

SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF CITU  
CALCUTTA, FEBRUARY 13-17, 1991

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Jyoti Basu, Vice President

Comrade Delegates and Fraternal Guests,

We have yet to reconcile with a situation and think about the CITU Conference without Comrade B. T. Randive participating in it. In all the six Conferences of CITU held since its foundation, Comrade BTR played a notable role in guiding its deliberations. His Presidential addresses contain voluminous information and clear cut directions for the working class and the trade union movement. Though he is no more with us at this critical juncture the rich heritage he left behind him will always be a source of inspiration and guidance for all of us and we will continue to cherish his memory for all time to come.

Since the last Conference, we have lost another stalwart of the CITU, Comrade P. Ramamurthy who was the founder General Secretary of our organisation. The tireless efforts he made to build the CITU in its early days will always be remembered. Despite ill health he was active till he breathed his last and extensively toured to guide various mass movements under the banner of CITU.

Comrade Moohammad Ismail, Vice-President of CITU and veteran Trade Union leader of great standing has passed away. Coming from a working class family, he played a leading role in building the TU movement of our country.

Comrade Nrisingha Chakrabarty, one of the Secretaries of the CITU, whose meritorious role in strengthening the CITU Centre cannot be forgotten. As a victimised Railway employee, his contributions to the Indian Railwaymen's movement were outstanding.

Since Bombay Conference two important members of the Working Committee, Comrade Krishnapada Ghosh and E. Padmanabhan have passed away. In this period we lost three of our General Council members, Comrades Bholu Basu, Subodh Sen and Ajit Chakrabarty.

Many of our valuable Comrades have laid down their lives while fighting communal, divisive and cessationist and reactionary political forces in Tripura, Punjab, Kashmir, West Bengal and Assam.

Their indomitable courage and sacrifice will inspire us in our struggle against these forces.

### Relaxation In International Tension

Since the Bombay Conference, there had been marked reduction in international tension due to the initiative taken by President Gorbachev. Within six months after our last conference the world witnessed the signing of INF Treaty by the end of 1987, though the treaty covered a small portion of Nuclear armaments it set in motion the concept of destroying Nuclear stock pile and reduction of armaments. The worldwide peace movement played an important role in achieving this international agreement.

However, the commitment to the INF treaty by the US imperialists was not sincere. Reagan Administration shamelessly announced their determination to carry forward the Star War Project. The US Administration continued to spend billions of dollars on development of new weapons of mass destruction. It has emerged as a powerful super-power.

In Asia, the US imperialists continue to strengthen their military bases. They openly supported the Israeli Zionist brutal attack on the Palestinians on the occasion of the 4th Anniversary of the Intifada, the uprising of the Palestinians. Despite the UN Resolution on sending a fact finding mission to Jerusalem, the US Imperialists and Israeli Govt. refused to accept the mission. Even the proposal for a conference on this West Asian problem could not be held due to Israel's opposition at the behest of US imperialists to PLO's participation. The treacherous killing of 2 senior assistants of Yasser Arafat in Tunisia was clearly planned by US and zionist agents. It is a shameless act of Subordination to the US imperialists.

The entire world condemned the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and demanded withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. However, the Bush Administration has sent 4.5 lakh troops to the region on the plea of implementing UN resolution which it had violated on so many occasions. The issue in this case became the control of the oil rich

areas of West Asia. After all, of the world's 1001.5 billion barrels of proven oil deposits, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait and Iran possess 65 percent. The hollowness of US intentions were clearly seen when same Bush administration is not prepared to implement UN decision on Palestinian people. Massive demonstration in USA, UK and other European capitals have expressed the feelings of the people of these countries against war and for peaceful solution of the Gulf crisis. The French Defence Minister and the Italian Navy Chief have resigned in protest against their Govts' policies in the Gulf war. India needs even now to take the initiative to call for cessation of hostilities and to attempt at a peaceful solution through the Security Council. The Govt. should also cease giving refuelling facilities to US war planes.

US arming of Pakistan directly resulted in preparation of tension in the Indian Sub-continent. The Pak arming and training of terrorists in Punjab and Kashmir was not possible without US Govt. conniving at it. The US military aid and bolstering of dictatorial regime in Pakistan has made settlement of Kashmir question on the basis of Shimla accord extremely difficult.

The open US armed intervention in Panama and Grenada clearly shows to what level it can go to subvert the existing regimes in Latin American countries. The armed assistance given to contras by US Govt. and the CIA to fight the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua led by Daniel Ortega and financial assistance given to the counter-revolutionary forces during elections is an example of the US policy of aggrandizement. The world press openly admitted the role played by CIA and the US Government in defeating the democratic forces in Nicaragua.

Hundreds of US military bases all over the world are threatening the sovereignty of several developing countries.

The CITU is of the view that to-day there is urgent need for peace loving forces to come together in the struggle for world peace and disarmament which alone can prevent world war. Working class and the trade union movement should take initiative in strengthening the peace movement so that the US imperialists design for world domination is successfully combatted.

The US continues its aggressive designs against

the heroic people of Socialist Cuba. Repeated attempts of economic blockade of Cuba have not yielded any results. As a result of the recent developments in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union the aid received by Cuba has been drastically reduced creating serious difficulties for the Cuban economy. However, the people of Cuba have been valiantly fighting under the leadership of Comrade Fidel Castro to overcome these difficulties. Socialism has been adhered to by the Cuban people and their Government. This is an inspiration to the people of all Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The defeat of Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, which came in power in a bloody coup by overthrowing Allende's Government, is a development which has caused a serious set-back to US imperialists in Latin America. CIA and the US administration were helping the Pinochet Government in suppressing trade union and democratic rights, but as a result of the sustained and united struggle by the democratic forces in Chile they could squarely defeat the tyrannical rule and established a democratic Government in Chile. The victory of the democratic forces in Chile has strengthened the struggle of the Latin American people against US imperialists and their stooges.

### Heroic Anti-Apartheid Struggle

Comrades, in Bombay Conference, we had an opportunity to welcome the delegates from COSATU from South Africa who were fighting amidst extremely difficult conditions. Under the leadership of African National Congress, the people of South Africa heroically fought with arms against the hated Botha regime and we fully supported their struggle. Our Coal mine workers and officers contributed Rs. One Crore and donated the amount to the ANC as a token of solidarity with their glorious struggle.

The US, the self proclaimed champions of freedom, vetoed the resolution of UNO for sanctions against South Africa, but the united movement of the people of South Africa became so widespread that the Govt. of South Africa could not carry forward their suppression of the black majority population. A new Govt. of South Africa had to release Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and other political leaders, had to recognise ANC and sign settlement agreeing to commence negotiations on new Constitution for South Africa. There is

welcome news that the President has started taking steps for scrapping apartheid.

We had great pleasure to receive Comrade Nelson Mandela on 15th October, 1990 on Indian soil. The impressive rally organised in Calcutta by the Left Front Government expressed the warm feelings of the people of India for the cause of our brothers and sisters in South Africa. We wish all success to our Comrades in South Africa in their united struggle to liberate South Africa from the clutches of the Apartheid regime.

The people of Namibia achieved liberation in November 1989 after three quarters of a century struggle against the government of South Africa. The SWAPO under the leadership of the legendary Sam Nujma played a significant role in achieving this liberation after long-drawn and bitter struggles. It was a big blow to US imperialism in the African continent.

#### Democratic Advances

The CITU consistently supported the proposals advanced by the Government of Democratic Peoples (DPRK) Republic of Korea for unification of Korean fatherland. The presence of over 40,000 US troops with modern weapons and massive US capital investments in South Korea is a big hurdle in the process of national unification. The US military exercises with the Govt. of South Korea have further added to tension in the region. However, due to the advance of democratic movement in South Korea the Government of that country had to open negotiations with the Government of DPRK for national unification. The US imperialists are still toying with the idea of two Koreas to keep their stranglehold over the economy of South Korea. The people of South Korea are strengthening their movement for national unification and for withdrawal of US troops from South Korea. We earnestly hope that dialogue between the two Governments would progress on the lines of new proposals given by the Government of DPRK so that the artificial division between the Korean people is put an end to as soon as possible.

In Afghanistan, Geneva Accord was an important development for the settlement of the dispute among various sections of the population. The USSR withdrew its troops from Afghanistan as per accord but the US imperialists continued to send

arms to the Mujahedins. This has resulted in repeated attacks by the counter revolutionary elements on the peaceful citizens of Afghanistan. However, the Afghanistan Government under the leadership of Najibullah handled the situation well and took number of steps to unify all the democratic sections. This was a big blow to the Mujahedins who are getting isolated from the people. We wish all success to the people of Afghanistan in their efforts to defeat the conspiracy of US and Pakistan and achieve stability in the country.

The question of political solution to the Cambodian problem has been hanging fire for a long time. However, an advance was made when agreement on the formation of Supreme National Council was reached in the informal meeting of four parties of Cambodia on 10th September 1990 in Jakarta. The Working Conferences held in November at Jakarta and Paris created favourable conditions for a final political solution of the Cambodian problem. However, difficulties have cropped up and the Paris Conference could not be convened. We hope, the parties would be able to thrash out their differences amicably so that the political solution to the problem is achieved as soon as possible with the sovereignty of Cambodia maintained. The solution of this problem has great bearings on the situation in South East Asia.

Winds of democracy have been blowing in Nepal where the struggle against King controlled 'Panchayati Raj' was successful and after brutal repression the King of Nepal had to agree for a democratic system in the country. The unity of Nepali Congress and United Left Front played an important role in this struggle. For the first time, genuine trade unions have emerged in Nepal and open political activity is permitted. We wish success to all the left and democratic forces in our northern neighbour so that they can achieve further successes in protecting people's rights. We hope, the developments in Nepal will also improve the relations between India and Nepal.

After a bloody struggle for 9 years against dictatorship of Ershad the people of Bangladesh have achieved success in throwing out the dictatorial Government and in paving the way for democratic elections in that country.

We hope, Bangladesh people will be able to assert their rights and will not allow military dictatorship

stage a come back in Bangladesh. We fully support the left and democratic forces in Bangladesh to consolidate their position in the national political scene.

The struggle of the people of Burma against military rule was soaked in blood but the dictatorial regime had to accept elections. The people threw out the military rule in polls but the military rulers refuse to handover the power to the elected representatives with the result that the dictatorial regime continues. We hope and trust that the democratic forces will triumph.

Comrades, the condition in Sri Lanka further deteriorated due to non-implementation of India-Sri Lanka Accord. The unilateral ceasefire declared by LTTE in Sri Lanka became shortlived and lot of innocent lives are being lost in the internal strife. The CITU is of the firm opinion that full autonomy to the Tamil speaking people within Sri Lanka can bring about a just solution.

#### Suppression of Democracy in Fiji

The suppression of democracy in Fiji is causing great concern to us since a large section of population of Indian origin is deprived of elementary citizenship rights. The Indian workers are subjected to repressive measures by the army and police and their trade unions have been crushed by the dictatorial regime. Since diplomatic ties with that country have been broken, there is no chance of communication with the people of Fiji. We express full support to the people of Fiji in their struggle against military rule and for democratic rights.

#### Set Back in some Socialist Countries

Comrades, the developments in Eastern European countries are of great concern to us. Reactionary, anti-Communist forces have come to power and are working and clamouring for capitalist path of development by dismantling the socialist system. But experiences alone will teach the people that such a path cannot bring about salvation however much the Western capitalist countries may be encouraging them.

The developments in the USSR have added to the seriousness of the situation. The people of the world witnessed how after the revolution in backward Russia in 1917 the first Socialist State was established and grew from strength to strength with the sacrifices and enthusiasm of the people led by the

working class. It caught up with many of the capitalist countries in several spheres and surpassed many, despite the attempts of the capitalist and imperialist countries to destroy it by active intervention and boycott for a number of years. The first non-exploitative society opened up a new epoch and enthused the working class and down-trodden people throughout the world to fight against exploitation and injustice with Socialism as their objective. As in peace, so in war in the anti-fascist struggle the sacrifices and heroism of the Soviet people, the role of the Government under the leadership of the Communist party were acclaimed by all freedom loving people. In the post-war period also further expansion of Socialism took place, the great Chinese revolution was victorious and a Socialist State was established in the most populous country in the world. The liberation struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin American countries drew inspiration from the Socialist countries. But in the post-war period, the capitalist and imperialist countries through scientific and technological discoveries and neo-colonial exploitation could reorganise their economies and make great advances in the economic sphere despite the inherent crisis of the system, growing unemployment and other evils with which they were beset. In the Soviet Union on the other hand, whilst significant scientific and technological advance did take place, it was confined mainly in the sphere of defence, probing of the outer space etc. The Soviet Union equalled the US and broke its monopoly in sophisticated weapons. This helped to contain war and threats by the imperialists. But the Soviet leadership ignored the needs of the masses in the new situation that had arisen, the Communist Party lost its contact with the people, ignored the reality and did not make the necessary corrections and changes in time and Socialist ideology was given a back seat. The new generation was in these circumstances influenced by the consumer society of the West ignoring all the other evils of the society. I need not comment on the analysis of the history and developments undertaken by the Soviet Party and new programme of the Soviet Party and Government. But as yet no tangible result has emerged and new problems in regard to nationalities and ethnic groups are seeking to tear the Soviet Union apart. There is also a dangerous division in the Communist Party. In the Soviet Union a section

of the leadership is still of the view that it is making changes within the system of Socialism. But there are other strident voices and opinions which seek a different path away from socialism. We can only wait with anxiety to see the results. Its position as a great power vis-a-vis USA, has weakened.

### China

In China also serious mistakes were made in the course of building Socialism. The leadership admits that 10 years were lost because of the cultural revolution and grave errors were committed in the economic policies. Even before the Soviet changes and restructuring were adopted, the CPC after assessing their own situation undertook serious corrective measures of reform within the Socialist system and they are basing themselves on "Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse Tung thought". They have discarded the bourgeois democratic system and the capitalist path. After the Tianmen square incidents the CPC and the Government, whilst countering them and defeating the counter revolutionary forces, took corrective measures to fight back anti-Socialist pro-capitalist ideology. We have to keenly study the developments in China and wish it success in strengthening Socialism.

In Cuba, Vietnam and DPRK, distortions in building Socialism were corrected which resulted in defending Socialist gains by these countries.

The Indian working class and the people must draw proper lessons from all these developments and also from their own experience in order to take the correct path according to the concrete situation in India to finally reach the goal of Socialism—a non-exploitative society. We shall continue to raise the political consciousness of our working class. We must educate it in the doctrine of Scientific Socialism and in Marxism-Leninism.

### Welcome Improvement In India-China Relations

Comrades, since Bombay Conference there has been considerable improvement in India's relations with China which has great bearings on the general situation in Asia and the Third World countries. Both sides have expressed satisfaction that the official level talks on the border dispute are progressing well and have expressed desire to settle the border problem through negotiations. During the last three years

cultural and economic relations have shown improvement and exchange of delegations have become more frequent. Welcome decision has been taken by both the countries to re-start border trade.

It is our earnest desire that the friendly relations between India and China should continue to develop further which is in the interest of both the countries. Since its inception the CITU had always been emphasising that all the outstanding issues between the two ancient countries can be resolved peacefully and we have every reason to rejoice at the welcome developments in this respect.

### Growing Conflict Between Developing and Imperialist Countries

During the last couple of years the world has witnessed the intensification of the conflict between the developing countries and the imperialist countries. Despite the U. N. Resolution calling upon the advanced capitalist countries to allocate at least 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) as official aid to developing countries, no such step has been taken by any of the advanced capitalist countries. By the end of 1988 the assistance provided by United States was only 0.21 per cent of its GNP while the corresponding figure for Britain and Japan was 0.28 and 0.32 per cent. As a result the economies of the developing countries are unable to develop at a faster rate. The developing countries in several international conferences have pressed the need for increasing the economic assistance but the advanced capitalist countries are refusing to respond favourably.

While giving loans to the developing countries, the two agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been imposing conditionalities which are detrimental to these developing countries and often do not suit them. Despite talk of New World Economic Order by the U. N. and the ILO the poverty in developing countries continues to increase while the affluence of the developed capitalist countries is on the rise. The so-called North-South dialogue to improve the living conditions of the developing countries has remained on paper.

The foreign debt of the developing countries is increasing year by year phenomenally and according to official statistics by the end of 1989 it reached 1,320 billion. The group of 77 which represents the Third World countries have repeatedly demanded

change in the policy of the advanced capitalist countries. Their demand for reduction in interest rates, cancellation of debt prior to 1987 of the least developed countries, flexible rescheduling of debt servicing and providing new loans have not been accepted by the advanced capitalist countries. As a result, foreign debt of the developing countries continues to increase and some countries have already entered into the debt trap.

Unequal economic relations is another aspect of conflict between the developing and developed countries. The developing countries essentially export primary products. Prices of these products are declining or in case of some products they are increasing marginally. However, the prices of finished goods are increasing at a much faster rate. Thus the price gap between the primary and finished products is increasing at a faster rate. The prices of primary products declined 30 to 50 per cent during the last decade with the result that the developing countries have to export more to earn the same amount of foreign exchange. The terms of trade for the developing countries have become more and more unfavourable during the last decade.

When the developing countries need more protection the advanced capitalist countries are resorting to so-called "trade protectionism" to prevent goods from developing countries to enter their markets. This had a devastating effect on the foreign trade of the Third World countries.

The Omnibus Trade Act passed by US Congress in 1988, in the name of checking "unfair" trading practices is empowering US government to retaliate against some countries which do not toe the US imperialist dictate. The Super 301 directed against India by the US Government was an example of economic blackmail to pressurise the Government of India to follow the dictates of American Government. This section actually hits at the basis of sovereign rights of a developing country.

General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay round of talks could not make much advance just because the imperialist countries want to perpetrate their exploitation of the developing countries.

It is a welcome development that developing countries are becoming aware of these policies and are trying to assert for change in the policies of the advanced capitalist countries. These developing

countries are seeking to change the terms for technology transfer which is again controlled by the multi-national companies. According to statistics, developed capitalist countries control 85 per cent of the capitalist World's Scientific Research talents and 94 per cent of the World's Scientific and Technological Research and Development expenses, while developing countries own only 11 per cent and 6 per cent respectively.

The trade union movement should, therefore, take keen interest in the problems of development in the third world countries so that we can effectively participate in the struggle against exploitation by the developed capitalist countries and combat the unequal terms of the multi-national companies.

### Indian Political Scene

The country witnessed several changes in the recent past but I do not propose to review them all here today. I shall highlight only a few of them.

After Indira Gandhi's brutal assassination a revulsion of feeling swept India and in the elections to the Lok Sabha which were held immediately after that gruesome murder, the Congress (I) emerged victorious under Shri Rajiv Gandhi's leadership, with a massive majority on the crest of a sympathy wave.

But the Government's promises and performances were at variance and its authoritarian character was revealed within a short time. People started getting disillusioned because of the anti-people policies adopted by this Government. Also various charges of corruption, particularly that relating to the defence deals in regard to the purchase of Bofors guns were levelled against this Government, causing widespread disenchantment of the people with it.

The economic policies pursued by the Rajiv Gandhi Government were retrograde in nature. The import liberalisation policy which it enunciated affected very adversely the Indian industries. The growing dependence on the foreign capital, the increased concessions to monopoly capital led to further concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. The other economic measures of this Government caused further inflation and added more burdens on the common people because it periodically raised administrative prices of essential commodities. The Government led by Shri Rajiv Gandhi did not care to look into the problems of the closed and sick industries and refused to pay the

needed attention to the small scale industries which are labour intensive. There was no attempt to combat at least, to some extent, the unemployment problem in the country.

The "Industrial Relations Bill" which the Rajiv Gandhi Government brought to the Parliament sought to suppress the right of the working class to strike which, however, was successfully stalled by the workers' movement all over India.

In the sphere of Education, this Government chose to neglect the cause of "Universal education" and instead laid emphasis on elite education. In the face of countrywide demand for decentralisation of powers the Rajiv Gandhi Government adopted the policy of more centralisation of power ignoring the Sarkaria Commission report and thereby further embittered Centre-State relations.

In the political sphere, the Rajiv Gandhi Government did not take the initiative to solve the Punjab problem; it allowed the situation in Jammu and Kashmir to deteriorate.

This Government inducted the army in Agartala a few days before the Assembly polls in Tripura in order to subvert free and fair elections and helped the Congress (I) party to win. It became clear later that the then Central Congress (I) Government conspired secretly with the TNV to oust the Left Front Government. It compromised with the divisive, communal and fundamentalist elements for immediate political gains in the elections. All these alienated vast masses of the people from the Government and when the opportunity came it was defeated by the opposition forces.

A vital role in the political battle was played by the Janata Dal under V. P. Singh and the National Front which the leftists supported.

During the Lok Sabha Election in 1989, the Janata Dal or for that matter National Front made seat adjustments with the BJP in the context of wide-spread anti-Congress (I) feeling of the people in the country and in order to avert, according to it, any major split of non-Congress (I) votes. But we, the Left, stuck to our decision that under no circumstances we would share the platform with the BJP for electioneering. The National Front, as we all know, formed the Government but the weakness lay in the fact that the BJP emerged as a big force in the political scene of the country. This party made a categorical assurance that it would not harass the N. F. Government by pressing upon it to implement some of its own party programmes to the

point of breaking it, but in reality the opposite happened. As it grew in strength, the BJP acted in a way detrimental to the interest of the nation and violated its promises. The BJP put forward its demand for building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya by removing the mosque built by Babar.

We found thereafter how trail of blood was left behind along the route of Shri Advani's rath with the support of the VHP, RSS and Bajrang Dal. The Muslim minorities were killed and maimed. The V. P. Singh Government with our full backing refused to accede to the demand of the BJP. Instead of hailing this stand Shri Chandra Sekhar with a minority of about 60 MPs out of 525 MPs conspired with the Congress (I) to form a government. It was immoral and opportunistic on the part of both to defy thus the mandate of the electorate. It went against all norms of parliamentary democracy and was an insult to the voters. What is necessary now is to go back to the people for a mandate. Now the number of Janata(S) M.Ps has been reduced to 52 after the Speaker acting on principles disqualified 8 members of the Lok Sabha including 5 Union Ministers under the Anti-Defection Act. But shamelessly they continue to be Ministers. Our country has become the butt of ridicule and gone down in the estimation of the world today. The minority Government has not announced any programme nor has the Congress (I) Party felt the need of it. This is the level of respect that they have for the people. Some of the adhoc decisions taken so far go against the interest of the people and in this unstable and uncertain situation no well thought out policies can be laid down by the Central Government. In any case such a government can only last as long as the Congress (I) Party supports it.

The authoritarian character of the Chandra Sekhar Government has become exposed in its moves one after another to topple the elected State Governments. First, it dismissed the A.G.P. Government in Assam. We, the Left have been always opposing the dismissal of any elected Government because it goes against the norms of democracy and federalism. Our opposition in the case of Assam was based on this fundamental principles.

I raised the question with Shri Chandra Sekhar whether he tried to persuade the elected A G P Government to act against the ULFA terrorists and

secessionists which had become urgent. The Prime Minister asserted that necessary request was made but according to him the Chief Minister of Assam refused to take measures till after the election. We do not, however, know what actually happened.

This unprincipled and opportunistic Government which has been in office entirely on the mercy and support of the Congress (I) party led by Shri Rajiv Gandhi dislodged the DMK Government in Tamilnadu early this month to please the Congress (I) and AIADMK combine and thereby to continue in office.

Bereft of political morality and having scant respect for the electorate, the Chandra Sekhar Government toppled the DMK Government in Tamilnadu that had a large majority in the Assembly and had taken action to deal with the LTTE activists. There the President's Rule has been imposed even without a report from the State Governor who was evidently not in agreement with the Government of India about the law and order situation. All right-thinking people in the country joined in massive protest actions against this subversion of democracy by the Centre. Total 'bandhs' were observed in six states i.e. in Tamilnadu, Bihar, Pondichery, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. We in West Bengal organised a successful Bandh in our State on the 6th of this month against this dangerous act of the Centre and also against the present Central Government's action in providing facilities to the US military planes to refuel in India.

The working class can not remain indifferent spectators to such an act of political immorality, vendetta against democracy and debasement of India's foreign policy.

The situation in the country is further complicated because of the activities of the communal, fundamentalist and divisive elements. The divisive movements in Punjab, J & K and Assam are being carried on with the motive to tear India apart. In order to gain political advantages in elections and for opportunist's reasons, the Congress (I) for years together gave concessions to separatist and fundamentalist forces. The Congress (I) also denied legitimate rights to tribals and other weaker sections. On several occasions it ran roughshod over democratic rights of States and took authoritarian steps against elected Governments resulting in deterioration of relations between the Centre and States. The working class cannot afford to ignore these develop-

ments. As a very significant section of the nation, it must do its utmost to keep itself informed of the developments in the country and to help find a solution to the political problems created by unscrupulous politicians.

Since the working class has a big role in providing leadership to the movements for transformation of society and establishing socialism, it must take the initiative in all movements for strengthening our democracy and unity of the country.

### Welcome Steps by the V. P. Singh Government

Despite adopting almost the same economic policies of the previous Rajiv Gandhi Government as reflected in the budgetary formulations for the year 1990-91, the V. P. Singh Government took some measures calculated to help the people and advance the democratic processes in the country. The Bill on Workers' Participation in Management, in spite of limitations, for the first time provided for secret ballot to determine the representation of the workers. The Government accepted in principle the concept of Right to Work as a Fundamental Right and agreed to enshrine it in the Constitution of India. Though no concrete measures were taken by the Government to implement this right, it set in motion a countrywide debate to achieve this right. The Durgapur Convention on this subject last year formulated in clear terms the policy measures to ensure this Right and it was accepted not only by the trade unions but also by Kisan and agricultural workers' organisations, student, youth and women's organisations.

The National Front Government accepted secret ballot for the purpose of recognition of Trade Unions and announced its decision to bring a Bill in Parliament. It scrapped the Industrial Relations Bill of the Rajiv Gandhi Government and appointed a committee to prepare alternate proposals. Though the Committee could not arrive at unanimous conclusions it placed in a concise form the views of all the organisations. The Government promised to bring a Bill on Construction and Agricultural Workers to govern the working conditions in these important industries.

The V. P. Singh Government respected autonomy of the State Governments and did not resort to discrimination against them.

In the meetings of the National Development Council and Inter-State Council which were

constituted during the time of the V. P. Singh Government a cordial atmosphere was evident, which was regretablely absent during the Cong. (I) regime at the centre. The NF Government attached importance to the Land Reforms measures by including them in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution.

The move that this Government initiated in preparing the Prasar Bharati Bill was also a welcome step.

The trade union movement will have to launch a countrywide movement along with other sections so that the Chandra Shekhar government is not allowed to go back from the commitments given by the National Front Government to the working class and people of India.

### **Anti-Reservation Agitation**

The entire northern belt of the country was engulfed in a large scale anti-reservation movement after the announcement of 27 per cent reservation of jobs for other backward communities in India. The agitation turned violent in Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, U. P. and Punjab. The situation became further complicated when self-immolation was resorted to by some students in different parts of the country. The advanced castes mobilised their full strength against the new policy of reservation and some attacks against backward castes were witnessed in certain parts of the country.

The CITU had supported the reservation for the other backward communities but suggested that economic criterion should be applied for the purpose of reservation so that the actually needy persons both among the upper castes and the OBCs, would get assistance. This was also the basis of the well-known Karpuri Thakur Formula which we generally supported and want now this to be accepted and implemented. It was, however, unfortunate, that the National Front Government announced the OBC reservation without proper consultation with other parties and trade unions. If this would have been done it would have been possible to adopt by and large a nationally accepted consensus on the question of reservation isolating the reactionary forces. However, the inordinate hurry had resulted in large section of forward castes becoming hostile to the National Front Government.

The V. P. Singh Government subsequently announced its decision of 5% to 10% reservation of jobs for the poorer sections among the upper castes.

The CITU appealed to all the anti-reservationists

to give up violence and come forward to find out a solution through negotiations. However, the agitation affected the working class in some industrial sectors and one section of the workers was pitted against another section. The CITU appeals to all sections of the working class to preserve unity so that a national solution to the problem can be evolved jointly through mutual consultation.

The CITU also emphasises that the lasting solution lies in ensuring Right to Work for all. It is necessary to organise a massive campaign of education among all sections of the working class about our correct position so that we can do our best in preserving working class unity and protecting interests of the downtrodden sections of the society as well.

### **Alarming Communal Situation**

A deliberate attempt to inflame communal feelings all over the country was made concertedly by the BJP, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajarang Dal activists, over the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue. The plan of Kar Seva to construct the Ram Mandir in a disputed site on 30th October, 1990 was preceded by Padayatras, Shila Pujans, Ram Jyoti processions and recruitment of Kar Sevaks to storm the disputed site at Ayodhya. The attempt was to destroy the mosque and build the temple. The Rath Yatra led by BJP President Advani was accompanied by Anti-Muslim inflammatory speeches, posing serious threat to secularism in the country.

After the repulsion of the attempt to destroy the mosque at Ayodhya on 30th October a pre-meditated plan to create communal riots all over the country was carried out. The Ashthi Kalash processions were used as signals to organise riots in different centres. Hundreds of innocent lives were lost in communal riots in Rajasthan, U.P., Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

We cannot forget the fact that industrial centres were made a special target of attack by the Hindu fundamentalists. RSS activists played a leading part in these riots and efforts were made to involve working class in this senseless fratricidal war. It should be remembered that immediately after the independence of the country the RSS spread the communal poison and vitiated the atmosphere. In that situation an activist of the RSS assassinated Gandhiji.

While trade unions in certain centres attempted

to give protection to the people of minority community, one must admit that the trade unions should have played a more leading role in defeating the games of communal and divisive forces.

Since the threat to secularism still continues and fresh threats are being made by the BJP, VHP etc. the working class and the trade unions must play a more active role in creating communal harmony among different religious groups. Organised efforts must be made by the workers belonging to both communities to resist unitedly the heinous activities of the communal forces. The tendency on the part of certain quarters to mix up religion with politics must be stopped. Wherever possible the trade unions are to launch industrial action to warn the communal forces from indulging in instigating one community against another. The defeat of the communal forces has to be ensured for the advance of the working class and for consolidating national unity.

#### **Deteriorating Economic Situation**

Economic situation in India is deteriorating very fast adding to the already miserable situation of the people. The balance of payments position has become precarious and country's foreign exchange reserves reached the rock bottom. The gulf crisis has further aggravated the situation. As a result, it is apprehended that there may be further outflow of foreign exchange.

The IMF has agreed to give a loan under IMF's "Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility." India is also reported to be seeking another quantum of loan to bail the economy out of the present balance of payments crisis. Such loan is usually known to carry further anti-people conditionalities.

The Chandra Shekhar Government announced the steps to boost exports which have led to several essential commodities being sent out of the country causing rise in their prices within India. The price situation already has been very critical. The deficit financing for the current fiscal year was budgeted to be Rs. 8,500 crores but it is expected to go up to a much higher figure. The inflation rate has run into double digit last year but in the Eighth Plan the over all price increase is estimated to be 12 to 15 per cent. Between December 1988 to December 1989 the prices on an average increased 7.9 per cent. However, between December 1989 and December 1990 they have risen by 11.7 per cent. The Economic Times dated 22 January, 1991 noted, "because of steep

rise in prices of several commodities in the current year, many of them being items of mass consumption, the price situation has become alarming."

The economic situation has almost thrown the Eighth Plan out of gear.

Though the size of the Plan was considered to be of the order of Rs. 6,10,000 crores doubts are being expressed by the informed quarters whether the Plan of this size would at all be possible. Many projects which were considered for inclusion in the Eighth Plan are being dropped unceremoniously on the plea of 'resource crunch.' There is every possibility that energy targets are likely to be slashed down further adding to the seriousness of the energy crisis in the near future.

Comrades, two weeks from now the Union Budget for the next financial year will be presented in Parliament. The Prime Minister has asked the people to be prepared for further sacrifices. Already before the budget heavy dose of additional excise and income tax has been imposed. Another colossal budgetary deficit is in the offing which will, by further adding fuel to inflationary spiral, considerably bring down the standard of living of the people.

The registered unemployed in the urban area has already reached 3.5 crores while the rural unemployment is estimated to be of the order of 7 crores. With the huge army of unemployed the domestic market is shrinking at a faster rate. Industrial sickness is reaching unprecedented levels. The new job opportunities are reducing day by day when the number of new entrants in the labour market are swelling in the country.

What is imperative today is to raise the purchasing power of the common people so that the internal market may be expanded. Exports are necessary but our country cannot depend in any great measure on exports for the sustenance of her economy. The export market must be under constant study and should be suitably utilised in the interest of the country. But the creation of the domestic market is of vital necessity to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

In regard to Science and Technology we must keep abreast of the latest developments. In our educational institutions, studies and research to gather the latest knowledge have to be given importance. More funds must be spent by the Governments and the industrial houses in this respect. In importing technology we have to be guided by the objective of

standing on our own feet. In application we need to choose what is necessary according to our concrete conditions and have to be discriminatory. In view of the fact that there is abundance of labour and massive unemployment in our country, appropriate technology should be given the importance it deserves whilst not ignoring high technology wherever necessary.

### Public Sector & Private Sector

In a capitalist feudal set-up the public sector units and the nationalised banks have to work under constraints and so they have their drawbacks. In the present situation in our country, the CITU supports these units and financial institutions and stands against any attempt to weaken them. The workers have an important role to play in removing weaknesses of the public sector and increasing its efficiency through their dedicated service and using their expertise gained through experience. Apart from struggling for their just demands they must draw attention of the Government and the management to their views on the problems that arise from time to time and the means to overcome them. It is the duty of the management to seek the cooperation of the workers, to motivate them properly and redress their just grievances. The authorities of all public sector undertakings and Central and State Governments should always adopt responsible and constructive attitude for the well-being of the economy. Harsh criticism is often made against the functioning of the public sector units. While it is true that some of the public sector undertakings are running at huge losses and the managements are very inefficient, there are still some other units which have shown good results. Similarly while there are excellently and professionally run units in the private sector, there exist also over 2 lacs sick and closed units under this sector which draws bulk of its funds from the state-owned banks & financial institutions. So at present, units in both sectors need to be professionally and efficiently managed with co-operative efforts.

In our socio-economic situation the private sector has an important task to perform for the growth of the economy. The entrepreneurs must be freed from the bureaucratic interference. They should not be subjected to face unnecessary delays in getting things done. Adequate opportunity must be given

to them to run their industries efficiently. Proper links between the big capital intensive industries and the small scale ones have to be established with the required protections to the small scale sector. Rules and laws that exist in regard to prices and profits must be reviewed regularly. Black market operations and profiteering are evils that eat into the vitals of our economy. The strictest measures are necessary to combat them.

The CITU has an important part to play also in the private sector not only in fighting for the legitimate demands of the workers, but also for efficient running of the units. They must take interest in production and productivity. The management must also take the workers into confidence and draw upon their assistance.

I have also the experience of the working of the joint sector ventures in which the States and the private sector participate jointly. I am of the view that it is a workable proposition provided both these sectors keep in mind their social responsibilities.

### West Bengal & Kerala

In these two States where left and left democratic Governments exist, the working class knows that these Governments stand by them and have a positive attitude to their demands. Democratic rights have been ensured for them and they should use the opportunity to strengthen and extend their organisations. In West Bengal even the government employees have been given the right to strike. This is a weapon which the workers must never give up but use whenever it becomes absolutely necessary. The employees know that there is a big change in the situation with the establishment of these Governments. Many of them having understood the organised strength of the workers and the support given to their just demands by the Governments which accede to their legitimate demands without forcing them to resort to strikes in industrial units. Where management and workers fail to reach an agreement the Labour Department helps in finding a solution to the issues and problems and the workers know that their interests are never sacrificed. In case of failure in conciliation efforts, the workers go on strike for realising their legitimate demands and the Government stand by them. Some recalcitrant and irresponsible employers are also there who create a situation where the workers have to resort to strike or a lock-out is declared. But the Government's Labour Department

tries even then to bring about a settlement. In West Bengal if the workers take a wrong stand they are also given proper advice by the State Government.

In these two States, where a special and favourable situation exists for the workers, they do come forward to stand by the respective State Governments against all conspiracies of the opponents and foil all movements which are not in the interest of the States.

### State-Owned Undertakings in West Bengal & Kerala

There are several state-owned undertakings in West Bengal and Kerala which are incurring heavy losses and the two Governments have to subsidise them from budgetary resources. The productivity in many of them is low and there is a great scope in improving their performance. If the overall performance of the state-owned undertakings is improved to generate some resources, then these two State Governments can use these resources in taking over more sick units in the States to provide gainful jobs to the unemployed people. The trade unions in the state-owned undertakings should take a constructive approach and suggest concrete measures to improve the performance of these undertakings and make them viable units. Improvement in respect of productivity and quality of output, maintenance of discipline and punctuality in these units are of immense importance.

The trade unions should constantly endeavour to motivate the workers to improve their performance. They should also note that though these Governments in West Bengal and Kerala would do everything to protect the job security of workers, there is a limit to the capacity of these State Governments in regard to their financial resources to meet the losses of the undertakings through budgetary support.

I would earnestly appeal to the trade unions in State-owned undertakings in West Bengal and Kerala that it is their paramount task to ensure that these units perform a good deal better so that the State Governments can reduce their budgetary support and use the savings for other development purposes and to help other sick industries. I hope our unions will take initiative in mobilising the employees in these units to discharge their responsibilities and effectively introduce a work culture that would lead to substantial improvement in the performance of these undertakings.

### Special Attention In Weaker Areas

Despite growth of CITU in different parts of the country, we are still weak in Hindi speaking belt and some other areas. Without strengthening substantially our influence and organisation in these areas our struggle against communal and divisive forces will not be able to achieve the desired results.

It is most necessary at this moment to draw up a proper plan for strengthening our activities and organisations in the Hindi-speaking belt and to augment efforts to help these State Committees in other weaker areas.

A better coordination between the CITU centre and the State Committees in weaker areas will help to improve the situation. Development of cadres in weaker States should be given priority to strengthen activities in these areas. Thereby, the impact of the working class movement will be felt more powerfully all over India.

### Struggle For Land Reforms

The inordinate delay in introduction of genuine land reforms in the country except in West Bengal and Kerala has only aggravated the phenomenon of concentration of land in the hands of a small minority. Without these land reforms all talk of elimination of poverty and improving the lot of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and other backward communities in rural areas are meaningless. The Congress Governments in different States have been consistently opposing implementation of land reforms, though outwardly they have paid lip service to them. If land reforms are seriously carried out it would generate big market for our industrial products and many of the units closed down due to lack of market would be reopened in India reducing the problem of sickness of our industrial undertakings.

The Planning Commission has admitted that the land reforms have been successfully carried out in West Bengal and Kerala while in other State the progress is tardy.

The working class should take active interest in the struggle for land reforms because it is a question of national importance and stability of industrial development largely depends on introduction of land reforms. The Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers' Union have correctly taken the programme of re-distribution of land to the landless poor in the villages and helping them to obtain other inputs.

The trade unions should express full solidarity with the peasantry fighting for introduction of genuine land reforms; they must also actively come forward to help the organised peasantry in their growing struggle so that the peasantry and agricultural workers achieve success.

### **For Establishing Leading Role of the Working Class**

Comrades, the capitalist path of development compromising with feudalism has failed to solve the basic problems of the people of India.

The trade union movement today is generally engaged in economic struggles on day to day issues. After some achievements here and there the movement enters a period of lull which lasts till the discontent of the workers comes to surface once again and trade unions become active for some other economic struggle. But it must be noted that in many areas the working class movement has responded very well to uphold the cause of broader democratic struggle.

It must be our continuous endeavour to politicise the workers so that through its experience it emerges as a champion for bringing about structural and fundamental changes in the socio-economic system in India. While fighting for economic demands it must never forget its ultimate objectives. It must lead the struggle of all oppressed sections of the people so that a countrywide movement is launched against the policies of the capitalist-cum-feudalist set-up. We have already noted how the working class can contribute effectively in the struggle for

implementation of genuine land reforms and for distribution of land to the landless people in the rural areas. Similarly, the working class has to take leadership of the democratic struggle of the entire people in the country so that the capitalist policies are defeated and genuine pro-people policies achieve success.

To day in the state of the working class movement and organisation, wherein the workers are divided and large numbers among them are unorganised and under conservative political influence, we have a long way to go to change the consciousness of the workers in regard to the task which they have to fulfil. The CITU must take a lead in preparing the working class both ideologically and organisationally for achieving their ultimate objective. We have to learn from the successes and failures in the socialist countries and also from our own experiences in order to draw up a clear perspective to build Socialism in our own concrete conditions.

We have advocated the idea of Confederation to unify the working class in the struggle for common issues. Our slogan has been unity and struggle. However, we will have to independently educate the working class on our own platform for their final objective of achieving Socialism in India.

Let the working class rise to the historic responsibility bestowed on it by the present period. The task is no doubt difficult and complicated but if we carry it out with perseverance and tenacity along the correct lines, we can rouse and organise the working class and the people of our country to fulfil the much-needed transformation of our society.

- Long Live 7th Conference of CITU !
- Forward to Unity and Solidarity of the Working Class !!
- Down with Imperialist machinations !!!
- Long Live Proletarian Internationalism and World Peace !!!!

# WELCOME ADDRESS

MONORANJAN ROY

( Secretary, Reception Committee )

Comrade President, distinguished Guests & Comrade delegates.

I feel it a great pleasure on behalf of the Reception Committee to welcome our honourable guests from abroad, who have responded to our invitation and are attending the 7th All India Conference of CITU. I also consider it a pleasure to welcome the delegates coming from all parts of the country with their rich and varied experiences of struggles, not only for the economic gains of the working class but also in the struggle against the divisive forces in our country, particularly in Punjab and against the fundamentalists and other reactionary forces. I express my deep condolences for those brave comrades of Darjeeling, Dooars and Punjab who have laid down their lives fighting against the secessionists and also greet the comrades from these areas, who are attending this conference.

With heavy heart I remember Comrade B. T. Ranadive, founder President, guide, philosopher and the leader of CITU, who passed away on 6th April, 1990. So long he was alive, it was inconceivable to hold CITU's All India Conference without the guidance and leadership of Comrade B. T. Ranadive. We shall have to do it ourselves from now on. I also remember with respect Comrade P. Ramamurthi, the founder General Secretary of CITU; Comrade Saroj Mukherjee, who was a member of the Polit Bureau of the CPI (M) and Secretary of its West Bengal Committee, Comrade Nrisingha Chakraborty, Secretary, CITU, Comrade Bijoy Pal, Subodh Sen and other Comrades who have passed away after the sixth Conference of the CITU held in Bombay in 1987. I also mourn the loss of Comrade Md. Ismail, who was Vice-President of the CITU and President of our State Committee, and was a life long indefatigable fighter for the cause of the working class.

Comrades, it was our proud privilege to host the Foundation Conference of the CITU in this city of

Calcutta, and 20 years after its formation, the 7th Session is being held today in this city, the city which has a rich tradition of anti-imperialist struggles & Internationalism since the British days.

Next to Kerala, it was in this State that the Congress could be defeated again and again since 1967. Please permit me to mention a few words about the background of such defeats, about the struggles of the Working Class, Peasants, Students, Women and other sections of the people of West Bengal. It will not be out of place to mention that during 1950 to 1976 i. e. 26 years, as many as 37 Bengal Bandhs & General Strike were organised by the Working Class and other sections led by the Left Parties. During the 10 year period between 1960-69 alone, there were 17 Bengal Bandhs & General Strikes including one for 48 hours.

During the period 1970-76, the Working Class, Peasants, Students, Youth and Women of the State passed through the ordeal of Semifascist Terror. During this period, 1100 cadres of CPI (M) including 330 workers were murdered, 130 CITU Offices were forcibly occupied by the Congress gangsters backed by the Administration, and about 20,000 sympathisers of CPI (M) were evicted from their areas. It even became impossible for the CITU Unions in many places and in many factories to function openly. Even then the Left Trade Unions & Left Parties organised General Strikes and Bengal Bandhs against such terror and on other demands, twice in 1970, twice in 1973, twice in 1974 and once just on the eve of the declaration of Emergency. Apart from this, Bengal Bandhs and series of struggles were also organised by the workers of different industries and by the peasants, particularly share-croppers against eviction, and for seizure of vested and Benami lands by the landless and poor peasants. It was in the wake of all these series of struggles and bandhs that the Left

Front Government came into existence in 1977 and is continuing for the last 14 years.

The biggest achievement of the Left Front Government is the distribution of Agricultural vested and benami lands among the poor and landless peasants, particularly among the peasants belonging to Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes. While West Bengal has only 4% of the total agricultural land in the country, the Left Front Govt. has been able to distribute about 20% of the total vested land in the country. Secondly, the performance of the three-tier panchayets in the development of the rural areas is also unique in the country. However, we are conscious of our organisational weaknesses and we feel that the CITU in the State should have made far more advance during the Left Front rule.

Comrades, the Working Class today is facing a serious situation due to Closure, Lock-outs and sickness of a large number of Industrial Units throughout the country. In West Bengal, the most affected industry due to this crisis is jute Industry, so much so that during 1986-89 out of 52 Jute Mills in the State, by and large 18 mills on an average remained closed or under Lock-out every month. Apart from Jute, the conditions of Engineering, Cotton Textile, Drugs and Pharmaceuticals and other Industries are also no better. The State Govt. has taken over 13 sick units (including 3 units which were de-notified by the Rajiv Govt.) and Nationalised 10 of them. The biggest Jute Mill, with a complement of about 15 thousand is at present being run by the joint efforts of the workers and the State Government. The working class of the State realises that the problem of sickness of Industries is a National problem and unless the Central Govt. changes its Industrial policy, the State Government with its limited power and resources cannot do much in the matter. However, the Working Class of the State have been continuing series of struggles against employers' offensives in the form of Lock-Outs and Closures.

Although the number of Small Scale Industrial Units in the State, which has reached a figure of 3,08,305 employing 21, 31,770, the highest in the country, but compared to the staggering figure of unemployed in the country, which has reached a

colossal figure of about 10 crores, including 7 crores in the rural areas, and 3 crores registered under the Employment Exchanges in the cities, it is negligible. The question of unemployment and acceptance of right to work as fundamental right to be incorporated in the constitution, has not yet been achieved. I hope the Conference will take programmes of action to realise this demand.

Comrades, the country is passing through a situation which we never before experienced since the Independence. The situation created by the divisive forces in Punjab, Kashmir, Assam etc. has become a serious threat to the Unity & Integrity of our country. Over & above the conditions created by the divisive forces, the communal riots raging in the country—Bihar, U.P., M.P., Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh etc. has seriously challenged the secular character of our Constitution and the secular fabric of our society. After the 1946 riots, which led to the division of the country, we have never witnessed such widespread riots in the country. It has raised the question, whether the country's Unity will be maintained. In West Bengal, although the fundamentalists have been trying their best to create communal riots, they have not yet been successful. But we can not afford to remain complacent in this matter.

Comrades, a new situation has arisen due to the Gulf War which is assuming serious proportions threatening the environment and economic prosperity of the entire region. The US imperialists, seeking to establish world hegemony, unleashed the war spurning all efforts for peace. The savage and massive air attacks mounted on Iraq is unparalleled since the days of Vietnam War. Our country will be faced with an extremely serious economic situation if the War continues for long. I am sure the conference will take note of this and decide accordingly.

Comrades, in the meantime a most disgraceful episode in the history of independent India has shocked the entire nation. Even before the Gulf war erupted, the Congress (I) supported Chandrasekhar Government had started allowing U. S. war Planes and Ships with nuclear arms to have refuelling facilities at Indian airports and seaports. This is not only an act of shameful surrender to U. S. imperialists but also a betrayal of our long cherished

ion of anti-imperialism and non-alignment. is no doubt that this abject surrender is ted by the Chandrasekhar Government's to get a Rs. 3275 Crore IMF Loan. e are also shocked at the sudden dismissal of MK Government of Tamil Nadu and imposition resident's Rule there. The miniscule Chandra- tr Government has taken this naked authoritarian at the behest of the Congress (I) and AIADMK ies, on whose support the very survival of the ernment depends. We condemn this highly

undemocratic act, and to register our protest, we observed a total Bengal Bandh on 6th February last.

Once again I greet you Comrades, and hope the Conference will take dicisions in the interest of the working class and the people on all issues referred to above.

Comrades, we have tried our utmost to make your stay in this city as comfortable as possible. But I hope you will bear with us for any inconveniences and difficulties that may arise.

With revolutionary greetings,

Yours Comradely,  
( Monoranjan Roy.)  
General Secretary  
Reception Committee

# General Secretary's Report

Samar Mukherjee

Comrades of the President, Fraternal Guests and Comrade Delegates,

1. During the period from our last conference, we experienced the greatest shock since the formation of the CITU in 1970, we lost our founder President Comrade B. T. Ranadive, the senior most member of the P. B. of CPI(M), who left us on 6th April, 1990. It is an irreparable loss to the working class and communist movement to lose a great leader and teacher like Comrade B. T. Ranadive at this juncture of the international situation when socialism is under attack by the counter-revolutionaries and an avalanche of reformism, helped by imperialism, and also at this juncture of the national situation when the country is challenged by the communal and divisive forces and the National Front Government fell on the issue of safeguarding the secularism and unity and integrity of the country. Comrade B. T. Ranadive is no longer with us. But his revolutionary guidelines, the strategy and tactics of trade union movement will continue to guide us to face the fast changing international and national situations. We mourn the passing away of Comrade B. T. Ranadive and pay our respectful homage to him. I propose that all the State Committees and unions should observe the death anniversary of Comrade B. T. Ranadive on 6th April, 1991 and then his birth anniversary each year on 19th December, 1991 onwards. As you are aware, we have decided to form a B. T. Ranadive Memorial Trust to promote and guide future trade union movement. The first volume of B. T. Ranadive's writings has already been published.

2. During the period we also lost Comrade P. Ramamurti, the Vice-President of CITU and a former P. B. and C. C. member of the CPI(M). Comrade P. Ramamurti was also one of the founders of the CITU and its first General Secretary. It was during his tenure as the General Secretary that the CITU took shape and emerged as one of the leading centres of the Indian trade union movement. We mourn the loss of Comrade P. Ramamurti and pay our respectful homage to him.

3. We pay our homage to Comrade Md. Ismail,

our seniormost Vice-President, Comrade Nrisingha Chakraborty, Secretary ; Comrade Krishnapda Ghosh and Comrade E. Padmanabhan, both Working Committee members ; Comrade Saroj Mukherjee, P. B. member of CPI(M) and Chairman of the West Bengal Left Front ; Comrade Gurucharan Singh Randhawa and Comrade Shankar Dayal Tiwary, both Central Committee member of CPI(M) and many other veteran leaders of the working class, peasantry and freedom movement of the country and international communist movement who passed away during the period.

4. We pay our homage to all the comrades who were martyred in Punjab, Kashmir, Tripura, West Bengal and Assam while safeguarding the unity and integrity of the country.

5. Comrades, we must recall and condemn the most dastardly crime committed by the hoodlums of the Congress(I) during the period, when they brutally murdered Comrade Safdar Hasmi, the young promising and progressive cultural artiste of the CPI(M) and a prominent people's theatre activist of the country on 1st January 1989, while his team, the Jana Natya Manch was performing a street drama at Sahibabad in support of the CITU conducted struggle for minimum wage for the unorganised workers. Comrade Safdar placed his art in the service of the working class and the down trodden. On behalf of you I pay my respectful homage in memory of this great progressive artiste.

## The Report

6. Comrades, I shall now proceed with the report dealing with the international and national situations separately reviewing the period in brief since the Bombay conference.

## International Situation

7. Comrades, we are meeting here in the Seventh Conference in the wake of a marked sharpening of contradictions between imperialism and socialism with a serious set back to the socialist forces. We

have to analyse the developments since the Bombay conference.

### Struggle for Peace :

8. In the Bombay conference we reviewed the international situation in the light of the growing danger of nuclear war created by the US imperialists both in the presidential address by Comrade B. T. Ranadive, as well as in the General Secretary's report. We extended full support to the Soviet Union's series of peace proposals to eliminate all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction by the end of the century. We assailed the US imperialists for their refusal to respond to the Soviet peace proposals and their adamant pursuit of the Star War project. We focused to the rising struggle for peace, attracting new organisations and various sections of people world over. The report highlighted the struggle for peace waged by the CITU in different states. The peace struggles were waged in a widespread manner by different states particularly while observing the two international days, viz 1st September and May Day, apart from observing the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days by some State Committees. However, we pointed to the weaknesses of the peace struggles in the country and urged upon our unions to intensify the struggles in the background of the growing imperialist threats.

9. Because of the relentless struggle for peace and the consistent pressure put by the Soviet Union, coupled with its defence preparations, the Reagan administration was compelled to sign the INF Treaty in December 1987. We welcomed it, but warned against any complacency to water down the peace struggles. The INF Treaty eliminated only about 4 to 5 percent of short and medium range nuclear missiles. The US imperialists refused to withdraw the SDI and were further modernising their existing nuclear weapons. We warned that the war mongering character of imperialism does not change. The US imperialists are notorious for subterfuges and were going ahead in pursuit of their global domination.

10. However, the situation in the international arena started changing thereafter from the last quarter of 1987 itself after the 70th anniversary of the October revolution. A constant propaganda from the Soviet leadership indicating the end of cold

war between the USA and USSR and about the moderation of contradictions between imperialism and socialism based on a completely wrong understanding of the imperialist character, blunted the edge of the peace struggles as a part of struggle against imperialism. Not to speak of the non-trade union organisations and the various peace committees, which were growingly participating in the peace struggles, the 1st September as the International Day for Trade Union Action for Peace was observed in a very subdued manner by the international trade unions in 1988. As a matter of fact the stirring call from the WFTU to observe 1st September with anti-imperialist outlook was no longer there. We have to admit that it had its effect in India too including the CITU. Except in a few states like in West Bengal, Kerala and Punjab, the 1st September demonstrations in most of the other states lost the organised and militant edge that were seen till 1987 and got relegated to mere formalities from 1988, despite instructive circulars from the centre. Even no report of the observance could be published in our journal, the Working Class from 1988. First September was not observed even in W. Bergal in 1990.

11. Even the May Day observance which we elaborated in the Bombay Conference in the wake of the centenary celebration of the Chicago massacre, was emasculated of its revolutionary tradition abroad. 1990 the centenary of the observation has passed off without any pomp in the background of the setback to the socialist forces. In India of course our State Committees and unions and other unions observed it all these year in the best possible way to renew the revolutionary pledge.

12. The situation continued to deteriorate at a fast rate in the international scene. I am not going to give a political elaboration of the changes. But a brief resume is necessary, as the changes had have their direct and immediate adverse effects in the international trade union movement. With socialism as our goal of struggle, criticism of certain aspects of the changes embarked upon and being propagated is necessary, so that we can launch struggles against the deviations and distortions and steer our trade union movement through the path of socialism in a determined manner overcoming all confusions and possible demoralisations.

## Events in Eastern Europe :

13. In Eastern Europe the reformist trend, prolonged violation of the Marxist-Leninist norms in the functioning of the working class states and socialist democracy alienated the Communist Parties from the people. This along with the intemperate and unhistorical criticism, distortions and denunciation of the past by the Soviet leadership, completely ignoring the mighty achievements of socialism of that period gave a lever to the imperialists to launch an orchestrated campaign about the failure of socialism and the superiority of the capitalist system. The imperialists' campaign got a boost from the fact that the ideological education of the workers were not at the required level. Furthermore, Glasnost in fact encouraged the internal reactionaries and the counter revolutionaries to launch assault on the socialist states, being supported by imperialism. Com. BTR had epitomised the international events while writing on "7th November, 1989" in the October, 1989 issue of the Working Class in the following lines :

14. "Experience of all socialist countries shows that reforms and remedial measures have no chance of success unless they are consistent with the basic principles of socialism and the socialist framework of society. These principles are Marxism-Leninism, leadership of the Marxist-Leninist Party, socialist means of production and distribution and the State led by the Working Class."

15. The counter revolutionary rebellion in China in the name of pro-democracy movement marked the beginning of the onslaught of the internal reactionaries on the socialist states helped by imperialism. We must greet the People's Republic of China for successfully fighting down the counter revolutionaries and safeguarding the socialist state under the leading role of the communist party. We also greet Cuba, Vietnam and DPRK for remaining steadfast to the principles of socialism to safeguard and develop the states, despite the adverse economic effects of the set back in Eastern Europe and the imperialist conspiracies against them. But these internal reactionary forces were successful in subverting the socialist states in Eastern Europe and now have embarked upon the capitalist path of development in the name market economy.

## Impact on Trade Unions : WFTU Congress :

16. The ongoing changes in Eastern Europe and in Soviet Union had their immediate effect on the trade union centres of respective countries. All the Trade Union Centres of the erst-while socialist countries in Eastern Europe have been dissolved. The new trade unions have even left the WFTU. Only Poland has remained with WFTU. The new Government of Czechoslovakia have even asked the WFTU to shift its head quarters from the country.

17. In Soviet Union the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) has been dissolved in an extraordinary Congress held in October 1990, and a new General Confederation of Trade Unions of USSR has been formed. The Congress declared that the trade unions did not want any longer to remain pupils in "the school of communism" and that the task of the Congress was to "elaborate a new concept of trade union movement on new democratic principles." It laid emphasis to shift from "the predominantly political goals to practical issues in the context of the transition to market economy." The confederation proclaimed its "independence of the political organisations, independent of political movement. In the international arena it sought to "renovate the activities with the repudiation of excessive politicalisation in trade union relationships, repudiating confrontation like approaches in the new context of political and trade union pluralism." The Congress hoped that the forthcoming "12th World Trade Union Congress may become a stepping stone to the real renovation of the WFTU, to struggle and work together for the sake of these humane goals."

## WFTU Congress :

18. Thus the directive line was given to the WFTU Congress. The Congress held at Moscow from November 13-20 1990. A five member CITU delegation attended the Congress viz., M. K. Pandhe (leader), Vimal Ranadive, P. K. Ganguly, Sunil Basu Roy and A. K. Padmanabhan. Apart from the CITU delegation, Sukomal Sen of All India State Government Employees' Federation, Ram Narian Goswami of All India Kisan Sabha and T. Arasu of All India Agricultural Workers' Union also attended the Congress. Other Central Trade Union representa-

tives invited were from AITUC, INTUC, HMS, UTUC (LS) UTUC, TUCC, NFITU, NLO and BMS. However, INTUC, HMS, and NLO did not attend. I shall give a brief critique of some aspects of the document.

19. The Preamble began with the words, "As the new decade of the 1990s dawns, the trade union movement is facing great changes in the world, a general aspiration in opening its way everywhere—democracy, in the largest sense of the word." It went on to say, "One of the most important transformations of the 1980s was perestroika in the Soviet Union. This change is inextricably linked to the large scale transformation taking place in Eastern Europe, which have led to the establishment of new political and economic regimes. Perestroika gives impetus to a new political thinking which tends towards radical change in the structure of international relations, with an evolution from the existence of two great ideological and military blocks, promoting animosity and confrontation, to new internationalism with a human face and progressive social content. The trade unions of the world have to take into account the appearance of these new concepts in the field of international relations."

20. The document goes on to say, "The radical transformations taking place in the world clearly underline the fundamental values of the trade union movement, including the autonomy and independence of trade unions in regard to political parties.

21. It has to be noted that although the new confederation of the Soviet Trade Unions and the WFTU have called for independence of the trade unions from political parties, yet the entire document openly smacks of and follows the "new thinking and new concept of socialism as formulated by the leadership of the CPSU. The document totally lacks the class content of the struggles of the workers. In fact it derecognises the presence of classes and different social systems and so undermines the class struggle of the working class. Similarly, the word imperialism has never been used at all. The entire peace and disarmament question was projected in a pacifist manner, totally ignoring the imperialist machinations and the US imperialists' aggressive designs for world domination. It has unabashedly called for giving up the line of ideological "confrontation" with imperialism.

22. The document talked of deideologisation and

depoliticalisation of the trade union movement and independence of the trade unions from political parties. This, the document emphasised that is necessary for trade union unity. The question arises, what is the purpose of trade union unity. Is it for class collaboration? Obviously not. Without its own class ideology can the worker be united? It is the capitalist class and the imperialist camp that are causing split in the trade union movement through constant propaganda of their class ideology. Without its own class ideology can the workers counter this constant bourgeois ideological campaign? For this the working class must have its political party for guidance without the trade unions becoming its appendages. The call for deideologisation and independence from political parties is in fact an old misleading propaganda by the bourgeoisie to drag the trade unions out of the influence of the Communist Parties and make them appendages of the bourgeois parties and confuse them with bourgeois ideology. This is an attempt to emasculate the working class of their political arm.

23. The Soviet Trade Union Congress document has emphasised the need of the trade unions to shift from political goals to "practical issues" in the context of the transition to market economy. In a question-answer session during the WFTU Congress, the Soviet T. U. leadership, while answering a question from our CITU delegate had doggedly defended market economy and extolled the dynamic role of privatisation. It is nothing but denunciation of socialism, the socialist mode of production and renunciation of the achievements of socialism, totally ignoring the vices and the adverse effects of the capitalist path on the working class and the common people.

24. The WFTU document has even gone to the extent of terming the socialist planning as authoritarian planning. It has to be noted that the 12th Congress document has been a total deviation from its earlier anti-imperialist and socialist outlook. It is based mainly on the ILO framework, which the AUCCTU had severely criticised several years ago. Struggle against multinationals, unemployment, for working women, on the adverse impact of new technology on employment, on environment, etc. all points are there. But all these struggles have to be waged without any attempt to change the social system of exploitation of man by man. Everything has to be

done in tune with the advancement of market economy within the capitalist frame work for "humane and democratic alternative".

25. The CITU did not agree with the document and did not vote for it. This was made clear by Comrade Pandhe in his speech. Our CITU delegates played important role in the Congress, placing the views of the CITU boldly in all the separate commissions, in the question-answer session, on the working women's session and on the resolutions. All amendments sought by the CITU in various resolutions had to be accepted. Most of the speakers from the third world countries called for intensification of struggles against imperialism. They attacked the concept of market economy pointing to the prevalent conditions in their countries and called for carrying forward class struggle and struggle for socialism. Many of the speakers from the advanced capitalist countries spoke in the same line. Delegates from Cuba, Vietnam, DPRK, China, etc affirmed their conviction on socialism and socialist framework for reforms and rectification measures. Overwhelmingly the Congress delegates expressed serious concern over Soviet Union's decisions to go in for market economy and warned against it.

#### **Consolidate WFTU**

26. However, despite deviations and controversial view-points in the document, the WFTU remained united as the united centre of the trade union movement of all the continents. It is true that serious crisis has crept into the organisation following the changes in the Eastern Europe and the leaving of the Eastern Europe trade union centres. There is a serious financial crisis. As already mentioned, even its head quarters may have to be shifted. The future of the TUIs are uncertain. Apart from the various trade union centres in the Latin American, Asian and African countries, who are fighting against imperialism under sharpened contradictions, the trade union centres of the socialist countries like Cuba, Vietnam, DPRK, etc are there trying to consolidate the WFTU. ACFTU China, although not affiliated, yet it attended the Congress for the first time. The main burden however is on the Soviet Trade Unions.

27. The CITU is not affiliated to WFTU. But we wish the WFTU to consolidate its strength. We criticised the various aspects of the document to point out the deviations and give a caution. It is to be

recalled that the WFTU was formed in 1945 after the Second World War at the initiative of the Soviet Union to unite the world trade union movement and the international working class to carry forward the struggle against imperialism for world peace, to consolidate the socialist forces and in support of the national liberation movements in the third world countries against the imperialist backed fascist and dictatorial regimes. It did carry forward its task creditably as the greatest international trade union force against imperialism despite the split caused by it. Now at this juncture of the international situation, when imperialism has launched the most serious onslaught on socialism, propagating its demise, the world trade union movement is at cross roads. WFTU has to decide whither to go. The same question holds good for the Soviet Trade Unions too, for they have to carry the main burden. The CITU is a small force. It represents only over two million workers in India. But the CITU has not vacillated at this juncture of the world trade union movement, because the CITU is firmly wedded to anti-imperialism and to the cause of socialism. The CITU is confident that the WFTU can consolidate its strength if it consolidates its anti-imperialist stand.

#### **Situation in Soviet Union**

28. Comrades, as you are observing, the crisis in Soviet Union is much more serious than we can visualise from the trade union movement. You can gauge the situation from the fact that despite bumper crops, the food shortage is so acute that not to speak of help from the advanced capitalist countries, even India had to rush food aid. But the situation with regard to the question of nationalities is all the more serious. It is an irony of fact that during the Sixtieth Anniversary of the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1982 we hailed the Soviet Union for solving the problem of its nationalities by correct implementation of the Socialist principles. Comrade BTR wrote an article in the working class giving the Soviet example, while dealing with the ethnic problems in India. But now it is most unfortunate that with the approach of its Seventieth anniversary the Soviet Union is threatened with disintegration. It is a matter of serious concern. If it materialises it will cause further set back to the socialist forces and naturally to the world trade union movement, clearing the path to the US imperialists for

world domination. I am not going to analyse the causes and spell the remedial measure here. But the realities are seen by the world. So far, the reforms and remedial measures that have been embarked upon have only worsened the situation, landing the pioneer of the socialist revolution to the present critical juncture. We extend our full support to the Soviet Union in its efforts to check the disaster. We only hope that by steadfastly adhering to the Leninist principles and their correct implementation the Soviet Union will definitely succeed in its efforts.

### Mighty Achievements of Socialism

29. Comrades, there is no doubt that the ongoing events in the East European countries and the Soviet Union might have cast a shadow of gloom over the working class movement. The orchestrated campaign of imperialism and the bourgeois press about the demise of socialism might cause confusion among the rank and file cadres and activists. But we must remember that the entire process of the working class struggles for socialism and the socialist construction after successful revolution is based on the scientific principles of socialism. I shall again draw your attention back to the quotation from Comrade BTR made earlier. Therefore gross mistakes in proper understanding and practical implementation of these principles according to the conditions in each country and their prolonged continuation are bound to cause the rebound phenomena. The lessons are relevant for the trade union movement, as we have already seen the effects on it. We have to expose and fight all the deviations from infiltrating the trade union movement.

30. Simultaneously we have to recall and highlight the mighty achievements of socialism to serve as the beacon light for the working class struggles.

31. The October revolution founded the first successful proletarian state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was an indispensable condition for the building and development of socialism in the Soviet Union. The all round socio-economic development by socialist planning turned the Soviet Union into a most developed country in the world out of a scratch. While writing on the October revolution in the Working Class of November 1987, Comrade BTR had said, "The successive achievements were made possible because the working class and the state were guided by the scientific doctrine of

Marxism-Leninism and by the Party wedded to it." The mighty victory of the Soviet working class and the Soviet people led by Comrade Joseph Stalin over fascism led to the emergence of the socialist camp, victory of national liberation movements in a number of countries including India, liberating millions from the yoke of imperialism and colonialism and changing the correlation class forces in favour of the working class and pushing world capitalism into a phase of general crisis.

32. The foreign policy of the working class state based on Lenin's Decree on Peace, which called for peace among nations, abjuration of war, annexations and enslavement of countries by others became a powerful factor in linking the struggle against imperialism for peace, the national struggles and the progress of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union answeringly pursued this Lenin's policy nearly the last seven decades past, establishing the fact that while socialism thrives on peace and development, imperialism thrives on war and destruction. The earlier period witnessed Soviet Union becoming free from all crisis and unemployment. Material uplift of the people and accelerated growth rate with a strong industrial base beat all previous record. They guaranteed land to the tiller, right to work, free education, housing, health and all social security measures including old age pension, which no capitalist country can ensure. The increased economic and material strength of the Soviet Union helped strengthening the economy of other socialist countries and the newly liberated countries of the third world and acted as a deterrant in the way of the US imperialists for global domination.

### Crisis of Capitalism :

34. Comrades, the imperialist campaign through the bourgeois media about the failure of socialism and success of capitalism is a deliberate attempt to confuse the working class in the background of the developments and is a fraud on the people. Despite all the campaign, the fact lies that the economic growth in the advanced capitalist countries in the 1980s are less than that of the 1970s and 1960s, despite utilisation of the scientific and technological revolution, and through intense exploitation of the third world countries. With the end of direct colonial exploitation, it has evolved newer forms of neo-colonial exploitation through the multinationals.

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The World Bank and the IMF impose conditionalities on the third world countries to facilitate the penetration of the MNCs in these countries to exploit the resources and the people, and through adverse terms of trade. Many of these developing countries have already entered the debt trap. A large portion of the borrowing is meant for repayment of the earlier loan with the result that the net aid gets reduced, forcing them to seek further debt and get trapped in vicious circle. In the 1980s the developing countries have paid back as debt service a colossal sum of 1456 billion dollars. The debts of some of the developing countries amount to about half of their GNPs. The exploitation can be gauged from the fact that the overall debt of the developing countries has crossed 1.5 trillion dollars, which is further increasing. This has resulted in growing poverty and rising unemployment of the third world people and soaring assets of the MNCs. This has led to the intensification of contradictions with imperialism.

35. Apart from above, the growth of capitalism was marked by militarism and sale of armaments and emergence of a powerful military-industrial complex.

36. But the inherent crisis of capitalism has been ever deepening despite all the methods of boosting it up. Unemployment in the OECD countries, i.e. the 24 advanced capitalist countries including USA and Japan; has reached the 40 million mark. In EEC alone it is over 15 millions. In USA it is 7 millions. According to a poll carried out by "Gallup", 45 million US citizens are below the poverty line. This is thirteen million more than the official figure given by USA. According to an UN Study, unemployment began to rise in USA and Canada in 1990. According to National Association of Business Economist, unemployment in USA will rise from 5.5 percent in 1990 to 6.1 percent in 1991. In Canada it is 9.1%. Temporary jobs in the EEC countries are increasing at an annual rate of 15 to 20 percent, while permanent jobs are vanishing, according to International Confederation of Temporary Work Enterprises (CIETT). According to the Centre for Study of Income and Expenditure (CERC), France, one million full time jobs have disappeared in France from 1982 to 1988. Job insecurity has affected particularly the young people. The number of workers in insecure jobs (temporary and part time) has increased from 5 percent to 10 percent during the period. In January

1990 unemployment in France was 9.4 percent of the workforce. In Spain it was 15.9 percent, in Italy 10.9 percent, Belgium 9.1 percent, Netherlands 9 percent, Denmark 6.4 percent, Britain 6.1 percent and in FRG it was 5.4 percent having crossed the psychological barrier of 2 millions, reaching the colossal figure of 2,191,000. After unification in July 1990, 1.5 million East Germans have become unemployed. According to analysts, the figure is likely to go upto 4 millions in the coming two years. Closures and retrenchments are the order of the day. The same phenomena we now see in all the erstwhile socialist states after switching over to market economy. Every month the unemployment figures increase by leaps and bounds. Unemployment, coupled with redundancies due to introduction of new technologies, cut in social security benefits, attack on trade union rights and on right to strike and increasing resistance to concede demands of wage rise by the workers in commensurate to price rise, have resulted in sharpening contradictions between the working class and the ruling capitalist cliques in all the capitalist countries including in those "newly liberated" market economy countries, resulting in widespread strike actions by the organised working class.

37. According to the same UN Study, the world economy slowed down in 1990 with per capita output declining for the first time since 1982 and the overall global output growing by only one per cent in 1990 as against 3 percent in 1989 and more than 4 percent in 1988. The main slow down was marked in North America and Western Europe. According to the UN, the main reason for the slow down was not the gulf crisis, but recession in the major industrialised countries. The volume of exports by these countries rose by only 5.5 percent in 1990 as against 7 percent in 1989. The number of people living in these countries of declining per capita output rose from 700 millions in 1989 to 1200 millions in 1990. The growth in developed market economies dropped to an estimated 2 percent in 1990. The deceleration was especially sharp in USA and Canada, where the output growth was estimated at only one percent compared to 2.5 percent in 1989. In Britain also it fell from 2 percent to one percent. Inflation has been rising steadily in these countries since 1987. The average consumer price index for the seven major industrialised countries rose by 5 percent

in 1990 compared to 4 percent in 1989 and 3.2 percent in 1988.

38. The crisis in the capitalist countries have so deepened, that it has resulted in sharpening contradictions amongst the advanced capitalist countries themselves. The trade war between the USA Japan and the EEC countries for redistribution of their spheres of influence and capital has sharpened to such extent that it resulted in failure of the recent GATT talks on the issue of farm subsidies. Further sharpening of this contradiction is in the offing with the unification of Germany and the forthcoming Integrated Europe in 1992.

39. The condition of US economy is precarious. Japan is scoring over USA almost in all spheres of economic and trade activities. The Japanese Yen is gradually increasing its sphere of influence with the retreating US Dollar desperately trying to regain its supremacy. According to press reports, the Federal debt was 1,000 billion dollars when Reagan came to power. After eight years of Reaganism and two years of Bush, it has reached 3,000 billion dollars. The budgetary deficit as apprehended by the Congressional budget office may reach the colossal figure of 253 billion dollars in the fiscal year of 1991. In the case of a war in the Gulf, the US war expenditure may incur one billion dollars per day. Japan has now become the biggest exporting country. In the overall US Japan trade of 138.2 billion dollars in 1989, Japan enjoyed a trade surplus of 49 billion dollars. The US Super 301 was originally aimed at Japan. But in a trade dispute with Japan, the USA is bound to suffer. Restrictions on Japan's investment in US would lead to unemployment in USA leading to further loss of production and increase in the prices of US products leading to inflation. USA being the biggest borrower country today, its citizens are burdened with a per capita debt of about 10,500 dollars. During the last ten years the per capita income of affluent families of USA have increased from 74,000 to 90,000 dollars, but that of the lower income group have decreased from 9,000 to 8,000 dollars. If the decline in the income of the larger part of the population continues, the US goods are bound to lose ground in US market itself.

39. The above picture however does not mean that Japan's economic position is very strong. Despite the prowess of its technology, Japan's economy is in difficult condition because of its chronic budget deficit

and national debt. In order to reduce the deficit and huge debt the Japanese Government has undertaken reconstruction of the economy by allocating huge amount in the budget which is more than that allocated to all social programmes and double the amount allocated to science and education. The main tax payers in Japan are the manual and white collar workers, whose taxes are deducted at source. Japan's economy is also jeopardised by the rise in military spending. From 1981 to 1985 it increased by 45 percent and by 1990 it rose to 1.9 trillion Yen. The reconstruction of the economy has had negative effect on employment. Unemployment has risen to 3 percent. According to Nomura, the Japanese Trade Research Centre, unemployment could reach 4 to 5 percent in 1990.

### Carry Forward the Struggle Against Imperialism and for Socialism :

40. I have tried to analyse the world events briefly with regard to the developments in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union. Mistakes and deviations from socialist norms do not mean failure or end of socialism and the triumph of capitalism and imperialism nor do they mean moderation of contradictions. Exploitation and private profit motive being the basis of capitalist mode of production, crisis is inbuilt in the system itself, and so contradictions are bound to develop, whereas the socialist mode of production abolishes this exploitation. Hence the central contradiction remains between socialism and imperialism in the era after the October revolution. Therefore capitalist path of development or market economy cannot be an answer, rectification measure or alternative to the problems or mistakes or deviations from the socialist system. The struggle for socialism and for overthrow of capitalism is a historic necessity based on scientific formulations. The course of this antagonistic struggle between two hostile camps cannot therefore be always smooth and on a forward direction. There has to be occasional gigantic leaps back, as Lenin said. Therefore, we have to understand that the present set back to socialism is a temporary phase. But capitalism is bound to meet its doom because of its inherent contradictions. It is only socialism which does not have this inbuilt contradiction and abolishes exploitation of man by man, of one country by another, can liberate the working class

and the toiling people of the society from exploitation by capitalism and imperialism. The CITU therefore calls upon its unions to counter the imperialist and bourgeois propaganda against socialism and intensify the struggle to defend the cause of socialism.

### The Gulf War :

41. Comrades, we outrightly denounce the US administration for launching full scale war in the Gulf region. In the contest of our discussion about the US imperialists' aim for global domination, it is necessary to point to the Gulf problem, which has laid bare the character of the US imperialists, smashing all talks of end of cold war and moderation of contradictions. There is no doubt that the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq on August 2 was an act of aggression and we unequivocally demand withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and restore the position as on before August 2. But it was the intervention of the USA with its massive troops, acting as the gendarme of the world that prevented a solution to the problem by the Arab countries themselves alongwith the withdrawal of the Israelis from occupied territories and the question of homeland for the Palestinians. Since long the USA had been trying to have its hegemony over the gulf to exploit the rich oil resources in the interest of the US multinational oil tycoons. It was its constant game to keep the Arab world disunited. It successfully trapped the monarchical regimes of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, etc alongwith Egypt at its side and was waiting at the fences for any opportunity to jump into the fray. Iraq's action against Kuwait on the question of the disputed Rumaiyla oil fields and other parts, provided this opportunity to the USA. So far as USSR is concerned, it was its anti-imperialist struggle for peace that had acted as a detrrant to the US war drives and prevented recurrence of war for the last 45 years. But now, it is not surprising that although the USSR did not join the war against Iraq, yet with its new thinking and new concept of moderation of contradictions it voted in the Security Council in favour of using force against Iraq. Leave aside the UN, even USSR ignored the question of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian lands and the question of their homeland. It was thus easy for the USA, the only super power now in a position to command the UN, to get the sanction from the UN to declare war against Iraq, when so many UN

resolutions on the Palestinian question remained unimplemented. With the memory of its attack on Panama still fresh in the mind of the world democratic forces and its shameless support to Israel's continued occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip and denial of the homeland to the Palestinians, all the crocodile tears of USA for peace and sovereignty of Kuwait exposed its hypocrisy and war mongering character. It is of serious concern that the UN failed as the world body to act against war and gave the sanction instead, which will now have a devastating world wide effect. In the very first wave of the air attacks, the USA and the allied forces dropped 18,000 tonnes of explosives at Bagdad, which is one half time as powerful as the atomic bombs dropped at Hiroshima.

42. But it will not be a very easy affair for the USA. Its Western allies are divided, except of course Britain. The Arab world despite the disunity have had enough experience of the US supported Israeli aggression. Massive anti-war and anti-US movements have been sweeping the world, the Arab countries, and in USA itself. It may be another Vietnam for America. Responding to the communique issued by the CITU Secretariat protest actions have already been launched by Delhi, W. Bengal and other State Committees.

43. On the issue we must at the same time criticise the role of the present Government of India led by Chandrasekhar for its one sided condemnation of Iraq without pointing to the American belligerency. The Prime Minister even went on to say that the issue cannot be clubbed together with the Palestinian cause. It is further a matter of serious concern that the Non-Aligned Movement also failed to rise to the occasion when a third world member country has been attacked by the USA. The Secretariat called upon the Government of India as a member of the Security Council and the Non-Aligned Movement to demand convening of a meeting of the Security Council to call for an end to the war and withdrawal of the US and allied forces from the Gulf and facilitate resolution of the entire gulf problem including withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and homeland for the Palestinians.

44. The Gulf crisis has affected the whole world and India very adversely. India has to pay more than double the price for each barrel of crude. Following the return of thousands of Indians the hard currency

remittances have dwindled sharply. With a record deficit of Rs. 14,000 crores and a precarious balance of payment position, the Gulf crisis has pushed the Indian economy into a serious position. Kerala led by the LDF Government is particularly affected. About 80,000 persons have returned to Kerala only, who are now unemployed. This has very badly affected the financial condition of the state. In case of a prolonged war the situation will be precarious. Resolution of the Gulf crisis is an immediate necessity.

#### **The Palestinian Struggle :**

45. During this period, the struggle of the Palestinians for homeland has brought into focus the sharpening contradiction of imperialism and the national liberation movements. The uprising of the Palestinians, Intifada entered the fourth anniversary on December, 1990. The Zionist Government answered the observance with random shooting and third degree tortures. About 6 millions of Palestinians are without a home of their own. About one million are living on West Bank and 6,50,000 in Gaza strip, the areas occupied by Israel ; 7,50,000 are in Israel and the rest are scattered all over the world. In West Bank and Gaza Strip they are under the Israeli military rule, in Israel they are second class citizens and in the Arab countries they live like refugees. The USA desperately tried to prevent the UN Security Council adopt a resolution on the Israeli repression and sending a fact finding mission to Jerusalem, but failed. The Zionist Government however refused to accept the mission. The proposed conference on this West Asian problem is yet a nonstarter due to the refusal of USA and Israel to recognise the PLO to attend the conference. The Palestinians however are undaunted and taken a vow to get the homeland. The CITU condemns the Israeli brutalities and the American support to them and extends full support to the struggle led by PLO and its leader Yasser Arafat.

#### **Struggle Against Apartheid :**

46. In the Bombay conference, where the COSATU delegates were present, we gave a stirring call to intensify the struggle demanding the release of Nelson Mandela and dismantling of the apartheid structure in South Africa. With the rising struggles in South Africa led by the ANC, the former racist dictator Botha had to go, and his successor F.W. De

Clark had to release Nelson Mandela. February 11, 1990 was the red letter day when this legendary leader had to be released unconditionally.

47. USA and Britain had repeatedly vetoed against the UN resolution for mandatory sanctions against South Africa. But the armed struggle waged by the Umhonto-we-Sizwe, the spear of the Nation, led by ANC alongwith the South African Communist Party, the COSATU, the United Democratic Front, the Natal Indian Congress and other anti-apartheid organisations was irresistible. The world community, the socialist forces, the Non-aligned Movement and the International working class extended full support to the life or death struggle.

48. In India, the CITU and other trade unions implemented various programmes in all the states. Observance of 21st March as the anti-apartheid day against the Sharpeville killings and 16th June against the Sweto killings were observed in a widespread manner. The 70th anniversary of the birthday of Nelson Mandela was observed in all the states and by various unions and federations on 18th June, 1988. Massive reception was given to the COSATU delegates when they visited Delhi, Calcutta, Trivandrum, Bombay, etc during the period.

49. 15th October was the red letter day in India when Nelson Mandela visited India after his release. Our cadres participated in a large number in the reception given to him at Delhi. At Calcutta the reception given by the Left Front Government was unique. About one lakh workers and people participated in the historic reception given at the Eden Gardens.

50. Nelson Mandela's release was preceded by the release of Walter Sisulu. The racist regime had to sign an agreement with the ANC on August 7, 1990 to release all the political prisoners and return of the exiles. Following this, Oliver Tambo President of ANC returned to the country after long exile. The apartheid Government also agreed to commence negotiations on a new Constitution which is expected to remove all apartheid provisions. With this agreement, the ANC suspended the armed struggle.

51. However, it is to be noted that the apartheid structure still remains in South Africa. The Zulu Inkhata violence allegedly at the connivance of the racist Government and police has launched attacks on ANC. The CITU however is confident that the ANC and all other anti-apartheid organisation will

march ahead despite all obstacles to dismantle the entire apartheid structure and establish a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa as per its Freedom Charter. The CITU extends full support to the ANC.

#### **Freedom of Namibia :**

52. Comrades, during the period from our last conference the independence of Namibia in November, 1989 was a most important event in the history of the national liberation movements of the oppressed people of the world. The victory led by SWAPO and its legendary leader Sam Njuma brought to an end the last vestige of colonial rule in Africa after one of the bitterest struggles of freedom-loving people against the same abominable apartheid regime of South Africa which had occupied it for long 74 years and supported by imperialism headed by USA. We greet the Namibian people and wish them all success in rebuilding their country overcoming all obstacles still created by the racist supported Democratic Turnhalle Alliance.

#### **Afganistan :**

53. Comrades, Afganistan is another country which went through a turmoil during the period facing virulent attacks from the counter revolutionaries openly supported and aided by the US imperialists with the help of the military rulers of Pakistan. Even after the Geneva Accord on Afganistan and after the departure of the Soviet troops, the US imperialists continued their full efforts to subvert the Nazibullah Government demanding its ouster. We extend our full support and solidarity to the People's Democratic Republic of Afganistan in its grim struggle to safeguard the sovereignty and integrity of the country against the US backed counter revolutionaries.

#### **DPRK and Vietnam**

54. We warmly greet DPRK and Vietnam for their steadfast adherence to the path of Marxism-Leninism and fight against imperialism for the protection of these socialist states under the leading role of the working class and the Communist Parties. The Ho Chi Minh birth Centenary was observed by various State Committees in 1990. West Bengal in particular organised a unique reception at Calcutta on 14th January 1991 to General Vo Nguen Giap, the Deputy Vice Chairman of Vietnam and the hero

of the historic battle at Dien Bien Phu which devastated the US forces. We also appreciate the role and stand taken by Vietnam for resolution of Cambodia's internal problem by the Cambodian people themselves on the basis of the decision of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia without any outside interference.

55. We extend full support to the DPRK's proposals for the process of reunification of the two Koreas under the banner of a Confederation, which is being opposed by the US imperialists and their puppet South Korean regime. The USA have stationed over 40,000 troops in South Korea with all modern nuclear weapons as a constant threat to the DPRK and the entire Korean Peninsula. Severe repression is being let loose on the workers and the people of South Korea. From this conference we demand withdrawal of the US forces to facilitate the unification process as proposed by DPRK.

#### **Imperialist Intervention in Latin America**

56. Comrades, Latin American and the Carebbians are the areas which witnessed increasing intervention by the US imperialists during the period. They tried to dislodge the Sandinista Government led by Daniel Ortego at Nicaragua. Our State Committees and unions organised various programmes in support of the Sandinista Government and donated liberally to the Nicaraguan fund. West Bengal alone contributed one lakh rupees to help Nicaragua. We extend our full support to the Sandinistas and the working class and the people of Nicaragua for their resolve to carry forward the Nicaraguan revolution despite the electoral reverses.

57. The ouster of Augusto Pinochet, the US supported fascist dictator of Chile and victory of the democratic forces was an important event during the period.

58. The attack on Grenada and Panama by the USA were the events that exposed its intension to dominate and exploit the resources of Latin America in pursuit of its imperialists interests and sharpened the contradictions of imperialism with the third world countries.

59. Cuba is under constant threat from the USA, which is now trying to blackmail the USSR to stop all assistance to Cuba, which is already under serious difficulties following the destabilisation of the socialist states in Eastern Europe due to loss in trade. We sent our warm congratulations and greetings to Cuba and its valiant leader Fidel Castro for holding out against

all the threats and defending the Cuban revolution adhering to the path of socialism in a steadfast manner.

### Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan

60. Comrades, the period from our Bombay conference was marked by the victory of the democratic forces in two of our neighbouring countries. In Bangladesh after long years of struggles since the assassination of Mujibur Rahman, the people have removed military rule and ousted Ershad after nine years of his military dictatorship. This was possible because of the unity forged by the political parties struggling to restore democracy. They are now preparing to elect a Government. The trade unions played a big role in the struggle to oust the military ruler. We greet the working class and the people of Bangladesh for their victory and hope and urge upon them to consolidate this unity to consolidate the democratic process.

61. Similarly in Nepal the United Left Front and the Nepali Congress successfully fought against the autocratic rule of monarchy in the country to establish a democratic political system. We extend our greetings to them and wish them all success in consolidating the fruits of their struggle. We are confident that the relations of these countries with India will be improved by these democratic changes.

62. Pakistan saw a turmoil during the period. A democratic Government was established under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto. But it was removed by the Islamic alliance helped by the military. The relations between Pakistan and India continues to be strained. The imperialist conspiracy to destabilise our country through the secessionist activities at Punjab and Kashmir continues to get support from Pakistan. We urge upon the working class and the people of India and Pakistan and fervently hope that through their unity in understanding and struggle, they will be able to make the new Government of Pakistan uphold the spirit of the Simla agreement leading to new understanding and friendship between the two countries and frustrate the designs of the US imperialists to create hostilities between them to serve its imperialists' interest of domination over the sub-continent.

### Sri Lanka

63. Comrades, the situation in Sri Lanka continues to deteriorate since our last conference, helping the imperialist in their endeavour to destabilise the region. The armed confrontation between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan forces have resulted in mounting civilian casualties. The IPKF which went to Sri Lanka according to India Sri Lanka agreement had to return without the full implementation of the accord because of the sabotaging game played by the Premadasa Government and the LTTE. The devolution of powers to the North Eastern Provincial Council could not be effected. The Premadasa Government trapped the LTTE pitting the different Tamil groups against each other. The LTTE infiltrated into Tamilnadu and killed all the EPRLF leaders in Madras. Our Tamilnadu State Committee of course is successfully fighting any chauvinistic trend in the state. We firmly stand for a democratic solution of the problem in the interest of both India and Sri Lanka through negotiations in which all the Tamil groups should participate. We call upon our Tamilnadu State Committee and unions to remain vigilant against any disruptive forces fostering chauvinism and separatism and safeguard the unity of the Tamil people.

64. Comrades, from the above review of the international situation, it can be seen that during the period from our Bombay conference, the contradictions of imperialism and capitalism with forces opposing them have further sharpened. The deepening crisis of the capitalist system at the same time has further sharpened the contradiction amongst the capitalist countries themselves. Imperialism have launched attack on socialism, both ideologically, as well as by helping the internal counter revolutionary forces. At the same time the imperialist powers and the ruling capitalist cliques tried to pass on the burden of the crisis on to the third world countries and the working class in their own countries. In this critical situation the prospect of intensification of struggle against imperialism and capitalism have further increased for the defence of socialism and the interests of the working class and the people. The CITU and all its unions have to note these developments and prepare to carry forward struggles accordingly.

## National Situation

### Upsurge of Movements against Congress (I)

65. Comrades, like the international situation, the national situation also was eventful since our last conference in Bombay with a sharpening of contradictions between the working class and all sections of the toiling people on one hand, and the ruling classes and their Congress (I) Government led by Rajiv Gandhi, leading to its ouster.

66. In the Bombay conference itself, both the presidential address by Comrade BTR and the General Secretary's report pointed to the growing isolation of the Rajiv Government from the people. Comrade BTR in his address had said, "No previous leader of the Congress (I) party secured such an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha as Rajiv. Even Jawahar Lal Nehru was unable to win such a huge majority in the first election of independent India. But within a couple of years Rajiv Gandhi has growingly lost the support of the people, and its Parliamentary majority today is becoming a majority which is fast losing its popular support."

67. This was obviously because of the growing crisis of the capitalist path of development and the new economic policy of the Rajiv Government allowing unbridled development of the private sector, denigration of the public sector, and increasing invitation to the multinationals in the name of high technology—all tuned to the demands of the World Bank and IMF. The growth of unemployment, closures, industrial sickness, price rise and growing pauperisation of the peasantry soared to unprecedented heights within two years of his rule. This was coupled with the rise of the divisive forces of all sorts and the policy of compromise with them by the Congress (I), and scandalous corruption at high levels. The situation was ripe for massive movements, and the conference gave a call for such movement.

68. The situation worsened thereafter at a fast rate. A few months later, when we met at Chandigarh in the Working Committee meeting in December 1987, lakhs of workers, peasants, agricultural labour, students, youth and women were converging to the capital from various corners of the country in six jathas covering the whole country to stage the largest ever demonstration before the Parliament on December 9, 1987, jointly called by the four left parties, viz. CPI (M), CPI, RSP and Forward Block

and their mass organisations. The participation of CITU from all the states was massive. The rally was the most mammoth one organised by the Left parties and mass organisations and attended by one million workers and others. The rally gave the call for Bharat Bandh on 15th March, 1988 with a 14-point Charter of demands for all sections of the workers and people, with the first demand to strengthen national unity and the central demand for resignation of the Rajiv Government. All the Central Trade Unions except the INTUC and BMS called for industrial strike on the day. The public sector unions also called for three day strike actions from March 14 to 16 and the coal workers went on strike for one week from March 15. The Congress (I) Government of course replied with a savage vengeance arresting about 150,000 people, 40,000 from Tamil-nadu alone. Firing took the toll of 10 workers. Even despite the repression, the Bandh shook the country and workers were mobilised to continuous actions to dethrone the Congress (I). The Left Front of West Bengal and the LDF in Kerala alongwith the CITU and other mass organisations took the leading role in these mass movements.

69. Thereafter the Dhanbad General Council meeting again called for carrying forward the struggles, initiating independent activities by the CITU with the focal demand for resignation of the Rajiv Government. The continuing upsurge of mass movements culminated in another Bharat Bandh on 30th August, 1989. The movement got a spurt following the resignation of the opposition MPs in the Lok Sabha following the exposure of the corruption relating to Bofors, through the report of the CAG and refusal of the Rajiv Government to resign. Bengal gave the lead by calling Bengal Bandh on August 30. Kerala followed by calling Kerala Bandh on the same day. It is to be noted that while the earlier Bandh was called by the left parties and their mass organisations and supported by some opposition parties, the 30th August Bandh was jointly called by the left and opposition parties. As a preparation to the Bandh, a "Save India Day" was called on August 9.

70. The CITU promptly supported the Bandh and took initiative to call a meeting of the NCC. Some constituents of the NCC however showed vacillations. The CITU however went ahead preparing for the Bandh. After initial vacillations

and then after a broader meeting with the federations, six constituents of the NCC supported the Bandh and called for industrial strike on August 30. BMS however backed out from the joint call. It separately called for protest actions only without strike, without supporting the Bandh and without demanding the resignation of the Rajiv Gandhi Government. INTUC as usual, opposed the Bandh. The Bandh was obviously a bigger success than the earlier one with massive participation of workers in the strike in most of the industries due to the assiduous work made by the CITU.

71. At the Kalyani working Committee meeting held in September 1989, we reviewed the movement for the Bharat Bandh and reiterated our call to dethrone the Rajiv Government in the election which was forthcoming. We called for increased cooperation of the trade union movement with the left and secular parties and isolation of the communal and divisive forces.

72. The development of movements thereafter was fast. The CITU initiated a number of countrywide movements involving maximum number of trade unions, like by unorganised workers, public sector workers, textile workers, working women, etc all with the growing demand of the workers with the focus at removing the Rajiv Government. The election that took place was marred by large scale communal riots. The BJP made the Ramjanam Bhoomi an election issue. Following the Ramshila procession mass scale communal riots took place in Bihar (Bhagalpur), UP, MP, etc. The Congress on the other hand instead of taking a secular stand abiding by the Court verdict, played into the hands of Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The Government allowed the VHP to lay the foundation stone (Shilanyas) of the proposed Ram Temple at the disputed site marked by the Allahabad High Court.

I shall come to the communal situation later on.

#### **Defeat of Congress (I)**

73. In the Kanpur General Council meeting held in July 1990 we reviewed the new situation after the last elections held in November, 1989. The anti-Cong. (I) feeling of the people swept the Congress (I) from power. It was routed in the northern India although it gained in some southern states. The ouster of the authoritarian, anti-people and corrupt Cong (I) regime and installation of the

new National Front Government with the support of the left was an outstanding political event. This was made possible, as we have seen, by an upsurge of mass movements for more than the last two preceding years, which culminated in two great Bharat Bandhs.

#### **The Short-lived National Front Government**

74. The 1990 dawned with great hopes for the working class and the toiling people of the country, expecting the N.F Government to undo the havoc created by the long rule of the Cong (I). The left Parties supported the N. F Government on the condition that it should implement its own Manifesto, which itself could deliver a lot of goods to the working class and the people. The policy guidelines as enunciated in the Ranshtrapati's speech to the joint session of the Parliament on December 20, 1989 were of course a welcome departure from those being practised by the Congress (I). We do welcome some of the measures taken by the NF Government like repeal of the 59th Constitutional Amendment, which was made hanging like the Damocle's Sword on the people by the Cong (I) to impose emergency ; to include the land reforms Acts in the Ninth Schedule, so that the land lord and vested interests could not go to courts to challenge them ; calling the meeting of the National Development Council, setting up of inter. State Council, Prasar Bharati Bill, Lok Pal Bill ; efforts to resolve the Ramjanam Bhoomi issue and those of Kashmir and Punjab on the basis of all party consensus and calling meetings of the National Integration Council, etc all of which were long pending democratic demands of the people. Moreover, there was a welcome change in the attitude towards the Left Front Governments which were subjected to continuous attack, slander and injustice by the Cong. (I) regime.

75. Several long pending demands of the working class and the trade unions were also accepted in principle and measures initiated for implementation, which were hitherto been refused by the Cong. (I) regime. These were secret ballot for recognition of trade unions ; withdrawal of the retrograde Industrial Relations Bill and formation of a Bipartite Committee to suggest a new law ; workers' participation in management with equal rights and their representation in the fora through secret ballot ; central legislations for the agricultural labour and construction workers, etc. The N. F. Government also accepted the principle of

right to work and promised to incorporate it as a Fundamental Right into Constitution. Before its fall, it also announced the decision to reinstate all the railway workers who were dismissed from services in the wake of the strike of 1980-81 under the draconian Rule 14 (ii) of DAR based on the retrograde clauses 310 and 311 (a, b, c) of the Constitution, which the Chandra Sekhar Government has still withheld it. Thus there were efforts to reverse the long standing and growing authoritarian structure and anti-working class and reactionary policies embarked upon by the Cong (I) for the long 43 years after independence.

76. In the economic and industrial policy however, there was no break through by the N F Government. It rather followed the same Cong (I) policy with more vigour. I shall discuss the economic policy and the situation separately later on.

#### **Secular Stand of the N F Government :**

77. Comrades, we have to appreciate the firm secular stand taken by the N F Government led by V P Singh. Of course, the left parties led by the CPI (M) and the CITU and other mass organisations played a significant role to keep it firm in its stand. It was the potential of the united left that made this favourable impact on the Government on the question of secularism, albeit it fell.

78. 7th November, 1990 will go in the history of Indian Parliament as a day of rape of secularism. It was for the first time that a Government was voted out on the question of secularism only. Although the Government, which was functioning not only with the support of the left, but also with the support of the BJP, had in fact fallen when the BJP withdrew its support following the arrest of L K Advani, yet V P Singh rightly wanted the people to see who stood with whom on the question of secularism. He boldly pronounced that the Government may fall, but he at the head of the Government cannot make any compromise with the rabidly communal BJP-RSS-VHP combine to construct the Ram temple on the ruins of Babri Masjid. The whole country witnessed that the Cong (I) which was vociferous in demanding the arrest of Advani and stopping his Ratha Yatra, voted with the same BJP against the Government to ensure its fall. The whole country was also witness to the high sounding "secular" Chandrasekhar and his group winning the election on anti-Congress ticket, sailing in the same boat with the BJP and the Cong

(I) for the fall of the Government and splitting the Janata Dal only to become the Prime Minister of a miniscule Government under the thumb of Congress (I), for the ouster of which the working class and the people struggled for the last three years, and finally voted it out. So comrades, we are back to Square One with a virtual Congress (I) Government functioning through its puppet. The fall of the V P Singh Government has certainly given a boost to the communal and divisive forces posing a danger to unity and integrity of the country making it a breeding ground for imperialism to destabilise the country. The situation has posed a challenge to the trade union movement, which we must discuss now.

#### **Rise of the Communal and Divisive Forces :**

79. Comrades, it is now over a decade that the CITU has been drawing the attention of the unions to the growth of the divisive forces of all sorts and the necessity to fight them. When we met at the Fifth Conference at Kanpur in 1983, the secessionist threat in Assam was foremost. The Punjab situation was also going from bad to worse. After the Kanpur Conference, the Punjab situation became volatile. The Khalistanis under the leadership of Bhindranwale had captured the Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras and turned them into arsenals. He had to be killed. Then came the murder of Indira Gandhi by her own security guards at the instance of the Khalistanis. We reviewed the situation in the Bombay conference. By that time the TNVs in Tripura had started depredations killing our cadres. The Gorkhaland issue was floated in W. Bengal and our cadres were being killed by the GNLFF terrorists. The Kashmir problem and the Ramjanam Bhoomi issues were dangerously brewing up. Between the Kanpur and Bombay conferences communal riots took place at several places, the worst being in Maharashtra at Bhiwandi, Thane, etc caused by the Shiv Senas at the forefront and the RSS. The worst caste riots took place in Gujarat, where the Harijans and tribals were killed. Since the Bombay conference the situation has deteriorated all round.

80. The separatist and secessionist forces in Tripura, Punjab went on escalating their activities and the Rajiv Government went crazy in trying to make deals with them. Having been routed in the 1987 elections in W. Bengal, Kerala and Haryana, the Cong. (I) allied with the TUJS and came to a deal with its extremist wing, the TNV, shortly before

the Tripura elections in February, 1988. Within a few days about one hundred non-tribals were killed to strike a terror in the population. Then just three days before the election, it declared the entire state as disturbed area and in a highly manipulated election under para-military rule, usurped power from the left front. Since then a semi-fascist terror is continuing in the state. This has been further accentuated after the last ADC elections. A large number of our cadres are being killed, their houses burnt, properties looted, women are raped and unions captured. Even the ILO had indicted the Cong (I) on our complain. The report of the Janata Dal Committee which visited the State had also revealed the semi-fascist nature of the attacks in the state. The situation continues unabated with the attempt to divide the tribals and non-tribals and curb the communist movement in the state which united them. Now the muslim minorities are being targetted to instigate riots against them. Our State Committee and the unions are fighting a grim battle in Tripura.

81. In Punjab the situation worsened after the President's rule and continues to deteriorate with dangerous portents. Thousands of innocent people have been killed during the period, which includes the cadres and leaders of the CITU, CPI(M), CPI and distinguished individuals, writers and freedom fighters. Instead of trying to implement the Rajiv-Longowal Accord, the then Cong. (I) Government of Rajiv Gandhi released the five High Priests the protagonists of Khalistan, trying to make a deal with them. It failed to utilise the situation after the Operation Black Thunder, despite the fact that the extremists were getting isolated from the people. In the name of curbing the terrorists, it made the 59th Constitutional amendment acquiring emergency power and directing the attack on the democratic and trade union movement. The shortlived V. P. Singh Government tried some methods through consensus among all political parties, but failed to take any steps thereafter. Now under the Chandra Shekhar Government the situation is drifting fast with the Pakistan based Panthic Committee trying to get on the saddle firmly. The Committee has directed the press, the TV and the Radio not to use the word "extremists", but they should be painted as "freedom fighters." They have further directed to transmit the news bulletins in Punjabi and not in Hindi in Punjab. The same direction has been given to the Government

to use only Punjabi in the State and not Hindi. In the schools they have directed not to teach Hindi. Even the National Anthem should not be sung in the schools. They have asked the girl students to wear only Shalwar-Kameez and Dupattas. They have started collecting "revenues" in the border districts. Now these extremists are trying to coordinate their activities, with those of Kashmir, which are also Pakistan based and helped by the imperialists. They are deliberately creating panic to force the Hindus to migrate from Punjab and the Shikhs into Punjab from other states to create the social base for "Khalistan."

82. In this background, the Chandrasekhar Government has started talks with Simranjeet Singh Mann, who has openly raised the demand for right to "self-determination" based on Article 51 of the Constitution which relates to India's relations with foreign nations. He has further stated that the "Sikh State" would act as a buffer between India and Pakistan, and also demanded inclusion of the "militants" in the talks. He has thus refused to initiate the talks unconditionally, and within the frame work of Indian unity. It is a dangerous portent.

83. Braving all the terrorist activities and threats, our Punjab State Committee and the unions are waging continuous actions to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country and unity of the Punjab people and the working class. A large number of our cadres and those of CPI have become martyrs during the period. Immediately after the Bombay Conference a joint trade union delegation also went to Punjab and addressed big rallies at Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana. Both independently and alongwith other trade unions big rallies and demonstrations were held. The State CITU organised two massive statewide jathas during the period, which evoked massive response from the people.

84. Assam is another state which has been under turmoil since 1979 when the Assam agitation started. After the Bombay Conference the situation has taken a serious turn. A number of separatist, chauvinist and communal organisations grew up during the period. The agitation for Bodo land paralysed the entire Kokrajhar district for months together due to repeated Bandhs. Now the ULFA has come out as a new outfit of terrorist agitation being connived by the AGP. Overcoming all the weaknesses our CITU unions have waged a valiant struggle against these terrorist activities. Five comrades were killed and

many have been injured and tortured by these forces during this period. Fighting boldly against the ULFA, who have been indulging in gruesome killings and extortions of money, our comrades are now able to make access to the areas which were hitherto inaccessible and not only been able to keep our members firm, but also been able to get those Assamese workers into the fold of CITU, who were earlier taken away by the separatist agitations.

85. So far as Kashmir is concerned we have already reported how Pakistan is openly helping the secessionists to destabilise the state. Kashmir is another area where the Ceng(I)'s policy of installing G M Shah, a known secessionist element, resulted in worsening the situation. During the period the situation became so grave that the entire Kashmir valley had to be declared a disturbed area. President's rule has further caused deterioration. Just like, in Punjab, innocent people and distinguished personalities are being killed. The administrative measures have not helped much. The danger is that it is not only the secessionist J & K Liberation front, but also the Islamic fundamentalists, the Jamaite Islami that are spearheading the terrorist activities. The BJP is trying to further accentuate the situation by demanding abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which will further alienate the people of Kashmir and help the secessionists. We must counter the BJP's propaganda and assure the people of Kashmir that their identity will be preserved and the special position occupied by the State under the Article 370 will continue to be in force. Our biggest difficulty is that we do not have any State Committee in Kashmir. The limited, left cadres that we have, had to shift their working base of Jammu because of the attack on the union offices in Srinagar.

86. In Bombay Conference we reported about the violence created by the separatist GNLFT terrorists in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal for Gorkhaland. Our tea garden workers carried forward the battle against them in a heroic way. About 100 cadres were killed and thousands of people were rendered homeless. The Rajiv Government initially tried to have a nefarious deal with them. But it underestimated the strength of the CITU and the people's support to the Left Front Government. It was because of this determined struggle by the tea garden workers and the principled stand by the Left Front Government that an agreement was reached during this period. It should be noted that regional

autonomy and Hill Development Council were the demands of the Left Front Government itself which had to be agreed upon.

87. During the period, the Ananda Margies also stepped up their violent activities. They even targeted Com. Jyoti Basu for attack. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is carrying forward their demand for a separate Jharkhand State.

#### The Communal Situation

88. Comrades, we have been warning on the Ramjanam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid issue since the last several years. In his presidential address at Bombay, Com. BTR had said, "In these three years the working class and the Left movement had not only to fight the divisive forces, they also to combat the challenge of communal forces, Muslim and Hindu fundamentalism. The compromising policy of Rajiv Government on the Shah Bano judgement case and Babri Masjid-Ramjanam Bhoomi issue intensified the communal atmosphere all over the country and many cities and localities have become powder keg ready for explosion. The working class and the trade union movement must reckon with this situation and fight back the booming offensive." Com. BTR's warning has come true.

89. We have seen how within two years from his warning, the last election was held in the wake of unprecedented riots on the Ramjanam Bhoomi issue. We have seen how this issue resulted in the fall of the V P Singh Government.

90. The RSS-BJP-VHP combine with their new ally, the Shiv Senas are coming up not only as a rabid communal force, but also as a fascist force. They will neither abide by any court verdict, nor the secular Constitution of the country, but based on a perverse concept of secularism, are determined to build the Ram Temple on the ruins of the Babri Masjid itself. The BJP was a party to the unanimous decisions of the Committee on Promotion of Communal Harmony, which in its meeting held at Delhi on September 18, recommended that there should be continuing dialogue and discussion to consider and decide the site of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya with a view to reaching an amicable settlement; that the decision of the court should be respected, and that in the meantime no attempt should be made to aggravate the communal situation which already existed.

The meeting was chaired by Atal Behari Bajpai

and attended by L K Advani himself. But immediately thereafter, on the plea of these recommendations having been leaked to the press, the BJP boycotted the meeting of the National Integration Council held at Madras on September 22. Then defying all public appeal, Advani took out his Ratha Yatra with the ostensible desire to build the Ram Temple, but with the ulterior motive of election campaign with the Hindu card. The communal conflagration that took place was the direct result of Advani's Ratha Yatra and their crusade against secularism and pronouncement for the Hindu Rashtra. The planned manner in which they went ahead beginning with the Ratha Yatra, Ram Jyoti, the violent attempts for Kar Seva and to damage or blow up the Babri Masjid, then the Asthi Kalash processions and brazen distribution of the Video and audio cassettes propagating rabid Hindu communalism, whipped up such a communal frenzy that was not seen during the pre-independence riots even.

91. Hundreds of innocent people have already been killed, properties looted and burnt. It is of a serious concern that the riots engulfed the industrial cities like Kanpur, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Kota, Jaipur, Beawar, etc. In several places it spread to the village areas also. It affected the states like Bengal and Kerala even. But this is not over. Their declaration to go ahead to Mathura, Varanasi, etc to "liberate" other temples also augur a more dangerous situation ahead threatening disintegration of the country and making it a breeding ground for the imperialists to destabilise it. They were allowed to do satyagraha for the right to do Kar Seva. Betrayal by the Chandrasekhar group and his lieutenants like Mulayam Sing and Chiman Bhai Patel, and the opportunist stand of the Cong (I) suggesting construction of the temple at the disputed spot of Shilanayas have given a boost to these communal forces.

92. Comrades, it is pertinent to recall here that in pursuance to Com. BTR's warning in the last conference, the CITU in cooperation with the left forces had been warning against these communal forces. We raised this issue as the first point during the two Bharat Bandhs. During the last election we were concerned not only in defeating the Cong (I), but in isolating the communal and divisive forces.

93. It is creditable on the part of our State Committees and unions that in pursuance of this

objective, almost continuous programmes were carried forward by them all these years, particularly in late 1989 and in the 1990. Campaigns, communal harmony marches, conventions, street corner meetings, etc were organised by Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, UP, Bihar, Assam, Punjab, Tripura, Orissa, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andaman & Nicobar too. Bengal and Kerala continuously launched massive programmes all the years. In UP our State Committee launched independent campaign apart from joining the district-wise rallies massively before the Kar Seva. Huge human chains were held at Delhi, Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka, Tripura, etc. Bombay organised an Ekta Yatra. A "Sabhavana March" was organised at Patna. Apart from above, the 19th September all India convention jointly organised by the Central Trade Unions at Delhi was attended by our comrades from almost all the states in good number and the programme of communal harmony week culminating on 30th October, the Kar Seva day, was successfully organised in all the State Committees, and unions participated in the anti-communal programmes jointly sponsored by the left parties. In all these programmes tens of thousands of our workers and employees participated. Our unions and national federations also chalked out separate and independent programmes apart from participating in all the above programmes in the States and districts. As per call of General Council Tripura Day was observed by most of the State Committees. Funds are also being collected.

94. But despite all above, we have not been able to check the depredations. The Hindi belt, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and also Karnataka have been badly ravaged. In UP and Rajasthan our State Conferences had to be postponed because of riots. Even the Hall meeting organised at Baroda during the State Conference had to be cancelled. Many other programmes in various states could not be implemented. All our programmes planned against unemployment, price rise, closures, etc and in various industries could not be carried forward.

#### Anti-Reservation Agitation on OBC's Issue

95. The recent past not only witnessed the communalists dividing the people, it witnessed very ghastly scenes of anti-reservation agitation exposing the hatred of the upper castes against the lower castes on the issue of 27 percent reservations in Central

Government jobs for the other Backward Classes as announced by the V. P. Singh Government. Earlier we have seen caste riots in Gujarat and other states particularly in the Hindi belt. The Bombay conference dealt exhaustively on this issue. This time the agitation of the upper caste swept major parts of the country particularly the entire northern India with such a horrible intensity that beggars description. The students were misled by the same BJP and Congress (I) who had supported the issue. Large number of young students died of self-immolation. The anti-reservation agitation in fact went into the hands of anti-socials. The normal life and any other programme of the Government virtually came to a standstill.

96. On the question of reservation of jobs the CITU has always made its stand clear, that in a situation of growing unemployment as a result of the capitalist path of development being pursued by successive Governments, the backward castes, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been worst hit. They have been victims of perpetuating caste atrocities and discriminations since decades. Under such circumstances the CITU supports reservation of jobs to the tune of 22.5 percent and is opposed to any such movement which is against reservations. However, so far Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are concerned, which came under the purview of the present 27 percent of job reservations, the CITU categorically stated that there are economically affluent sections among them who cannot be compared with the SC/STs. The CITU therefore urged upon the NF Government to consider the economic status of the OBCs while extending the benefits of the reservation. However we do not oppose the reservation announced. We therefore opposed the anti-reservation agitation. But at the same time we must make our cadres understand that reservations alone can never solve the gigantic problem of unemployment, as has become evident from the fact that despite the policy of reservations being pursued since independence, the number of the unemployed, particularly among the backward castes, has gone on increasing. The reservations are just sort of interim relief, which is also necessary. We have to enthuse the backward castes to join the trade union movement by giving such enthusiasm and making them understand that the only solution lies in reversal of the pro-land lord, pro-monopolist

economic policy of the Government and planning starting with genuine land reforms, which can guarantee more employment.

### Direct Intervention Required

97. Our struggle against the communal forces and the other divisive forces has therefore to be stepped up. Apart from stepping up the programmes for mobilisation of workers and public opinion that we are already doing, it is time that we must try to intervene directly and acting against these communal forces to stop the riots. The Secretariat of the CITU in its meeting held on December 13 and 14 last directed the State Committees and the unions accordingly. The administration has failed to protect the minorities from these communal hordes. The state machinery on the contrary, the PAC in UP and the RAC in Rajasthan have been notorious in directing their wraths against the minorities. In this situation the CITU must take up the initiative to mobilise all workers and other trade unions to act as a force to counter the rioters. Bengal and Kerala serve as the beacon lights in this respect. All possible actions including strike action by the workers should be taken to stop the riots.

### Cooperation with Left and Secular Forces

98. We must note that it is because of the weaknesses of the trade union movement, because of the weaknesses of the left forces in majority of the states, the isolation of the Congress (I) was fully exploited by these communal and reactionary forces. It is necessary that the CITU must work assiduously in cooperation with the left and secular forces in all the states to reap the benefit of the isolation of the Congress (I). It is only through this process of struggle that we can isolate the communal and divisive forces too alongwith the Congress (I) and consolidate the left and secular forces to project the real alternative to the Congress (I). The Co-ordination Committee formed with the left parties and the National Front is a welcome development in this direction. The recent rallies addressed by the leaders of the left parties and NF in Bihar, UP, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and in Calcutta attracted huge public. The CITU has to take the initiative to mobilise the workers and other trade unions to this new platform.

## Economic Situation

99. The crisis in the Indian economy has taken a very grave turn. The gravity is such that it is threatening the very sustenance of self-reliance. The Indian people who are already suffering untold miseries are going to face acute impoverishment and destitution hitherto unknown.

100. Successive deficit financing during the period 1980-81 to 1988-1989 had aggregated to a staggering amount of Rs. 50,7111 crores. And now for the year 1990-91 alone it is estimated to be about Rs. 15,000 crores; trade deficit is increasing in a menacing proportion. From Rs. 5802 crores in 1981-82, it has increased to Rs. 7731 crores in 1989-90 with an estimated further jump to Rs. 10,000 crores during the current year.

101. Our external debt position is inexorably pushing us into a debt trap. It has reached the figure of Rs. 1,25,00 crores by the end of 1989. While a decade ago, we paid only 9.2% of our foreign exchange earnings for servicing foreign debts, this ratio has gone up 3 times in 1989, i.e. 30%. Added to this, the exchange value of the rupee has been steadily falling in comparison to other currencies. Between the end of March 1989 and mid-November 1990, the rupee lost by 5% against the dollar, 20% against the Pound Sterling and the Yen.

102. During this period, due to the constant pressure of IMF and World Bank, the policy of liberalisation has moved very fast. The number of foreign collaboration agreements which stood at 526, jumped up to 926 in 1988. The foreign investment involved in these collaboration agreements which stood at Rs. 892 lakhs in 1980, increased to Rs. 23,975.75 lakhs in 1988. Remittances abroad including profit, dividend, royalty, technical know how fees and interest payment, increased to Rs. 813.5 crores in 1986-87 as against Rs. 204.0 crores in 1980-81. The liberalisation policy is jettisoning self reliant economic development.

103. Due to all these and other reasons, our foreign exchange reserves have dipped to the rock bottom. The current reserve of about Rs. 2,500 crores can hardly cater for 2 weeks' imports. With the gulf crisis the situation has attained alarming proportions. According to Finance Ministry's various estimates, if the price of crude goes up to 35 dollars per barrel, its impact on the balance of payment will be 3.5 billion dollars. Internally too our debts have been soaring

very high. Government of India's internal debt stood at an astronomical figure of Rs. 1,44,563 crores in 1987-88 i.e. 14 times higher than in 1970-71. So also the interest payment on this sky rocketted to Rs. 12199 crores in 1988-89, i.e. 60 times higher over 1970-71. Borrowing abroad has turned out to be borrowing more and more for servicing the past borrowing. The debt trap is closing in, both externally and internally.

## Living Conditions of The People

104. During this period, attempt at resolving the crisis at the expense of the people has been mercilessly carried on. Inflation has already crossed the two digit mark. By the week ending November 17, 1990 the annual rate had gone upto 10.2% as against 7.4% in the corresponding period in the previous year. Administered price increases, continuous upward revision of petrol prices, telecommunication and railway rates, budgetary levies, periodic hikes in issue price of wheat and rice supplied to the public distribution system, tremendous rise in the share of indirect taxes in the total taxes, from 18% in the early years to 70.26% in 1989-90 have all led to crippling price increase of essential commodities. In a period of two years the increase has been between 30% and 70%.

105. We are facing a situation where, with the highest production ever of about 170 million tonnes of food grains in 1989 and the prospect of about 185 million tons in 1990, the food prices are the highest so far. Added to this, the Govt. policy of export of essential commodities in order to earn foreign exchange, has further accentuated scarcity and pushed up prices. With the increase in prices of industrial manufacturers, and the absence of fair prices to the peasants, the terms of trade has turned heavily against the rural masses. Consequently rural indebtedness has swelled manifold.

106. The policy of passing the burden of the crisis on the common people, has intensified the miseries and destitution of the masses, both urban and poor, as never before. On the other hand the assets of the six biggest monopoly houses has been increasing by an annual average of 19% during the last decade.

## Economic Policy of N F Govt.

107. Comrades, as I have already stated, despite some positive measures taken by the N F Government

to restore the democratic process, and acceptance in principle of certain democratic demands of the trade union movement, the National Front Government did not take any measures to reverse the retrograde economic and industrial policy and resource mobilisation policies of Rajiv Government. In fact the National Front Government during its short tenure of 11 months pursued those policies vigorously. It reflected in the railway and general budgets of the National Front Government. It reflected in the increase in administered prices. While we criticised the Cong (I) Govt for systematically increasing free sale quota of sugar from 35% to 50%, the N F Govt. in one stroke increased it from 50% to 75%. this had further adverse effect on public distribution system. All this heaped more miseries on the people.

108. The Secretariat of the CITU expressed serious concern over the N F Govt treading on the same lines as the Cong (I), of taxing the people. In a statement while appreciating the enormous difficulties the Govt had to confront to revitalise an economy brought to new disaster by the long Cong (I) rule, the secretariat urged upon the Govt. to withdraw the proposed hikes in the prices of petrol, diesel and postal rates and also the hikes in railway fares and freights. The left parties also made the same demands. But it had no effect on the Govt. Supporting the call of the left parties, the CITU called upon the State Committees and unions to observe May 16, 1990 as the protest day against price rise. Some of the State Committees reported about the action programme taken on the day. Bengal and Kerala took additional programmes. The situation was reviewed in the Kanpur General Council meeting, by which time the prices of all commodities registered steep hike. The Kanpur meeting called for gearing up the movement against price rise and called for observance of anti-price rise day on August 23, 1990. However, according to reports that came from the States, although the anti-price rise day was observed in several states, no struggle could be waged continuous in a big way. Apart from Bengal, it was observed in Bihar, Delhi, UP, MP, Punjab, Assam, Karnataka, Haryana, Gujarat and Tripura. In some other states the question of price rise was tagged with other issues like closures, lockouts, on the economic and industrial policies in general, although the Kanpur General Council focused on this demand separately, as a part of the people's demand. However, as I have already

mentioned, the programme could not be carried forward because of the worsening developments with regard to the issue of OBCs and Ramjanam Bhoomi resulting in the caste and communal riots which completely diverted our attention and forced the State Committees to concentrate on these issues.

#### **Industrial Policy of N F Government :**

109. The most obnoxious part of the N F Govt's economic policy was its industrial policy, which was pro-big business, with its continued drive towards liberalisation and privatisation which sought to undermine self-reliance and public sector. To appease IMF and World Bank it allowed foreign equity participation upto 40%, accompanied by automatic minimum import entitlements without cover of specific export obligations. Licensing system for investments upto Rs. 75 crores was done away with, and allowed import of capital goods and raw materials upto 30% of plant and machinery. It has raised the investment ceiling in small scale sector to Rs. 60 lakhs, and in case of ancillaries upto Rs 75 lakhs, which facilitates further penetration of monopolists in this sector. Moreover, the policy did not spell out any measures to check industrial sickness. On the contrary, the Industry Minister announced that no sick unit will be taken over. In fact this retrograde policy was announced bypassing the planning commission. In a meeting with the Planning Commission all the Central TUs severely criticised this policy. The CITU Secretariat, in a statement, pointed out that when the USA had targetted India with its Super 301 and Special 301, the policy was an indication of the danger of Government's surrender to the USA's threat. The Left Party also severely assailed this policy. Some of our State Committees launched campaign. Several industrial federations also raised the issue. However, there were only symbolic protests, and as such it had no impact on the Govt which rather defended it and the Cabinet also approved it.

#### **Present Grave Economic Situation and Chandrashekhar Government**

110. With a defector Government at the Centre, not answerable to the people, but totally dependent on Congress (I), the economy is in for a catastrophe.

111. The first act of Chandrashekhar was to declare that, policy of liberalisation will continue, betraying his own position to the contrary during V. P. Singh Government. This was followed by its

announcement that they are approaching the IMF for a new loan, which means our country facing the imposition of more conditionalities. It is interesting to note that Chandrasekhar had criticised the Indira Gandhi Government which took loan from the IMF and started the policy of liberalisation, which was staunchly carried forward by Rajiv Gandhi also. Now as the Prime Minister he is giving the same argument as Indira Gandhi gave that the loan was only to tide over the present critical balance of payment position. But the conditionalities of liberalisation of imports by the IMF will take the country nearer to the debt trap as I have said above. We are now going to have the same experience as many other third world countries which have to take loans to repay the earlier ones. Thus the Indian economy is at cross roads—either going in for IMF loans and greater dependence on foreign capital and fall into the vicious circle of debt trap, or reversal of the policies. By a stroke of the pen, customs and excise duties were hiked to the tune of fetching Rs. 1430 crores in a full year which again means further sky rocketting of prices.

112. At the same time the Finance Ministry is seriously on a course of reducing or abolition of subsidies, which will hit the public distributions system. In the meantime, an adviser to the Government has recommended partial disbandment of the public distribution system and taking out of the purview of rationing all those earning income of Rs. 2500/- and above per month. Above all, of late, the Prime Minister and Finance Minister have been repeatedly calling upon the people to tighten their belt.

113. As reported by Statesman, "even before the Gulf war, the latest estimated inflation rate of 11.4 percent computed on an annualised basic and based on the official wholesale price index (1981-82=100) was said to represent the highest rate of price increase during the past decade. The general financial position is so bleak that it should surprise no one if fresh imports are levied to mobilise funds to enable Government to meet some of its debt repayment obligation." Now when the war has broken out, the Prime Minister in his speech to the Nation on January 19 kept on repeating that there is no need for panic, there were enough stocks of foodgrains and other essential commodities and there was no reason why prices should rise. But at the same time he bluntly

told the people that they would have to suffer because of increase in prices due to dislocation of supply of petroleum products. It is to be recalled that the Union Finance Minister assured the people in December that all necessary steps would be taken to insulate the poor and the wage earners from inflationary pressures. Among the suggested measures was the extension of the public distribution network to cover vegetable oil, pulses and several other essential items which would certainly spare the poor and the middle class households from the inflationary pressure. But so far, the Government did nothing to implement such steps.

114. All this means that furious attacks on the living conditions of the working class and mass of the people is in the offing. A serious assault on job opportunities and existing trade union rights of the workers is in the making.

115. Comrades, consequently, we are in for a period of extensive and militant mass upheavals, from the working class and other section of people against these new attacks. The CITU must gear itself up to take initiative to organise massive united actions of the working class; it must prepare the workers to initiate solidarity actions in favour of the struggles of the other sections of the people. The workers and mass of the toiling people, having experienced continued poverty, unemployment, price rise, retrenchment, closure etc under Cong (I), Janata, NF and present Chandrasekhar regime, would be eager to know what policies are responsible for their sufferings. This is the opportune moment for the CITU, while heading the struggles of working class, to identify and focus on the policies that are responsible for these consequences, and mobilise them for reversal of these policies. To get the country out of the debt trap and revive the economy, and independent and united movement must be built up where focus shall be:

- Stop dependence on IMF and world Bank loans.
- stop the liberalisation policy.
- stop privatisation.
- stop entry of multinationals and ensure leading role of public sector to build up self-reliant economy.
- concentrate on the process of developing indigenous technology.
- reduction of indirect taxation and stepping up of direct taxes.

—strengthening the public distribution system and distribution of all essential commodities through it, and above all concentrating on genuine land reforms to expand the domestic market and employment generation. This conference must bring about a serious turn in the direction of our activities as indicated above.

116. Comrades, in the context of the economic policy of the Government and the pressurisation for privatisation by the World Bank and IMF, it is necessary to have a brief review of our activities in the defence of the public sector.

#### Public Sector :

117. In the Bombay conference we discussed the question of building up struggles to safeguard the public sector following the new economic policy of Rajiv Gandhi of denigrating it and going in for privatisation. The CITU took the initiative to expose the Government's move to denigrate the public sector under pressure from the World Bank. The publication of Arjun Sengupta Committees report on public sector recommending winding up of the loss making units and watering down the definition of the Core Sector to suit the policy of privatisation, the publication of the confidential report of World Bank on Steel industry recommending its privatisation, etc. enhanced the prestige of the CITU among the public sector workers. The CITU played the major role in bringing together the constituents of the NCC and the non-NCC trade unions in the Bangalore and Hyderabad based public sector units to form the CPSTU and organised a big convention at Delhi in October 1986 linking the economic demands with the demand to stop privatisation. The strike of January 21, 1987 was the first joint movement of the public sector workers, which was supported by broad sections of the officers also. Thereafter the 3-day strike during the Bharat Bandh from March 14 to 16, 1988 was another major joint action. The strike was called by the CPSTU demanding scraping of the BPE guidelines and early settlement of Charter of Demands, payment of interim relief to all undertakings including those covered by Central DA, ensuring full neutralisation of rise in cost of living, against privatisation and denigration of public sector etc. At the initiative of the CITU, it was made to coincide with the Bharat Bandh call to protest against the policies of the Cong(I). A large section of the officers also joined the strike. This

strike was therefore an unique demonstration of all in unity in action to defend national economy and self-reliance. The strike created a big impact on the movement of public sector workers. But due to the Government's delaying tactics to settle wage agreements and attempt to impose the BPE guidelines, the workers were compelled to bog down their struggles for wage agreements. After threat of strikes again, the wage agreements were signed throwing over-board the BPE guidelines. Then further struggles went on for approval of the wage agreements by the Government. The BPE still created obstacles in finalising certain issues like pension scheme. The struggle of the public sector workers took a fresh turn on the question of DA. The Government did constitute a Tripartite DA Committee in pursuance of the pressing demands of the unions to evolve a scheme of neutralisation at all levels of wages instead of the present one of neutralisation at the lowest level only. But the Government by passed the DA Committee and unilaterally announced a single DA rate of Rs 1. 90. Under threat of strike the DA Committee was revived. But till now the problem has not been resolved.

118. During this period the officers of the public sector also went on various forms of struggle including strike actions, dharna before the Prime Ministers' place on their various demands and against privatisation. The CITU extended full support to their struggles. While at one hand the unity among the public sector workers and unions has been consolidated, on the other hand there has been a good rapport between the officers and the workers in the public sector.

119. In the service sector there has been attack on the right to collective bargaining. The Cong (I) Government at the Centre enacted a law in 1981 depriving the LIC employees of the right to collective bargaining. By a later enactment the GIC employees too were similarly deprived of the same right. In both the cases, the Government acquired overriding power to unilaterally determine the wages and service conditions of employees. The employees led by the AIEA have been crying out prolonged struggle including strikes against the authoritarian enactment. The NF Government failed to rectify the position and restore the right despite a promise to do so. Yet another aspect is the continuation of

several obnoxious and anti-democratic provisions in service regulations. These need to be democratised.

120. But with all this unity, we have been repeatedly pointing out that our struggle in public sector cannot be confined to realisation of immediate economic demands only. As a part of self-criticism we must admit that the unity we developed in the public sector could not be utilised to expand it to the level of an all out struggle against privatisation. Even in many states, we have not yet been able to form Co-ordination Committees at state level. It is functioning only at all India level. During the period from the Bombay Conference, the Government, both Congress (I) and the short lived National Front have taken further serious strides towards privatisation. All the core sectors are either affected or threatened, like Steel, Coal, Power, Fertilizers, etc. Various steps have been taken towards systematic privatisation of works in different public sector units. As we have seen, the new industrial policy was another step towards systematic denigration of public sector and entry of private sector both Indian and foreign in the areas of public sector. In various states, the state sector units are being sold away to private enterprises. Now there is a move to allow the multinationals in agriculture also in big way. The vigorous drive and campaign against the public sector is to reduce national planning and self-reliance to the planning of a few monopolists and multinationals. Our unions in public sector must realise that if we cannot save the public sector, we cannot save the national economy. Ruthless exploitation of the workers and the people will follow at the hands of the monopolists and the multinationals. The workers will not be able to safeguard their economic demands also.

121. In this back ground, after a long time a convention of public sector workers was organised by the CITU at Bangalore in December 1990. The convention discussed the situation and decided to rebuild the struggle against privatisation.

sector. We hope that the struggle of the public sector workers as initiated by the CITU will take a new turn for the safeguard of the public sector.

### Struggle against Unemployment :

122. Comrades, we have been discussing and focusing on the growing unemployment in the country as a reflection of the deepening crisis of the capitalist path of development. We have been emphasising on the point that to fight the capitalist path we have to wage struggles against unemployment as a regular agenda of our trade union movement. The Bombay conference discussed elaborately on the issue. Com. BTR in his presidential address stressed on the necessity of the organised trade union movement to take the vast section of the unemployed work force in the struggle against unemployment demanding right to work for them and unemployment relief. He warned that neglect to do so will make the unemployed victims of the communal and casteist forces. We got experience of this truth in the recent communal and caste riots that we have already discussed. He therefore called upon to launch actions programmes for the unemployed and prepare for a march to Parliament taking them into the fold along with other organisations. I shall quote the excerpts from Com. BTR's address :

123. "Comrades, the massive challenge of unemployment is not yet properly seen by our trade unions. They often confine their understanding to unemployment created by closure and retrenchment. What we do not see is that millions of new entrants to the labour market are denied any productive work. These people have never seen inside of a factory or a concern. They have no tradition of working class unity and solidarity. In this situation unless the trade union movement forges links with the

public sector etc. At the same time, a large section of the officers also joined the strike. This was made to coincide with the Bharat Bandh call to protest against the policies of the Cong(I). A large do so. Yet another aspect is the continuation of the position and restore the right to enactment. The

shape. We took stock of the state committees which took up the programme. At the Chandigarh Working Committee meeting held in December, 1987, we found Bengal, Assam, Tamilnadu and Karnataka had organised conventions, etc. In the Dhanbad General Council meeting in September, 1988, we found that West Bengal, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh had maintained some continuity in the movement. During the Kalyani Working Committee meeting in September, 1989, apart from the above states, MP, Orissa and Assam organised convention and dharnas, etc. Then during the time the Kanpur General Council meeting was held in July 1990, programmes were taken at Maharashtra and other places. But the continuity was maintained only at a few states like in West Bengal, Kerala and Tamilnadu.

125. The call of the CITU however was taken up in all seriousness by the Steel Workers' Federation of India. The federation observed anti-unemployment day in all the steel units. Then at their initiative an all India convention on Right to Work was held at Durgapur on April 2 and 3. By this time the National Front Government came to power and proposed to incorporate right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution. The Durgapur Convention was attended by about one thousand delegates from all over the country representing various State Committees of CITU and national federations including Central and State Government employees. Comrade BTR in his last document gave the guidelines in the convention for the struggle against unemployment. The Preparatory Committee of various national federations which organised the convention, prepared an Approach Paper based on the guidelines by Comrade BTR. The convention constituted a broad Steering Committee consisting of the representatives of the federations, students, youth, women and kisan and agricultural workers' union. The convention decided to organise a national seminar inviting people from various walks of life and other trade union centres, so that a countrywide campaign can be launched against unemployment. It also called for statewise, districtwise and industrywise convention to mobilise the maximum number of workers, trade unions, students, youth, women, agricultural workers, kisans and the unemployed from the urban and rural areas—all for the preparation for the march to Parliament as envisaged in the Bombay Conference.

126. But the programme could not be carried

forward properly. The Steering Committee met several times with some members. A seminar was held at Delhi. But except two other trade union centres people from other walks of life could not be approached. State conventions were held in Assam, Bihar, Tamilnadu, Kerala and at Nagpur. The Construction Workers' Federation of India also organised one convention.

127. It is true that the situation in the country went on worsening thereafter leading to communal and caste riots and then fall of the NF Government. But we must admit that we failed to carry forward the promise and success of the Durgapur convention in right earnest. We must remember the call of the Bombay conference—massive action programmes in the states with all other mass organisations, with the unemployed both in the urban and rural areas to prepare for the march from the states capitals to Delhi. So it will require lot of systematic and organised work at the state and district levels and chalk out continuous programmes involving other mass organisations and the unemployed to give the shape of a countrywide mass movement against unemployment and for right to work. The question arises whether our State Committees put this issue as a regular agenda in the meetings and plan out the action programmes. The Chandrasekhar Government has already taken a negative attitude towards the promise held out by the NF Government. The number of the unemployed has gone up steadily during this period. I am confident that all the State Committees and unions will take up the matter in right earnest to build up the movement.

### **Closures, Industrial Sickness**

128. Comrades, closures and industrial sickness constitute a phenomenon that is having a cancerous growth in the country alongwith unemployment and contributing to its growth by throwing the employed workers into its rank. As is evident from the State reports, all our State Committees without a single exception are engaged in continuous and grim struggle against closures, sickness and lockouts. On this point there were heated debates in the Bipartite Committee for the new Industrial Relations Law and the CITU demanded even amendment of the Constitution to put a curb on closurers, when the managements pointed to their Constitutional right to close down. Industrial sickness has virtually become a profitable

business for the monopolists and its growth can well be compared with the growth of their assets. We noted during the Bombay conference that total number of the sick units were 1,19,606 till 1985 i.e. upto December 1988, the total number of sick units were 2,41,814, of which 2,40,573 were SSI sick units and 1,242 non-SSI units. Now within three years it has gone beyond two lakhs, But the Government does not have any concern for the casualties of the workers. The Cong. (I) Government had constituted the BIFR to revive and rehabilitate the sick units. But actually it has become a legal institution to sanction sickness and liquidation unless the workers are prepared to pay heavy prices for it. Hundreds of cases are coming to the BIFR, being sent by the managements, in fact to extract loans from the financial institutions to carry forward "business". The BIFR in turn takes "expert advice" from private consultants and as advised them, impose anti-workers terms as conditions to allow loans to reopen the units, like wage freeze or DA freeze for several years, closure of certain units of the factory and retrenchment of certain number of workers. Apart from sickness, the number of direct closures and undeclared closures are also increasing affecting thousands of workers in each state. In the same manner, man days loss due to lockouts are increasing than the man days loss due to strikes. This all constitute another phenomenon of the crisis of the capitalist path that is passed on to the workers.

129. In the Kanpur General Council meeting we decided to organise a joint convention with other trade unions to decide countrywide action programmes. But as I have already said, due to the communal situation we failed to take up programmes on the issue. However, with the ongoing struggles in the states, we have to take up this question without any further delay simultaneously.

#### **Unorganised Workers :**

130. Comrades, it is now about a decade that we have been exhorting on our State Committees to penetrate our activities into the vast unorganised sector of industries, which constitute about 90 percent of the work force. The strength of the CITU not only in membership, but also in militancy can be increased if we can get the unorganised sector's workforce into our trade union movement. This is all the more necessary because vast majority sections

of these workers belong to the backward castes, who apart from living below poverty line and working without any protection of labour laws and social security measures, are socially oppressed too. After our consistent efforts from Kanpur conference and particularly after the Bombay Conference, there has been a welcome development in our work among the unorganised sector workers.

131. After the Bombay Conference the first militant movement was launched by the Delhi State Committee with a three day strike in November, 1988. There after movement started in some other states like Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, UP etc. In Kerala, Tripura and Bengal there was continuous efforts to mobilise the unorganised workers. Tamilnadu and Karnataka also came up gradually. In 1988 November again Delhi went ahead with a 7-day strike. This was a tremendous success despite severe repression by the police and management hirelings. The Delhi strike created a big impact on an all India level. We held several meetings in between to giving an all India shape to the movement. Andhra Pradesh and UP organised solidarity strikes. Bengal held demonstrations. Till then the struggles were waged on the demand for minimum wage of Rs. 1050.00 which became a popular slogan after the Delhi strike. Strike actions were organised by the CITU at UP, Haryana and Punjab. Madhya Pradesh organised a 3-day Assembly gherao. Demonstrations and conventions were held at Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and several other states. Programmes like Rasta Roko etc were organised at Karnataka and other places. We then held an all India meeting of our State leaders and unions at Delhi on July 3, 1989 and decided to organise an all India convention followed by one day strike. A complete 12-point charter of demands was formulated in this meeting. However at this stage the NCC approached us for a joint movement. We agreed, and a joint convention was held at Delhi on 23rd September 1989. But the convention failed to give a strike call. This acted as damp squibb. Although we prepared for strike action later on, but it could not be pursued because of the sudden announcement of the Parliamentary elections. After the elections, another all India meeting was held during the Kanpur General Council meeting. The Kanpur General Council meeting finalised the charter of demands including the minimum wage and called for

observance of a demands week and state level conventions in preparation for a strike at all India level. As per reports from the State Committees the demands week was observed in most of the states. Conventions and rallies were also held in various states like Punjab, Delhi, UP, MP, Gujarat, Haryana, etc. The biggest rally of the unorganised workers was held at Calcutta on October 25, 1990, which mobilised over one lakh workers. This rally was addressed by Com. Jyoti Basu. Various other trade unions have now come for joint actions in several states. At Delhi a strike call has been given for two days on January 22 and 23 alongwith other trade unions.

132. One significant feature in the movement is that in several states our membership has increased significantly from the unorganised workers, like in W. Bengal, Kerala, Delhi, Tripura, Punjab, Rajasthan Haryana, etc. However, we have to go long way in mobilising the unorganised sector workers. All the states have to carry forward the movement in right earnest and increase the independent activities of the CITU in this sector while making efforts for joint movements.

#### **Working Women :**

133. Comrades, we have been drawing the attention of all the State Committees and unions to the vital task of mobilising working women in common trade union programme and to take up their specific problems and pursue the demands. We are emphasising on the necessity of formation of Co-ordination Committees of working women at state level, district levels and union levels for this purpose. We have also been emphasising on the need to bring the working women in the fore front of struggles and give them responsible positions as functionaries in the trade union movement. In the Bombay conference we devoted one full day's session to discuss the problems of working women only. This Calcutta conference is also being preceded by full one day's conference of working women. All our efforts are directed to achieve the goal to take the women workforce as equal partners to strengthen the trade union struggles and not to keep them as preserves for men only.

134. The progress made by the CITU since the Bombay conference is gradual. In their state reports, Assam, Delhi, Tripura, Punjab, Gujarat and Karnataka have reported about their activities and

efforts made in this direction. Tamilnadu has not mentioned anything about working women in their report, although we know that it is making all efforts in the direction. Among all the other states which have sent no report at all, we know efforts are being made at Haryana, Rajasthan, Orissa, MP, Andhra Pradesh, etc.

135. During this period however, the working women launched various struggles in several states and also joined all India movements on all important issues. In the two Bharat Bandhs and other strike actions large sections of working women participated in all the states and were subjected to serious repression alongwith their male counterparts. In several unorganised sector of industries like in Beedi, mining, construction, forestry, in small scale industries, etc women workers launched militant struggles braving all repressions. In Assam workers in the tea gardens launched several struggles, as well as in Tripura and Bengal. In the organised sector also and in Central and State Government and Public sector undertakings, participation of middle class women employees in trade union struggles were significant developments during this period. To mention a few, the struggle of women employees in state and central Government departments, in railways, P & T, in banks, in LIC, of the air hostesses, of nurses for their specific demands like maternity benefits, chreche, etc and against discriminations were significant. Many conferences, conventions and meetings were held by the unions and federations in LIC, Electricity, State and Central Government departments, in P & T, Audits & Accounts, in railway and steel, etc. Special mention must be made about Tamilnadu, Kerala and W. Bengal where almost all branches of LIC held working women's conferences. Our State Committees organised conferences and conventions in various states. In Orissa a two-day conference of working women was held in 1989. Bihar also organised one convention. A series of movements were organised by Delhi, including a prolonged and successful agitation by Social Welfare Mahila Karmachari Union. Madhya Pradesh organised conventions of working women. In Bombay a working women's conference was held in February, 1989 which was followed by a massive morcha in April which was participated by about 5000 working women. The International Women's Day on 8th

March was observed in various states all the years during this period. In Bangalore a convention was held in April 1990, which was participated by about 2000 working women. In Kerala the state convention of working women was held in July, 1990. A large number of working women from various states participated in the 8th September women's rally at Delhi jointly organised by AIDWA and AICCWW.

136. Another significant development was the efforts to mobilise the working women in public sectors and extend support to their struggles. The struggle of the air hostesses in Air India against discrimination in retiring age visa-vis their male counterparts, supported by the CITU and AICCWW met with success. The separate convention of working women in the public sector undertakings held at Bangalore on 19th December, 1989 was a step forward in mobilising the working women in the struggles in public sector and against privatisation.

137. The most significant development was the struggle of Anganwadi women (ICDS) during this period. The all India convention of Anganwadi women at Delhi on April 22 and 23, 1989 and their rally at Boat Club met with success in mobilising this section on a countrywide level. The programme taken by the convention to observe 10th July as the Demands Day was successfully implemented in majority of the states. The convention also decided to form an all India federation of Anganwadi women and constituted a Preparatory Committee for the purpose. A delegation met the former Prime Minister with a charter of demands. Another all India demonstration was organised at Delhi on 7th August, 1990. The charter of demands was again submitted to the Ministers of the N F Government. The federation was formed in a foundation conference held at Udaipur on January 5 and 6, 1991. Now other trade unions are approaching the CITU for joint movements on the demands of Anganwadi women.

138. However, the above report should not carry the impression that our work in the working women's front has made big strides or we are working in an organised manner. The membership of working women in CITU has remained stagnant. The fact lies that despite the growing urge among the working women in participating in struggles, many of our state committees have not yet formed state coordination committees of working women. Assam, Bengal, Tripura, Punjab, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana,

Himachal Pradesh etc. are the examples. We have repeatedly pointed out that working women constitute an important part of the workforce and belong to the weaker sections of the workforce. They are among the worst exploited sections of the workforce. They are the first victims of retrenchment and attack. Besides, they have got specific demands and problems apart from the general demands of the working class, which can be sorted out by the trade union movement only in the struggle against the employers, and not by the AIDWA as is the notion in some states. Their problems cannot be met by the general trade union movement conducted by the State Committees and unions also. It is absolutely necessary that State and union level coordination committees are formed under the guidance and supervision of the CITU. I hope all our State Committees will record positive advance in this respect.

### Fraudulent Price Index Series

139. Comrades, in Bombay conference we discussed about the new Consumer Price Index Numbers based on 1982, which was in the offing. We called for intensified struggle against its introduction without full discussions with the trade unions, because its compilation was fraudulent and defective. Moreover, it was based upon the 1960 series, which itself required rectification by 8 points. Thus the workers would lose heavily in DA. The Cong (I) Government had decided to introduce the new series as a new method to attack on wages of the workers. Since the workers are not much aware about the procedure of calculations of the Consumer Price Index Numbers vis-a-vis the DA we decided that a book should be published by the CITU. The book was published as written by Com. Pandhe. There was some movement and tripartite meeting and so on. But despite all opposition from the trade unions, when the new series was introduced in September 1988, all movements stopped. The NCC which was spearheading the movements backed out. Even the CITU failed to gear up any movement despite repeated calls by the Secretariat. Only a symbolic protest day was observed on 21st April 1989. Only the Maharashtra State CITU launched a successful strike in May 17, 1989, despite backing out by other trade unions. We must self-critically admit that we have failed to justice to do the working class in not making them aware of the heavy loss they are

incurring, while paradoxically they are mostly involved in militant struggles for wage rise and any attack against it. But it is still not too late. I think our state and union leaders should make fresh efforts to build up a struggle through independent actions if other trade unions fail to respond.

### **Minorities in Trade Union**

139. Comrades, we have been emphasising on this issue since several years past. In the Bombay Conference also Com. BTR pointed to our weakness in defending the religious and other minorities. He gave the example of the anti-sikh riots in Delhi and other riots in Maharashtra, etc, where our trade unions failed to protect the minorities. He also gave the examples of West Bengal Kerala and Tripura where our State Committees and unions act according to the demands of the situation. Now the current communal and caste riots have again revealed our weakness. We have elaborately discussed the issue in the foregoing paragraphs.

140. Now there has been some positive developments. Reports from Assam, Tripura, Punjab, Kerala and Karnataka show that our State Committees have taken up the matter to mobilise the workforce from religious and caste minorities into our fold into the same stride of the trade union movement and also take up their specific cause and demands. I hope all the State Committees will take up the issue and report the progress made by them in this direction.

### **Solidarity with Peasants :**

141. Comrades, our closest allies, the kisans\* and agricultural workers are in constant struggles in pursuance of their vital demands like land reforms, remunerative price, against unemployment, for central legislation for agricultural labour, for minimum wage, against eviction, plugging of the loopholes in the ceiling laws, etc. After our Bombay conference they launched big struggles in 1987 and 1988 unitedly. In 1988 the united struggle by the peasants and agricultural workers took a broader shape when the four left parties jointly mobilised their kisan and agricultural workers' organisations. There was land grabbing and courting of arrests in lakhs throughout the country. All our state committees extended splendid support to their struggle by actively participating in the struggles, by courting arrest with them in thousands and by extending financial and

material help. The reports sent by our State Committees from Punjab to Kerala and from Assam, Tripura, Bengal to Maharashtra reveal the participation of workers in those struggles. This was an unique demonstration of our efforts to build up a fighting worker-peasant alliance in the country.

142. During this period, after the N F Government came into power some good measure were initiated. In an all India seminar on agricultural workers, the Government agreed to make a central legislation for agricultural workers. A new agricultural policy was mooted and promised to include the Land Reforms Acts in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. However, after the fall of the Govt. the situation has changed. The kisan and agricultural workers are gearing up for fresh struggles. All our State Committees must stand shoulder to shoulder with them and extend full support to their continuing struggles.

### **Workers' Participation in Management :**

143. Comrades, as I have already reported, the N F Government introduced a Bill on Workers' Participation in Management. This was in pursuance of a national seminar called on the subject in January, 1990. However, the Bill did not fully reflect the conclusions of the seminar. The Bill dropped the decision of workers' representation at Board level also in equal numbers. This was obvious because of the opposition by the employers who revealed their mind in the Indian Labour Conference held subsequently. However, we have submitted our amendments to the Bill. The two most important amendments that we have sought are representation of workers at Board level in equal numbers and representation of workers in all the fora by secret ballot.

144. However, with the fall of the Government, the fate of the Bill may be uncertain. With the Chandrasekhar Government now in power under Congress (I)'s support, our amendments may be rejected. Since workers' participation at all levels and representation through secret ballot have been our long standing demand, it is necessary that all our unions should step up struggles in pursuance of the demands.

### **New Industrial Relations Law**

145. Due to the persistent agitation by the trade union movement excepting INTUC, the Labour Minister of the N F Government made an announce-

ment in the Indian Labour Conference to withdraw the erstwhile retrograde Industrial Relations Bill which was introduced by the Rajiv Government. Simultaneously, a Bipartite Committee was formed with Ramanujam of INTUC as the Chairman to suggest a new Industrial Relations Law. Comrade M. K. Pandne and Comrade P. K. Ganguly were the Member and Alternate Member respectively in the Bipartite Committee from CITU. The Bipartite Committee after a number of sittings failed to arrive at any unanimity. The employers' representatives wanted more stringent clauses to curb the workers' right to strike and other trade union activities and establish their right to closures, lockouts, etc. We opposed the same and wanted improvement of the existing laws, so that workers' right to strike, collective bargaining, etc. are not attacked. We refused to equate lockouts with strikes. We wanted curb on the employers' right to closures. The final report submitted by Ramanujam was one sided and did not reflect our views properly. The left trade unions, viz. CITU, AITUC, UTUC, TUCC, and UTUC (LS) disagreed with the report and submitted a joint note of dissent to the Government.

146. During this period, the National Front Labour Minister also announced that a separate Bill for recognition of trade unions would be introduced in the Parliament. This was also our long standing demand. However, with the fall of the Government, the outcome of the Bipartite Committee's deliberations with our note of dissent as well as the possibility of a Bill for secret ballot for recognition are uncertain and remote. The INTUC has already started a campaign for a new labour policy de novo. Our struggles in pursuance of our demands in these respects also have to be intensified.

### **Textile and Jute Industries**

147. Comrades, we have been discussing about the textile and jute industries which are crisis ridden, in all our meetings and conferences. Comrade BTR laid particular stress on these industries, so as to develop struggles to save these industries.

148. Since our Bombay Conference, we made some advances in organising our workers in the textile industry and develop struggles.

At the Kalyani Working Committee meeting we placed a detailed report on the textile industry, prepared by Com. P. K. Ganguly. First we tried to

build up joint movement with other trade unions. We approached INTUC also. But ultimately only AITUC, HMS and UTUC came forward to accept our proposal. A joint convention was held at Kanpur in October, 1988. The programmes included observance of a Save Textile Industry Day and collection of over one lakh signatures to be submitted to the Petition Committee. But the participation of the other trade unions was not encouraging. Among about 1,20,000 signatures the CITU contributed to over 88,000 signatures. Later we held an all India meeting of our unions at Delhi in April, 1989 and decided to carry forward our independent actions. A detailed charter of demands for all the sectors of the industry, viz handloom, powerloom and NTC mills was formulated with the central demand for nationalisation of the textile industry. As per the programmes chalked out, we held separate conventions of powerloom workers at Sholapur and that of handloom and NTC workers at Delhi and staged a big demonstration of about 3,000 workers before the Prime Minister's place. We revived the activities after the last elections. According to our earlier decisions, an all India Co-ordination Committee was formed. A meeting of the Co-ordination Committee was called at Kanpur during the General Council meeting. A demands week was observed according to the programme taken in the meeting. The crisis in the textile industry however is deepening. Closures have become the feature of the industry. Powerloom workers are extremely low paid and are deprived of all labour laws. The same condition prevails in the handloom sector with growing pauperisation of the workers. The NTC mills are mostly sick and under threat of closures. The Government has started with a move to merge a number of NTC mills together. As per the state reports, workers are engaged in continuous struggles in all the sectors in all the states. We have to carry forward our struggle on all India basis in the industry. The Co-ordination Committee should meet in a regularised manner to carry forward the struggles. With our increased independent activities however, we have to simultaneously develop united struggles with other trade unions again.

149. Similarly, the traditional jute industry, which is still a good foreign exchange earner of over Rs 250 crores annually and having an internal absorption capacity of about 90 percent of the produc-

tion of jute goods, is in deep crisis because of the profiteering business of a few jute barons. Growing closures and progressive reduction of the number of workers through rationalisation and modernisation are the features of the industry. The situation has accentuated because of the policy of the Government to allow import synthetic fibre as the packaging material. The increasing replacement of jute fibre by synthetic fibre has made the condition of 40 lakh jute growers vulnerable. The attempt to introduce poly bags has further endangered the situation. Encouraged by the policy of no-take over the mill owners resort to closures in a phased manner throwing thousands of workers on the street. Helped by the refusal of the Central Government to intervene, they impose humiliating conditions on the workers for reopening the mills. Under such conditions, our Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union and the All India Jute Workers' Federation, as also the left front Government of W. Bengal have been demanding complete nationalisation of the jute industry from the purchase of raw jute to the manufacture and sale of jute goods in the domestic market and abroad. Big struggles have been launched by the BCMU in pursuance of the demand. The struggle has to be carried forward on all India basis by the federation.

### Support to Left Front Government

150. Comrades, during the period from our Bombay Conference, our left front Governments passed through many vicissitudes. The Tripura Government was usurped by the Cong (I)-TUJS gangsters. Nbw our comrades are fighting life or death struggle for restoration of democracy, against the semi-fascist regime. The W. Bengal and Kerala Governments after magnificent victories were subjected to constant threat, slander and discriminations by the Cong (I).

151. The agitation launched by the left front of W. Bengal in pursuance of the long pending 5-point demands including giving clearance to the Haldia Petro-Chemicals, Bakreshwar Thermal Power, etc was a significant event during the period. The continuous campaign, a dharna at Boat Club, the Bengal Bandh, etc caught the attention of the people to the discriminatory policy of the Cong (I) Government at the centre. It was an unprecedented incident that the entire panel of the Ministers, MLAs and MPs

came down to the capital to press their demands. This was followed by Kerala later during the period. The agitation by the left front of West Bengal and the LDF of Kerala brought to the forefront large sections of workers protesting against discriminations and demanding devolution of more funds to the states and realignment of Centre-State relations. This was followed by the magnificent victory of the left front in the municipal and Calcutta Corporation elections in 1990. The installation of the NF Govt. brought welcome changes in the Centre-State relations. However, the appearance of the Chandrasekhar Government has again threatened to change the situation. While we greet the left front of W. Bengal and the LDF of Kerala for their steadfast performance in the defence of democracy, national unity and people's interest despite limitations of the bourgeois-landlord Constitution, all our unions in all the states from class angle must demonstrate their support to these Governments in their day to day activities and struggle to safeguard them.

### Struggle of Government Employees :

152. The struggle of the Central Government employees during the period did not make any advance worth recording. However, in W. Bengal particularly their movement has been good particularly with two important demands, viz., deletion of Articles 310 and 311(2) (A) (B) (C) of the Constitution which smack of master-servant relation and under pleasure doctrine the authorities can dismiss any employee without giving any reasons or chance to defend, and the other for parity of pay with the employees of central public sector undertakings. In Assam and some other states also some good movements were launched. Because of hard core reformist leaders their participation in all national movements and strikes also have been very much discouraging. During the Bharat Bandh of course the confederation did support the call, but they failed to participate in it. A small militant section of course in some departments are working hard to vitalise the struggles. The CITU and the NCC have been trying to get these employees numbering over 35 lakhs to come to the fold of all India trade union movement, especially in the struggle for right to work. They attended the Durgapur Convention also.

153. The State Govt employees numbering about 65 lakhs however launched militant movements

including strike struggles under the leadership of the All India State Government Employees Federation. Apart from deletion of the same retrograde Articles of the Constitution, their main demands were parity of pay with Central Government employees and devolution of funds by the Central Govt to the state Governments. Through militant strike struggles in several states like Bihar, UP, MP, Tamilnadu, etc they have been able to wrest their demand for parity in pay. Despite all threats, they participated in the Bharat Bandhs also. They are also in the Steering Committee for right to work. The CITU has been extending full support to their struggles.

### **Trade Union Approach to Technology :**

154. Comrades, we have not discussed about the problems faced by our workers and unions due to technological changes in an indepth manner earlier. It is necessary that with the drive for modernisation, computerisation, and new technologies we must try to make indepth studies of the impact in the industries and trade union movement. The development of new technology all over the world has raised several problems of policy towards technology. Trade union movement has to adopt a proper technology policy which will meet the purpose of improvement in the living standards of the people as well as protect the interest of the working class and the people. In the Third World countries in particular the introduction of new technology has raised several problems of approach towards it. It is not correct as alleged by the ruling classes that the working class and fighting trade unions are opposed to technology as such.

155. Multinational companies who by and large are controlling most of the technological innovations and patents are charging excessively higher prices for the transfer of technology. As a result of this, the developing economies are finding it extremely difficult to compete with the technology of the multinational companies despite low rate of wages in these countries. While giving technology, the multinational companies keepsome intermediary goods in their own hands and keep the developing countries dependent on them for those products for which they take their pound of flesh. Moreover, the multinational companies do not supply to the developing countries the latest technology but the second grade or third grade technology which they are going to discard or have

already discarded. Quite often, in the name of transfer of technology, equipments and components which do not suit the conditions in the developing countries, are being supplied and thus the technology either cannot be utilised gainfully or becomes extremely uneconomical. In coal mining industry, for example, huge quantity of equipments is lying idle because the technology and the equipment were not suitable to Indian geo-mining conditions. The experience of Durgapur Steel Plant has clearly shown that the plant could never achieve the rated capacity despite payment of high prices for the equipment and machinery.

156. The introduction of new technology is generally accompanied by creation of huge surplus manpower. With every new technology unemployment rises. Though due to pressure of working class resistance the workers are not retrenched, but through the device of voluntary retirement schemes and not filling the posts lying vacant due to natural wastage the employers are in a position to drastically cut the manpower. If along with the technological advance, the productive capacity is also expanded then the manpower can be redeployed in the expanded programme of production. The employers whose chief motive is only profit, do not take into consideration the problems faced by the workers while introducing new technology. Due to large number of unemployed in the country, the market is shrinking day by day and the new technology even it can produce more goods is unable to find market resulting in curtailment of production. In the absence of additional availability of market, the new technology often encourages only increase in the unutilised capacity in the industries which is harming the cause of economic development in the country. The question of redeployment of workers after modernisation has become a very painful process for the workers. Highly skilled workers are asked to do the job of unskilled workers and put in lower levels in new production process which will adversely affect their levels of skills.

157. Besides, there is another important factor. The technological changes bring about a change in the composition of the working class also. A new strata of skilled and highly skilled work force is created. From class angle we have to prove how far our unions have been able to get them in the trade :

union struggle and maintain the militancy in the movements.

158. Multinational companies quite often dump technology on developing countries which is not really required for those countries. The developing countries can keep a large population engaged in gainful jobs without that technology. For example, bringing in sophisticated technology in the manufacture of soap, match boxes, biscuits etc is not required for the country's economic development. India can do without this technology and can use the scarce resource for development of Heavy Engineering Industry like engineering, steel, oil and other sectors.

159. The arrival of new technology has also brought several hazards to the working class and the people of developing countries. It has been established by research work that Cathod Rays emitted by Video display units of the computerised equipment is seriously affecting the eyes of the person working on it. These rays also affect the pregnant women and the new born baby also develops health deformities. Trade union movements in England, Canada, Australia and other countries have jointly demanded that pregnant women should not be allowed to work on these machines. As a result of vibration, big noise, excessive heat and generation of dust several health hazards are faced by the workers. However, sufficient protective devices are not introduced along with the new technologies. This has increased the dangers of occupational diseases and it has been proved beyond doubt that the multinational companies which have introduced the safety measures in their own countries do not send these safety devices when technology is transferred to the developing countries. Apart from occupational hazards, the question of environment, pollution, ecology, etc are also required to be studied.

160. The introduction of new technology in a reckless manner even where indigenous technology is available, hampers the development of indigenous technology with the result that the developing countries increasingly become more and more dependent on developed countries. To achieve self-reliance in economy it therefore imperative that indigenous technology should be developed and foreign technology should not be allowed to enter where indigenous technology is available. Despite the impressive infrastructure of a premier organisation like the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR),

which was established with the objective to achieve self-reliance in the field of science and technology for industrialisation, its vast resources, and potential has not been utilised. The potential of our various national laboratories and research organisations has to be fully utilised for this purpose. Hence what is opposed by TU movement, is not new technology as such, but the policy which permits indiscriminate and reckless introduction of technology, which endangers self-reliance, retards industrial development and development of indigenous technology, attacks job security and job potential, neglects protective and safety measures, which the various governments at the centre continue to follow, succumbing to the pressure of IMF and World Bank.

161. The trade union movement therefore should ensure that use of technology is selecting on the basis of the understanding given above, and choice of technology should be determined by the requirement of the economic development of the country and to protect the interests of the people. All this must be decided in consultation with the trade unions, which must have a full say in the matter. Unless the programme of introduction of new technology in the country is accompanied by programme of massive job generation, the introduction of new technology will not be able to help the developing countries.

162. We sent a questionnaire on this issue to the State Committees. Only Assam, Punjab and Kerala have replied that although their effects on employment are being campaigned in meetings and journals, yet no proper studies have been made. In Kerala the skilled workers are approaching the CITU for membership. The issue should be discussed and future work and studies should be done and the workers educated in this respect.

### Housing for Slum Dwellers

163. Comrades, before I go to any other issue, I would like to raise this new issue of housing for slum dwellers, which we have never taken up earlier seriously. We should take cognisance of the fact that the problem of housing for the slum dwellers has grown very seriously with the march of time. We have to recognise this as one of the greatest vices of the capitalist path of development, not only in India, but in all the capitalist countries in the world. Even the UN had called for observance of international

year for shelter for the homeless. The slum dwellers are one of the most down trodden people. We cannot restrict our trade union movement for our organised workers only. We have to take up their cause, otherwise the situation may be exploited by various so called voluntary organisations, which are funded from abroad and supported by the Government, to mobilise these slum dwellers against the organised trade union movement.

164. But apart from that, we must also note, which we often forget that majority of these slum dwellers are from the backward castes and they work in the various unorganised sectors of industry, whom we are trying to mobilise in our trade union movements. The charter of demands formulated in the Kanpur General Council for the unorganised workers contain the demand for housing. It is therefore necessary that we take up their cause and demand of the Central Government for allocation of sufficient funds for housing for the slum dwellers.

### Struggle for Trade Union Unity :

165. Comrades, the question of trade union unity as you are aware, was raised by the CITU immediately after its formation in 1970 with the slogan—unity and struggle. We have to struggle for unity. Through our struggle for unity, we could form the United Council of Trade Unions (UCTU) and then the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions (NCC) at different stages of development of the united struggles of the working class.

166. The NCC did play a significant role in developing united trade union movement. Since the Bombay Conference, the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions, conducted several campaigns on various problems facing the working class. Its popularity among the working class is immense and it has been possible to even involve the unions not belonging to National Campaign Committee with the joint movement on common issues. However, the growth of NCC has raised certain problems. Several industrywise federations, some of which have larger membership than any constituent of the NCC, complain that they are not given proper weightage in the activities and decision makings of the NCC. Although some extended meetings are held, yet the NCC essentially is based on coming together of Central Trade Union organisations. The industrywise federations get a secondary status.

167. The decisions of the NCC are generally taken by unanimity and if there is a dissenting voice by any organisation, the NCC is not in a position to take decision. For instance, when BMS did not agree to support a call for Bharat Bandh of 15th March, 1988, the NCC officially could not give a call. Only six trade unions jointly gave the call.

168. There are occasions when it is possible to involve the INTUC unions in the united movements, but some constituents of the NCC cannot become a party to this. For instance, on the question of communalism, it was not possible to hold the convention along with BMS, but we united with INTUC in the convention organised by the Central Trade Union organisation. Another experience we have got is that on certain occasions it is not possible to give a call for direct action due to opposition of certain constituents of the NCC. For instance as I have already mentioned earlier, in a convention of the unorganised workers, called by the NCC, the CITU's proposal for one day industrial strike of the unorganised workers could not be carried through due to opposition of their constituents of the NCC.

169. Despite all these ups and downs it is important to note that it was during this period a form of all India unity, wider than NCC, but including the constituents of the NCC, could be forged on the public sector front, through the CPSTU. United all India actions through the CPSTU have already been narrated in brief in the section dealing with public sector. Its impact and implications for the T. U. movement should not be underestimated. This unity and united actions had drawn the mass of the INTUC workers into common action, though the INTUC leadership had kept away from the CPSTU; had facilitated forging common position among all TUs including INTUC leadership at the wage negotiating table as against the management. These united actions had a role in inspiring the public sector officers to unite among themselves on trade union lines, and adopt the workers' forms of struggle like dharnas, demonstrations, mass casual leave and strike etc. This in its turn has narrowed the gap between officers and workers, built up fraternal relations and had reached the point of joint all India strike action on October 11, 1990. The CPSTU however had to defer the strike due to unilateral withdrawal by one of the constituents and vacillations by some others. But the officers went on two day strike on October

11 and 12. Had it been a joint action, it would have been an historic industrial action in public sector.

170. There are some comrades who do not appreciate the significance of this trend of unity and fraternity between officers and workers organisations, since some officers have taken up positions against workers, and were party to certain misdeeds of the top management. While fighting against these erroneous behaviour of some officers we must ensure better co-ordination between officers' and employees' movements so that we can play a major role in improving the performance of public sector and strengthen self-reliance in the national economy.

171. Looking into the developments of united struggles, Comrade BTR had suggested expansion of the NCC. He developed his idea to the formation of a Confederation with all central trade unions and federations, where all issues concerning labour and economic policies can be discussed freely and decisions taken unanimously. This is what Comrade BTR said in the Bombay conference. However, the Confederation cannot be formed by giving slogan only. He said that the problem before trade union movement is that how to gather together all the trade union centres and federations with different political outlooks and background, with their different international perception and their different outlook on trade union movement itself. He therefore stressed the necessity of trade union unity in different forms, in different industries, in different states on different issues and with different trade unions on common agreed points. These may be on economic issues, price rise, closures, lockouts and industrial sickness, on attacks on trade union rights, against repression, on communal issues, on cooperation with the left, democratic and secular parties, on international issues, etc. If there is unity with any trade unions on any of the issues, that should be pursued. This would bring together sections of the working class on particular issues and create the scope for further expansion and understanding with other sections of the working class.

172. To achieve this, Com. BTR stressed the need for intensifying our independent activities among all sections of workers, so that the common understanding forged below will be reflected at the top level, on the very issues where NCC could not act in unison. Some of our trade unions do not recognise the important role of independent activity in forging unity and united action. It is our experience that wherever our unions are active and take initiative in

organising joint movement, the NCC, or CPSTU or similar forms of united movement have got well. Wherever, we lack initiating, there the joint movements also have become defunct.

173. It is true that CITU's active role in forging unity and united actions, has raised its prestige and influence in a big way nation-wide, statewide and at local levels. But crucial and essential part of our review of these united action shall be, how far they have changed the co-relation of forces in favour of CITU and CITU line, how far it is reflected in our membership, and how far these united actions have helped to raise the consciousness of the workers.

174. There will be opposition and obstacles, particularly at this juncture of international situation when deideologisation and independence from political parties are being preached, and some of the trade unions are gulping these ideas in India, such obstacles are bound to increase. But with determination we have to carry forward our task in the above line with the slogan for a confederation overhead. Reports of our experience at state and union levels are necessary for this purpose for review. But unfortunately, only Assam, Punjab, Karnataka and Kerala have given their experiences in this matter. In the absence of reports from the states on these all important aspects I am not in a position to place before you any generalised conclusions. I request the delegates to deal with these aspects in concrete terms during the discussions in their respective states, so that the lag can be made up with your contribution.

### State of Organisation

175. Comrades, both the Kanpur and Bombay Conferences gave clarion calls to strengthen the CITU organisation. There is no doubt that during the period from our Bombay conference, there has been a significant development of the CITU. The paid membership with annual returns during the four year period from 1985, on the basis of which the Bombay conference was held, to 1989, on the basis of which this conference is being held, has increased by about 6 lakhs. The membership of all the States, except Karnataka has shown increase. During the period the number of closures, industrial sickness and lockouts have increased by leaps and bounds, the economy has sunk to critical depths, there has been a meteoric rise in the prices of all commodities and unemployment, new technologies have caused redundancies and adversely affected the growth of

employment. According to an ILO report all these factors have adversely affected the membership of trade unions in various advanced capitalist countries and the developing countries, showing a downward trend. Thus it is a positive achievement of the CITU to increase the membership despite all these adverse phenomena. I would particularly appreciate Punjab, Tripura and Assam for the growth of membership despite serious situations in these states, specially in Tripura, where the semi-fascist gangsters are directly attacking the CITU unions, which the ILO also has taken cognisance of. Similarly West Bengal has shown a massive increase in membership despite being one of the worst hit states by closures and lockouts and discriminating industrial policy by the Congress (I) Government at the centre. Kerala likewise has shown notable increase in membership despite its main base, the traditional industries having been brought to the position of ruination by the erstwhile congress led UDF Government. My appreciation goes to all other states, particularly the proverbial weaker areas and the Hindi belt which have recorded increase in membership. This growth has been possible because of the assiduous work and militant struggles launched by our workers holding high the banner of the CITU braving murderous attacks by the police, the management hirelings and gangster elements. As we have seen in the preceding pages, with the growth of the organisation and initiating joint struggles, CITU's influence in the trade union movement in the country has increased.

### Membership

176. But comrades, we cannot afford to remain complacent about the above growth in membership. There are several negative traits in our functioning. As we have been repeatedly pointing out despite this increase in membership, it still lags far behind the actual influence of the CITU. More systematic drive is therefore necessary to get this influence reflected in membership. Secondly, despite the increased membership, you will find from the chart that although the total number of active unions are 4,648, only 2,776 unions have sent annual returns, on the basis of which this conference is being held. It is a great organisational lag that about 2,000 unions failed to submit annual returns and do not come in our record of membership which would have further increased. And this lag has been shown despite series of circulars and pointers on the issue

during the Working Committee and General Council meetings, especially when the Government verification process is scheduled to start on the basis of 1989 membership.

177. Secondly, you will notice that the Bombay Conferences was held on the basis of membership of 2,714 unions, which had submitted annual returns. So there has hardly been any increase in the number of our affiliated unions. This is a very serious matter. I would ask our delegates to explain this paradox during the discussions.

178. Another serious factor you have to note is that despite all this increase, our membership has registered very little growth in organised and modern industries. Although the State Committees have not replied to this point of the questionnaire sent to them, yet this is a reality that the position of the CITU has remained almost the same in the modern big industries since a long time. Examples are Steel, HEC, BHEL, Fertilizers and many others. We sent the questionnaire to our industrial federations also. But there is no reply from any federation except from construction worker Federation, BCMU and JCI Staff Association. This is a great lapse in our organisational functioning. As a matter of fact we have not been able to make any reporting on the activities of our industrial federations. This is related to lack of understanding about modern industry and about the emerging working class in the modern industry. Even the comrades working in big integrated plants are not conversant about the details of the industry. This results in failure to intervene in major issues like technological matters, safety, corruption, etc. In big industries another shortcoming is unplanned cadre utilisation. In many places departmental or shop level committees are not formed. The unions function through the Executive Committees alone. This practice cannot put the entire rank into continuous work and therefore cannot result in growth of membership. We have to note that growth of membership is related to democratic way of functioning of the unions.

179. There is another scenario that is continuing. The development has been uneven. Among the most industrialised states, West Bengal has made the most advance in membership. Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh have also advanced. Built in the two most industrialised states in the country, viz Maharashtra and Gujarat, the CITU continues to be

very weak force. We are not there in any key industry in these two states. We know the task is difficult. But what are the problems? What are the difficulties? What efforts are made to make dents and have a footing in the big and new industries growing in these two states? Gujarat of course corresponds and sends reports to the Centre. We know the problems of cadre building and leadership are there and efforts are being made to develop. But so far Maharashtra is concerned, the Centre is completely in the dark. There is no report. Even communications from the Centre are not replied. This is a serious lack of organisational functioning and cannot help in revamping the organisation. Take for example, the crisis in the textile industry, or of the largest and prestigious industries of the country employing over 15 lakhs workers and having a big impact on the national economy. It is crisis ridden and from the report you have seen that we are making serious efforts to mobilise the workers in struggles to save the industry. Maharashtra and Gujrat are the two leading states in textiles. But what is our position in textiles in these two states? It is negligible. Take another example—sugar industry. Maharashtra is the leading state in the country in sugar with modernised mills. Maharashtra politics is controlled by the sugar barons. We have formed a federation in sugar industry also a few years back. But as yet there is not a single CITU union in the sugar industry in Maharashtra. What are the efforts made in this regard? The point is, if we are to really renovate our organisation, then we have to enter the big organised and modern industries and set the plans accordingly in every state. The Bengal-Kerala membership being the major parts cannot remain the criteria for organisational development.

180. So far as the unorganised sector is concerned, is a good trend that a number of our State Committees have increased membership through this sector of industries. In West Bengal and Kerala, unions and federations of different sections of workers in the unorganised sector have been formed. Punjab has formed a strong union of brick kiln workers. Haryana also has formed unions of brick kiln workers. Beedi unions have been formed in several states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Tripura, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, etc. We have formed an all India Co-ordination Committee of our Beedi unions. In handloom Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka have made

advances. In powerloom however our activities are limited to Maharashtra only. It is necessary that the State Committees should plan to enter the big sections of unorganised workers like this so that we can organise them on all India level and wage country-wide struggles of each section and advance the struggles of the unorganised workers as a whole. This is a very important job not only from the point of increasing membership, but also from the point of mobilising the backward caste workers and women who constitute the vast majority of the unorganised workers.

181. So far as women workers are concerned, I have already pointed out that their membership has remained stagnant. This is because of our lack of consciousness to mobilise women workers as members of the unions by taking up their specific problems. I would repeat that without making Co-ordination Committees function we cannot achieve our objective. Delegation of women workers in the State Conference as compared to males and their representation in the State Committees are miserably poor in almost all the States including in W. Bengal. To keep a record of this the centre has sent a circular to the state committee. I hope the state committees will send their replies accordingly.

182. So far in our drive for membership, we have been keeping records for statewide growth only as a whole. But this is not sufficient. For a systematic drive all the State Committees will have to chalk out concrete plans to increase membership industrywise and district wise; in the organised sector and unorganised sector; among different sections of the unorganised sector; in public sector and private sector; among middle class employees, central and state Government employees; women workers; skilled and highly skilled technical workers, etc. Apart from the standpoint of organisational development, we have to take into consideration the fact that the Government's verification process is based on industrywise assessment also for giving representation in various industrial committee. In the entire process we have to take particular drive in enrolling the young and new entrants in the workforce.

183. On the question of membership, I would again point out the lag of our unions in the submission of annual returns. The practice of rushing annual returns during conferences has to be stopped.

All State Committee must get the returns each year so that a proper record of annual growth of membership can be maintained. The practice of withholding the membership fees to the centre has also to be stopped. Membership paid by the workers and deposited to the states must be sent to the centre forth with. For this conference we had to send several circulars to expedite the same. Himachal Pradesh for example had sent affiliation fees for only one union till about only one month before the conference. The balance came only after telegrammes. This is a serious organisational lapse which has to be stopped. We must see that State Committee leaves are paid to the State Committee.

184. On another point I would like to draw your attention. It is accounts, which is not maintained properly. In many state conferences accounts are either not placed, or it is not audited. This practice has to be stopped forthwith. All States must place audited accounts to the delegates.

### Democratic and Collective Functioning

185. In the Bombay conference we dealt with the question of democratic functioning in an indepth manner. It was emphasised that democratic functioning means broad involvement of the members of the various committees at different levels in the day to day functioning of the unions. It also necessitates broader involvement of the general workers in the process of decision making and in execution. It cannot be limited to the Constitutional requirement of calling meetings of the Committees within specific periods which is a must. The importance of democratic functioning has to be understood in the perspective of our task of mobilising the class as the leader of the movement for social transformation. The class cannot be developed by spectres only. The democratic functioning of the organisations at all levels ensures an effective process of interaction between the leadership at various levels and the general workers on the issues facing the trade union movement, on correct approach and outlook of trade union movement, on economic struggles, political, national and international issues. This living link between the workers and the leadership helps in turn in developing the spirit of collective functioning and information sharing with distribution of job responsibilities and check up, cadre building and growth of future leadership in a continuous

process. This practice can unleash militant activities in the field, which alongwith ideological education helps in raising the class consciousness of the workers. Criticism and self-criticism have to be component parts of this democratic process. Comrade BTR used to criticise our lag in this respect. He used to say, "instead of practising proletarian democracy, we indulge in petty-bourgeois bureaucracy". The decisions may come from higher committees. But there must be conscious efforts to get the same through democratic consultation.

186. The system of sending delegates to different conferences and the choice of speakers have also to be democratised. We often get complains at the Centre. The conference loses its leading role if we fail to do so.

187. This is another discouraging factor in our organisational functioning. There are comrades who hold leadership of dozens of unions and federations and controls a number of industries, and hold numerous responsibilities, in one hand. This cannot help in democratic functioning of the unions, nor in cadre building. It creates a bottleneck in the growth of new generation of leadership. It reduces the organisation into a body of one leader and his volunteers and creates a fertile ground for sychophancy and factionalism. We must discourage and stop this practice.

188. Now so far as holding the state and district committee meetings are concerned although the states which have sent replies to the questionnaire sent by the Centre have stated that they hold the meetings regularly, yet there are states which do not hold them as such. Written reports are generally not placed in the meetings and very often the meetings are over within two or three hours. The struggles are not properly reviewed. Some times the meetings are held in a ritualistic manner only to implement the instructions from the centre. The same process is being done at the district and union levels too. Generally all the members do not attend the meetings also, sometimes only a minority attends. Some times notice of the meetings are very short making it impossible for the members to attend the meetings, and steps to ensure full or majority attendance are not taken. This practice must be stopped. Written reports should be submitted in the meetings. Full review and analysis of the situations, connecting them with national situation and struggles of the workers at state and all India level should be made.

## Communication Channel :

189. Comrades, the communication link is a vital part of our functioning as an all India organisation, and this is one of our biggest lapses. We have been repeatedly hammering that all communications from the centre to the states must be passed on the districts, unions and grass root levels, and similarly replies must come to the centre. But this is not happening. For example, a questionnaire was sent to the states and the federations on various points including the organisation. Replies have been sent only by Delhi, Punjab, Assam, Tripura, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu Gujarat, Andaman Nikobar & Goa. The vast majority of the states including the biggest one W. Bengal have not sent replies. How can the General Secretary prepare an analytical all India report if the states do not send reports? —In the replies Delhi has stated that state committee meetings are held regularly, reviews are made, etc. But where are the regular reports of such activities? Even during the historic seven-day strike on minimum wage, the centre had to telephonically ask for reports. Maharashtra neither sends reports, nor replies to any central communication. W. Bengal replies to communication but does not send regular reports. Kerala send reports only during meetings of the Working Committee or General Council or conferences. Reports from Andhra Pradesh are irregular. Among the smaller state committees, Himachal Pradesh virtually keeps itself delinked from the centre. The Bombay conference reviewed these phenomena as trend of federalism. After the Bombay Conference, the Secretariat discussed the matter and issued several circulars asking for reports. The State Committees were also asked to send reports of the meetings of State Committee and office bearers. But the situation has not improved till now. We receive reports only from Assam, Tripura, Punjab, Haryana, UP, Bihar, MP, Gujarat, Karuataka and Tamilnadu. But not all state committee meeting reports. In fact Tamilnadu is the only State Committee which keeps the communication channel with the centre regularly.

190. Comrades, I know difficulties are there. The states and the cadres are busy in continuous struggles. There is always a dearth of cadres. But in the midst of all these a team work has to be developed and practised giving job responsibilities in the manner stated above, so that this communication

channel remains unbroken, otherwise the development of the CITU as one big all India organisation will become difficult. The State Centres have to be strengthened with additional cadres. A number of office bearers including the President and General Secretary must stay at the State Centres. Efforts to increase the number of whole time workers have to be made. I hope you will accept the criticism in right spirit and act accordingly.

## Trade Union Education

191. Now I shall draw your attention to the necessity of trade union education referred earlier. In this respect almost all the eight states have replied in the affirmative. Although some states are holding trade union classes, yet a systematic approach is yet to develop, particularly at union level. Moreover, generally they are held in a ritualistic manners with some traditional subjects. No proper syllabus is drawn. What is required is to raise the ideological and political consciousness of the workers, cadres and leaders, so that they realises the political task as a class. Self-critically I will blame the centre for the lag. However, we have discussed the matter in the Secretariat. Some of our central leaders have been given the responsibility to draw a syllabus and carry forward the task. We shall have to take it up in a regularised manner at all levels after the conference.

192. I shall close the organisational aspect giving you some informations about how we are trying to strengthen our functioning at the central office. We have already inducted Com. R. Umanath, Com. Md. Amin and Com. V.B. Cherian at the centre. Distribution of jobs has been made to all the secretaries functioning at the centre. As a part of collective functioning and information sharing all the available office bearers at the centre are meeting regularly. All important mails are discussed and being executed. Reporting of activities of the office bearers are made in weekly meetings. Charges for some weaker states have been distributed among some secretaries. After tours by the secretaries meetings are held for reporting, so that the problems of the states are discussed and approaches are made through collective decisions. Secretariat meetings are held regularly and communications circulated. Excessive tours of certain comrades have been restricted so that all can give maximum time at the centre to strengthen