions with varying degree of success and they are moving politically too. In the recently held elections in many countries the workers were voting for a change. The conservative party has been defeated and labour party was voted to power in Britain. In France, the front of socialists and Communists were came to power. The even increasing unemployment was the major issue. In Italy too, the ruling party has been defeated and a new coalition has come to power. In the former socialist countries too, the new political formation getting elected and improving political support. The people's resentment is being reflected in these changes though many of the government which came to power is continuing the very same policies with only marginal changes.

Conclusion

Comrades,

Before I conclude, I wish to draw your attention to the propaganda being unleashed by the bourgeois media and their 'experts' about the virtues of the World Bank-IMF dictated economic policies. Also they are directly attacking the attempts of the working class to safeguard their hard earned privileges and for the betterment of their daily life. We cannot forget the recent campaign launched by them against the Central Government employees pay hike agreements. The total results of the globalised market economy is known to us and needs no explanation here.

Therefore, we have to take suitable measures to strengthen our efforts to bring out sufficient propaganda materials on each issue in a planned manner. Every union must take this job seriously. Finally, let me congratulate our Himachal Pradesh State CITU for arranging this Working Committee in Shimla.

With these words I conclude.

E Balanandan
President

(Navaratna Cont. from Page 17)

is more distressing is that the proceeds of the disinvestment is utilised by the Government to meet the fiscal deficit. Such step is definitely suicidal for the economy of the country. The Government is gifting away profit earning national assets and killing the source of revenue.

The pertinent question that arises in the situation is what is the state of the country's economy at the moment? Is it worst than what it was in 1990 when the Government air-lifted gold out of the country and mortgaged it to take loan. Then the gold was mortgaged, (it is a different question whether that was necessary or not) but now the 'Navratnas' are sold out and that too to meet the budget deficit of the Government. Or in other words, they are killing the goose itself laying golden eggs, for making a quick buck. The Government owes an answer to the people of the country and the working class has a responsibility to push the movement to the required height to defeat the anti-national steps of the Government.

CUBA ADVANCING DESPITE U.S. BLOCKADE

M K Pandhe

In spite of heinous blockade by the U.S. imperialists for decades the Cuban economy is showing spectacular advance. When capitalist rulers have been collapsing before the US blackmail, the socialist Cuba is not only surviving but also advancing with determination resulting, shattering the dreams of those who drafted the notorious Helms Burton Law. A week's stay in Cuba by the Indian T.U. delegation in connection with International T.U. Conference against globalisation was no doubt very short but all round enthusiasm seen among the people is sufficient to convince that Socialist Cuba is invincible!

A Decade of Difference

I visited Cuba last time in 1987 to attend the Conference of Centre of Cuban Trade Unions. This time, after a gap of 10 years, while driving on the road from the airport one immediately noticed the development of agriculture in the last decade indicating tireless efforts made by the people to grow more food, vegetables and fruits.

One remarkable change we could see was the big development of tourism. Last time we saw that most of the tourists were from Latin America. Now we could witness that large numbers of tourists were coming from Canada, France, U.K., Germany, Italy and other European countries. We could also see the substantial increase in trade between Cuba and these countries. The foreign exchange Cuba earns from tourist traffic is enabling them to meet all the requirements of the tourists as well as Cuban population. The departmental stores are full of consumer products from various European countries. When I entered one departmental store I heard one European tourist commenting, "where is the blockade for all these products?"

Cuba has several beautiful seaside tourist spots which have been developed well by the Cuban Government. When I asked a French tourist why are you coming here when there are beautiful spots in Riviera in France, promptly he replied, : The airfare from Paris to Cuba and back and residential expenses for one week's stay is much less than what we have to spend

in a French tourist spot." After some pause, he again stated, "Those spots are very crowded and we find much quietness in Cuba!"

The Government owned hotels and tourist lodges are charging a minimum of \$36 per day for air conditioned accommodation, breakfast and dinner and stay is quite comfortable.

In the area where we were staying, we found that U.S. dollar was the main currency of transactions. The U.S. blockade could not prevent flow of millions of US dollars to Cuba every year from all continents in the world.

Fighting The Blockade

Self reliance is the bed-rock of the 12 million population of Cuba. As Pedro Ross, General Secretary, CTC said, "we are building our economy through sheer hard work and using whatever natural resources are available to the best of our advantage. We don't say that we have no economic problems. The blockade is still staring at us and threatening free trade with other countries. Yet, we are fighting the blockade and building a self-reliant socialist economy".

Com. Ross said, "The fraternal help received by Cuba has immensely helped us to fight the blockade. Even now we are receiving moral and material support from all over the world". Cuban trade union leader acknowledged the valuable and timely help received by the people of Cuba from India and expressed his gratitude.

CITU delegation had a special appointment with com. Pedro Ross who emphasised the growing fraternal ties between the CTC and the CITU. He also noted the important role Indian people can play in the struggle against globalisation.

The public distribution system in Cuba is indeed remarkable. The entire population is supplied ration of all essential commodities including vegetable. Though at times you see some queues but things are available through public distribution channels. We were informed that education and health system in Cuba have made much advance and every citizen in

the country has free access to the system. Cuban medicines are exported abroad in large quantities due to their effectiveness. General health of the people appears to be fairly good and there is no sign of starvation or destitution.

Cuba despite U.S. attempts to strangulate the economy has made appreciable progress in house building for the working class and the people. The Government provides housing material and through collective efforts in the nearby region, the construction work is carried out in spare time of the people.

In A Fisherman's House

I visited a village near the seashore. It appeared to be a fishermen colony. I did not see a single thatched house in the area. Though residential quarters were modest they were planned properly and essential family requirements were met in the houses.

I entered one house just to see its interior. Though language barrier was there since inmates knew only Spanish language the entire family welcomed the guest when they knew that I was from India. I showed them my delegate card which was in Spanish and they understood the purpose of my visit. Through gesture I was asked to sit. I saw 4-5 chairs, teapoy and other furniture in the drawing room. The house had 6 inmates and had 4 rooms and a kitchen. They offered me tea and eatables which indicated their standard of life was fairly good. Two small children in the house appeared to be enjoying the visitor from a distant land.

The family permitted me to look around the house. Though it was a fisherman's family the residential rooms were comfortable and kitchen was neat and tidy. We could only express through gestures. I saw T.V. in the house.

Cuban people are extremely fond of music and dancing. At 1 a.m. in the night one can see in main squares people singing Latin American songs and dancing endlessly. They were seen in a relaxed mood.

Vigilance Against Crimes

The crime rate in Cuba is extremely low and the Government is taking stern action against crime. The so-called human right activists in U.S. are clamouring

about the absence of human rights in Cuba and pointing out the cases of such criminals who are characterised as freedom fighters by the reactionaries abroad. We walked on foot in various areas and found that people were moving fearlessly and policemen appeared to be friendly towards the ordinary people. We were informed that anti-social elements and agents of US imperialists have been trying to resort to terrorist methods but the vigilance of the people is so great that these hirelings are periodically detected and punished.

K. Ashok Rao President NCOA who was a member of our delegation video filmed lanes and byelanes of Havana but nobody obstructed him. The foreign tourists also told us that they did not find any suppression of freedom in Cuba and they were treated as honoured guests.

I had great pleasure to meet Fidel Castro. He was with the representative leaders of various countries for more than 45 minutes and was moving freely and talking frankly in Spanish with leaders of the delegates. He was particularly keen to enquire about the developments in Latin America. Fidel was standing erect throughout the reception and all the stories circulated by U.S. press about the failing health of Castro could be seen as a mere kite flying.

Marching Forward

Everywhere we found that Che Guevara was extremely popular not only in Cuba but in entire Latin America. He has almost become a symbol of resistance to U.S. imperialist machinations.

Despite U.N. resolution to lift the blockade against Cuba, U.S. imperialists are continuing the blockade and showing contempt towards world public opinion. They may continue to enjoy their pipedream to destabilise the situation in Cuba. However, one who sees the firmness and determination of the people of Cuba fighting the blockade and developing a self-reliant economy, one is easily convinced that U.S. imperialists will never succeed in their game to throttle Cuban economy. The slogan of "Socialism or Death!" is heard everywhere.

Cuba survived several years of blockade! It will continue to survive and march ahead despite blockade imposed by the world's most ferocious imperialist administrators just from a distance of 90 miles!

WELCOME INITIATIVE AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

W R VARADA RAJAN

The issue of sexual harassment of women at work places has come to be focused in India at least after the recent judgement of the Supreme Court, setting out certain guidelines in this regard. We can only say 'better late than never.'

But has there been any trade union initiative on this sensitive - but of grave concern - issue? Are the trade unions supposed to safeguard the interests of their members—male and female have committed themselves to elimination of sexual harassment at work places?

Here is an exemplary precedent of a welcome initiative by the trade union movement against sexual harassment by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

CODE OF CONDUCT

The COSATU has developed a code of conduct on sexual harassment after an in depth and lengthy process of debate within.

The code of conduct begins with a basic recognition that sexual harassment discriminates against women. The COSATU code first looks inwardly and resolves that it is committed to taking action to stop sexual harassment within the federation. It directs the union officials and members to:

- not ask for sexual favours in return for help at work, including representation, employment, retention of employment, promotion or to secure a salary increase;
- not victimise or threaten to dismiss or jeopardise job security of any aggrieved person in a sexual harassment case;
- create a working environment free from sexual harassment;
- and
- handle cases in this regard sensitively, honestly, quickly and confidentially.

HARASSMENT DEFINED

The COSATU code defines sexual harassment as any unwanted and unwelcome physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which causes discomfort to the victim.

The code proceeds to list the types of sexual harassment ranging from subtle attention to the worst form of violence like rape.

Touching, patting, pinching, fondling, molestation, assault, attempted rape or rape are the physical forms of sexual harassment.

The verbal forms comprise sexual advances, telephone calls with sexual overtones, sex related jokes or insults, enquiries about a person's life, whistling, comments about a person's body.

Leering, winking, public display of offensive or derogatory pictures are listed as non-verbal forms of harassment.

ELABORATE PROCEDURE

A detailed and well formulated procedure is incorporated in the code for settling complaints or grievances relating to allegations of sexual harassment.

The harassed person can opt for an either formal or informal procedure.

The informal procedure is to directly contact the person who is harassing and telling him to stop, taking a colleague along, as a witness or support. This gives the harasser a chance to stop wrong-doing or unwelcome behaviour.

If the victim feels unable to take to the informal procedure of talking direct or when the harasser does not listen, the formal procedure of disciplinary enquiry can be resorted.

The procedure is quite elaborate but the least cumbersome. There is a gender coordinator at the apex level appointed by COSATU. All the unions are required to appoint gender coordinators at the union level. Similarly disciplinary committees are constituted both at COSATU and union levels. The disciplinary committees must be gender balanced, which means that women should be included in these committees. At least half the people on the disciplinary committees must be women. Gender coordinators are necessarily part of the committee.

Any person, sexually harassed, can report the case directly to the gender coordinator, shop steward or

union official. They in turn must report it to the disciplinary committee within two days. If the wrong doer is a shop steward, or union official the complaint can directly be made to the disciplinary committee. The disciplinary committee shall institute an enquiry within five days on receipt of complaint.

None in the union hierarchy is above the code. The code provides for action to be taken by the national office bearers, if the allegation is against any one of them.

The disciplinary measures range from counselling to dismissal, but not limited to only these. As is normal in any disciplinary procedure, provision has been made for appeal, but it is to be heard by an arbitration service agreed upon by the parties.

This code is to govern the behaviour of all members of the unions and implementation of the code is the responsibility of all unions across the board.

FOLLOWING THE CODE

COSATU does not stop here. It ensures that all its affiliates negotiate a sexual harassment code and procedure with the employers. It further takes upon the task of ensuring that current legislation including the Labour Relations Act prohibits violence against women and sexual harassment is codified as an offense.

After formulation of the code, the COSATU will not leave anything to chance. It has included education and awareness raising programmes to encourage gender sensitive practices and behaviour in the union education programmes for all office bearers and members. It has also launched a campaign against sexual harassment. A Sexual Harassment Education Project (SHEP) has also been commissioned to address this problem through a variety of services which include providing advisory and referential services and operating a resource materials centre.

The code has a healing touch as well. It provides for grant of additional paid sick leave for therapy for those suffering emotional or physical stress. It also ensures that the sexually harassed as well as the wrong doer receive counselling. A list of organisations dealing with trauma cases is drawn up and made available by the unions to those in need of them.

In the male dominated world, the sexually harassed

working women often throw up her hand: "What can we do?" They curse their fate and condemn themselves to silently suffocate. The COSATU code of conduct on sexual harassment lend them confidence and comforts them assuring that there is something they can do!

This is a welcome initiative from an enlightened trade union in a distant land. There is something in it worth emulating.

REMOVE BONUS ACT CEILINGS: CENTRAL TUs DEMAND ORDINANCE

Five Central Trade Unions jointly addressed a letter to Shri I K Gujral, Prime Minister demanding an ordinance on Payment of Bonus Act.

Text of the letter is:

"The existing ceilings under the Payment of Bonus Act have become outdated consequent to which an overwhelming majority of workers do not get Bonus and many do not even get the minimum bonus.

It has been the demand of the working class that the artificial ceilings should be removed so as to make all workers eligible for bonus.

At the last Indian Labour Conference it was the unanimous demand of all the Central Trade Unions to remove the ceilings prescribed under the Bonus Act. Now that the Parliament is not in session and the festivals are close at hand, we demand that an Ordinance be issued by the Govt of India, immediately, removing all the ceilings under the Bonus Act.

In view of the acute discontent amongst the working class all over the country, we request you to treat this as urgent and very important."

The signatories to the letter are: M K Pandhe (CITU), K L Mahendra (AITUC), Umromal Purohit (HMS) R Venugopal (BMS) and C D Sinha (INTUC).

NATIONWIDE COAL MINERS' STRIKE AGAINST PRIVATISATION

M K PANDHE

The historic All India Convention of coal workers held at Dhanbad on 6th July 1997 gave a clarion call to 7.5 lakh coal workers to organise 3 days strike on 28-30 July on the following demands:

1. Stop privatisation of coal mining industry including exploration and excavation.
2. Withdraw the proposed amendment of the Nationalisation of Coal Mines Act.
3. Restore the custom duty on imported coal to the level of 1989-90 and stop import of coal to protect the Indian coal mining industry.
4. Reorganise coal industry to make it a unified single company with full autonomy.
5. Restore budgetary support to the coal industry.

The coal workers all over India unitedly responded to this appeal by Federations of INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS. As a result of this remarkable unity achieved by the workers, the Government of India had to come down. The Prime Minister met the central TU leaders to assure that the policy measures in coal industry including the proposed Bill to privatise the coal mines would be kept in abeyance and talks would be held to evolve a common understanding within 2 months.

FIXED MINDSET OF GOVT.

However, discussions between trade union representatives and the central govt failed due to fixed mindset of the Government spokesmen. The representatives of the Government produced exaggerated figures of demand for coal to make out a case that Coal India would not be able to meet the demand. They expect the demand for coal to rise from the present 250 mt to 410 mt by the year 2001. Even this much of coal can be produced if govt provides necessary investment. It is, however, known to everyone that no previous estimation of demand has proved correct and plan targets of power generation were never fulfilled during the last 8 plans. All the central trade unions representatives pointed out that Coal India has capacity to meet all the national requirements provided the Central Government makes necessary investment in this core sector

industry.

Despite promise given by the Prime Minister that no policy decision will be taken by the Central Government, and even when the talks were going on, the Minister of Coal Ms Kanti Singh went on publicly making statements regarding privatisation of coal mines. This has created strong resentment among the coal workers.

With the drastic reduction in import duty on coal, foreign companies were dumping coal in India on lesser price. This would lead to reduction of jobs to coalminers and loss of production in coal mines.

Despite opposition by all the unions in coal industry to the proposed Bill to privatise the coal mines, the government of India is going ahead with this anti-national Bill. It is proposed to allow upto 74 % equity holding to foreign companies. This will practically hand over Indian mines to the foreign companies to make profit. The Govt will also give tax concession to private sector to attract capital from the private sector. The united trade union movement in coal industry will not allow this retrograde step by the Government of India.

NOT A SINGLE DEMAND CONCEDED

When several advanced capitalist countries are giving substantial assistance to coal industry to keep the prices of energy down, Government of India is refusing to extend budgetary support to the coal industry. The production in coal mines is not going up fast due to lack of this support by the government. During the talks with the unions, the Government of India gave no assurance in this regard. This policy, if allowed to continue, will only cripple the coal industry in India and workers must fight against it. The restructuring of Coal India as demanded by the trade unions in coal industry in order to run the industry more efficiently is not agreed to by the Government of India.

The Central Government has drastically reduced the custom duty on coal to less than 20 per cent with the result that domestic coal production became non-competitive. The Ministry of Coal accepted the

rationale of the demand to restore the duty to 1989-90 level but the Ministry of Finance refused to concede it and the talks could not progress further. Thus, not a single demand raised by Dhanbad convention has been accepted by the govt. This has roused anger among the workers of all affiliations.

WAGE NEGOTIATIONS DELAYED

Over and above that, workers are extremely unhappy that though nearly 2 years are over, negotiations for a new wage agreement have not yet commenced. Even the meeting of the Joint Bipartite Committee for Coal Industry (JBCCI) is being delayed by the management. In this process the workers will lose huge amounts by way of arrears payment.

There is also acute discontent among the workers about the non-finalisation of the pension scheme for the coal miners. Every thing is left to the government and JBCCI has no voice to finalise the pension scheme. The agreement in JBCCI on the pension scheme is not being followed and the management's contribution is symbolic. For new entrants, the management refused to give any contribution. The pension is not linked with price index while the rate of interest on pension funds is extremely low. Though 2 % of the workers' wages are deducted since 1.4.1989, the management has not yet taken step to finalise the pension scheme as a third retirement benefit. All this is bringing down the workers' pensionary benefits. Unless workers unitedly fight for drastic improvement in the pension fund, the government will make a mockery of the pension scheme.

Health and safety of the workers is callously ignored by the management. Precious lives of workers are being lost while several get injured.

While coal miners are suffering due to anti-worker policies of the government and the management, the corruption in coal industry is eating the vitals of the industry. Mafias are looting the industry in connivance with the management and administration. The coal industry is unable to show any good performance. It is estimated that over Rs 1000 crore worth coal is lost every year due to organised theft in coal industry.

The spectacular unity achieved by the coal workers in India has created enthusiasm among rank and file to fight for improvement in the coal industry as well

as in their working and living conditions.

TOWARDS UNITED STRIKE

The meeting of the office bearers of the All India Coal Workers Federation held in Calcutta on 2-10-97, presided over by M K Pandhe, reviewed the situation. It decided that the united movement of coal workers must launch another round of struggle to force the Government of India to change its retrograde policies. It has decided to appeal to the coal workers of all affiliations to continue their struggle on the lines of the decisions of the Dhanbad convention and prepare for three days strike all over the country. The AICWF has appealed to all the Federations in coal industry to fix up the commonly agreed date for such a strike so that united preparations for such a mighty action can commence without any delay. A meeting of the Coal Federations will be held in Asansol on 27-10-97 to finalise the dates of strike. The AICWF is confident that all trade unions in coal industry belonging to all affiliations will rise to the occasion and unitedly launch a massive struggle of coal miners all over India which alone will result in solving the problems of coal industry and the 7.5 lakh coal miners.

Com. Kangsari Haldar

CITU pays homage to the memory of Com. Kangsari Haldar who passed away recently after prolonged illness. He played a leading role in the historic peasant struggle-Tebhaga Movement braving severe onslaught and repression by the police and state machinery in West Bengal. He was elected to the Parliament while underground. He was associated with the Left and Democratic movement till his death.

Com. Chitta Basu

CITU pays homage to the memory of Com. Chitta Basu, veteran freedom fighter and leader of the working class and one of the senior leader of Forward Block and TUCC. He passed away after a massive heart attack while travelling in train from Patna to Howrah.

' NAVRATNA - MINI RATNA ' "SELLING FAMILY SILVER TO PAY BUTLER"

SWADESH DEV ROYE

The UF Government have declared nine excellently run PSUs as 'Navratnas' and another ninety-seven profit making PSUs as 'Miniratnas'. The Government have proclaimed that they have taken this step for 'fulfillment of their commitment' in the CMP to turn some PSUs as 'global giant' and 'strengthen' others.

The CMP noted, "The United Front government will identify public sector companies that have comparative advantages and will support them in their drive to become global giants. Others profit making and efficient public sector companies will be strengthened and their management professionalised, and participation of workers in the management of these companies will be encouraged."

The Navratnas have been granted 'enhanced autonomy and delegation of powers' which are inter-alia for entering into joint venture or strategic alliance, opening branches, splitting the company, winding up of branches, abolishing permanent posts, imposing compulsory retirement on permanent employees and borrowing fund from international capital market.

The entire scheme of the Government is meticulously designed to privatise the well-run PSUs in varying degrees through the routes of disinvestment, strategic alliance, restructuring the Board of Directors etc.

BIG BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES IN PSUs BOARDS

As a matter of fact the 'Navratnas' have been issued directive by the UF Government that they will be allowed to exercise the so called enhanced delegation of powers only after the representatives of private sector have been inducted in their respective Board of Directors. The Industry Ministry OM dated 22nd July, 1997 states that, "The Boards of these PSEs should be restructured by inducting non-official directors as the first step before the exercise of the enhanced delegation of authority." Yet another OM issued on the same date states : "The Government has given priority for restructuring of the public sector

boards through induction of 'professionals' and 'experts' ... as non-official part-time directors." It is important to note that under the 'autonomous' situation, as per Government decision, these non-official directors shall be selected by a committee of bureaucrats called the "Search Committee" constituted by the Government.

The other stipulations are that outside professionals in PSU boards should not be less than one-third of the actual strength of the board. The names selected by the 'Search Committee' need not be cleared by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. But above all, "the Government have decided to do away with vigilance clearance for 'non-official' Directors in PSUs." The names for such Directors for all the 'Navratna' PSUs have been selected by the Search Committee and as per news paper reports, "all the persons which have been selected by the 'Search Committee' are believed to be in the private sector." Now it should not be difficult to foresee as to how the enhanced autonomy shall be utilised in the interest of public sector by such a restructured Board of Directors.

BRAIN CHILD OF DISINVESTMENT COMMISSION

The whole concept of so called enhanced autonomy, corporate restructuring, including induction of 'professionals' in the board of directors is the brain child of the Disinvestment Commission (DC). In their Fourth Report the DC noted, "the Commission has been stressing for granting of greater autonomy to the PSU Boards of Management ... The Commission is happy to note that Government has come out with a package of measures conferring autonomy to nine selected PSUs". It further went on to say, "extension of graded autonomy to all PSUs according to performance criteria is still awaited." The strategy of the DC is that before disinvestment of shares, the PSUs should be partially privatised to attain what they call "value-enhancing". According to the DC the steps which would help in value-

enhancing are: “corporate governance, managerial autonomy, remuneration, incentives, professionalising the Board of Management and restructuring where necessary.” Thus it is clear that all these high sounding terms and steps are nothing but prelude to phased programmes of privatisation of well-run PSUs.

It is shocking that the ‘autonomy conscious’ DC has recommended that PSUs should be exempted from the purview of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and Parliamentary Committee on Public Undertakings. Can there be any further dangerous step to wide open the doors of PSUs for unchecked corruption?

The prescription of the DC to go for strategic alliance is a definite step for cent per cent privatisation of PSUs. ‘In elaborating this concept the DC in their report has noted, “a strategic partner is inducted into the management of the PSU with a transfer of shareholding up to 50% to him. At that time there will also be an agreement with such strategic partner that at a later date within a stipulated period when share values go up, Government will disinvest its balance holding.” Contrary to “protect the interests of the affected employees” the DC has recommended retrenchment of employees “to balance the size of workforce “in order to make the PSUs ‘competitive’ in the globalised market economy. In the language of the DC, “Right-sizing of the workforce ... will be inevitable in the long run whether an undertaking continues to be managed and/or owned by Government or not.”

It is deplorable and a matter of serious concern that the DC, blithely transgressing their terms of reference, are prescribing dangerous measures to the Government even on matters much beyond their jurisdiction. Therefore, it should not be ascribed as exaggeration that the Disinvestment Commission is in effect working as public sector ‘Dismantling Commission’.

THE VITAL COMMITTEE

The Vittal Committee appointed by the UF Government to review the guidelines for PSUs, in their report have recommended wide-ranging ‘autonomy’ to the PSUs. It has been observed, “with autonomy an oft-repeated chant throughout the report, it is clear the committee adopted a holistic

philosophy of deregulating the public sector.” In the name of professionalising the management, the kind of ‘autonomy’ recommended by the Committee, if implemented, is bound to spell doom for the public sector industries. Let us look at some of the powers proposed to be vested to the management. Government need not be involved in finalising contracts between PSUs and foreign parties [read MNCs]. The manner of ‘reducing’ manpower should be left to the management. Limits should be removed on the use of the official car by the CEOs and functional Directors. There should be no bar in purchasing Contessa cars or air conditioning existing cars. Travel in ‘executive class’ should not be limited to top executives only. There should be no limit on expenditure on account of advertisement and entertainment. The climax of the situation is that there is a ‘sunset’ clause stipulating that after three years the PSUs should be ‘completely’ deregulated.

IN THE NAME OF CMP

One after another disastrous policy measures adopted and implemented by the UF Government pertaining to public sector are all in the name of CMP! Now the Government of the day claim that, with the steps taken by them, public sector shall be ‘strengthened’ and some of them shall become ‘global giants’, as per their pronouncement in the CMP. So under their policy perception they believe ‘strengthening’ means dismantling and privatising.

We have already examined in detail earlier the kind of ‘autonomy’ granted to the PSU management by the UF Government in their fake agony for granting so called ‘autonomy’. But the same Government has conveniently forgotten their commitment for enacting legislation on participation of workers in management. Therefore, it is very clear that Government is motivated for bureaucratic autonomy and rather opposed to democratic autonomy. This amounts to betraying the working class and defrauding the nation. This is yet another example of the class bias of the Government.

KILLING THE GOOSE LAYING GOLDEN EGGS

It is amazing that the PSUs which have been adorned with the ornamental title of ‘Ratnas’ are being sold to the monopoly capital and foreign MNCs. What

(cont. on page 9)

FORWARD TO BIGGER AND UNITED STRUGGLE

M K PANDHE

(MK Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU, in his report to the meeting of the working committee, at Shimla, 25-28 October 1997, outlined the present economic scenario in India, the activities of and the challenges before the CITU. He also called for effectively leading the movement in fighting against the capitalist onslaughts against the working class and common people in the country. Here is an extract from the report. Editor)

NEW RECESSION IN THE OFFING

Despite tall claims that neo liberalism will lead to faster economic growth, Indian economy is heading towards severe all-round recession with the result that in every sector of the economy, either the rate of growth declined drastically or there has been a decline in production. For instance, the index of Industrial production between April and June in 1997-98 declined to 6.6% from the earlier year's 9%. In case of capital goods, the growth rate came down to 6.3% from 21% earlier year. With regard to intermediate goods, the change in index has declined from 11.22% to 7.4% during these two years. In case of consumer goods sector, during 1996-97 there was an increase of 9.3% but during 1997-98, it actually declined by 0.7%. Regarding consumer durables, the index declined by 6.5% compared to 13% during the last year. Regarding consumer non-durables, the growth index came down from 8.2% to actual decline of 2.9%. The Automobile industry's downhill journey has commenced and in one month alone, the production declined by 9.31%.

The talk of reducing the fiscal deficit has failed to bring any outcome. It was estimated that to ensure a national growth rate of 7%, fiscal deficit curtailment has to be ensured. However, several economists have clearly indicated that fiscal deficit this year is likely to be exceptionally high and the promises given by the Finance Minister that the fiscal deficit will be kept within 5% is not likely to materialise this year. In early years of the economic reforms, fiscal deficit was brought down from 8.3% in 1991 to 5.5% in

1995-96 by drastically reducing developmental activities. However, there is every possibility that the fiscal deficit may reach the 1990-91 level. According to a senior economist, Mr.K.R.Vishwanathan, "total dependence on foreign direct investment or by raising fiscal deficit for achieving growth beyond a certain limit will lead to another economic crisis which could be similar to one that took place in 1990-91 or even worse.

The CII, Assocham and FICCI have made an assessment that industrial growth is likely to be brought down from 6.7% in 1996-97 to 5% during 1997-98. When the Finance Minister presented the budget this year, he made a tall claim that it would lead to faster economic growth as a result of tax concessions to industrial houses worth Rs.10,000 crores. However, the experience of the current year has clearly shown that the tax concessions given by the Government have not been utilised for increasing the investments by the Indian industrialists with the result that the benefits have been pocketed by the industrialists instead of redeploying in advancement of domestic industry.

When the foreign direct investments are increasing in the country, the external aid in India has declined. The total external assistance at the Government level which stood at Rs.553 crores in April, 1996 has been reduced to Rs.358 crores in April, 1997 indicating a sharp decline of 35.30% in one year alone.

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy in its study of 1724 Corporate companies has drawn the conclusion that performance of overwhelming majority of Indian companies has declined drastically. Though the tax incidence in the Corporate Sector which stood at 32% in 1991-92 were brought down to 16% in 1994-95, yet the profitability of the industry declined by 10.6% in 1996-97. The major cause of this fall in performance has been ascribed to decline in the purchasing capacity. The investment by foreign institutional investors which stood at \$297.6 million at the beginning of 1997 declined to \$136.4 million in June, 1997. Though the

Government of India has given substantial concessions including majority participation to foreign investors, the investment is not coming as expected by the official spokesman.

The export performance is also on the decline and during April-May 1997, the country witnessed a negative growth in volume of exports and the trend continued in the later period. The export target fixed for the current year of \$40 billion is not likely to materialise according to expert opinion. This reduction in exports and increasing import bills is likely to cause further deficit in India's foreign trade. According to the latest quick estimates made by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the industrial growth rate declined sharply in 1996-97 to 6.7% compared to 11.9% in the previous year. The electricity and the mining which grew only 3.8% and 1.2% respectively last year highlight the serious situation likely to develop in the country.

GROWING INDEBTEDNESS OF THE COUNTRY

The over reliance of the Government of India on borrowing internally and externally has added to the repayment liability of the Government and a large part of the revenue income has to be spent on repayment of the loans or borrow more money for repayment of earlier loans. The recent budget papers have given the data regarding the growing indebtedness of the country since the introduction of new economic policy.

The combined liabilities of the central and state governments were Rs.3,19,433 crores in the year 1991-92 which is likely to go up to Rs.7,98,028 crores by the end of 1987-88 according to budget estimates. This works out at 54.9 per cent of the GDP of the country at current prices.

The external debt of India has also grown up during the same period. India's external debt which stood at Rs.2,52,910 crores in 1991-92 (\$ 85,285 million) increased to Rs.3,26,457 crores (\$ 90,852 million) which is causing heavy drain on the national economy. The repayment liability of India towards external debt is going up at a faster rate and the decline in the value of rupee adds to the national burden. During 1990-91 the Debt service payments were of the order of \$ 8,982 million which went up to \$ 14,140 million by 1996-97.

It is estimated that more than 50 per cent of the

revenue earnings of the Central Government are used for debt servicing which leaves little funds for developmental activities.

The internal debt of the Government is growing fast due to the efforts of the government to meet the fiscal deficit through resorting to market borrowing. The Government is also utilising the small savings of the people for this purpose. The workers provident fund accumulations used by the central government at low rate of interest are also utilised by the Central Government to meet this fiscal deficit. 3.7 per cent of the countries fiscal deficit is met by external finance. The budget for the year 1997-98 provides for internal and external borrowings to the tune of Rs.65,454 crores to meet the fiscal deficit.

The non-developmental expenditure of the Central Government is growing faster with the result that the proportion of developmental expenditure has gone down. During 1990-91 developmental expenditure of the Government was 54.3 per cent of the total expenditure but according to the 1997-98 budget the share of the developmental expenditure declined to 45.2 per cent. Thus the non-developmental expenditure has increased from 45.7 per cent in 1990-91 to 54.8 per cent' in 1997-98 in the budget estimate. Government of India's policy decision not to send more on developmental projects has resulted in such a stagnant economy.

Though foreign trade has increased during the last 3 years we have been importing more than exports with the result that the balance of trade has been unfavorable to India. The following table explains the position.

During the year 1997-98 the situation is likely to be more grim than shown in the table with such adverse balance of trade India has to depend on more foreign borrowing or devaluing the rupee. Nearly 70 per cent of India's export consist of agriculture and allied products (23.9%), minerals (3.5%), Leather and leather products (4.7%) Textile Fabrics, Cotton Yarn, garments etc.(23.5%), Handicrafts (17.1%). With growing competition in the international market the growth in this area is slowing down while the advanced countries are imposing restrictions on Indian exports.

As a result of the Government of India giving up the policy of self reliance in oil, import bill increased

from Rs.18,613 crores in 1994-95 to Rs.35,737 crores in 1996-97. Similarly the Government made the Fertilizer industry sick and spending for importing more than Rs.3000 crores every year. In the name of liberalisation of imports thousands of crores worth goods are imported every year by reducing the market of the domestic producers. Machine tools, steel, coal, chemicals, electronic goods industries are facing severe crisis due to reduction in custom duty and allowing import of these commodities by resorting to dumping practices by foreign multi-national companies.

Despite adverse balance of trade the country's foreign exchange reserves shows substantial increase. This however cannot be considered as a sign of progress. The Finance Minister is never tired of calling India's foreign exchange reserves as comfortable. This is largely due to huge commercial borrowing, foreign direct investment, foreign companies entering the speculative share market, entry of foreign financial institutions in Indian market. This actually points out to India's growing dependence on multi-national companies which is also responsible for the slow economic growth or even recession in the economy. The periodic assurance given by the Finance Minister that the recessionary trend would be shortlived, the indications are clear that the stagnation and recession is going to be a longdrawn phenomenon.

MNC'S TAKE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE OF LIBERALISM

The concessions offered by the Government have essentially benefited the MNC'S at the cost of Indian companies. According to Economic Times, a study of 91 companies for 1996 amongst whom 36 were MNC's makes a revealing observation. It stated on 15th May 1997.

"The poor state of overall profitability is mainly due to the discouraging performance recorded by companies other than MNC's....."

"While the 36 MNC's collectively recorded a net profit growth of 23 per cent and 37 per cent growth in sales over the previous year, the 55 Indian companies witnessed a substantial fall of 57 per cent in net profit though aggregate sales for this segment went up by 15 per cent".

"It is pertinent to note here that the collective performance of MNC's has a major bearing on overall

fundings, as they accounted for around 77 per cent of aggregate turnover and 86 per cent of aggregate net profit of the sample".

The Hindustan Liver has earned during 1996 a net profit of Rs.413 crores while MNCS like Ponds India, Reckit and Coleman witnessed 85 per cent growth in sales and 60 per cent growth in net profit in the same year. ABB, Bata India, Castrol, Knoll Pharma and Philips India have also increased their profits substantially.

CONSPIRACY TO DISMANTLE THE SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES

The Abid Hussain Committee appointed by the Ministry of Industry has recommended a gradual withdrawal of the protection to small scale industries with a view to deregulate the entire small scale sector. The Abid Hussain Committees recommendation clearly gives a green signal for the entry of big business houses in this sector which would ultimately ruin the entire small scale sector.

The small scale sector comprises 30 per cent of our employment and exports. With modest capital requirements it effectively increases the productive capacity of the country and contributes in making the national economy self-reliant. In their desire to capture the indigenous market the MNCS are out to enter the market of this sector and make more profit. The Abid Hussain Committee has only signed on dotted line what the World Bank and the IMF would wish to do in the country.

Meanwhile the Ministry of Commerce appointed another Committee headed by T.S. Vijayaraghavan on the same subject has recommended that the reservation for the small scale should continue but advocated opening up of 91 items and keep reservation for only 56 items, that too with some modifications.

Both these committees are hitting the interest of the small scale industries and pave the way for entry of big business houses in India and MNCS.

The Parliamentary Committee on the Ministry of Industry chaired by Ashok Mitra opposed further deregulation of small scale industries. The Committee recommended a review of the impact on the small scale industry as a result of deregulation that has already taken place in the country. It further pointed out that the reduction in custom duty in last two

years' budgets which hit hard the small scale industry should be kept in abeyance. Noting the role of small scale sector in reducing the poverty the committee noted, "If is therefore a matter of grave concern that not even 0.3 per cent of the Union Government Budget is currently targeted towards the small scale sector. It therefore recommended enhancement of budgetary allocation to small scale 4 times and Khadi and Village Industries 6 times.

Trade Union movement in India should therefore take up the case of development of small scale sector of industry as a means to generate more employment and develop self-reliant economy in the country.

The question of implementing labour laws and ensuring higher minimum wages also are crucial for the trade unions. Hence the move to exclude small scale sector from the purview of labour legislation cannot be accepted by the trade unions.

However, there is an urgent need for undertaking a bipartite dialogue with the employers of the small scale sector with a view to fight for more protection to small scale sector and ensure proper working and living conditions for the workers in the small scale industries.

If the working committee agrees with the proposal, the CITU can take initiative in this regard and one may take steps to open a new front in the struggles against the economic policies of the Govt of India.

PDS IN DOULDRUMS

Through the CMP provides for strengthening the PDS and the former Prime Minister gave an assurance on the Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi that 10 Kg. of foodgrains will be supplied to the 80 million people below the poverty line at half the rate, the PDS has yet to give real relief to the poor people. In several states there is no proper machinery for public distribution and the foodgrains will go into hands of others. In West Bengal and Kerala there is an effective PDS for all the people and it is difficult to distinguish between people below the poverty line and those alone.

Moreover, earlier ration shops were supplying 20 Kg. of foodgrains through ration shop. The reduction of concessional supply would still put the poor people in difficulties since they would be forced to purchase their requirement at open market at a much higher rate. It is also a fact that a section of the poor who

have no source of livelihood will have difficulties in purchasing grains from the PDS.

The Finance Minister has openly come out against subsidies in his interview to Washington Times, P. Chidambaram said, "There will always be a section of the people that enjoys subsidies and free lunches but we must overcome that".

PDS cannot be effective if it is given completely in the hands of bureaucracy. Without involvement of people and their supervision over the PDS the scheme may remain in paper. Trade Unions and other mass organizations must campaign for necessary procurement drive and proper distribution through a broad-base network of outlets. The FCI who has the responsibility of procuring foodgrains is a den of corruption and pilferage through mafias is regularly taking place.

We must also campaign for supply of other essential commodities at affordable prices to the poor which alone can make PDS in the country effective means of going relief to the poor.

FORWARD TO BIGGER AND UNITED STRUGGLE

The review of our activities since the last conference of CITU underlines our achievements as well as weakness in this period. Though we have been able to take some positive steps to strengthen our struggles, the sweep of these struggles had not been adequate to meet the challenges of the situation. Though due to various factors there were some difficulties in undertaking some of the tasks. We could have been more active in mobilising larger and larger masses in the united programmes we have undertaken. It must be admitted that all state committees were not active in all the programmes of action. This weakness should be overcome by us so that we can make the mass actions more effective.

In this period the centre has taken steps to strengthen its activities and improve its coordination. However, there is need to fully ensure the task of implementing all the directives given to the CITU Centre in our Report on Organisation.

A new wave of the struggles of the working class is in the offing in the country and the CITU has to play more important role in these struggles. At international level also the need for better coordination is being felt by the trade unions in

various countries. The CITU has to contribute its mite in the task of such international cooperation.

In the forthcoming period we have to pay more attention on a priority basis for imparting education to our cadres so that they are equipped to meet the tasks more effectively. Unless we fulfil these tasks the advance of our movement itself will be at stake. We have been discussing this question from time to time but the progress in the matter has been extremely tardy.

Today, the responsibilities on our shoulders are increasing more and more with each passing day but we are organisationally not prepared to take over these responsibilities as a result of which some of jobs are going by default. The existing centre within its limited capacities is making efforts to meet the challenges of the situation. These capacities can be improved to some extent. However, without increasing the strength of the Centre and some leaders who are unable to function from the Centre come forward to help in implementing these tasks the tasks before us cannot be fulfilled effectively.

At the same time objective conditions are becoming favourable for more and more struggles by the working class in the country. The discontent among the workers is fast increasing and they are coming forward for movements. The deteriorating economic conditions and falling real standards of living are forcing them to join the struggles and the urge for unity among the working class is increasing day by day.

We have to cease opportunity and do our best to mobilise millions of workers in the action programmes which alone will result in developing nationwide powerful movement on pressing issues facing the working class.

This will also help in strengthening the activities of the NPMO and all the mass organisations participating in it. It is only by leading these struggle the role of the working class in them can be enhanced.

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ACTIVITIES IN HINDI SPEAKING STATES

A meeting of senior CITU leaders from Hindi speaking States was held in New Delhi on 5.7.1997 to review the CITU activities and finalise concrete steps to strengthen the organisation in Hindi speaking States. President, General Secretary and other Secretariat Members from CITU Centre attended the meeting. It was noted in the meeting that the CITU centres in Hindi speaking States must be augmented and properly organised with a team of functionaries, proper co-ordination between the district centres and leadership to the big industrial federations in these States and the State Centre in the respective States shall have to be further strengthened and consolidated. The democratic functioning of the State Committees needs to be improved and collective leadership must be ensured. Steps should be taken to develop young cadres and programme for trade union education on the basis of centrally prepared syllabus must be undertaken. It was decided that a status report on implementation of the tasks on organisation set forth in the Bhubaneswar document should be submitted by these State Committees to the Centre to enable the centre to prepare a consolidated paper outlining the plan of action for putting into practice the organisational tasks. It was also decided to organise a Central Trade Union school for the leading comrades of all the Hindi Speaking States. The review revealed that there has been increase in membership of CITU and it was decided to continue the membership drive throughout the year and special drive on the successful conclusion of specific programmes of struggle, signing of settlement etc. The full Secretariat meeting of CITU held on 19-20 July reviewed the decisions of this meeting and identified various steps to be undertaken by the centre for strengthening the work and organisation in these States. The Secretariat decided that the available Secretariat at the Centre must collectively ensure constant monitoring and coordination of the work of the Hindi speaking and other organisationally weak States.

(From the report to the Working Committee)

BEML: AN UNWARRANTED VENTURE

There is a proposal for Joint Venture of M/s. Bharat Earth Movers Ltd., Bangalore with M/s GEC Alsthme, a Multi National company of U.K.- France collaboration operating world wide with Europe as its centre and the proposed Joint Venture is intended for manufacturing High tech Rail Coaches, ACEMU & DECMU required for our Indian Railways.

Bharat Earth Movers Ltd., is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence Production. The company came into existence in 1964. It is engaged in designing, developing and manufacturing a variety of sophisticated construction and earth moving equipments and systems serving the core sector of the economy like irrigation, mining and construction, defence, railways, transportation, energy, robotics and Automation. It has three manufacturing unit situated at Bangalore, Kolar Gold fields and Mysore of Karnataka State with its corporate office situated at Bangalore. It has a workforce of about 12,000, including Officers and employees.

It started with a capital of Rs.5 crores in the year 1964-65. It has reached a turn over of Rs. 1160 crores and a profit of 33 crores in the years 1996-97. This PSU has been making profit year after year since its commissioning.

Over the years, BEML has created vast infrastructure needed to produce variety of equipments on a large scale to meet the demands of customers. However, as a result of the introduction of new economic policies of the govt. of India, BEML is facing series of grave problems. First it was disinvestment of

shares. Then downwards slide in profits due to lack of orders from traditional customers following import liberalisation. Thirdly the R & D which was able to indigenously develop various types of equipments was dismantled in a planned manner. Now in the name of survival of the company, joint venture with one of the MNCs is proposed citing the ongoing economic reforms in the country.

The proposed joint venture of BEML with M/s GEC Alsthme for manufacture of Rail Coaches at Bangalore, if materialised, will have serious consequences not only to the company but to its workers as well. The vast resources and infrastructure created by BEML is going to be exploited by the MNC to its advantage. With a small investment capital the MNC will be able to make huge profits. There can be reduction in the strength of employees, wage cuts and other troubles as a consequence of this venture.

The proposed joint venture is not at all warranted since the technology is already available in our country. There has been public criticism against this proposal and in a Convention at Bangalore, prominent personalities expressed their views against this. The workers of BEML are very much agitated over this development. Further the workers have been kept in dark about this issues.

CITU in a detailed letter as well as through a memorandum has urged the Prime Minister to drop this ill-advised measure in the interest of all concerned.

(Report by UP Menon)

CPSU defaulting statutory dues

Shri P A Sangma, the Speaker of Lok Sabha in his address to the special session of Lok Sabha observed, inter alia as under:

“As on 31st of July, 1997, Central Public Sector Enterprises coming under seventeen ministries of the Government of India had an outstanding labour

payment arrears of Rs 605 crores. Out of this Rs 435 crores are statutory dues under Provident Fund, ESI and Gratuity laws. Some of these defaults also carry with them criminal liabilities. A demoralised and dehumanised work force is likely to backlash on the very process of economic reforms.”

This was preceded by a letter from the Prime Minister on 29.5.97 wherein he assured:

“A Cabinet Note is being prepared by the Ministry of Labour on the subject, once this is done, we expect to take up the matter in the Cabinet and to resolve the issues.”

But as has become symptomatic with the present day governance, the matter is yet before a sub-committee comprising the Ministers of Finance and Agriculture and the Labour Minister.

The fact is that these arrears had accumulated over the last 3 years and more.

Dipankar Mukherjee, MP and member of CITU Working Committee had referred to these developments in a letter to the Prime Minister on 17.10.97. He has urged the PM to resolve this issue immediately to ensure payment of statutory dues to CPSU workers before the commencement of winter session of Parliament.

SERVICE, LABOUR & ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIGEST

Com. E X Joseph, former Secretary General of the All India Audit and Accounts Association and a veteran leader of the central government employees' movement has launched a new monthly journal Service, Labour & Administrative Law Digest. This will be a very useful and informative monthly disseminating legal information, widely and effectively, covering the three most important areas of service, labour and administration Justice V R Krishna Iyer is the patron of this journal and a galaxy of senior advocates are in the editorial board.

The journal is priced Rs 35/- per single copy. The annual subscription is Rs 400/-. Com.E X Joseph has sought the help and involvement of the CITU in this venture. The address for communication is:

Service, Labour & Administrative Law Digest
67, First Floor,
Old Rajendra Nagar Market
New Delhi 110 060

Unions and individual comrades can write to the above address for literature about the journal and subscribe to the same.

CITU

ON VERIFICATION

During last conference, publication of the verification results carried out on the 1989 membership was reported. INTUC went to the court challenging the result and demanded stay. During pendency of the dispute they had demanded 1980 results to be in vogue for ascertaining representation in various national and international bodies. Since CITU was also made a party to the case, our lawyers during their oral submission made it abundantly clear that though the whole mechanism was faulty and unscientific leading to enormous delay in completing the entire exercise making the result irrelevant still CITU cannot accept such a position of reverting back to 1980 verification results which was all the more faulty and irrelevant. CITU therefore, demanded that since the next round of verification is already overdue, the govt, after discussion with the central TU's should immediately initiate the process of fresh verification. The court it is reported, has upheld the CITU view and fresh verification may be started on the basis of 1996 membership. Last time, although we ranked third, still 25% of our claims were turned down mainly because our unions could not produce proper records, It is, therefore, very important that one office bearer of the state committee should be made in charge of monitoring the entire matters pertaining to verification, submission of affiliation fee/annual returns etc. This office bearer should ensure that all unions in the state maintain their membership register properly, with records of payment of membership fees. The counterfoils of the receipts issued by the unions, the proof of submission of annual returns to the respective office of the registrar of TU's, the receipt against payment of affiliation fees and working class subscription to the CITU centre, should all be preserved and kept ready for verification. The affiliation certificate, registration certificate etc. should also be maintained properly. All these are necessary to ensure that our unions can present proper records at the time of verification, when asked for. Considering the above, our State Committees should take this task in right earnest and seriously to prepare ourself for the fresh round of verification. The next round of verification is likely to be based on 1996.

(From the Report to the Working Committee)