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# General Secretary's Report

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COM. President, fraternal guests and Com. delegates,

While presenting this report covering a period from April 1983 to this conference, I pay homage to the memory of all those who have laid down their lives in course of struggle for a better world free from exploitation of man by man.

The heritage of proletarian internationalism gets added significance today when the world is facing the danger of a nuclear war by US against the USSR, against the people of the world".

"But it has to be recognised that the trade union movement of our country under the influence of diverse ideologies is hardly playing its part in this gigantic struggle against human genocide. We ourselves have been somewhat lagging behind. But situation is still worse with some of our partners in the trade union movement. All the constituents of the National Campaign Committee are not agreed on the war danger and its sources. Some act as if imperialism does not exist. In the anti-war propaganda our partners are at best the AITUC and the UFUC. In short the consciousness about internationalism and war danger is extremely weak. It is our duty to activate all our unions and the workers behind them. But they are only a part of the working class. It is our responsibility to draw in the working masses of other Central Organisations acting as the spearhead of the anti-war movement. We must warn the workers that an outburst of war will not leave Indian hearths and homes unaffected and that indifference may lead to annihilation or enslavement".

At the outset I warmly congratulate the comrades of West Bengal and Kerala for imposing an ignominious defeat on the Congress (I) and the communal, casteist forces, it had been leading. Com. President has highlighted the meaning of the impressive victory. Even then, I would like to add that in Kerala the victory of the CPI(M) and Left Democratic Front over the communal and casteist United Democratic Front led by the Congress (I) makes a positive contribution for unity of the country. For the first time communal, casteist forces stand defeated in Kerala and the possibility of advance of secular and democratic forces has forcefully presented itself. I am sure that our CITU cadres have been working hard for such victory.

In West Bengal, the CITU comrades had to fight the hoax of one million jobs, one Kg rice at Rs. 2/- and other mischievous lies including one thousand seven crores of rupees as Central assistance. Slanders and lies were repeated in Geobelian style. Undeterred by the political discrimination at the hands of the Centre the working class and the people defended this advance outpost of democracy. The magnificent victory is based on experience of the people, who appreciate the sincere efforts made by the Left Front Govt. led by CPI(M) and our esteemed comrade Jyoti Basu. The two victories together constitute a beginning of further advance in consolidation of the Left Democratic and secular forces through out the country. This also enhances our responsibility to tackle with due seriousness the problem of trade union unity, to which I would come later.

In this report an attempt has been made to assess the collective work of CITU basing the decisions of the last conference.

## Struggle for Peace

The Kanpur Conference formulated that :

"It was Karl Marx who gave the working class the inspiring call to unite its international strength, raise the banner of proletarian internationalism and fight the unjust offensive of war waged by the capitalist ruling classes.

The CITU had been observing the 1st September every year as the "Day of Peace". But a constant campaign to draw in and mobilise the masses on struggle for peace was lacking. Through campaign, a consciousness could however be roused to the extent of talking about "Dangers of War" in the union annual meetings. The visit of a delegation of All Union Central Council of Trade Unions to India at the invitation of CITU and signing of a Joint Communique between these two organisations represented by Com. V.V. Kulik, Secretary of the Ukrainian Council of AUCCTU and Com. B.T Ranadive, our President, gave us an opportunity to intensify the struggles for peace. The communique recorded "Next May all progressive mankind will be marking a remarkable date—the 40th Anniversary of the Victory over German Facism and Japanese Militarism. The second World War, the bloodiest war in the entire history of mankind, has carried away fifty million human lives, teaching the main lesson to the peoples of the world—one should fight against the aggressive course of imperialism. In this context both trade union centres voiced their desires to cooperate in the struggle for the consolidation of the unity of actions of the working class for the sake of achieving peace on our planet.

Both delegations expressed concern over the escalation of the militaristic preparations of the

United States in the Indian Ocean. They fully supported the demands of the workers of Asian countries regarding the dismantlement of all foreign bases in that region and turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace".

In 1986 the CITU Central Council meeting held at a Calcutta noted that "In contrast to these war plans of the USA, the Soviet Union and Comrade Gorbachov have made several proposals to stop the progress towards war and gradually eliminate all nuclear weapons. But the US imperialists refuse to respond.

In these circumstances international unity of the working class demands constant opposition to war and full support to Gorbachov's proposals for peace. On May Day it must be our endeavour to carry the message of peace to the workers and expose US plans for war. The defence of the socialist camp against imperialist war plans constitutes the essence of internationalism".

This was also in response to the appeal of the AUCCTU which had called for our support to the proposals made by Com. M.S. Gorbachov for advancing a programme of complete and world wide elimination of nuclear arms before the year 2000, in the following words: "on behalf of one hundred and thirty seven (137) million Soviet trade union members the AUCCTU appeals to the working people of all countries, to all trade union organisations to give their all round support to the Soviet Union's large scale programme for the complete elimination of nuclear arms".

### Observance of May Day Centenary

The year being the Centenary of Chicago May Day blood bath, the meeting decided to observe the Centenary in a proper manner. A clarion call was given in the following terms "Let our General Council in this May Day centenary year assure the working class of Soviet Union and other countries that our organisation and our working class will do everything to frustrate imperialist plans of war against the peoples of the world to protect peace and gains of socialism. Let me once again assure the AUCCTU that its appeal will be warmly responded to by our CITU unions and by the workers of India".

It is noted that the comrades all over the country had made serious preparations for observing the Centenary of May Day in a proper fashion. A special issue of the Working Class and the CITU Mazdoor journals was brought out, which published a collection of important articles. The main Article "The Revolutionary Traditions of May Day" by Com. President had been translated in almost all major languages of the country in a huge number. Our Punjab comrades took this opportunity and organised special sale of CITU literature worth Rs. 40,000/- throughout Punjab. This measure had helped them to keep the working

class more or less united, despite serious attempt by both the Sikh extremists and the Hindu fundamentalists to raise communal passion throughout the country. It may be mentioned that in February 1986, the INTUC took initiative for bringing together all the ten Central Trade Union Organisations to adopt declarations on (1) Struggle for Peace (2) for National Integration and against communalism and (3) against apartheid. This was a big step and CITU General Council welcome the same. But on the question of peace we have not been able to move beyond adoption of the statement

It may also be noted that the foreign policy of the Govt. of India, which found expression in the Harare Summit of the non-aligned movement, is fully supported by CITU. We consider that the non-aligned movement is an important step against imperialism and helps the struggle for peace.

This year a joint May-Day Manifesto by AITUC was also issued and all our affiliated unions and State Committees were asked to jointly observe the May Day Centenary. The report received from different states as to how they conducted their movement for peace are given below :

West Bengal report states that apart from the yearly programme of observing peace day on September 1st every year :

"The 40th Anniversary of the defeat of fascism was observed in 1985 and it was a major event for the anti-war movement and the movement for peace. CITU West Bengal State Committee observed this anniversary jointly with other mass organisations of West Bengal. The Central programme was organised in Calcutta by holding meetings, discussions, rallies and poster exhibitions and similar programmes were also organised in the districts and industrial belts. This programme as a whole helped to educate the workers about the dangers of war and rouse their consciousness for carrying forward the peace movement."

"On 28th April, 1986 a massive rally was organised in Calcutta before the U.S.I.S. Office as a protest against the bombing in Libya by the U.S. imperialism. Protest movement was also organised against the intervention of the racial government of South Africa in the adjacent countries."

A massive solidarity movement was organised in support of the struggle of the people of Nicaragua against the military intervention by the U.S. imperialism. The response of the working class in West Bengal for giving financial assistance to the struggling people of Nicaragua created a precedence. They contributed Rs. 5.44 lakhs in cash and also donated various materials for the Nicaraguan people of similar amount, including blankets and medicines. With the assistance from Soviet Union the necessary materials were sent to the Nicaraguan people".

The report from Maharashtra States that :

'We have been observing the International Peace on September 1 for the last four years. In 1984 1985 in Bombay, demonstrations were held at the American Cultural Centre. This year, a public meeting was held in which AITUC, UC, Sarva Shramik Sangh and Samant-led unions also participated. Before this, August 6 was observed as Hiroshima Day in Bombay by a procession. Outside Bombay, Hiroshima Day and peace were observed in Nagpur, Ichalkaranji, Uran, Dhavnagar, Nasik, Bhandup, Beed, Wardha, Sangli, Kolhapur and other places by means of meetings and demonstrations. In Nagpur, AITUC participated. In most of the places, student youth organisations had also participated along with CITU in these programmes".

"The May Day Centenary was widely observed over Maharashtra in 1986. In this observance the question of the peace movement was given primary importance, and in many centres one day has been specially kept for the purpose. Republic Day, Independence Day, October Revolution Day, Chinese Liberation Day and other such important national and international occasions are observed at several centres, and our comrades have begun to give greater attention to the question of peace in their gathering. To summarise, the defence of peace, opposition to war, and the exposure of imperialist manoeuvres are being given greater importance in our campaigns than was the case hitherto, this position is being placed before wider masses of the people, and other organisations are being involved in a greater proportion".

The report from Tamil Nadu Committee states,

"Our campaign has improved. Regular observance of 1st September, protest demonstrations and speeches in workers' meeting on this subject has started attracting new sections.

Hiroshima day, solidarity with Nicaragua, protest over the attack on Libya etc were organised by our unions in general.

In the recent campaign against nuclear disarmament good number of our unions were involved by holding gate meetings and sending protest letters to the Embassy. On 16th March 1987, demonstrations were conducted in various parts of the State and in Madras only the demonstration before U.S. Consulate was on 18th March. We could mobilise an increased number of workers in this.

Our journals, referred to earlier, allot pages on this campaign, in almost all issues. Other than this, posters and painting exhibitions have also been arranged in some areas by our unions and some times workers are mobilised in activities organised by our fraternal organisations".

The reports from Karnataka, Haryana and

Orissa self-critically admit that they have not been able to do much beyond observing the "Peace Day". The reports state :

Karnataka report states ;

"Between 1983 and now some of our unions have been observing "Peace Day" on 1st September. In 3 or 4 places public demonstrations are held and hall meetings in other places. Almost all our unions, which observe "Peace Day" publish leaflets and distribute them highlighting war danger and peace efforts of USSR and the need for mass participation in peace movement. It is noticed that participation of our members in peace demonstrations and meetings is poor. We have to struggle to overcome lack of international consciousness among our members.

Haryana Report states :

In the speeches of leaders in workers' meetings danger from the divisive forces aided by imperialism is explained. The Haryana CITU lays much stress on world peace and national unity. 1st September is observed as peace day every year."

Assam report states :

"The peace movement in general is very weak in our state though attempts are being made jointly with other trade unions and every opportunity are availed by the CITU unions to educate the workers and employees. The campaign against war danger is not yet up to the mark. It appears that the workers in general are still very much reluctant to develop the peace movement. Perhaps the leadership also do not react timely."

The report from Orissa states :

"The campaign for peace during the last week of May 1983 was undertaken by some of our unions. The 13th April, 1984 was observed as the peace day in various places. The state could not take any initiative for the observance of anti-apartheid day on 16th June 1985. The 9th August, 1985 was observed as the Hiroshima & Nagasaki Day by all our unions. 6th August, 1985 could not be observed as the state class was going on."

"Throughout the state, May Day of 1985 was observed as 40th anniversary of victory over fascism in more significant manners at Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela, Jharsuguda, Paradeep, Sambalpur, Bhadrak and Barbil etc. In many places AITUC and even HMS in some places had joined with CITU to observe the Day. The occasion of May Day Centenary (1986) was used, among other things, in highlighting the war danger and necessity of the struggle for peace throughout the state. Seminars and other programmes were conducted at different places.

The report from Delhi State Committee states :

"At the call of CITU Centre, 6th August, 1985 was observed as Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day.

"The 40th Anniversary of Victory over fascism was observed and prior to that meetings were organised in all districts underlining its importance."

"Regularly in all union conferences, general bodies and activists' meetings, the need to strengthen the peace movement against the war danger were stressed."

In 1986, responding to the call of WFTU, August 6 was observed as Hiroshima Day. In Tripura a huge rally was organised, which was addressed by Com. B. T. Ranadive. Some of other states also observed the same. The CITU Secretariat responded the call of AUCCTU and directed the unions to lodge protests against the US policy of continuing nuclear tests despite unilateral moratorium by the Soviet Union for more than 18 months. It realised that in order to keep its defence preparedness the USSR may have to resort to further tests if the US administration continue further tests. The Secretariat directed that protest demonstrations should be led wherever possible. All must send resolutions and telegrams to U. S. Embassy and hundreds of telegrams have been sent to the U. S. embassy here. But it can safely be said from the above reports that our campaign is still very weak. We have to make urgent efforts to overcome our deficiencies so that the Indian working class could march hand-in-hand with the peace loving forces of the world to make it nuclear free by the turn of the century.

#### Struggle Against Apartheid

The CITU had been always espousing the cause of the people of South Africa by condemning the Apartheid regime of Vorster and Botha and extending our solidarity. The joint declaration adopted by 10 Central Trade Union organisations and observance of 16th June 1986 as an anti-apartheid day was an expression of the solidarity of the Indian working class in a demonstrative manner. It was decided that the solidarity would start with the observance of 16th June throughout the country so that material contribution could be raised later. Our Karnataka State Committee reported that the State Units of other Central Trade Union organisations did not participate. This was drawn to the attention of other organisations. At the central level, however, the decision to raise funds is being worked out and a committee has been set up with two representatives from each organisation. A decision has been taken in the Joint Bi-Partite Committee for the Coal Industry that the Coal workers would contribute @ Rs. 10/- each, to be recovered from their salary bill. The authorities are trying to contribute the sum to the Prime Minister's Fund directly. This is being opposed. Some of our unions have already started sending their contribution to this committee. It is suggested that all

cheques/drafts be sent through the Central so that we may know which of the unions made their contribution. All State Committees must pay due attention to this..

This year also another anti-apartheid day was observed on March 21st. The report from Tamil Nadu, however is very encouraging. They state "Anti-apartheid Day was observed on 21st March in various centres of the State. In many centres CITU and AITUC jointly observed the day. Neyveli, CITU, AITUC and HMS jointly organised the day. In Coimbatore CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS and NLO organised the day jointly. In Madurai, INTUC, AITUC and CITU jointly observed the day. Workers went to work wearing badges with slogans expressing solidarity with the struggling South African people. In some other districts also badges were printed and distributed. Reports of meeting at various centres are yet to come.

It has been reported that a 3 member student team from COSATU are likely to visit India during May 87'. We must fully demonstrate our solidarity with them in their just struggles.

#### Struggle Against Divisive Forces

One of the most important developments in our national arena during the period is the growth of divisive forces and their intense attempt to Balkanise the country. During the Kanpur Conference, the secessionist threat in Assam was foremost. It was stated in the conference that "the lessons from the blood curdling story of Assam must be fully mastered by our trade unions if the unity of the country is to be preserved... This is a clear sessionist threat to India without the Indian people realising the danger. The bourgeois newspapers sustain the game of deception and cheating and a number of bourgeois opposition parties also join it. Feelings of animosity are being created among the toilers, among people speaking different languages". Warning about the danger of the US hand behind these movements of disruption and quoting from the USIS document titled Project Brahmaputra and the notorious documents circulated by Jean Kirpatrick, the US Ambassador to UN, the conference had pointed out that the Government of India which represents the bourgeois landlords in the country does not take the matter seriously. On the other hand there is a tendency to make opportunistic compromise for securing some electoral advantages.

The General Council meeting in Jaipur having noted the development, therefore, warned the working class, "the bourgeois landlord combination unwilling to uproot the old land relations is also unable to fight anti-national and fissiparous tendencies. This is the experience of all newly liberated countries. That is why the working class and its organised trade union movement has to play a crucial role for the fight for the unity of the people

d the nations, for national integration. Without is the country will rapidly lose its sense of oneness d unity." These had devolved a serious political sk on the entire CITU cadre. The situation in injab took a serious turn, Khalistan forces nder the leadership of Bhindranwale turned the olden Temple of Amritsar into an arsenal from nder such a consistent campaign for Khalistan and tacks on and murder of non-Sikh population ntinued. Smt. Indira Gandhi was shot down in e hands of her own security guards on 31st ctober, 1984. For four days thereafter the sikh opulation was attacked in Delhi, Haryana, M. P., . P., Bihar and many other places. Delhi was orst hit. While it goes to the credit of the CITU nd other democratic forces who extended a hand ' protection to the Sikh workers, and saved ctories and other industrial establishments owned y the sikhs from being looted or gutted, it must owever be remembered that the workers could ot come out on the streets before the attacks. he whole situation was discussed in the working ommittee meeting held at Trivandrum on 31st ay to 2nd June, 1985 and further lessons were rawn. The adoption of a declaration on ational Integration and against comunalism by n Central Trade Unions referred to earlier had iven an opportunity to rouse the entire country on e question. A convention was held at Delhi on 11th May 1986 which was well attended. The ITU delegation came from all over the country. he meeting decided to send a delegation of ntral Trade Union leaders to Punjab. It was lso decided to observe 9th August 1986 as the ay for National Integration and against commu- alism and divisive forces.

To the credit of our CITU comrades every- where, it has to be stated that they have taken the ssue very seriously. The question was discussed horoughly in the Working Committee meeting eld in September 1986, which quoting reports rom Assam and Tripura had recorded as follows :

"Our Assam comrades who have been fighting or over 4/5 years against the chauvinist forces, state in their report the following :

"We took initiative for holding a state conven- tion. The INTUC, AITUC, HMS and UTUC (.S.) responded and successful state convention was held on August 3. The Delhi Convention resolu- tion was translated in the regional language and the state convention discussed it thoroughly and adopted unanimously. Preparations are also going on for organising rallies and processions through- out the state jointly. In the context of the prevail- ing political conditions in the state these programmes are of great significance. Though the conventi n was very much successful, no local daily has published any news on it. Therefore, we have lodged a complaint with the Press Council."

In Tripura, our comrades had to face the murderous attacks by TNV, who have been trying

hard to split the Bengalis and Tripuris. They observed the National Integration Day programme, about which details have been given in the report. That apart that have to rouse people against these attacks. Their report states :

"A protest rally has been held against brutal murder of Com. Amiya Chakraborty, CITU acti- vist and active member of TCKS who has been murdered on 28th June, 1986."

Like our comrades in Assam, our Punjab CITU has been constantly mobilising the workers for communal harmony. It goes without saying that they had to a large extent been able to keep the unity of the workers.

But before coming to their report, we note the report from Delhi State Committee which states ;

"Delhi is directly affected by the events of Punjab. Besides, fanatics of all communities are bent upon rousing communal passions here. Whether it be the Ram Janma Bhoomi/Babri Masjid question or the atrocities on the minority community in Kashmir, pamphlets and posters are being brought out by the BJP and organisations like Shiv Shakti Dal, Hindi Shiv Sena, Hindu Manch, Balmiki Sena, Bajrang Dal, etc. To inflame the Hindu community Trishuls are being distributed in resettlement colonies. The Muslim funda- mentalists have formed the Adam Sena and Ali Sena. Sikh fundamentalists are organising the Dashmesh Sena.

On 11th May, all the General Trade Unions held a joint convention in Delhi on Communal Harmony and National Intergration. About 200 activists from Delhi State attended this convention.

The State Committee decided to conduct a campaign on the question of communal harmony and national integration. In the first phase (from 15th to 31st May) it was decided to educate our activists and in the second phase (from 1st to 15th June) to hold street corner and public meetings. These decisions were implemented by holding 11 meetings in Ghaziabad and 22 meetings and one demonstration in Delhi. Over 10 thousand leaf- lets were brought out by the State Committee and distributed among the workers all over the State.

Due to the movement launched by the Lok Dal in Haryana against the Punjab accord, communal tensions have been roused in Faridabad.

On 18th December, 1986, a people's march was organised by the committee for communal harmony comprising various eminent personalities, teachers, lawyers, judges, artists etc. The CITU participated with all its strength in the massive propaganda cam- paign which preceded the march, held gate meetings, area meetings distributing tens of thousands of leaflets and selling badges. The State Committee had decided to mobilise 20% of the total member- ship in the State and for implementing this decision, the entire machinery of the organisation from the

State Committee down to the factory level was brought into motion and on the day of the march, over 10,000 CITU workers from Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Delhi joined to make it a thumping success.

It has been seen that the workers usually respond in a big way to their economic issues but this time it was our experience that if we take a decision and in a planned way take it to the workers and explain the importance of the particular issue, they respond with much more seriousness even to issues of national importance. The response in this case was much beyond our expectation and the workers in fact rebuffed such trade unions like BMS, who wanted to keep them away from the march.

The report from Punjab State Committee states :

"After the 6th state CITU conference at Abohar in March, 1983 the situation of Punjab has been going from bad to worse. Communal fanaticists supported by American imperialism and Pak military junta are continuing their terroristic activities and are trying their utmost to unleash clashes on communal lines. Divide in Hindu Sikhs has been going on further continuously and it is taking the shape of hatredness. Therefore the main task of the State Committee of CITU and its affiliated unions during the period under report remained to work for the defence of communal harmony and national unity and integrity. The organisation had been busy in ideological campaign against terrorist-secessionists independently and unitedly with other trade unions".

May Day in 1983, 84, 85 and 86 had been celebrated keeping in view this above cited main task of ideological campaigns. May Days were used to celebrate specially with planned efforts of workers and other toiling people to isolate the terrorists-secessionists and in defence of the unity and integrity of the country and communal harmony. May Day celebrations in Punjab during 1983 and 1984 were held independently by CITU and somewhere with AITUC, with utmost vigour. For the preparations of these celebrations the gate meetings, wall writings and posters were arranged in a big way throughout the state. And on the May Day big Peace Marches and rallies were held at Amritsar, Rajpura, Chandigarh, Mohali, Kharar, Nangal, Batala, Pathankot, Asron, Sangrur, Jalandhar, Abohar, Ludhiana and Talwara, etc. On 12th March 84 came a threat from 'Khalistanis' to make us to close our CITU office at Amritsar and on the very next day i.e. on Baisakhi Day they attacked unsuccessfully on the office. CITU organised the city working class against this threat and organised a demonstration of five thousand workers with traditional weapons which not only demoralised the terrorists but also gave an encouragement to the general people of the city. This was done

jointly by CITU and AITUC. May Day in 1984 was also celebrated in a big way for which commendable preparations were done. This was the first time when in Punjab intervention of the Police, CRPF and BSF was extreme in the trade union activities. Therefore, the workers took it as a chance to ventilate their views against this repression and curbs on trade union rights alongwith other issues. That is why the participation of workers in May Day celebrations was unprecedented.

Amritsar City Committees of AITUC and CITU observed the 2nd week of January, 1984 as Communal Harmony week during which area wide meetings and rallies were held and torch processions were taken out in the city. On May 16, 84 a rally was held at Chheharta, when extremists announced to allow this rally to be held and the police was also pressing workers to withhold the rally, because the main thrust of the rally was against the poisonous propaganda of Bhindranwala when its influence was at its peak. This rally was attended by 5 thousand workers and the rally was guarded by the workers themselves with traditional weapons even when the police escaped. This year May Day was also observed by the workers of the city with the processions of traditional weapons. Not only communal harmony struggle but the economic struggles also had the main thrust towards ideological struggle against communal and divisive forces. 31st May strike for the demand of rise in minimum wages was concluded successfully by 30 thousand workers whereas the extremists announced to break the strike by all means at their disposal. The procession started from Putlighar raising slogans against secessionists-extremists. This demonstration of 10 thousand workers has become a glorious event of trade union history of Amritsar. Because it was held at the time when the government had become ineffective and paralysed. As such at that juncture the violent activities of the followers of Bhindranwale were at the highest peak.

In 1985 with the campaign against communal fanaticism there were also joint communal harmony marches and conventions at all most every industrial centres in defence of communal harmony and unity and integrity of the country by CITU independently or with the initiative of CITU five big conventions were held at Amritsar, Chandigarh, Rajpura, Sangrur and Abohar,

In Bhatinda and Malout for maintaining communal harmony and for implementation of Punjab Accord the conventions were held by CITU and the workers contributed Rs. 23 thousands and Rs. 11 thousands respectively for that reason.

According to the decision of 11th May convention of Delhi at all India level there were held two big joint conventions at Amritsar and Jalandhar on June 12 and 13 which were addressed by All India Trade Union leaders. Com. Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary of All India Centre of CITU

asked the working class of the state to see the imperialist forces working behind the communal and terrorist forces and called upon the working class to isolate these anti-national forces from the people and form their own defence committees at village Muhalla level. These conventions brought together the largest sections of the state trade unions working in industrial workers and employees and gave a remarkable encouragement to the people of the state significantly. The participation of CITU and AITUC unions was a major contribution in these conventions.

9th May, 1986 was observed as "Unity and Integrity Day of India". But the AITUC did not agree for joint observance except in few centres. Jathas were taken out for a fortnight to convey communal harmony message to the people and to rouse them against the secessionists and communal fanatics. The CITU workers participated in these jathas in good numbers and the flag marches taken out by Arson and Shella Khurad workers in this respect were not able ones. There were district level demonstrations on 12th March in which good number of CITU workers took part. The 5th April c ll from national level to observe "Save Punjab Day" was observed by organising gate meetings throughout the state".

The State Committee further adds that a state level jatha will be taken out for about a week or 15 days in which there would be a minimum of 400 workers althrough. This would culminate in a huge rally at Amritsar. It was thus a constant ideological campaign and a movement for communal harmony earned the Punjab State Committee of CITU a rich dividend in that although the economic condition was scattered and many industrial establishments had to be closed down, they could maintain the work and organisation of CITU, champion the cause of workers intensifying the struggle for better living conditions including holding rallies, demonstrations and even strikes and they had been able to increase their membership.

Another report from Assam states further that : All the workers and employees organised under CITU unions took a very bold and firm stand against the divisive movements that continued for long seven years in Assam. They opposed all agitational programmes launched by the divisive forces against heavy odds. As many as eight CITU members and one sympathiser sacrificed their lives to keep the CITU flag of unity fluttering. Similarly the unions carried out explanatory campaigns against Khalistan and GNLF movement and so on. All the programmes announced by the CITU in this regard were observed.

Orissa State Committee has submitted a very detailed report which states as follows :

Assam day was observed by different unions through public meetings, gate meetings and G. B.

in last week of May 1983. Booklets available on Assam situation were also sold to the workers.

Similarly booklets on Punjab issue were being sold to the workers. During campaign on Punjab issue by Com. H S Surjeet at Bhubaneswar and Cuttack workers and employees participated in big numbers.

After murder of Smt. Indira Gandhi, tension were sought to be created throughout the state. Our comrades and some unions took active part in maintaining communal harmony. At Rourkela comrades joined the police forces as special police force to curb the ecommunal violence for which Sikh community at Rourkela have developed a special liking towards us. At Jharsuguda, another spot where unions helped to restore normalcy. At Bhubaneswar and Cuttack our comrades have moved to give shelter and confidence to the Sikh people. Processions and meetings etc were held jointly with democratic and secular forces. At Barbil in Keonjhar district, our union also took steps for protection of Sikh community.

As regards Jharkhanda movement, it is now raising its head gradually in the hill track areas comprising districts of Mayurbhanja, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Sambalpur. In Mayurbhanj District it has come out openly very recently where they come with arms in processions. They had given the Jan 26th boycott slogan and took out a procession at Rajrangpur in Mayurbhanja district. In Sundargarh mines belt they have started secret meetings. One such meeting was disrupted and the organisers who had come in the guise of religious leaders of church were chased away by the same workers who had faith on church, denouncing the demand of Jharkhand. Our United Mines Mazdoor Union had taken the lead. Our State Committee has taken up plans for campaign mongst the Adivasi workers. It has also demanded economic and social issues affecting their life before the government which is generally sought to be chanelised in wrong manner by the protagonists of Jharkhanda movement.

Very recently the religious fundamentalist forces of Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities have started their games throughout the State. The untimely car procession of Lord Jaganath throughout the State, refusal of Muslims to sing the national anthem in their festival to be attended by the Governor at Dhamnagar in Balasore district, the arson on several churches in Phalbani district, conversion of poor Hindus to Christinity, discovery of a head of cow in a Hindu temple, communal clash between caste Hindu and Harijans on issue of an inter caste marriage in Jari at Cuttack Dist, recent meetings by fundamentalists of both Hindus, Muslims and Christians and Harijan leaders at various places, participation of leaders of both Congress (I) and Janata Party and Government officials in these meetings and processions, provocative warnings throughout the state have made the

atmosphere tense. The CITU State committee at its meetings on 3rd and 4th March 1987 have recognised the weakness of our unions to pinpoint and counteract it and have taken plans for extensive campaign for 2 months (March & April) and to further chalk out plans and programmes. In one place at Berhampur R.S.S. people threw bombs on the meeting held by CITU and other mass organisations for communal harmony.

The August 9th of 1986, National Integration Day was observed at Bhubneswar unitedly with AITUC, Bank employees Federation, LIC, GIC and State Government Employees Coordination Committee by organising a public meeting. This day was observed by the workers of CITU at Balasore, Jharsuguda, Bolani, Paradip, Rourkela, Cuttack, Joda and other places. The State Committee leaders attended the meetings. INTUC took tactics of dilly dally till last moment and finally observed separately in 2/3 places. HMS, BMS and UTUC (LS) were also neither interested nor participated in the observance. The workers of United Mines Mazdoor Union (CITU) were attacked by the goondas of SAIL management with lethal weapons in the presence of senior police officer and SDO at Barsua Railway Station of Sundargarh district on their way to attend the public meeting on this occasion, as a result more than 20 comrades including female comrades had received serious injury. Earlier the convention against divisive forces on 11th May 1986 was attended by 2 State committee members at New Delhi.

During all these campaigns the role of imperialist powers have been exposed. Particularly on the Punjab happenings the common people have been gradually realising the heinous role of American imperialism to create instability of Indian soil.

Report from Tamilnadu State Committee states :

In our state, other than the All India issues, Srilanka and the language issues had become serious during this period. When chauvinistic sections had tried to rouse the masses, CITU played a role in explaining to the workers, the correct position and this had its results. (This point has been elaborated further).

When the Hindu communalists took up the issue of conversions and other issues, our union, especially in Kanyakumari dist, played a role and campaigned for communal harmony.

Our unions also conducted campaign on Assam, Gorkhaland, Punjab, Ramjanma Bhoomi/Babri Masjid, etc, leaflets were published and meetings were held and joint efforts with fraternal organisations were also made.

In December 1984, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was murdered, anti-social elements made

use of it to attack sikh traders in Coimbatore and only at the intervention of workers, the arson was contained. Our unions took initiative in this.

Another issue taken up by us was the Muslim Women's Bill. Another group of divisive forces active in some areas in the guise of voluntary agencies tried to form trade unions in some districts. Some of the left extremist groups and SUCI section also tried to form unions. These groups have not been successful in general.

Though not a considerable force, these left extreme groups are active among workers in some factories and their main target of attack has been CITU and its functionaries.

Karnataka State Committee report states as follows :

In the speeches of leaders in workers' meetings danger from the divisive forces aided by imperialism are explained. Reports of General Body meetings of some unions contain material on Khalistan extremists, Gorkhaland agitation, Srilanka situation and religious fundamentalism.

CITU State Committee gave a call to observe "Gorkhaland Week" from 2nd to 8th November 1986. Some unions held meetings printed and distributed leaflets. Com. Benoy Krishna Choudhury, Land Revenue Minister of Left Front Government of West Bengal addressed a meeting on Gorkhaland organised by CITU at Bangalore.

Our Haryana comrades had made good work when there was an attempt to rouse counter passions in Haryana as a Punjab fall out. There was a stage when our comrades had to fight almost single handed. But that did not deter them.

Their report states :—

It is a matter of great pride that Haryana working class remained united during Punjab agitation in the name of 'Dharmyudh' and 'Nayayudh' lead by Haryana Sangharsh Samiti. The leaders of Haryana Sangharsh Samiti were unable to involve the working class in Haryana. It could happen only because CITU regularly stressed for national unity. Only organised working class can cherish secular ideals. Haryana CITU is determined to organise the working class despite the dictatorial attitude of the Haryana Government.

In the meanwhile new offensive came in the West Bengal state. The imperialist aided disruptionists and secessionist forces raised their ugly head on the slogan of Gorkhaland and the GNLF became active in the hilly confines of the north of Bengal in Darjeeling hill area and Terai area of Jalpaiguri. Com. Anand Pathak, MP and member of our working committee in a letter to the Home Minister stated :

"The GNLFF started its violent activities in April 6 and since then its rowdies have burnt more than 600 houses, killed more than 30 persons, papped over dozen people, rendered about 3000 sons homeless. The economy of hill area has n shattered. Tourism, one of the main resources ally dried due to uncertain situation. Tea lustry the main economic mainstay heavily fered and sustained a loss of more than Rs. 6 ores and the workers of the Tea plantations lost air wages to the tune of one crore of rupees due the agutation launched by them".

The West Bengal report apprehends that "weak d compromising attitude of the Congress(I) Govt, the centre and the Cong (I) party is encouraging e secessionist forces which in turn emboldens her distriptionist forces who are now demanding tarkhand, Kamtapuri, Jharkhand, etc"

One has to put on record the heroic resistance of the Nepali speaking comrades and other workers in the Tea Plantation areas of Darjeeling as well as alpaiguri districts. The terror regime of the GNLFF ent to such an extent that almost all the 80 states had become isolated island-like human abitations in which only the CITU flags had been uttering. There have been repeated attacks to ear down the CITU flags. The workers had efended the flags at the cost of their lives. We warmly congratulate them for their heroic resistance to the GNLFF deparadations. We also warmly ongratulate our comrades in Orissa mines area, n Punjab and elsewhere who are fighting for ational integration and unity of the country lespite murderous attacks on them.

### Sri Lanka

The ethnic problems of the people of Tamil origin in Srilanka had been engaging the attention of both the governments of Srilanka and India. There was also some agreement earlier which was not implemented. During the past 4-5 years the situation had reached a very serious proportion when attacks on Tamils were intensified by the Srilankan army. Parochial forces vied with each other in raising slogans for marching the Indian army. Even a section of the left were also emotionally involved.

Besides the imposition of Hindi on the people of Tamilnadu from the centre had created a very serious situation. This was utilised by almost all parties to rouse a sentiment against Congress (I) for their narrow partisan ends. In this extreme difficult situation, the CITU cadres had to work alongwith democratic forces in Tamilnadu. The report from the Tamilnadu State Committee states as follows :

"When the attack on Tamils intensified to massacre in Srilanka and the arrival of refugees in India increased, Tamilnadu people were justifiably worried and were angry, Chauvinistic forces, led by

DMK started using it for their ends. Vying with DMK were also a good number of AIADMK leaders. All of them, including the CPI and AITUC leaders demanded direct interverntion of Indian army, CITU and other fraternal organisations had to face this situation and go on extensive campaign against this demand while condemning the inhuman attack against Tamils.

After a period of campaign we could convince a section of the people that the demand for military intervention from the government of India's side is impracticable. At the same time, our trade unions also participated in the State Bandhs organised by political parties at the initiative of State Government. After a short period, we were able to convincingly campaign that the demand of separate state of Elam was not correct and the issue should be settled within the fame work of a united Srilanka with automomy for Tamil people.

At present it can be said that people are generally satisfied with our line on the issue. The cahuvinistic leadership of DMK and the AIADMK section has stopped raising the demand of sending Indian Army. CPI and AITUC leaders have also fallen in line with our position.

On the language issue, there was a statewide struggle recently. The recent development started with the circular in connection with the Hindi week. DMK and its supporters on the language issue decided to make use of it and an extensive acmpaign against 'Hindi' imposition started which actually ended up in raising hatred against Hindi as a language and against Hindi speaking masses. Expecting people to come out in support of their struggle in a big way, DMK leadership chalked out a series of programmes of action which culminated in burning of the copy of a section of the Constitution.

We on our part, while condemning imposition of any language Hindi, or English, went on campaigning our position on this issue. This time our campaign on language issue attracted the people very much".

During these four years attempts have been made to rouse communal and casteist passions. These are a bit different than the earlier ones. There had, of late, been a spurt in these due to the intensified action of the Fundamentalists who are being aided and abetted by the imperialism. Some of them are also due to the worseaing economic situation in the country and have the blessings of the ruling classes. The aim is to divide the people and particularly the working class. The religious fundamentalists, aided and abetted by the US imperialists have been moving to divide the people on communal and casteist line. The Babri Muszid-Ram Janambhoomi issue is smouldering, rather is now being fanned up once again. A few days ago the capital witnessed a determined march of Mustim population demanding a decision on the

Babri Masjid issue with such passions as was never witnessed before.

Report from Maharashtra gives us a picture as to how economic crisis is being diverted to make a section of the working class fight another. The Report states :

In Bombay, communal riots took place in May 1984, for the first time in 35 years of Independence, along with the communal riots in Bhiwandi and Thane. In the first 9 months of 1986 there have been over 20 communal riots in Maharashtra. For the last 2 years, communal riots have been erupting in Ahmedabad and other towns in Gujarat, where there have also been caste conflagrations on the reservations issue. Instances of communal elements committing atrocities on scheduled castes and tribes are in the increase in Maharashtra and also all over the country. Forces taking help from imperialist countries and adopting a 'left' posture are active among the Adivasis. On Dussehra Day, Shiv Sena Chief Bal Thackeray told a public meeting in Bombay to collect weapons for a "Religious War", and the same day RSS Chief Balasaheb Deoras told another gathering that the words "Secular" and "Minorities" should be removed from the Constitution.

The report goes on further to state that : The situation in Maharashtra is extremely serious. The Shiv Sena is today at the head of the communal forces. Twenty years ago, the Shiv Sena first came forward as the champion of the Marathi man. With its work of dividing the workers and breaking the struggles led by the leftist trade unions, it received the direct or indirect support from the capitalists and the Congress Government of Vasanttrao Naik. Even at that time, there were Hindu communal overtones in the Shiv Sena, but linguistic chauvinism was its main plank. After the Emergency, its strength was on the wane, and the appeal of linguistic chauvinism had declined, but during the last three years rapid Hindu communalism has become its main propaganda slogan. The Shiv Sena has been taking a more aggressive posture than the other Hindu communal elements like the RSS, BJP, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Hindu Ekata Andolan and the Patit Pawan Sanghatana. In the 1984 Bhiwandi riots, the Shiv Sena was in the forefront, and ever since then, it has involved itself in the large majority of communal disturbances that have occurred. The Government of Maharashtra has been looking the other way. In 1985, as a result of inner-Congress factionalism, the Vasantdada faction gave the Sena a hand which helped it to capture the Bombay Municipal Corporation elections, a mere four months after the Assembly polls where the Sena failed to make any impression. It scored a repeat performance in the Thane Municipal Corporation. After these victories in Bombay and Thane, the Shiv Sena naturally received a big boost, propaganda became more strident, ambitions rose, and it is now making great efforts to spread to rural Maharashtra using

the weapon of Hindu fanaticism. Another aspect of its communalism is that it is in the forefront of the atrocities against Dalits as evidenced by the incidents in Nasik, Phaltan and Aurangabad.

The situation of Muslims is even more serious. Growing riots in the country, the aggressive postures of Hindu communalism, the Government's dual role have persuaded the Muslim masses that their religion is in danger and their community insecure. Thus, the fundamentalist influence on them has rapidly increased. The 1-lakh strong morcha in Bombay on the issue of the Shah Bano case and the harassment of progressive Muslim activists (the Prof. Rahimatpure case in Kolhapur) is evidence of this. Today, the Muslim League, Jamaat-a-Islami, Ittehad-e-Islami and other such fundamentalist organisations have a strong grip over the Muslim community.

In the meanwhile there is another issue which is agitating and dividing the people. This concerns the question of reservation in education, employment and promotions. Everyone knows that the slogan of sons of the soil is raised to divide the unemployed and the other population. Now the protection granted to the minorities and the backward communities are being utilised to divide the working class while steps are being taken to strengthen trade union unity. The conflict between the reservationist and anti-reservationist in Gujarat be taken as a token of success of the Governments and the capitalists in dividing the working class. The report from Gujarat states that :

At the time of Assembly election, the State Government increased the percentage of Reservation. After the election was over, anti-reservation agitation started, which disturbed the normal life all over Gujarat, particularly in Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat after some days it changed into communal and caste-conflict. On one side Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe Kristis and other side Patels. Normally Patels are Jamindars and big farmers, and they had a hold on the Government. But when Madhav Singh Solanki became the Chief Minister the whole Patel lobby and other forces like BJP and some portion of Janta reacted against the reservation. They started agitation for complete abolition of reservation.

While this reservation and anti-reservation agitation was going on the Government employees started the agitation on the Roster, it added fuel to the fire. Against the roster the Government employees gave a call of continuous strike prolonged for about two months. Over and above Government employees, some Corporation and Panchayat employees joined the strike, and it paralysed the Government working. It divided the Government and semi-Government employees. In different parts of Gujarat for and against reservation and Roster big rallies of 9 to 10 thousand employees were organised. This movement then took a slogan of Remove Madhav Singh and after that all, over

Gujarat most of the all Khatriays came out with slogan Khatriya Bachao.

Though we were weak as organisation but with our CITU understanding all our Unions tried their best in this movement. Our Unions actively worked hard, and so other working forces in Mills and factories or industries were not disturbed.

It adds further that : At the time of Reservation movement there were clashes between Harijans and Non-Harijans, between Kshatriyas and Patels, but afterwards it took a communal shape. Ahmedabad, and Baroda were heavily affected. Nadiad was also affected. After the All India meeting of Trade Unions on communal, divisive and forces, in Delhi, we contacted local leaders of Central Trade Unions including INTUC and NLO, we decided to organise state conference for the same. Before the conference we published a Gujarati Translation of the resolution of the All India Convention.

The Conference was a success. The Chief Minister attended the conference, the other participants were CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, (MKP, NLO and SEWA (working woman organisation). But after that conference, we could not take this movement to the District and taluka levels.

In Gujarat, Vijayanagar in Sabarkantha, Lunagad in Bhavnagar, Garudo in Surat and Solana in Kheda District there were clashes between two castes at some places Harijans and tribals were attacked and murdered. Our local unions rushed there and tried to help them. But the other political parties and Government machineries were not allowing us to meet the people, even the affected peoples were keeping themselves away from us.

It was pointed out in our Trivandrum Working committee meeting as follows :

"There is no doubt that in the conditions obtaining in India and the rigorous operation of the caste system, reservation of jobs for socially discriminated sections becomes necessary as is now provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Similar demands are coming from some other sections. And those who raise this demand often believe that reservation of jobs and seats in educational establishments will solve all their problems. While admitting the necessity of reservation in the cases mentioned above the trade union movement must simultaneously educate all the sections that reservations cannot solve the basic problems of social oppression, rooted in feudal systems and feudal property relations. Thirty years' experience of reservation under the Constitution shows that while some people are provided with jobs, the massacre of Adivasis and Harijans continues as before. Today the ruling party which has lost its influence over the large sections of the people bolsters its prestige by raising the reservation issue for electoral purposes. The aim is to

polarise the votes and in the name of reservation monopolise the votes of certain sections, who normally would have voted for democratic and radical parties. This is what was done in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Both the Governments suddenly announced new forms of reservation which led to a social turmoil. The Gujarat Government entered upon a policy of wholesale repression against the protesters and unleashed police terror on the people and the press".

The same working committee meeting had also laid down a task before the CITU in the following words :

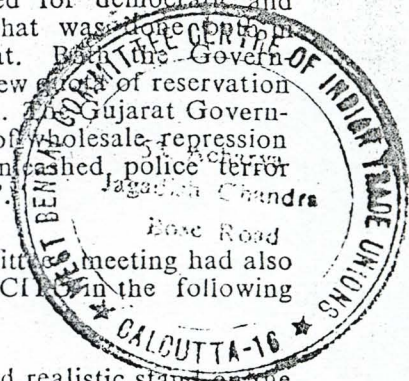
"While taking a sober and realistic stand on the question of reservation, taking consideration the concrete situation in our country, the CITU and its trade unions must do everything to protect the unity of the workers and emerge as the champion of all sections of workers. Their isolation in some states from the discriminated sections like the Harijans and the Adivasis or Muslims must be overcome. This can be done only if the trade union movement and our CITU unions remember that these sections have problems of social discrimination against which our unions hardly fight. The way to unity lies through the trade unions championing the demands of these sections along with the demands of all other workers and drawing these sections in the common democratic struggles. Unity at the level of Central Trade Union organisations will look more and more hollow if at the base the main mass of workers is divided on issue like reservation".

It is only in the states in which the trade union especially the CITU and the democratic movement with left-orientation is very strong where the scourge of communalism cannot cause much damage. The report from the West Bengal Committee states :

The people of West Bengal have created a precedence in preserving communal harmony. But recently it has been observed that Muslim Fundamentalist Organisations have become very active and influence of these organisations over the non-Bengali Muslims is increasing. These organisations are trying to create communal fervour among the Muslims on the issue of Shah Bano case, and the dispute arising out of Ram Janambhumi and Babri Masjid.

A call for a strike was given in support of the fundamental laws of Sheriat on 4th October, 1985 and a sizeable section of the non-Bengali Muslim workers absented from their duties in the factories on this day.

In 1984, following encounter between the police and the smugglers in Metiaburuj area of Calcutta an attempt was made to create communal riot but



it could be prevented due to timely action taken by the Left Front Government and our comrades in the locality. Our CITU affiliated unions in the area played a commendable role in rehabilitating the affected people of Metiaburuj.

During the last two years Id festival/Muharam and Durgapuja coincided and the Muslim and Hindu fundamentalists gave all sorts of provocation to disturb communal harmony during these occasions in the industrial belts. The timely actions of Left Front Government and alertness of our comrades helped to maintain communal harmony.

On 20th and 21st February, 1986 attempts were made to start a communal riot in Calcutta city when our comrades courageously came out and gave protection to sikhs and also provided them shelter in various places of the city.

There was no loss of life due to communal disturbance in West Bengal. But the communal forces are still very active and there is no place for complacency, we are alive to this danger.

In Kerala, the communal and casteist forces had been influencing the political atmosphere of the state for decades. Now the comrades have been able to make a clean break and thus establish a scope for advance.

We must remember that the need to fight back the divisive communal and casteist forces have two objectives, the first one relates to defeating the game of imperialists to divide our country with its aim of economic subjugation. The second one relates to the unity of the working class not only for the defence of the working and living conditions but for advance for a change of the social order with a view to banish exploitation of man by man for ever. It must be understood that only a united working class could inspire the other sections of toiling masses to come forward and unite for the struggle for a change in the social order. Success of the struggle depends on the extent to which the unity could be achieved and their capacity for struggle.

The Working Committee meeting held in Calcutta in February last therefore had directed that a special discussion should be organised to show what steps we have taken to draw in the minority and the Harijan masses in our unions and comrades were asked to send their reports. Only a few state committees have submitted their reports which are as follows :

"The Assam report states that : In fact the problem of Harijan and other minorities are not so active in Assam as in other states, so far the trade union organisations are concerned. The Harijan and other workers of minority community are elected to the leadership without any discrimination. However the Assam agitation directed mainly against the linguistic and religious minorities have

largely separated the Assamese workers and employees from the mainstream particularly where CITU organisations do not exist."

The Tamilnadu report states that : We have not much to report—no proper study and planned efforts by our State Committee or by our unions.

In the report of Anna District Committee, it is reported that majority of sanitary workers and Tannery workers in that district are Harijans and other Scheduled Castes and majority are organised in our unions. There are also office bearers and leading cadres from these sections. There are also Muslim workers as office bearers in our unions in Dindigul. Dindigul is our area with considerable Muslim population and Hindu communalists have tried to whip up tension. Our workers generally had taken firm position on these issues.

The report from Nilgiris refers to our special efforts to organise plantation workers who are Harijans by giving special responsibilities to our comrades and they are going on a house to house campaign."

The Karnataka report states that : Members of our unions in Kolar Goldmines, plantation, and Sanitary workers in local bodies are Harijans. In 1985 membership in Karnataka between 7000 and 8000 of our members are Harijans. About 25% of our members in Textile Industry are Harijans. There is a tough competition to win over these workers by INTUC and AITUC. There is no conscious and planned effort on our part to expand our influence among these workers.

Members of our unions in Beedi Industry at Kunigal, Sira and Tumkur District, at Kolar and Mulbagal in Kolar District, at Harihar in Chitradurga District, at Dharwar, Hubli and Muslims, overwhelming majority of them Muslim women. Relationships between Harijans and others on the one hand, and Muslims and others in CITU unions is cordial.

The Delhi Report states that there has been some discussion in their State Committee and some steps have been taken as stated below :

"With the objective of attracting safai Karmacharies, who are harijans, in the municipal corporation we formed a joint action committee for struggle on common demands. In Ghazipur we have also organised a union of safai karmacharies and gardeners of the municipality. However these efforts are too small but they are continuing.

It would therefore be apparent that the need to especially work among the Harijans and the minorities with a view to winning them over to the democratic mainstream has not been grasped by our comrades properly. Let us hope that reports from the states who have not sent the same as directed or have not mentioned anything about this in their

report and discussion in the conference would help in changing our attitude to this problem as otherwise this vast multitude of the oppressed people would remain a preserve of bourgeois ideology or separatist tendencies. The slogans that are now being raised enhance this danger.

Before going into other issues we should take up the retrograde shift in respect of the public sector as it has direct link with imperialism, IMF and their attempt to export their unemployment to the developing countries.

### Struggle of the Public Sector Employees

One of the new orientation in the policies of the Government affected the Public Sector. For some time past the policy of taking over of sick companies and profitability of the public sector has been discussed. The Government set up a committee headed by Dr. Arjun Sen Gupta to study the subject. The Trade Union organisations were not associated even in the manner as was done by the Tiwari Committee set up by the Reserve Bank though the workers are vitally interested in the subject as it affects their jobs and employment potential for the country. The recommendations of this committee were kept a classified document, an euphemism of secret document. This was a full scale conspiracy to demolish the public sector and do away with the independent research and Development for attaining self reliance in industry. The CITU Secretariat decided to consolidate its own strength and start a campaign against this nefarious policy. It was decided to hold a conference of Public Sector unions in Bangalore on 27th and 28th of May, 1985. The meeting was very successful in which a thorough view was made and the Campaign was mapped out. The Working Committee meeting which was held immediately thereafter warned the working class to give up the wrong attitude that was revealing itself. It stated: "Large sections of workers and many trade unions have acted in the past as if the way the public sector functioned or what the Government did with it was no concern of theirs. It was a wrong attitude of the Working Class in a newly liberated country. The public sector in India cannot be compared with the public sector in Britain. For instance, there both the public and private sector are instruments of imperialism and action under state monopoly capitalism.

But in newly liberated countries a well managed public sector based on strategic industry is an instrument of defending the economy against imperialist predations and dependence on imperialism. It serves the interests of indigenous capitalism. It obstructs the penetration of imperialism into the economy. This is why in India when the public sector started its activities in strategic industries it was largely supported by the advanced union movement and all progressive forces. In spite of a great deal of mismanagement the public sector contributed in defending independence

of our economy to a great extent. It has been so because in a large number of cases it was directly helped by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. In fact, we would not have been able to build our strategic industries if help from socialist countries were not available.

This aspect of the public sector has not been properly put before the workers by the trade unions. Today it is all the more necessary to do so because under the pressure of the imperialists, the World Bank and the IMF the official policy is denigrating the public sector and giving more encouragement to the private sector. But the matter does not end here. The denigration of the public sector is further intended to invite the foreign multinational companies to help India in her technological advance.

Comrades, the New Policy of Rajiv Gandhi not only contains proposals for the denigration of the public sector. It may also end in placing the public sector undertakings under the technological and managerial control of foreign companies. In fact it seems a process of penetration into the public sector by foreign multinationals is already starting if we are to believe reports appearing in the press. The penetration is taking place in the name of technological agreements with non-residential Indian capital which is often a sign board for foreign multinationals."

This is the guideline with which the whole movement was organised. It took us almost one year to organise the other public sector units to come together on a joint platform for conducting this struggle. An All India Protest Day was observed on 13th March '86 but the movement did not gather momentum properly. Hence it was decided to set up a Co-ordination Committee to co-ordinate the activities of the CITU. The first meeting of the Co-ordination Committee held in March 1986 at Durgapur took stock of the situation. In the meanwhile, the report of the Arjun Sen Gupta Committee could be secured and printed. Also the proceedings of the May '85 conference of public sector unions were printed. Sale of these two documents had created terrible impact among the public sector employees. Then again the proceedings of the Durgapur meeting also were printed both in English and Hindi. It was also noticed that there was considerable resentment among the workers for non-implementation of the earlier agreement. It was decided to organise a strike in the Coal industry which had been in the forefront of the struggle of the public sector industries. The strike on 9th April 1986 was a grand success. All these activities had enabled the CITU to set up a Steering Committee of public Sector Units in which CITU, AITUC, HMS, & BMS, the Joint Action Committee of Bangalore and Hyderabad Public Sector undertakings as well as the Officers' Confederation agreed to participate.

In the Working Committee meeting held on

Sept. 24 to 26 it was observed that the Govt. was going ahead with the disbandment of public sector while speaking the oppsite. It was noted in the meeting that :

“Rajiv Gandhi has been assuring the people that the priority of the public sector in our economy will be maintained and there is no danger of disbandment of public sector. The actual policy pursued by the Govt. belies this promise. It is also seen that a Cabinet Minister is permitted to open a virtual war against the public sector denouncing it as any mercenary of private sector will do.

Now it seems that the representatives of the efficient private sector are asked to supervise the implementation of the Central Projects of the Govt. In June this year the Minister for Plan Implementation announced a six member National Advisory Council under the Chairmanship of Ratan Tata and other private sector capitalists to monitor the implementation of Central Govt. Projects, removing bottle-neck and evolve methods and their completion on their schedule. All these years the idea was that the public sector should growingly control the private sector. Now the beginning is made to put the completion of the Central Projects under the expertise of the private-sector.

The CITU protested against the moves as a step towards privatisation and pointed out how in appointing this committee the Ministry was violating the norms of tripartism and the Government's resolution on workers' participation in management. The CITU further pointed out, “it would also render the work of the Committee on public sector set up under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of Labour irrelevant”.

Further, the fact is that the new economic policy of the Rajiv Gandhi Govt. leads to a growing discrimination against India's public sector and deliberate preference for foreign capital. It means that public sector is being attacked from two ends, firstly an attempt to privatise it and handing over to Indian capitalists and secondly to emasculate it and to allow the foreign capital to penetrate into it and dominate it.

According to press reports, the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) is reported to be planning massive import of 700 crores of rupees telecommunication equipment, which threaten to ruin Indian industry. The Indian Press now notes that Rajiv Gandhi Government's economic policy is putting public sector under the domination of foreign multinational capital. The Times of India issue dated May 5th observes, “The Govt. is planning to deal a bloody blow to the management of some of the most efficient state owned undertakings stalling them with the so-called non-resident expertise. Though they will be collectively expected to invest substantial sum, nearly 200 crores of rupees, according to one's estimate in the proposed venture, they

will have to control over the new company's operation. It will rest in the NRI by virtue of 51 per cent of holding in its equity. But even this by no means the most obnoxious features of the scheme. What it will be expected to do and what cost to the organisation of managerial cohesion and morale on the state owned undertaking is the main issue.

The Convention adopted a phased programme of action which culminated in a One Day Strike on 21st of January.

The 21st of January was a red letter day that for the first time the entire banking industry except the State Bank of India has closed the shutters. So was the offices of the Life Insurance Corporation. Though the INTUC did not join the strike, their local leaders and members participated in the strike and as a result many of the companies had no production at all. The Govt. however, is trying to undermine the impact of this strike by giving some figures of production which has been challenged.

Although under the pressure of public protest and the strike, the Govt. had to declare openly that they are against privatisation of public sector, the moves have not been given up. Already some of the public sector units had been grouped into holding companies. Many of them are given autonomous powers. The department of Post and Telecommunication had been broken up taking the telephones out of departmental undertaking to autonomous corporations and various other measures.

The Bureau of Public Enterprises has now come out with a guideline on wages which wishes to limit the wage increase to 10% or 15%. The struggle against this BPE's interference has already been taken up and the 12th of March last was observed as Anti-BPE Day throughout the country. The effigy of BPE or the circular issued by it was burnt from almost at all centres.

The officers of the Public sector units who were also being paid D.A. at the rate of Rs. 1.30 or 1.40 per point like other industrial employees had been moving for Central Pay Commission rates of Dearness Allowance neutralisation. Very recently the govt has conceded this demand and granted the ad-hoc increase in their pay. This has further created an imbalance. This issue would have to be taken especially in view of the fact that the Govt. has not yet started any serious negotiation for wage revision at all. They have also not given up their plan of mobilisation of resources from public sector.

The question of wages of public sector employees was no doubt important and we have to fight for a proper wage for them and restore the erosion in real wage which has already taken place due to price rise.

## Workers' Participation in Management

In the last Conference it was stated that it is a matter of surprise that "the Productivity Year of Mahatma Gandhi also announced the demise of Workers' Participation in Management. Workers participation was included in the first 20 point Programme. The Second 20 point programme has totally dropped it to ensure success for the Productivity Year."

It was also pointed out that the CITU "fully recognising the mismanagement of public and private or alike, the monstrous corruption that is rampant, the use of sub-standard material and linkage of some officials with anti-socials, proposed to participate in management in terms of equality. Workers were prepared to discharge their responsibility to society. But who wanted their cooperation? Not the vested interests when they were closing up one factory after another; not the Government which was mercilessly suppressing one strike after another."

Perhaps the Government later on realised that in the present era of highly sophisticated machines, workers' participation in management is absolutely essential if they want to utilise these highly sophisticated machines to produce its optimum or at least to increase the production. The Government had also realised that for all that they had propagated through National Productivity Council productivity could not be increased. From its own class consciousness and to some extent because the deliberations in the CITU Conference must have gone home, the Govt. by a resolution in December 1983 once again introduced a scheme for Workers' Participation in Management." The Govt. also had constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Labour Secretary at the apex level with representatives from all Central Trade Unions and also the employers' organisations, in which the CITU has nominated Com. P.K. Ganguly as its representative, to oversee implementation of the resolution.

It had been the task of the CITU to point out to this committee what we mean by equality. During the past four years the committee could meet only three or four times and the scheme mostly remains on paper except in some cases where at the plant level, the workers could be prevailed upon to produce more as a measure of their participation. The earlier attempt to popularise the workers' participation in management scheme was based upon the scheme in West Germany which was termed by them as co-determination. But as soon as industries were hit by crisis it was seen that the workers were not ready to accept retrenchment. They fought hard and forced the management to reduce the hours of work and saved jobs. The workers in metal industry in West Germany have secured as 38.5 hours working week.

New element is sought to be introduced in the name of quality control circle which is understood

to have followed Japanese model. The attempt is to involve the workers directly over the head of the unions in discussions concerning improvement of productive capacity of the machines without any law or formal body. These discussions are generally held informally and followed by tea, snacks and other endearments. This is another way of deceiving the working class. This is happening particularly in private sector. Since the benefits arising out of these quality circle have been tested by the private sector, the Govt. now proposes to bring in a legislation on workers' participation which would apply to both the Public and Private Sector. The implication of the present situation must be understood fully. The essential difference between the scheme as per the Govt. resolution and the CITU-line rests on two basic points viz., (1) participation with equality i.e. with equal rights including that of hire and fire and (2) election of workers' representatives at all levels through secret ballot among all workers. These are what neither the Govt. nor the private sector would allow. But at the same time the Govt. wants to introduce a law for the workers' participation in the form as is existing i.e., as an instrument to increase production. Efforts to secure reports for the undertakings in which the scheme is in operation have not yielded the desired result. Attention of the Conference is drawn to this aspect so that reports are sent in future.

## Growth of Struggles Against Lock-Out, Closure, Etc

During the past four years along with the intensity of crisis, the resistance of the workers also has grown. There have been many statewide struggles and bandhs, even industry-wise struggles and strikes covering the entire country. In particular the Government employees of Bihar and UP have repeatedly gone on strike. It covered employees of all walks of life, the Teachers, Junior Doctors, Nurses, etc all have joined the struggles.

The struggle against the closures, lock-out and retrenchment have been most bitterly fought. The workers of J.K. Rayon, Kanpur had valiantly fought for over 2 years. They agreed to a settlement only when the management agreed that in the event of opening a new factory at the said premises the retrenched workers would be given preference. The workers of Bhaskar Textile Mills, Jharsuguda struggled for over 3 years and forced the Government to take over the mills and reinstate them. The workers of J.K. Synthetics, Kota, who were subjected to brutal repression had not only maintained the unity and the strength of the union, but is slowly forcing the management to take back some of the workers who were retrenched earlier. The Kanpur Conference called upon all the CITU activities to examine how far we have been able to raise the public opinion to treat the closures, lock-outs and retrenchments which deprive thousands of job, as an anti-social act and warned the comrades in the following words:—

"The year that has started is going to see an

intensification of the offensive against jobs and earnings. The economy is in a perilous condition. The IMF loan, the need of increased exports arising from balance of payments difficulties, the increased imports under the IMF loans which are already affecting Indian concerns, all are leading to a greater job-offensive in pursuit of cost-reduction. Mechanisation, modernisation, automation preceded by closures or mass retrenchment, these loom large."

languish and gradually disappear from the industrial scene. Corporate Sickness is scourge of industrialisation as much in industrialised countries as in industrialising countries".

The CITU, while presenting the case to Tiwari Committee had rejected this stand and demanded that instead of allowing freedom to MRTPL houses, there should be a close watch over the machinations of the unscrupulous industrialists. The memorandum of the CITU had stated as follows :

The position as it has developed since then can be seen from the following tables. At the time of our Kanpur Conference there were 60,173 sick industrial undertakings with outstanding Bank credit at Rs. 2585.53 crores on 31.12.82. These have grown to 1,19,606 units with Rs. 4270.93 at the end of December 1985. By the end of 1986 it must have grown further.

"Effective steps are also necessary so that the Government could intervene in case of diversion of funds and corrupt practices resorted to by the management of private sector undertakings who allow the industry to become sick and block public funds. Appropriate laws to punish the guilty

#### Industrial Sickness

No. of sick units as at the end of	Large Units	Medium Units	SSI Units	Total Sick Units
December 1982	444	1178	58,551	60,173
December 1983	1491	1256	78,363	80,110
December 1984	1545	1287	91,450	93,282
June 1985	597	1181	97,890	99,668
December 1985	637	1186	1,17,783	1,19,606

#### Outstanding Bank Credit as at the end of

	(Rs. crores)			
December 1982	1790.60	225.76	568.97	2585.33
December 1983	2014.33	357.97	728.91	3101.29
December 1984	2330.12	428.88	879.69	3638.39
June 1985	2655.39	195.13	954.65	3805.17
December 1985	2980.24	220.12	1070.67	4270.93

(Economic Survey, 1986-87)

This is the direct result of capitalist path. The Government's stand was as follows : The owners and confiscate their properties should be enacted and strictly enforced.

"Industrial Sickness is a concomitant phenomenon of the very process of industrialisation in which vigorous and well managed grow while poorly conceived inefficient and marginal ones industries". The Government should also come out with the policy of exemption of excise duty and other taxes for limited period to help rehabilitation of the sick industries"

The Economic Survey goes on further to say that nearly one lakh units are non-viable, as can be seen from the following:

"Of the 1,19,606 sick industrial units (large, medium and small) involving a total bank credit of Rs. 4,270.93 crores at the end of December 1985, the viability position was as follows:

In the small scale sector, 16,41,748 units have been provided with bank credit amounting to Rs. 7829.32 crores at the end of December, 1985, of these, 1,17,783 units (7.2 per cent) have been found to be sick with outstanding bank credit of Rs. 1070.67 crores (13.7 per cent). Of the total

**TABLE 4.8**  
**Viability States of Sick Units as at the end of December 1983**

Units	Number	Amount (Rs. Crores)
1. Units found viable	8,569	1987.33
2. Units found non-viable	99,062	1790.73
3. Units for which viability yet to be determined	11,975	492.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,19,606</b>	<b>4270.93</b>

Of the 8569 potentially viable industrial units, 2751 units have been put under nursing by the banks upto December 1985. The outstanding bank advance to these units amounted to Rs. 1581.35 crores.

Of the 637 large sick industrial units banks had determined the viability or otherwise in respect of 552 units by the end of December 1985. Out of these, 350 units found to be potentially viable and accounted for Rs. 1737.13 crores i.e. about 58.3 per cent of the total outstanding bank credit to all large sick units. Banks have put 221 units with outstanding credit of Rs. 1125.06 crores under the

sick units 7839 units (6.7 per cent) with outstanding credit of Rs. 244.98 crores (22.9 per cent) were considered by banks as potentially viable. A total of 2188 units with outstanding credit amounting to Rs. 176.33 crores were reported to be put under nursing programme by the financing banks as at the end of December 1985."

The position of how the workers are affected by the industrial sickness can be judged from the following table, which will give the position of number of closures, lay offs and also the workers who are retrenched.

**III—Number of Closures, Lay offs and Retrenchment and Workers Involved**

Year (P)	CLOSURE		RETRENCHMENT		LAY OFF	
	No. of Units	No. of workers affected (In Thousands)	No. of Units	No. of Workers retrenched (In thousands)	No. of Units	No. of Workers affected (in thousands)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1982	286	27	768	16	1521	306
1983	226	43	689	20	1314	245
1984	188	72	495	10	847	141
1985	203	31	348	9	665	99

This is however, a gross under statement of the situation. The position of the question of displacement of retrenched workers after the struggle by Bombay Textile workers was examined by the Kotwal Committee, which states that services of over one lakh six thousand had been dispensed with after the struggle. This constitutes nearly 46% of the pre-strike forces of who 2634 have died during the struggle. Kotwal Committee could not give any explanation as to why there was such a high mortality rate among the strike bound workers. The inhuman torture of the workers can be understood if one goes through the report which says that the legal dues of these over one lakh dismissed and displaced workers to-day stand at Rs. 22.7 crores excluding the amount payable by 3 closed private mills, whose figures were not available. Once again the Government stands to be the worst offender as the 24 National Textile Corporation and one Maharashtra Textile Corporation mill (all public sector enterprises) constitute to be the biggest defaulter owing Rs. 13.95 crores to the workers. One is appalled to look at the hypocrisy of the Congress rulers. Shri. Chavan, the Chief Minister, Maharashtra while addressing a Public meeting in Bombay on February 10 said that he had learnt it for the first time only recently. A News Paper reports says :

#### Over One Lakh Textile Workers not Paid Wages

Bombay, February 10—Chief Minister Shankar Rao Chavan was shocked to learn that over one lakh six thousand textile workers lost their jobs

after the two-year old textile strike and that the mill owners are still to pay them their dues to the order of over Rs. 28 crore four long years after the strike (Patriot, 11.2.87).

The figure of the jobless, retrenchment and lay off as given above does not reveal the complete story. The first point that has to be noted, that the figures given by the Simla Labour Bureau only rely upon the cases reported to them. Thousands of cases of lock out, layoff and retrenchment are not reported to them at all. Consider the cases of retrenchment arising out of more than a lakh small industries of which over 99000 had been considered as non-viable and therefore are closed. These are not reported.

The agony of the workers arising out of vindictive action of the bourgeoisie is not limited to their jobs alone. Their entire social security like PF, ESI money of the workmen are suspiciously siphoned out along with the capital and the money advanced by the Public Financial Institutions. This apart, they have been wielding lock-out as a weapon to suppress the struggle of the workers. The following figures of mandays lost and the workers involved will give the picture :

It is not only in '82 & '83' that the lock out and mandays lost on account of lockout exceed those on strike excluding Bombay Textile strike but also in 1985 once again the number of mandays lost due to lock-out surpassed those of strike. The averages mandays lost per dispute excluding the Bombay Textile strikes is given below.

#### Number of strikes and lockouts, workers involved and mandays lost (1982 to 1985)

Year	No. of Strikes	No. of Lockouts	No. of mandays lost (in million) due to		No. of workers involved (in thousand)	
			Strikes	Lockouts	Strikes	Lockouts
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1982*	1970	454	10.71	22.50	1020	278
1983*	1936	493	11.54	21.94	1007	294
1984	1684	405	39.96	16.07	1726	223
1985 (P)	1320	396	11.41	17.96	868	201

#### Number of disputes and number of mandays lost (1981—1985)

Year	No. of disputes	No. of mandays lost (in million)	Number of mandays lost per dispute (in thousand)
1	2	3	4
1982*	2,424	33.2	13.69
1983*	2,431	33.5	13.78
1984	2,094	56.0	26.74
1985 (P)	1,716	29.4	17.13

P=Provisional

\*=Excluding Bombay Textile strike numbering 59 and 57 in 1982 and 1983 respectively resulting in 41.4 million mandays lost in 1982 and 12.6 million mandays lost in 1983.

Source : Labour Bureau

It may be seen that on an average the number of mandays lost in every dispute during the period was always not less than 13000 per dispute, whereas prior to 1980 only in exceptional cases such a number of workers were involved in each dispute.

### Determined Struggle against this Anti-Social Act

It must be understood that the workers have not only fought back against this anti-social act in a determined manner but also have adopted various forms of struggles. The heroic fight of the Kota workers against retrenchment has already been stated. But for the betrayal by P.N. Dhandu and his cohorts this struggle would have succeeded. In the case of Bhaskar Textile Mills Jharsuguda, the workers have not only come to Delhi but had prepared a detailed memorandum exposing the dirty game of the management, who had closed down the factory, in spite of the fact that it was viable. Since then many factories have adopted different methods. In Kerala and in Tamil Nadu the full force of the Public opinion around factory area i.e. the democratic masses, peasantry and agricultural labourers were mobilised, which forced the management to open the factory and concede the just demands of the Labour. Several unions have pointed out how in-fighting between 2 groups of management or between a Bank and the company management leads to a closure of a perfectly viable company as can be seen in the case of Oriental Power Cable, Kota. It has also been shown in the case of Rey Rolls Burn and AVBL how the situation worsened only after some particular gentleman joined the management and how with orders intact in the company books, the working capital was eroded making the company sick.

Apart from a Convention held on 28th January 1984 and the programmes adopted there, the CITU mobilised all the trade unions to pursue the question of industrial sickness. This was also agitated in the 28th Indian Labour Conference and the Government was forced to bring a Sick Industrial Companies (Special provisions) Bills in 1985. The original Bill did not provide any clause to penalise the erring management. It was once again the trade unions who had to raise the question and the Finance Minister agreed to bring some amendment for penalising the erring industrialists. It is already stated above that the CITU had advocated such action before the Committee set up by the Reserve Bank of India and the Committee on Controls under the Chairmanship of Shri. M. Narsimhan set up by the Government.

After the Bill was passed into an Act, those in the Government thundered that the erring companies will not be spared any more but there is not a single case in which they have taken action against the culprit management. In fact it took the Government one year to frame the rules. Even now the Act is not readily available in the market and the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruc-

tion has only been set up on 12th January 1987. To our knowledge there is no Labour Representative in the Board. In order to satisfy the Labour the Government has set up a committee for Monitoring Industrial Sickness, in which CITU has been provided one seat and Com. Narsingha Charkrabarty has been nominated by CITU in this committee. It would be our endeavour to ensure that all cases of management deficiencies, corruption etc are duly processed so that stringent action is taken against the culprit managements.

It has to be noted that due to the tacit support given by the left-front Government in West Bengal to the workers of about 28 units which were taken over during the Congress (I) regime between 1972 and 1979 and the united struggle of all the unions including the INTUC unions in these undertakings, the Congress (I) Government at the Centre has not been able to denotify these units after doing this for 4 units. These units have furnished proof that although after taking over of the management these companies showed increased production and in some cases even profitability, there was deliberate sabotage or under-financing and several other measures. The Left-front Government could have stepped in many more cases if the Central Government had not insisted on taking over the entire liability i.e. the Government must agree to pay for the mismanagement and diversion of funds by the monopoly houses. The struggle of the workers of these companies is linked with the struggle of the Public Sector employees as a whole who have now taken up the gauntlet of fight.

### Struggle of the Government Employees

During this period the Government employees all over the country both belonging to the Central as well as the State Governments had been in ferment. Two major factors had moved them to the path of struggle. The first was a judgement of the Supreme Court delivered in July 1985 which held the dismissal of the thousands and odd Loco Running Staff and hundreds of police and para military forces under proviso (b) to Art 311 (2) of our constitution without giving them an opportunity of self-defence as valid. The judgement gave rise to tumultuous protest from the Government employees, all Trade Unions, a large section of Lawyers, jurists and intelligentsia besides reversal of another Supreme Court judgement delivered earlier. This was a word to word re-enactment of the Government of India Act 1935, which was framed to serve the needs of the British imperialist Government. The Central Government employees ought to have lodged much more massive protest than what they did, because a section of reformist leadership did not want to take up any step with seriousness. The State Government employees, however, built up a powerful campaign through out the country. The Left Front Government in West Bengal and Tripura had already changed the Service Conduct Rules granting them the Trade Unions Rights including right to strike. The Left

is decided to intensify the industrywise acti-

the port and dock\* had been one of these areas which the four recognised federations could join her and conduct the longest strike in the country covering over 36 days. But for the vacillations shown by the INTUC towards the end these workers could have secured a better settlement. Then the INTUC and the Government said the port and dock workers have secured over wage increase during the settlement.

The next development was in the sphere of the textile workers movement. The government's policy indicated that the government was going ahead with full force to close down the sick mills and massacre the employment of the workers. The new policy declared its preference for the private sector who were granted increased autonomy from government control. The government finally disowned all responsibilities for ensuring that the textile industry is not being run in the interests of capitalists, on the other hand they were given freedom to dispose off the industry's productive capacities without regard to the people's interests. Under pressure of the IMF and the World Bank the government of India gave up its pretence of a welfare government.

The government also promised adequate funds to Textile Tycoons to accelerate the pace of modernisation in the industry under the soft loan scheme of the IDBI and promised to create a textile modernisation fund to enable the industry to tap internal resources for modernisation. Concessions to the industrialists were given by allowing liberal imports of the textile machinery allowing full fibre flexibility as between cotton and man made fibre and yarn. This foreshadowed a terrible attack on the textile workers. The Andrum General Council had analysed the effects of lay off and closure industrywise and came to the conclusion that the cotton textile industry was the worst hit among all others. 123 big units of 491 sick companies were in the textile industry. The number of workers affected due to closure was 57% out of total in 1981, 38% in 1982, 48% in 1983 and 48% in 1984. If the number of workers displaced due to Bombay textile strike which is over 1 lakh is taken into account, the agony of the textile workers can be well understood. An effort was made by CITU to find out whether the unions and federations representing a substantial number of textiles workers could be brought together. Initially many had expressed support to such an idea but when a convention was called in September 1985 only part of them attended. After a phased programme which was planned in one day's token strike the movement could not be carried on further. Our Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan comrades had, however, been able to mobilise almost all the unions in a struggle of the workers. In Tamil Nadu there were some problems and the government intervened with a

section of leadership having opted for a negotiated settlement even violating the rock bottom in negotiation which was fixed in the united meetings. It is the same story in Rajasthan that after initial efforts in which even the INTUC was also in the united committee as had been the tradition in Rajasthan many of the participating organisations opted for settlement below what was unanimously demanded. In Delhi there had been a very long drawn struggle of the textile workers which was conducted unitedly by all unions in the textile industry. It was found that the public sector unit was also toeing the line of the Birlas and Charatrams and opposing a settlement. It was only under pressure from all corners that a break could be made and settlement arrived at in the Ayodhya Mill owned by the MIC which became a pattern for the settlement of strike in other units though both the biggest monopolies, lingered the strike. The experience in Tamil Nadu was however, just the opposite. While the private mills under SIMA (South Indian Manufacturers Association) settled the question of Bonus, the NTC mills refused to extend the same benefits to the workers although this had been the policy of the NTC to maintain parity of regional wages as is prevalent. The workers in the NTC mills in Punjab groan because they are not given the regionwise wages, i.e., Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan wages they are given only according to the Punjab norms by paying only the notified minimum wage. This industry is under terrible attack in that the NTC wants to close down 28 sick industrial units. For this purpose they have already established a Textile Workers Rehabilitation Fund which would give wages on a slanting scale for 3 years over and above the legitimate due so that the workers could seek self-employment. The only catch is that it must be a closure which is permitted by the government which means that all the sick textile mills, all that have already been closed or retrenched are considered to be out of the purview of this Fund and they would not get any benefit out of it. Hence our comrades at different centres ask whether we could group our forces and develop further movement on our own.

The jute industry is another in which the attack is fierce. This is the oldest industry from which the British had earned fabulous profits. They had established a cartel named, The Indian Jute Manufacturers Association which had been mercilessly exploiting both the jute growers of the country and the jute workers. Our comrades particularly in West Bengal have been relentless in their struggle against the jute barons. In West Bengal, due to the intensity of the crisis, they have been able to develop complete unity of all trade union organisations in the jute industry and had repeatedly struck work (one day in 1983, one day in 1984, one day general strike in 1985 and one day in 1986) in defence of the interests of both the workers and the jute growers. The All India Jute Workers Federation also is functioning but due to the present changes in the government policy of importing granules for

manufacture of synthetic bags a serious situation has arisen when the production will have to be cut off. It must be noted that all these years the jute barons have been mercilessly increasing the workload on the workers forcing them to share their work "bhagawallas" by sharing wages with them in order to maintain the level of production. As a result it was seen that although in West Bengal 14 or 16 jute mills continue to remain closed or locked out throughout a year the total production of hessian, carpet backing and gunny bages went on increasing, debunking the theory that there was glut in demand in the international market. The problem of jute industry is constantly under watch and examination.

The existing federations like the Steel Workers Federation of India, All India Coal Workers Federation, All India Plantation Workers Federation and Water Transport Workers Federation of India are functioning well and all of them have held their annual conference during this period. The Forward Seamen's Union of India is engaged in a determined struggle to protect the interests of seafarers. The strength of our organisations have earned us prestige in that apart from our representatives in the Labour Boards, we have now representative in the Shipping Board too and the management in the shipping industry have been forced to accept negotiations with Forward Seamen's Union of India also. I congratulate the comrades on behalf of CITU for conducting a well organised movement facing terrible repression in some cases as well as the goonda attacks in Rourkela and the mining are as details of which are given here after.

During this period we have been able to regroup our unions in a very strategic sector i.e., Electricity and a successful conference was held at Trivandrum from which an Electricity Employees Federation of India has been formed with Com. E. Balanandan as its President and Com. D. Janakiraman as its General Secretary. A seminar on the question of Energy Problem in India was also held along with the same, which created a very good impact not only on the workers who participated in it, but also a large section of consumers, Engineers and other technical personnel and the intelligentsia. The Federation has already brought out a journal by name "Voice" which is attracting people of all walks of life. As a result, our influence among this section of workers is growing.

There had been a new attempt to organise our forces in the Sugar Industry. With the setting up of wage board in the sugar industry our comrades all over the country had to take a position. The Tamil Nadu comrades unitedly with others had been able to secure better wages than the industry Wage Awards. They had also been able to secure DA neutralisation rate at Rs. 1.65 per point. Hence they had decided to boycott the Wage Board. But this did not suit the interests of the vast section of sugar workers including those in Maharashtra where

most of the sugar mills are run by co-operatives in which kulaks have strong influence. Due to existence of feudal ties, it was extremely difficult to develop movement. All attempts were subjected to murderous attacks by the goonda hirelings of the management followed by terrible police repression. For them the Wage Board had presented an opportunity to secure some wage revision. A Convention was called by the CITU in which this position was discussed thoroughly and all came to the conclusion that it would be better to participate in the Wage Board proceedings. Accordingly a memorandum was prepared and our charter of demand was placed. During participation in the Wage Board proceedings it was seen that the INTUC and the HMS, the other partners in the Wage Board were more or less agreeable to accept some sort of settlement. Our firm determination and the superiority of the arguments placed by us had earned recognition and our proposal to have a co-ordination committee of all participating unions and giving a call for struggle when a paltry sum was offered as interim relief has succeeded. We have been able to set up a co-ordination committee which included the INTUC, AITUC, HMS besides ourselves. A call for one day strike was given. The Labour Minister cabled to the secretary of the Coordination Committee Shri. Kishore Pawar and appealed to him only just 48 hours before the proposed strike to postpone the strike because the government is considering these demands. He was taken in by the appeal and actually had issued a telegram to all concerned for postponement. We considered that this was against the principle of united functioning and all who so ever enquired from us, were told that the decision stands and it is matter of great satisfaction to report that our CITU unions unhesitatingly struck work and thereby earned the admiration from all concerned. Today our comrades Harsahay Singh and P.K. Ganguly who are coordinating the activities in the sugar industry have been able to impress on the others and are taking the leading role in the activities of the industry.

We have also been trying for a long time to organise our forces in the cement industry. During the last wage board negotiations we had tried to do something but as our forces were not of a substantial nature we could not make any headway and the INTUC had a clean field. This time, however, this is not so. We have been able to organise our forces and in combination with the forces of AITUC we have been able to force the government to give us a hearing before any decision could be taken by the Cement Arbitration Board. The CITU Secretariat is pursuing the matter and the industry's work is being co-ordinated by Com. M.K. Pandhe.

Just after the Second Convention of National Campaign Committee held in August 1983 it was decided to form a co-ordination committee of Construction workers whose number according to the census figures 3,278,124 but our comrades say that it would be somewhere near 5 million.

In the days to come our industrywise work may have to be intensified still further. At the state level there are many industrywise coordination committees. We must pay due attention to them.

### Repression

During Kanpur Conference it was pointed out that repression on the trade union movement was growing. At that time the workers of J.K. Synthetics Kota, Rajasthan, were fighting against retrenchment. They were subjected to brutal suppression in order to break this strike. Workers were forced to choose between going to the jails or the factories. Over 150 workers heroically opted to go jails rather than break the strike. Family members of such of the workers, who were underground had to face the police threatening them with dire consequences. One must note that all these repression took place despite the fact that the retrenchment was illegal. The Labour Minister admitted this in a letter to the Labour Minister of Tripura, Comrade Biren Dutta, our Working Committee member. Though the workers had to retreat for some time, they have once again rebuilt the unity of the workers and are going ahead.

Lathi charge, arrests, criminal cases against trade union leaders in Rajasthan is but a common thing. Patronage to INTUC unions in violation of the laws is also a common thing.

In Himachal Pradesh authorities are refusing registration of trade unions of Hospital workers and other labour, who have recently been taken out of the Industrial Disputes Act. This is absolutely illegal, but they have no compunction to break law in such a blatant manner. A small State like Himachal Pradesh subjects the workers to total repression in all strikes. Every strike is long drawn. One strike is continued for 63 days with 50 arrested. Another strike in BPL continued in 93 days, 63 workers have been prosecuted and the workers including women were brutally lathi charged. Another factory, at Parwanoo, the workers were forced to go on strike for 85 days and 50 workers were arrested including 6 women. The Hospital workers strike in 1985 had similarly been a very long battle. In Thirani Chemicals, the workers had to continue strike for 150 days. They are carrying on with 6 victimised, 28 being prosecuted. In 1986, when the workers throughout the State responded to a strike call in M/s United Diamond a settlement could be reached within 11 days. In December 1986 the workers of Ruchira Paper Mill which is just on the border of H.P. and Haryana were on strike and the workers were subjected to repression by both the Govts.

In Haryana also the situation is very serious. The report from the State Committee states :—

National Fertilizer Limited is a public sector unit at Panipat. It employed 500 contract labourers under the banner of NFL Lal Jhanda Workers Union Panipat. On 1st July 83 all the 500 workers

were thrown out of the factory and beaten by police. Even the rally addressed by Comrade P.K. Ganguly was lathi charged by the police. Workers were mercilessly beaten. Sikh workers were the main target. False cases were framed against the workers. On 31st August 1983 a State rally of several thousand workers was organised at Panipat in solidarity with NFL workers. It was addressed by Comrade Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary CITU. But 500 workers are still out of job. The labour department of Haryana is a silent spectator rather it colluded with the management.

**B.K. Iron, Bahadurgarh, Sonapat :** This factory employed Orissa labourers as contract labourer. These workers were denied all facilities provided under the Inter State Migrant Act and other labour laws. They were kept as bonded labourers. A CITU union was formed. On 3.11.83 night all the workers were thrown out of the factory. The struggle continued upto 10.1.85. Three times the huts of workers were burnt by the goondas in connivance with the police. No police cases were made against the management and its goondas.

The management of Mercury Rubber Mills, G. T. Road Sonapat in '86 closed the factory and forced the workers stop their accounts with the help of police. In this way 500 workers had to go. In Atlas & Milton factories Sonapat our unions are not allowed to function at the gate. CITU activists have to face all sorts of onslaughts.

In Haryana if you try to form union in a factory, the whole of the working committee is suspended and then arbitrarily dismissed. Even cases were not referred to the labour court. The management even tries to take the entry of the workers into the factory with the help of police. The workers are handed so that they may not come nearer to the factory premises. Even civil courts give permanent injunction to the management that the workers cannot come within the 500 metres radius of the factory premises. If anyone comes police cases are framed.

In Hissar, our comrade Tek Chand Gupta, was abducted by the goonda hirelings of the management. He was beaten severely and his life was in danger. But for a hue and cry raised by CITU and visit of Comrade Sukomal Sen MP and his effective intervention his life, perhaps, could not have been saved.

Gujarat report states : In Kandia in free trade zone the workers were fighting under the banner of CITU. The union was getting the strength. The management with the help of Police started to crush the movement and the Union. In September '83 the police open fire on workers. Suresh Pandya and Vasha were shot-dead, and about 50 activists were arrested. The CITU leaders immediately rushed and organised other workers and started agitation against the brutal act of police. We gave a statewide call to protest against this. But it was

not fulfilled, by all our unions.

Near Baroda at Sakarda the management closed down the factory. The workers organised 'Rasta Roko' on the 1st May '86. The Chief Minister of Gujarat had to pass by this road. The police opened fire to clear out the road. One died and three injured. Though the union is not affiliated to us, we rushed to the workers. But we were not allowed to interfere. Our workers and the sati union agitated and gave Dharna against the police firing.

The Orissa report also shows that severe repression has been let loose in the mining area and in some of the textile mills. Some of them are in the garb of union rivalry while in most of the cases, the goonda-hirelings of the management are involved. The report states: It was on 24 September 1983. In the darkness of night, hired assailants with questionable political links who wanted to kill Comrade Ananta Rout entered his house secretly and dastardly butchered his five year old son Sanjay. Com. Ananta Rout maintained extreme courage and did not deter from struggle nor accepted defeat before enemy. Again and again CITU union there had to confront anti social elements and go through bloody clashes.

In the end the workers of Kalta Mines and their unity had secured victory.

In Orissa also a state of severe repression has been let loose. In Baripada the registration of a Union of textile workers has been delayed for over a year. When the workers submitted a charter of demands the mill has been locked out and the workers beaten and their houses burnt by the goonda hirelings.

There has been some unfortunate cases of attack by some members of rival unions. Our Comrade Sakthi Vel of Leyland, Hosur was stabbed to death. There are some other cases also.

But in some cases the family members and children of the trade union workers were attacked and some of them succumbed to the injuries. It happened in Modinagar, Ghaziabad and in Kalta Iron Ore mines. As already reported a five year old boy of our Comrade Ananta Rout was murdered while his wife and sister-in-law virtually returned from the jaws of the death. This is a particular phenomenon which every one should eschew.

In Assam due to a deliberate attempt of the supporters of Assam Gana Parishad for securing control over trade unions, there has been some deterioration including clashes. In Tripura, murderous attacks are being organised by TNV, TUJS and their patrons.

The CITU warmly congratulates the comrades who are carrying forward the struggle facing the brutal repression by the Government and murderous attacks by the goonda hirelings of the managements.

## Attack on Trade Union and Democratic Rights

The Kanpur Conference noted, "the drive of the authoritarian forces against the people continues. More and more power is being concentrated at the Centre creating a crisis between the centre and the states. Anti working class legislation is being passed and more anti-labour Acts are on the anvil. Above all, there is no appeal against Police brutalities, rapes of women, murder in police custody. Every misdeed of the police is being hushed up. The so-called rule of law is hardly in existence."

During this period proof of these warnings was repeatedly seen. First came the illegal and authoritarian dismissal of NTR Ministry in Andhra Pradesh and Farooq Ministry in Jammu and Kashmir. The working class throughout the country responded to a call for strike against this authoritarian measure, which has been discussed hereafter.

The Government thereafter started a planned attack against the trade union movement in a concerted manner. On the one hand they started a dialogue about modification in the procedure of verification and on the other, they convened the Indian Labour Conference on the basis of the 1980 verified membership figures though they knew that our actual membership had been arbitrarily reduced as the CITU and AITUC did not participate in the verification process. This was aimed at driving a wedge in the unity of the trade union organisations that had been developing through the National Campaign Committee. Once again it was unanimously resisted and the AITUC, CITU, TUCC and UTUC organised protest telegrams and resolutions which poured in the Government office from all corners of the country.

The Tamil Nadu Committee was prompt in taking steps in this regard. The Secretariat reviewed the situation and once again directed intensification of the programme and it was taken up by the State Committees and the unions all over the country. Hundreds of telegrams have come to the government who ultimately yielded to give delegate status to all these four organisations.

The 28th Indian Labour Conference revealed that the Government had decided to bring in far reaching amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act and Trade Unions Act without consulting the organised labour. The plea taken by them was that it was discussed in the Tripartite National Conference held in 1982 which was attended only by INTUC and NLO while the rest had boycotted. Under pressure from 6 of these organisations the government agreed to have a dialogue with the trade union movement before processing the law through Standing Labour Committee. The papers produced before the Standing Labour Committee meeting held in September '86 had put on record some proposals about which the Working Committee held in September '86 stated the following:

The amendment provides that any trade dispute can be referred to adjudication by the Industrial Relations Commission at the instance of either the State Government or the Central Government after failure of conciliation. The Industrial Relations Commission is a standing permanent adjudicating body at the disposal of the Government to forestall strikes and divert action and compel the trade unions to appear before the commission. Experience shows that the power of the Government is always used to the disadvantage of workers by depriving them of their only sanction by force of action and strength of numbers. The Commission will always be guided by the prevailing policy of the Government towards labour. This is a device to impose compulsory adjudication and arbitration on the workers and it will always be used when the owners have no case and when the workers are likely to succeed. This is perhaps Mahatma Gandhi's first step towards industrial relations in the 21st century.

To give responsibility to this strike breaking apparatus, a President of the status of the High Court Judge is to be appointed in consultation with the Chief Justice. He is to be paid away high salary with the permanent or long time job while the strike breakers get only temporary assignment at lower remuneration. The other members of the Commission are to be appointed in consultation with this high salaried strike breaker.

Gone are the days when workers can be duped by strike breakers, gowning the costumes of judiciary and posing an impartial authority.

The Labour Courts would have the following jurisdiction.

(i) Individual disputes relating to discharges, dismissal, retrenchment or termination of a workman.

(ii) The application and interpretations of standing orders of establishments and propriety or validity of orders passed under the standing orders.

(iii) Certification of collective bargaining agent/ council (including powers for derecognition for fair labour practice).

(iv) Individual disputes of confirmation seniority, promotion reversion, premature retirement, superannuation, leave, disciplinary matters, remuneration and retirement benefits.

In a word all the duties and functions of the Labour Commissioners have now been given to Labour Courts thus lessening Government's responsibility and making it appear as if the workers are likely to get justice from such an impartial body.

Then there are reactionary provisions for trade

union recognition. Recognitions will be based on membership as ascertained under the check-off system. The democratic demand for recognition based on secret ballot of worker is rejected to pamper and favour INTUC. The disastrous effect of this anti-working class, anti-strike line of industrial relations has been noted by no less than Vasant Sathe, the fiery crusader against the public sector and Cabinet colleague of Rajiv Gandhi:

"A major and catastrophic instance in the recent has been that of the textile industry of Bombay, which had been closed down for over two years, rendering about 200 thousands employees idle and causing the production loss running into billions of rupees during this period. The main reason for this show-down in the textile has been the instance supported by the Government, that only a particular union (read Congress (I) INTUC affiliated union) will be treated as recognised union. The union is not willing to have its membership or its credibility and support among the workers judged on any democratic criteria that it should be recognised by some sort of verification which it expects to be favoured by the Government because of its political allegiance.

"It is this which has been a bane of the entire employer and employee relations in this country. When this union had some credibility among the employees the relationship between the employers and the employees did not come to a crisis. But when the so-called recognised union lost its credibility and was not willing to establish itself by any democratic method the matter came to a serious break.

"As a result the whole industry was thrown in turmoil by a prolonged strike. It is therefore imperative to provide that in the present pattern of employer-employee relations, the only rational way of establishing a bargaining agent for the employees must be in the form of electing that bargaining agent periodically, for two years by secret ballot among the employees of the concern. The Industrial Disputes Act would have to be suitably amended to achieve this object." (Sathe-Social Revolution, Page-182/183).

While Sathe's dialect against the public sector is secretly appreciated by his colleagues, his plea for secret ballot is rejected. The proposed amendment depends on check-off of membership which in the Indian condition means a guarantee of financial supply to a pliant union at the expense of the working class.

Besides, there is an atrocious provision which appeals to an unwilling worker to join the favoured union against his will. The amendment says, "The workmen who are members of an unregistered union may be given an option to join one of the registered unions within a period of three months. In case of

workman who does not opt to join any registered trade union within this period of three months, his trade union fee will be remitted to the principal bargaining agent, or the council as the case may be." The worker has not only the right to decide the representative character of the union by his vote but he has also the right to abstain from the union in which he has no faith. This is an instant provision. Only Hitler made it compulsory for all workers to join a fascist union. This is where the check-off system leads. You compel workers to join the union and to call it a bargaining agent. The check-off system demands that every worker should reveal his union affiliation to the management. The worker justly fear that they will be victimised if they do not join the favoured union. Now under the new amendment if they do not show their preference for the favoured union they will be deemed to be its members.

The provision for deciding the bargaining agent on the basis of check-off system is an instrument of promoting pliant unions in a conspiracy against the growth of militant unions of workers. Besides, there is a provision that no union can be registered unless it has minimum 25 per cent membership in a concern. Under the present provision the only condition for registration is that it should be signed by seven persons. The new amendment ipso facto wants to deny registration to growing militant unions and thereby preventing them from participating in bargaining and negotiations. It is intended to keep monopoly of representation in the hands of certain unions which have no reputation for militancy. In fact the new amendment is a provision to prevent the future growth of militant unions of workers.

Then there is a further restriction on the workers' right to strike. Strike cannot take place even when a majority of workers so decides. Only when 75 per cent of the membership of all bargaining agents vote for a strike then alone it will be legal. Little more than 25 percent minority can veto any strike. The authoritarian drive against working class is fully explained in the new amendment, which should be condemned and rejected by the entire trade union movement.

The fight was taken up once again in the Standing Labour Committee where from a direction has again been given to consult the trade union movement on each and every clause of the Bill before coming up to Standing Labour Committee as because the assurance given in the 28th Indian Labour Conference had not been carried out properly. It must be noted that the INTUC under the patronage of the Government took more than 2 years to finalise the amendment to modify the procedure of verification, while the question of introduction of check-off system for the purpose of recognition of union and collective bargaining agent was being jealously carried through. It has to be noted that while an agreement has been reached between the trade unions on the modification of verification no govt circular has yet been issued

stating whether the Govt have accepted this or not. The reports in the press indicates that the Trade Union (Amendment) Bill incorporating the introduction of check-off is being introduced. If this is passed then once again the whole process of revision of the procedure of verification will have to be gone into.

One need not be surprised to note that some of the public sector enterprises have already issued circulars admitting the appeal of some INTUC unions for check-off and have directed that in view of the amendments of the Payment of Wages Act the authorities can agree to deduct the money and hand over to the union concerned. This is the clandestine method of introducing check-off system and presenting themselves as a fait accompli on the organised labour. The National Campaign Committee is aware of this development and have observed 16th April as a protest day both against the proposed amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act and the Trade Unions Act, as well as the proposed change in the CPI numbers.

#### Attack on Wages—Change in Price Index Numbers

The aforesaid bills are intended to put the trade union movement into a straight jacket. The Kanpur Conference while noting the offensive against the wages had warned the working class as follows :

"To facilitate the offensive against wage and working conditions, the Government relies on enacting a number of anti-trade union Bills to stifle the growth of fighting unions, to strangle the right to strike, to interfere with the internal matters of unions and finally through arbitrary recognition and patronage to pliant unions to bring down the workers to machinations of corrupt and venal leaders!"

The attack on wages this time has developed in another way. The Government had taken up exercise of revising the Consumer Price Index Numbers on revised National Sample Survey and Weightage based on the increased working population and also the different working class centres which had sprang up. They ignored the report of the Rath Committee and its recommendations particularly about associating the organised labour in the process of both in respect of deciding the methodology and also physical collection of figures and drawing up of weightage diagram. Rath Committee had further recommended that the methodology of collection of price should include black market prices also as recommended by the ILO. This was also ignored and a Committee known as Seal Committee was set up to conduct the exercise. The organised labour was not associated with this process except that the Committee while touring different centres had heard the labour representatives about their views. This hearing was not prepared properly by circulating the Rath Committee report and a ques-

tionaire seeking further opinion if any. An effort was made even at this stage to prevail upon the Seal Committee to correct the wrong. The report does not deal with the comments of labour and as to why the demands of the labour of full association has been rejected. It must be noted that the revised figures have been so manipulated that by using the constant conversion factor of 4.75 between 1960 and 1982 series of Consumer Price Index numbers the workers lose more than 200 points of DA neutralisation in the year 1985 alone. One must note that by not correcting the mistake in the 1960 series of CPI numbers which, as agreed to by all, stood at 8 points, the Government has allowed the management to deprive the workers due legitimate DA at the rate of Rs. 10 per month to every workers upto 1985 and Rs. 13 per month since then. It appears that now the plan is to reduce the wages by a greater amount, i.e. 220 points or more per year. One can therefore conclude that the Government is utilising the revised series of consumer price index numbers to depress the wages of the working class which they are unable to do frontally through repression. In view of the increased production, the increase in the value added and the growth of per capita national income, the real wage of the workers are shrinking due to inflation. The workers have been fighting the BPE Guidelines and hence this dubious method for cheating workers.

Only the leading workers of the trade union movement are aware of the import of this change. Most of the workers are not aware of the procedure of calculation of Consumer Price Index Numbers. The CITU has taken a decision to publish an explanatory pamphlet to strengthen the movement.

Comrades, we must understand that the fight against the bourgeois operation and the authoritarian attack on trade union rights is getting sharper and sharper. It must be understood that the CITU which carries forward the proud heritage of the revolutionary trade union movement in India which is distinctly separate from the class collaborationist line in the trade union movement pursued by the reformists and their cohorts even from the pre-independent days. We must look to our organisations without which we cannot defend the legitimate interest of the working class. We must always keep in mind what Engels said about the trade union organisation. He said that but for the existence of the trade unions many of the beneficial labour legislations would not have been implemented at all. How true is this today. In our Indian context there is absolute collapse of virtually all labour legislations. Before going to the State of our organisation we must note the problem of trade union unity and some other basic weaknesses.

### Problem of Trade Union Unity

It was pointed out in the Kanpur Conference that the "CITU has persistently worked for unity of

trade union movement. Its efforts have earned a measure of success with the formation of the National Campaign Committee. The activities of the Committee, the 19th Jan. strike, the 3 day strike of Coal miners are all important steps in the direction of strengthening unity. A thorough review however is necessary to find out how far our common activities have helped to utilise the full results of unity."

The 2nd Convention of National Campaign Committee was held in August, 1983 at Delhi which invoked a greater participation and this time more than 57 federations joined the convention. It was decided to have another convention specifically on the question of closure, lock-out, retrenchment etc,

The convention held in Jan., 1984 on the question of industrial sickness, lockout etc. could create some impact and there was serious preparations for the workers march to Parliament in April, 1984. It was just after this Workers' March to Parliament that the Port and Dock workers had unitedly gone into strike and in this strike the INTUC-led Federation also participated. Lessons of the coal strike earlier seems to have weighed on them that the spirit of united struggle was eroding their base if they did not join the strike. The struggle for trade union unity had to be carried on after the 18th April, March to Parliament in a completely different context. The NTR Ministry, in Andhra Pradesh was removed illegally and unconstitutionally even though it was enjoying majority, in an authoritarian manner. The people and working class of Andhra Pradesh started protest actions in support of NTR Government against this authoritarian abuse of democracy. The Political Parties consulted the NCC for a Bharat Bandh. The National Campaign Committee could not extend full-fledged support. It adopted a resolution giving freedom to its constituents to work for a bandh. The bandh was a great success and ultimately the Government was forced to test the strength of NTR Ministry in the legislature and he came back to power.

Then for some time there was a lull in the united movement while the Government had started to work upon the question of Verification in vain attempt to drive a wedge in the unity of the NCC. Besides the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi and return of Rajiv Gandhi to power with more support than before had caused some sort of thaw in the situation. The intensity of the back lash and divisive forces had kept everyone worried.

On 2nd/3rd December 1984, there was a serious accident in the factory of Union Carbide. Subsidiary of an American MNC, of Bhopal in which thousands died and thousands upon thousands were affected. The NCC could not intervene or do anything in the matter. The CITU had to take initiative and after long efforts could organise a seminar on 24th May 1985 at New

Delhi. A Committee was formed and a programme of observing a Day on 3rd Dec. '85 was also taken. The Committee had also visited Bhopal. But as the interest of others had sagged the 3rd Dec. '86 went unnoticed by the Committee. Only the local organisation at Bhopal have observed the same. Meanwhile, in West Bengal in order to protect the jute workers, the growers and also the industry, all political parties had adopted a unanimous resolution in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly urging upon the Central Government to nationalise the jute industry. An all party delegation also met Smt. Gandhi before she was assassinated on the demand of nationalisation of jute industry. But she rejected the demand outright.

As the demand for nationalisation of the Jute industry was rejected by the Centre, the trade unions in West Bengal had to organise themselves and give a call for Bundh on 12th September, 1985 demanding nationalisation of Jute industry. The Congress hierarchy felt very much shaken and pressurised their West Bengal unit to come out of the united struggle. The pressure succeeded to some extent but they could not oppose the strike which was very much successful.

The Government had in the meanwhile declared its new textile policy which said inter alia "however where a unit has no expectation of becoming viable in a reasonable period of time there may be no alternative to allow the unit to close provided the interests of the workers are protected. Take over by the Government or nationalisation of such sick units does not provide a solution to the problem of sickness and the Government would not as a rule intervene in such cases". All these were only intended to cover the truth that the Government intends to close down a large number of sick mills in the near future especially those now run by the National Textile Corporation as has already been discussed in detail earlier. An effort was made to organise a joint movement of the Textile workers and a joint convention was held with the representatives from CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC participating in the same. It had also adopted a phased programme of action including one day token strike on 2nd September 1986 all of which were observed. Here also some of the participating trade unions had vacillated and created confusion. The net result was that it could not be carried further in an all India level. But this Joint Convention had helped the united struggle of textile workers in Tamil Nadu and in Delhi and also to some extent in Rajasthan.

The good development in the adoption of three declarations by the Central Trade Union has already been reported. To ensure that the unity does not remain on paper through adoption of declaration only, serious efforts were made. A convention against Communalism and for National Integration was held on 11th May, 1986, which was attended by a large section of people, a decision was taken for a joint visit of the Central

leaders to Punjab. In June, 1986 such a visit created tremendous enthusiasm among the working class and people of Punjab. The decision to observe 16th June as Anti Apartheid Day and collection of funds has also been reported.

It is good that already some of the CITU units have been collecting money and sending the cheque to this committee. It has also been decided that the question of National Integration and struggle against communalism has to be a continuous process and therefore it has been decided the State level and Regional level conventions will take place at Meerut, Bhopal, Gujarat, Maharashtra and another team shall visit Punjab. This is yet to be completed.

It was decided that the movement of public sector employees especially the workers in the Coal industry who were restive because of non-implementation of the earlier agreement, should be advanced. All organisations including INTUC agreed for one-day token strike and on 9th April, '86. More than 7 lakh coal workers joined the strike.

The struggle of the Public Sector employees as a whole against denigration of public sector and its privatisation has also been reported earlier. Campaign, however, is going on. The authorities, specially the Coal India Ltd., has taken a decision to deduct 8 days wage against which injunction from the Court has been secured. The struggle is being continued.

It must be noted that the growth of united struggle throughout the country is inspiring newer and newer sections of people to come into the vortex of the struggle. We must create a proper machinery for leading these struggles, which are now breaking out.

Comrade President has already drawn our attention to the importance of forging trade union unity and had reiterated our call for formation of Confederation. I am sure that the Central Trade Unions and National Federations will give a serious consideration to the call so that the entire organised labour could debate and on the basis of complete unanimity, decide upon the alternate policies for labour. On the basis of such a policy the entire organised strength of the working class could be built up and the Government could be forced to change its anti-labour and pro-monopoly policies.

#### Initiative of CITU—Its Responsibility

It is appreciated that constant efforts for implementing the call for united struggle given by the National Campaign Committee or the CITU centre are being made by our State Committees and Unions. It is also good that some State Committees have already drawn our attention when other forces did not join in some campaign. We hope that all State Committees would continue to take initiative in approaching the other Trade Union

Centres including Federations for a united action and thus promote a spirit of trade union unity which may lead to the formation of Confederation of trade unions.

The report of the State Committees present the following picture :

**A.P. :** "We are taking initiative to function the National Campaign Committee. Whenever there is a call we are contacting the other centres to implement them but the AITUC is not prepared to accept our initiative. HMS is a small force and BMS is creating all troubles even on petty matters. Even though they attend Co-ordination Committee meetings, their local units do not co-operate. The calls of NCC are only reiterated at state level. But no serious effort is being made at local level by different constituents. Our cadre is better than others in this regard."

**Assam :** "From the very beginning the HMS and BMS are not participating. The AITUC and UTUC (LS)'s participations are also mere formal. None except CITU take the initiative to implement any of the NCC's programme. Some time the entire financial burden is borne by the CITU alone."

Apart from the NCC, there is a state level united platform—Joint Council of Trade Unions, Assam (JCTU, Assam). On issues like solidarity with peasantry and struggle of other trade unions, whenever other central trade unions failed to act jointly, steps are taken for united actions through this platform. For instance—On Marx's death centenary, May Day Centenary, Relief and Rehabilitation to the flood affected peasant masses, LRSA strike etc. united actions were taken by the JCTU.

As mentioned above BMS & HMS are all along refusing joint actions. AITUC and UTUC (LS)'s participation are mere formal. But the State INTUC is rather serious to make the all India programmes successful at least at the central level."

**PUNJAB :** "In Punjab besides CITU, AITUC, BMS & INTUC also have influence on workers. There is a co-ordination committee of all trade unions at the state level. CITU has been trying to implement all India Trade Union actions through this co-ordination committee. These joint efforts and actions have a good influence on the workers. In the recent period joint conventions at the state level and joint rallies etc. at the local level were held on the issue of minimum wages. Now the co-ordination committee has given a call for one day strike on 12th December 1986 on the demand of increase in minimum wages. The experience of joint struggles shows that whenever CITU unions have forced other unions through its independent activity to join the struggle then brilliant struggles were fought and there were considerable achievements. In Amritsar intervention on workers demands and in Punjab situation bring before us

the importance of joint political struggles and the possibilities of achieving economic victories even in difficult conditions. The present PRTC & Punjab Roadways employees is an example of trade union unity although we had to go out in a long struggle in PRTC to draw AITUC in joint struggles. In the joint struggles the main hindrance is the attitude of the AITUC. They either try to enforce their sectarian approach on the other organisations or they do not join the joint struggles. Due to its policy, the workers under AITUC influence are joining the CITU. But the AITUC leaders are sad on these happenings and they start a slanderous campaign against CITU unions. In the present situation in Punjab the importance of joint struggle have become still greater. It should also be understood that while carrying on struggles CITU should not overlook its basic ideology. Only by carrying such a struggle we will be able to change the balance of forces in favour of CITU in the working class and can equip it with revolutionary ideology."

**GUJARAT :** "On 4th January 1983 All India Working Class Unity Day was observed in all centres. The CITU unions actively participated and took the lead. It was decided to hold a joint conference on 31st July 1983 to make this conference more effective. We with AITUC approached other Central Organisations, like HMKP, LIC, Banks, State Government, University, GEB Unions and federations when we approached them we were told that they had not received any circular from their organisations, but gave a good response, but in the in the conference no-body attended the same. Even the BMS unions did not attend. Thus though we were trying for wide united struggle we were not getting the same response because the federation was not informing them, or they were advised to keep themselves away from this."

"At the time of All India Port and Dock Workers strike, our Kandla Unit tried to organise a joint action, but the AITUC though it gave a strike notice, it withdrew it, and HMS did not respond to it, but our Union worked hard, took active interest and because of it the strike was complete."

**KARNATAKA :** "Functioning of State Unit of NCC is hampered by several political developments, mainly elections. 1984 December Lok Sabha election, and elections to local bodies held in 1983 July and December, 1985 March Assembly Elections are such developments."

After George Fernandes split HMS by founding HMKP in a conference held at Bangalore, major chunk of HMS including the President and Secretary of its state unit went with HMKP. This affected our manoeuvrability in NCC and the functioning of NCC.

Karnataka State convention against closure,

Lock-out, Lay-off, Retrenchment and Denotification was held at Bangalore on 18.3.1984.

After a long period a meeting of NCC is scheduled to be held on 25.3.87 to discuss the programme of All India Demonstrations on 16.4.87 against introduction of anti-worker amendment bills in parliament and change over from 1960 series to 1982 series of consumer price index.

There are co-ordination committees in plywood and plantation industries. The Committee in plywood consists of BMS & INTUC also. There are state federations in Beedi Industry and local body unions. Recently a CITU comrade has become General Secretary of Sugar Workers Federation. There is a co-ordination committee of CITU sympathisers and CITU Unions in public sector. There is a lot to be desired in the proper functioning of these committees.

**DELHI :** "The National Campaign Committee comprising of Central Trade Unions organised a convention on new textile policy of the Government in Delhi. They also held a vast meeting denouncing the anti-national and divisive forces perpetrating murderous attacks on the innocent people in Punjab. Our State Committee attended the above meetings and all other programmes which the national campaign committee held from time to time.

As per our policy, CITU Delhi Committee made strenuous efforts to form a joint action committee with other Central Trade Unions in the Capital to fight for the revision of minimum wages which was previously fixed by the Delhi Administration as Rs. 414/- (consolidated). We succeeded and held a convention for the purpose. A report was prepared in consultation with other Central Trade Unions and before its presentation for approval in the convention, the leaders of the AITUC raised objection and as such the same was not presented in the convention. In the absence of its presentation, the leaders of the HMS tried to minimise the importance of the convention, though, certain decisions were made collectively by the action committee and a programme was chalked out to launch the joint struggle.

Through continuous persuasion, Joint Action Committee held a demonstration in this connection at the office of the Executive Councillor (Labour) Sh. Bansi Lal Chauhan on 29.12.86. Joint Action Committee gave a call for an industrial strike on 26th January, 1987 and this strike was a great success and was almost total. Our CITU activists took leading role in all industrial areas of Delhi.

Six national trade unions including CITU observed a total industrial strike in Delhi on 16.1.87. The textile workers of our union only served the strike notices to the mills and observed successful strike in DCM Silk Mill where we are strong and in other mills large number of workers

absented themselves from duty on our efforts and activity participated with the industrial workers in their strike. The other unions did not work for the strike and indirectly opposed it.

Before the 16th January strike, an understanding had been reached that the struggle should be continued even after the strike and workers mobilised on the above demands. After a lot of renewed efforts, we managed to hold another meeting and decide on a mass court arrest programme on 25th March 1987. Over three thousand workers staged a demonstration at this call of six Central Trade Unions violating Section 144 and courted arrest."

**TAMILNADU :** "Amongst the Central Trade Unions functioning in NCC, only AITUC and CITU co-operate on implementing the decisions. On that also, many a times, the unity is limited to the State level leaders issuing statements. Our efforts to get the co-operation of HMS has not given results. BMS, UTUC etc. are not active in the State.

With the non-cooperation of Federations like AIBEA on many occasions the NCC activities are limited to CITU and some of our fraternal federations.

Non involvement of DMK led LPF in NCC and their refusal to co-operate with us in any of the all India actions create problems for united actions. Recent examples are the 21st January Public Sector strike and sugar workers' strike.

At the same time we have been able to organise many joint actions at the state level, involving CITU, AITUC, HMS and TNTUC (This janata led organisation has now become a part of NLO).

On many issues like textile wage and bonus issues, closure of textile mills, transport workers wage issue, solidarity with teachers etc., we could organise united actions including a state level general strike.

Against the State Government policies CITU, AITUC and LPF conduct campaigns and struggles. Even on this, the LPF and AITUC vacillates on many occasions and are selective.

Another point to be noted is the factory level or industry level united struggles which have been going on in various areas. Here, our partners differ depending on the situation, industry etc.,

But the weakness of not reviewing our struggles continues. The loss or gain of a struggle is not being properly assessed."

**MAHARASHTRA :** "The main reasons for this we have already seen earlier, and that is the decline of working class struggles during this period. This was bound to have an impact on the efforts of the Action Committee, Secondly, there

red a split in the HMS, and the Hindoor Kisan Panchayat came into existence under the leadership of George Fernandez. Due to HMS opposition, the HMKP has not found its place in the National Campaign Committee, and consequently the Panchayat has refused to associate with any of the joint actions in Maharashtra. Earlier, it was the section which is now in HMKP that was active in the Joint Action Committee, and with its departure, the participation of the HMS has also become much less.

is has had an adverse impact on the united front. Thirdly, during the period 1983-84 it was Samant's leadership that was the most influential in Bombay, and its attitude towards united front was one of disdain. Due to all these factors the earlier appeal of the Joint Action Committee has been weakened.

In an instance, on 1st August 1984, the Action Committee organised a joint convention at Shirodoli on the textile question. In this huge convention the Samant organisations had also taken part along with all others. It was decided then to observe a token Bandh in October, but due to the lack of support of this decision by almost all the unions, the Bandh naturally could not take place.

Another fresh example is of the National Integration Campaign. As per the call of the Trade Union National Convention, this was organised at the Raja Vaidyalaya on 9th August 1986. In this all Central Trade Unions, INTUC, Dr. Samant, Karmachari Shramik Sangh were to take part. In practice, the INTUC and HMS remained aloof and except for CITU and AITUC no other organisations bothered to mobilise workers. The strength of all these organisations taken together can be counted in lakhs, but the result was a failure.

On 1st January 1985, all the trade unions had participated in the Bombay Bandh to protest against the firing on the urban peasants, and to show solidarity with their struggle. The same day, a demonstration took place in several centres in Bombay. Such a working class action on a national question took place after a long time, and the Bombay Bandh had a special significance. But it is remembered that the opposition political leadership had taken the lead in this action.

On 5th February 1986 all the opposition political parties and trade unions had given a call for a 'Bandh' on the question of price-rise. In Maharashtra this Bandh was a great success. Such a successful Bandh was taking place after 12 years. When the central directive came, doubts were expressed in the Joint Action Committee as to how long it could be successful with just 6-7 days of Bandh. But the Bandh took place, and in an organised manner.

**Bengal:** From the day CITU emerged,

maximum emphasis has been laid on unity of working class and united struggle. In West Bengal we have given maximum effort for developing united struggle on economic demands as well as on political issues. And in the recent period it had been possible to bring in State INTUC in the fold of united movement, on issues and demands. We particularly refer here the State-wide General Strike on 12th September 1985 which ultimately took the shape of total 'Bandh'. The main demand was reopening of all closed mills, factories, and establishments. On this demand we carried on a continuous campaign over a period of time and at a stage it was possible to bring in State INTUC in the united platform making it possible to give the joint call of General Strike on 12th September 1985. The demands highlighted in this General Strike also included issues relating to the anti-working class policies of the Congress (I) Government at the Centre which drastically affect the workers, accentuate crisis in industries, give more and more concessions to monopolists and multi-national companies at the cost of public sector and offer scope to multi-national companies to strengthen their hold in India to the detriment of our national economy. Ultimately the State INTUC withdrew their name as joint sponsor of this General Strike but they did not oppose the General Strike and extended support to the demands.

The National Campaign Committee took various programmes but these could not be jointly implemented due to opposition of UTUC (LS), BMS and HMS to Left Front Government of West Bengal. In West Bengal we have built up an united platform of joint struggle with CITU, AITUC, UTUC, TUCC, 12th July Committee and Federations of Bank Employees and Mercantile Employees. From this platform, we unitedly execute all programmes of joint action. On 31st January, 1987 the strike in all public sector undertakings was successfully observed but in spite of our best efforts BMS and HMS did not join this united action.

**Orissa:** "Our CITU unions at different level are also always conscious of united movement, and never let the chance to go out of hand."

The State Centre of AITUC and their units have always remained a problem to unity and always they back the disruptive role of UTUC (LS). Again the leadership of HMS at State level also never take united struggle seriously and even more over wanted to cold shoulder it. BMS at state level entirely depends on initiative of others though not disruptive. All these organisations have their state headquarters at Cuttack except CITU. Though it is very difficult to coordinate them from Bhubaneswar, still then we have always taken initiative on every issue to bring everybody to the united platform.

All of them are averse to take the middle class organisations to the united platform as decision making units, as because we have influence over majority of organisations. During last public sector

strike, even to the extent they can go to debar the public sector unions to be in the preparatory body for state level convention and strike. They even refused to issue invitations to them.

Another aspect is that AITUC takes initiative only on issues where its interest in state level is concerned, but takes a negative attitude to other united moves.

As regards the functioning of NCC at the State level, it virtually does not exist. Only on the call given at the all India level it meets casually and that too not in all the issues. On State issues it had met only on two occasions, one in 1984 and the other in 1986.

Facing all these, we have to work for united moves. In spite of several difficulties, we continue to pursue them on such united issues. But in certain cases many moves could not be taken up either due to late informations from Centre or because of non-availability of our leaders at head quarters or due to our own engagement at the moment.

It must be understood by all that at the present moment, there is no alternative to united action by various Trade Union Centres, which alone can inspire the backward masses, especially the unorganised workers to come forward in struggle. The CITU's responsibility also must be understood. We have to very patiently build up united struggle on all issues affecting the masses of toiling people. This alone will help us to change the balance of class forces.

### The Unorganised Workers

The Kanpur Conference drew the attention of the comrades to the plight of the unorganised labour. It was pointed out: "the organised trade union movement including the CITU Unions have developed a feeling which may prove injurious and damaging to the entire movement...The minimum wage legislation which is supposed to guarantee a miserable wage is not observed in practice.

This section driven to desperation is easily capable of being used by reactionaries. In fact efforts are already afoot to make use of them against the organised movement. If the trade unions do not pay attention to this widespread section they will be damaging the movement by alienating a section which is militant, heroic and has become a strong contingent of common movement."

Rajiv Gandhi and his colleagues take a position as if the organised labour stand in the way of the betterment of the conditions of the unorganised workers. The real intention is to pit the unorganised workers against the organised so that it becomes easier for the Government to withhold granting increase which is due to the workers as sharing of value added by labour.

It is good that several States have taken up the question of minimum wages very seriously. They have been repeated strikes on the question of minimum wages and their job security as will be seen from the following :

The Orissa State Committee has submitted a detailed report which states as follows besides the reports sent earlier :

"The State Committee is trying to give more emphasis on Trade Union activities among the unorganised workers. The most sweated among the unorganised in the State are the migrant labourers (Dadan), workers in forest activities and construction sites. From time to time, this problem is discussed in the State Committee and highlighted in our monthly trade union journal.

The CITU activities among Bamboo cutters at J.K. Paper Mills have attracted the attention throughout the State. Sorada Bamboo Cutters Mazdoor Union is pressing the demands on various forms of movement since last 3/4 years. The management have been compelled to accept few demands initially though did not sign the agreement with the union. The bonus issue was referred to the Tribunal which has enraged the Singhania Group and other Paper Magnets who had gone to Court and got a Stay Order.

More than five thousand workers have been mobilised throughout the State those who are engaged in different type of forest activities like Bamboo cutting, Tendu leave, Sal Seeds and other forest product collections. Felling of trees, Transport and Afforestation activities. The name of Sorada Bamboo Cutters Mazdoor Union have been amended as Orissa Forest Mazdoor Union to organise these unorganised workers spread over the district.

The activities among construction workers have also taken some shape at Rourkela Steel Plant, NALCO (Damanjori), Orissa Construction Corporation etc., under the CITU leadership. The State level co-ordination for construction workers is there but it is very very weak.

The most neglected section of unorganised workers are migrant labour. Orissa is the second largest State for bonded labour after Karnataka. In certain places, even if they get some work in agricultural operations, a meagre amount of Rs. 5/- per day is paid in most of the places. As per the sample survey by the State Statistical Department the horrifying picture comes out. Out of the 556 families in 322 villages surveyed, 88% live below poverty line. 27% do not get any employment throughout the year. 27% are homeless, 87% are landless and 89.7% are loanee. Apart from this, continuous damage of paddy and other crops due to flood, cyclone and insects etc., the life becomes miserable."

The Maharashtra Report states—"We have refer

to the growing awareness in the unorganised workers above. The workers in these industries are being drawn into the path of struggle owing to increasing price rise and unemployment. These workers do not get the benefit of Labour Laws, have no security of service or protection. Their main question is the fixing up of a minimum wage and its implementation. As a result of their awareness, in many industries in Maharashtra a minimum wage has been decided and in some cases, special allowance afford some protection against the price-rise. But in most places, its implementation is found wanting. The struggle for this implementation is the most important in such cases. It is not a coincidence that the biggest struggle under TUC leadership during this period was the one for minimum wages of powerloom workers.

Workers in areas like brick-kilns, coal-kilns, salt-s, project construction etc., can be and are being organised on this basis. Those working here come in the lowermost layers of society, from Dalits to Advasis. They are actually landless agricultural workers. It is very welcome sign that during the last three years, these workers and their organisations are joining the CITU, and that they are conducting struggles and demonstrations. The most important example of this welcome development is the rapid spread of the Malaria Spray Workers Union in several districts.

The Punjab State Committee has sent a Report to the State how the unorganised workers are now being organised in Punjab.

The Haryana Report shows the fierce attacks of the owning class. It states "when the workers in Gurgaon Rubber demanded implementation of minimum wages they were thrown out and the factory is closed. It is still closed.

Haryana CITU organised the unorganised workers of Dharuhera District Mohindergarh (Haryana). The membership rose to one thousand. Haryana CITU gave call for strike on 21st January 1987 in solidarity with public sector employees. On 22nd January 1987, three hundred workers of M/s. Omex Autos Ltd., and M/s. Kay Jay (P) Ltd., Malpura Dharuhera Ancillaries of M/s. Hero Honda, a multinational, were not allowed to report for duty.

Haryana CITU started organising Farm workers in Hissar. There are several thousand Farm workers employed at the State and Central Government farms near Hissar. When the workers demanded the implementation of minimum wages and regularisation of services, they were thrown out and the police resorted to lathi charge and false Police cases were framed against the workers. The Haryana Labour Department did not implement the minimum wages despite our best efforts.

Tamil Nadu report states: "On organising unorganised workers, in Tamil Nadu, we had done something in connection with Handlooms, Beedi,

Tannery, Local Bodies, especially Sanitary Works, Loading-Unloading workers etc. In Handloom and Beedi and Sanitary workers we have State level Federation and in Tannery a co-ordination committee is functioning.

Another area, where our unions have concerted their attention and where we have considerable membership also is the small and tiny industrial units in industrial estates and industrial areas. These workers are organised in General Workers Unions. For example in Madras, we have four unions of this type, which are functioning in four areas covering the whole City and its Suburbs. These unions together have membership of nearly 5000, out of 30000 members in Madras City.

Recently our unions have started making concrete arrangements to organise contract, casual workers etc. Concrete work has been taken up by our Railway Union, Electricity Unions etc. In the State Transport Corporations, our efforts had given result and in the recent agreement all who had worked for 240 days were made permanent and a good number of them have become our members.

In Railways, a Zonal Special Convention was held recently, where contract and casual workers were mobilised. The convention has decided to continue the struggle and an action plan has been finalised.

In the State Electricity Board, our union had taken up the issues of contract workers in the Board. Systemwise conventions and Dharnas have been conducted. Branch level sub-committees of contract workers are being formed. Unions like Neyveli Lignite Corporation are also organising contract workers.

We are yet to take up the problems of construction workers at the State level.

On the whole, our Committees have been paying attention to this issue.

Gujarat Report says: "We held a contract workers conference at Baroda. We announced it a State Conference. But the workers nearby Baroda and Kheda attended, other centres did not take it seriously. Comrade Samar Mukherji attended the same.

In Gujarat in most of all Government, Semi-Government Projects thousands of contract workers are working, the sub-contractors are bringing workers from outside States. They are living separately and working separately. Some of them are advanced paid in before they come for work and because language and other problem, it is very difficult to organise them. If they organise, immediately their contract will be cancelled, and they will not be employed by other contractors, and it creates the feeling that because they became organised they lost their jobs. Even in this situation in

IPCL and Fertilizer, our union organised the contract worker. They have to fight hard struggle, and they got the result, about 500 workers were made permanent. And this gave us a push, at that time nearly 2301 contractors were registered.

The Assam report states :

"In all over the State we have atleast ten organisations of unorganised workers namely Contract Labour, Farm Workers, Shop and Establishment Workers, Bidi Workers etc."

In Tripura also an effort is being made to organise the unorganised workers. But if we take into account the overall situation, we have hardly touched even a thousandth part of estimated 115 million unorganised workers. It is one point which should be kept note of. We must remember that our failure to harness the strength of the unorganised workers leaves the CITU weak and robs it the militancy of these workers.

### The Working Women

Kanpur Conference pointed out : "The Trade Union movement is not a preserve of men. Yet all kind of hypocritical excuses, born out of feudal outlook, are to be found to explain away the neglect of the problems of working women, failure to draw them as active contingents of the working class. The Trade unions in other parts of the world have started fighting against this deviation. But Indian Trade Unions lag behind. Reactionary forces are already active in India to penetrate the ranks of working women neglected by the organised trade union movement. However some organisations of employees have started paying attention to the problem and that is good. The CITU started the fight for working women at its last conference. A full review will reveal how far our unions have advanced in this direction."

Repeated attempts had been made to organise our work on the working women. The report which some of the State Committees have submitted show a very dismal picture and proves that our State Committees have not been able to make any advance at all, rather there are some set backs.

The discrimination against women continues unabated. A report published in Indian Express, (10-11-86) says : "Perhaps the only instance of a women who used the present law and won a legal battle from the Bombay High Court three months ago. The point raised in the case was typical of discrimination practised in workplace (M. Mackenize Ltd vs. Audrey D' Souza)

This company employed eight 'Confidential lady' stenographers and a large number of male stenographers in a general pool. While the women were paid Rs. 1, 180 per month, the male stenographers were paid Rs. 1, 910. Audrey, one of the lady stenographers, challenged this discrimination as based only

on the ground of sex and therefore illegal.

The Deputy Commissioner of Labour upheld the women's claim but the company appealed to the high court. However, Justice M.L. Pender of the High Court rejected all the main arguments of the company."

Every one knows how the Pay Commission report recommended restriction of maternity benefit to two children. An earlier report indicated that in the Bank also the management wanted to restrict benefits to two children.

The question of bringing out a Hindi version of the Voice of Working Women had been raised and it is found that the sale of Voice of Working Women was limited to 1200 per issue and there was a demand in many Hindi speaking states for the same. All earlier attempts to get an idea from the State Committees in Hindi-speaking region about the sale of such a journal had been in vain. Only recently our Himachal Pradesh State Committee has asked for 200 copies of Hindi version of Voice of Working Women. Unless the State Committee reorientate their functioning and put some period in charge of sale of all the CITU journals particularly the Voice of Working Women, our work cannot be expanded further.

Then comes the question of promotion of women workers in trade unions keeping in view the special disabilities they suffer. The Central Office has now started keeping track of the number of the female members. The position as far as the 1985 issues is concerned is being shown at the end of Annexure Noll. In 1986 arrangement has been made to record from the very beginning the number of women members in the office bearers of the Executive Committee. After analysing some of the Annual Returns which have already been received in the office it is noticed that some of the unions are not sending the list of the Executive Committee members. Perhaps the practice varies from State to State.

Extracts from reports of the State Committees are given below.

#### Assam

"In this regard practically nothing so far could be done. Only one attempt was made by Akhil Bharatiya Chah Mazdoor Sangha, Rangapara. But that has also become defunct. This is for want of an effective leadership to guide the working women properly."

#### Punjab

"As for the working women are concerned, our trade union cadre has a criminal attitude in organising working women. Many efforts have been done but nothing came out. We are trying to organise a State level convention of working

women. Some women are members of CITU unions in some places. But we have to make a humble start. Some comrades now have started thinking on this issue."

### Tamilnadu

"On the question of organising working women, we have not paid enough attention and this lapse has been taken note of by our State Committee.

The State level co-ordination committee of working women has not been functioning for the last one year. We have district level committees in districts and only the 2 recently formed committees are active.

One of the important work done by us in this period was the State level conference prior to the late CITU conference. After this the State level convention of working women in unorganised industries was also held.

Though there are many industries like Hosiery, Beedi, Handlooms, Matches, Garments where women are in large numbers, we have not utilised all the opportunities available, except in Hosiery where a good number of women are our members.

The recently formed committees of working women in Anna district and in Thirunelveli are active. It is due to the failure of our State Committee and the district committees, that these co-ordination Committees have not been functioning properly.

A separate journal was published for the working women for some time and that has now been taken over by our AIDWA unit. CITU State Committee had given financial help also to run the journal when it was run for working women.

On promoting women cadres, complete details are not there in the state centre. In unions, where there are women members, our general instructions include them in the Executive Committees are followed. In some unions like BHEL, Tannery workers Union (Madras), Industrial Estate Workers Union (Madras) women workers have been working as office-bearers of our unions. Full details are being collected."

### Karnataka

"Nearly 80% of Beedi workers are women. Half the workers in plantations are women. Over 75% of the workers in Coffee curing works and cashew and Areca processing works at Mangalore are women. In the last state conference 11 women were elected to the State Council. In the Unions having women members there are women in executive committee and among office-bearers in the Beedi workers State Federation 3 of the four secretaries are women.

Women members in the State Council constitute working women's co-ordination committee and the committee meets when the council meets. As only 3 members attended the last state council meeting, co-ordination committee did not meet.

Though women are elected to leading committee it is very difficult to make them attend meetings and function in their capacity.

Domestic duties, feudal attitude of men in many cases are obstacles. Non-availability of educated (even minimum) among the women members of unions poses a serious problem to train women cadre. There is no serious effort on the part of the State Committee.

All India call of All India Co-ordination Committee of working women on 6.8.1985 was implemented at Sakaleshpur, Hassan, Chickmagalur, Mangalore and Bangalore. In the first two places working women from plantations and coffee curing works participated in the rally with enthusiasm.

### Maharashtra

It is reported that the Maharashtra State Committee has elected a committee from their last state conference.

### Haryana

"While organising CITU Unions, the women workers are given top priority. The organised working women strength is near about seven hundred in Haryana. It is mainly in textile. One working woman is elected member of District Committee Hissar. Main strength of working women in K.C. Textile Mill Jind, Gopi Chand Textile Mill Sirsa, Hansi Spinning Mill Hansi and M&M Kundli, Sonapat.

We are organising working women in Agriculture Farms and Brick kilns."

### Orissa

The Orissa State Committee has submitted a detailed report which states that: "The problems are multifarious for the working women. Apart from general economic and other issues, they have problems of their own. They face incalculable difficulties for their children in absence of creches which is a common feature throughout Orissa. They face the discrimination on wages, preference in getting services. Maternity benefit is not available in all the cases. Now the Government moves to restrict the benefit upto two children.

The modesty of women workers are always attacked by the owners be it office, mines or factories. Two such things have happened very recently. One mines worker at Sukinda in Cuttack district was raped by the Contractor. Though a little protest is there but nothing more could be done. On

16.3.87 at Rourkela Steel Plant one adivasi woman worker was attempted to be raped by an officer. Our Union has taken up the issue. The officer is arrested but is not yet suspended. One blind girl was raped in the State Secretariat in a room adjacent to Chief Minister's Office and the protest meetings and actions are going on.

In the mines and textile employment of women are squeezed. In C.R.R.I., the male workers are only regularised phasewise for which a serious situation is developing for the clash between male workers and female workers. Our Union has failed to take up this problem.

The Kanpur CITU Conference gave special emphasis on organising the working women and promote them in T.U. leadership. The International Women Year on March 8th, 1984 was observed by different unions. The State level working women convention was organised on 27th April, 1984 at Bhubaneswar where 100 working women attended. This convention was attended by Com. Vimal Ranadive. A working women's co-ordination committee was formed with two convenors. There are limited women comrades to carry out the task in the field. Other difficulties are also there. There is nobody from among women comrade to work from the State Centre, even occasionally. Even none of the two convenors were available for a circular to be signed. Therefore, the co-ordination work remained virtually defunct.

On 17th August, 1984 about 400 women workers from Mines and Construction had been to Delhi for demonstration and to attend the conventions, but were late due to late arrival of train. Only one comrade had attended.

On August 6th, 1985, signatures on the Charter of Demands were to be submitted to the Governor. Preparation was there, but due to heavy rains the procession could not take place. The Charter of Demands was sent the next day.

A meeting of the working women at Bhubaneswar including the members of the co-ordination committee was held on 27.9.85. Com. Vimal Ranadive attended that meeting. The drawbacks of the organisation was discussed there and steps to be taken were decided. But those things also could not be materialised.

On the occasion of May Day centenary, a day was observed for women. Even on certain places importance could not be given to that day also.

During the last state conference, the 2nd working women's conference was held on 8th and 9th December, 1986 at Barbil where about 200 women comrades from Mines, Textile, Rice Research Centre, Teachers and other middle class organisations attended. Com. Vimal Ranadive had inaugu-

rated the conference. Adequate preparations were there and quite a number of women workers could speak freely about their difficulties and problems. Com.BTR had addressed that conference and had stressed the importance of organising the working women. A state committee was formed with Com. Indumati Nandy as Secretary and Usharani Mishra as Asst. Secretary. Other members are Promodini Sahu, Yogmaya Dey, Pravati Dei, Malati Nayak, Kalyani Das, Marsa Samad, Benadit Sangma, Belamati Munda, Susila Singh, Ritila Naik and Lalit-Oram, as members. The conference had generated an enthusiasm among the women workers. After the conference separate co-ordination committees for working women had been formed by Jharsuguda Industrial Mazdoor Union, Keonjhar Mining Workers Union, United Mines Mazdoor Union, Baripada Spinning Mill Mazdoor Union and C.R.R.I. Sramik Sangha. The State Committee of CITU give emphasis on organisation of working women since last 2/3 years. However, even after the conference the problem of co-ordination still continues as we are not able to find out one woman comrade at the State Centre.

Apart from cadre question the main problem was the understanding. There was a lot of confusion regarding the organisation of working women and democratic women's organisation, its necessity and functioning. This confusion still persists among the leadership. Another impediment is that the male organisers are biased with chauvinism against women organisers for which no efforts are taken by the leadership to promote the women workers to the leadership thinking them to be weak in struggles. But our own experience shows that the female workers of Bhaskar Textile Mills, Baripada Spinning Mills, Kalta Mines and Roxy Loading Plot, Keonjhar Mines and Central Rice Research Institute have fought more valiantly than the male workers in many cases.

Promoting the working women in trade union leadership is reflected to a limited extent in our mines, spinning, construction and other fields where they constitute a bulk. The newly elected 51 member CITU State Committee have 7 women representatives but non among them as office bearer. The delegation to this conference also gives a good representation to the working women."

The report from West Bengal Committee states that :

"The women workers are members of the unions wherever they work and there is no separate organisations for them. Efforts are being made to include women workers in the union work more and more. Recently an union has been forced with the women workers of ICDS".

It is hoped that the discussion on the basis of special report would enable us to correct the deviation that is existing.

## Solidarity with Peasant's Struggles

The Kanpur Conference which was held in the year of Death Centenary of Karl Marx once again recalled the directions to the working class to look after the interest of worst paid trades and recorded that, "A dangerous weakness of India's trade union movement is its isolation from agricultural workers and the mass of peasants. This is bound to be fatal in a country where the agricultural workers and peasants form the the overwhelming majority of the people.

During the year when the working class was facing lock-outs, the peasants and agricultural workers were being ruined. There was hardly any consciousness about this and the responsibility of the trade unions.

All trade unions including CITU unions, are to a greater or smaller extent guilty of this weakness. Some efforts are made to overcome it no doubt, but it is an evil built-in in the trade union consciousness since early days under the influence of the bourgeois-leaders. They opposed every activity of the trade unions except acting for their own demands. For the rest they must await signal from the bourgeois leaders.

This outlook still grips a major part of the trade union movement, outlook of isolation of the movement."

The meeting directed that the CITU must clear its own stables before it takes steps to cure the movements of the disease. This call was once again repeated in various meetings of CITU. The attitude of the working class can be understood from the fact that there is virtually no protest against the serious repression on the agricultural labour by the landlord class who had organised armed gangs to induct rape, murder and arson of all agricultural workers fighting for minimum wage or for distribution of vested land, what to speak of solidarity actions. But only a little beginning had been made. The West Bengal movement for the jute growers had been very powerful. It is because of this joint movement of the jute workers and jute growers that the Government-owned Jute Corporation of India had to purchase some raw jute with the floor price and saved the jute growers from stock market manipulations of jute barons. But beyond this much could not be done except that the CPI (M) led Left Front Government of West Bengal led by our Comrade Jyoti Basu, had been openly claimed by the friends and foes alike that it had been the most in recording the share croppers' rights in the book of records, in guaranteeing minimum wage to the workers and ensure jobs through programmes under NREP and IRDP etc. The benefits derived had gone to the peasantry and the agricultural workers for whom it was intended. This is the one point of demarcation from other States including the States ruled by non-Congress Govts.

It is unfortunate that the entire CITU cadre had not been able to use this information in a manner to organise the peasantry and the agricultural labourers. The reports from various states as given below will show how pitifully inadequate are the steps that they have taken. Some efforts have been made by the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka state committees who themselves realise that it is not enough.

Once again we should recapitulate what Karl Marx had said. He had directed that they (Trade Unions) "must convince the world at large, that their efforts far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden million.

The Tamilnadu report states: Our decision to raise Kisan solidarity fund and campaign for its collection has helped us to raise the consciousness of our workers to a small extent.

Recently, in a village called Neikuppai in Trichy district, the agricultural workers were struggling for wage increase and the whole village was burnt by landlords. In the protest actions all over the State, our workers were mobilised. In Trichy district all our unions participated in collecting money and materials for the affected people. Some unions in other districts also collected money and materials from workers and public for the same.

This was a recent example of our solidarity action and our district committee has reported that in the surrounding areas, especially in BHEL and small arms factory, workers belonging to the scheduled castes, the affected people in Neikuppai were Harijans had openly appreciated the work done by our comrades.

In another instance in the hill areas of Nilgiris, our workers in State Electricity Board went to the help of hill tribes and mobilised them against police atrocities.

Another area, where workers are involved in solidarity campaigns, is the sugar factory areas. Our unions in Nellikuppam, Madhurandhagam etc., had conducted campaign in support of the cane growers.

The Karnataka report states that: CITU unions at Bangalore contributed (collected from workers) Rs. 26,000/- to Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha (AIKS) for drought relief. CITU unions directly distributed food grains to drought affected peasantry in some villages in the Taluks of Bangalore district. Some CITU unions in Dakshina Kannada contributed money to help to hold district Kishan conference. MICO Employees distributed food grains worth of Rs. 1,60,000/- (one lakh sixty thousand) to drought affected peasants and agricultural workers in some pockets in the districts of Raichur, Pijapur, Gulbarga, Kolar and Mandya. Some unions contributed money to Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

CITU Unions offered food packets to over 50,000 (fifty thousand) peasants who came from districts to demonstrate before Vidhana Soudha to press their demands on 29.9.1986 at Bangalore.

Members of CITU Unions struck work through out the State on 11.6.86 in support of peasant's demands and immediate notification of minimum wages, over 25,000 courted arrest on that day in 18 of the 19 districts.

The Punjab report states : Some of our unions have started to show some solidarity actions with peasantry and propagation of the peasant's demands among working class. It is very negligible. We have to redouble our efforts to forge living links with the peasantry and to organise them. Apart from doing day to day work CITU unions participated in thousands in the Kisan Sabha state demonstration and rally on 24th December, 1986 at Sangrur.

The Gujarat report States : Cotton growers are not getting remunerative prices. Our Baroda unit agitated for the same, but the agitation was not impressive.

The West Bengal report says : The Trade Unions have highlighted the demand of peasants for fair price of their crops. The jute workers organised joint conventions with the jute growers demanding remunerative price for raw jute and monopoly purchase of all raw jute by JCI. These demands were included in the list of demands on which general strikes were organised. On 7th August, 1986 the workers of jute industry in West Bengal observed strike on the demand for nationalisation of jute industry, monopoly purchase of raw jute by JCI and remunerative price for raw jute and on the same day and on the same demands hartal was observed in the jute growing rural areas of West Bengal.

Despite these actions we are yet to cover a long way to make the working class really conscious about the demands of the peasantry in order to strengthen working class-peasant-alliance. We have also not been able to fully educate the working class about the steps taken by the Left Front Government of West Bengal in the interest of the peasants by protecting the rights of share croppers (Operation Barga) and free distribution of about 8.03 lakh acres of Government vested land benefiting 15.9 lakh poor and landless peasants and agricultural labourers. The 'Operation Barga' benefitted 13.17 lakh share croppers of West Bengal. We are trying to make up these deficiencies.

### Unemployed

The Kanpur Conference exposing the bogus claims of the Congress Government about their plans to combat unemployment had called that : "the entire trade union movement must actively

move to secure immediate relief for the unemployed and compel the government to embark upon policies which would effectively check the growth of unemployment."

The General Council meeting held at Calcutta on 31st March to 2nd April 1986 had called upon the CITU "to devote one day out of week long May Day Centenary Celebrations" exclusively on the question of unemployment and a big movement on 'right to work' should be built up. Like 8 hours a day the right to work is a basic right for which the entire working class must stand up." Here also we find from the reports which have come that little effort has been made in this connection. The only exception may be the case of Kerala where a big movement was launched in support of the movement of the youth for employment from published panels of recruitment in public services and restoration of unemployment relief which the Karunakaran Government had dispensed with.

It is known to everyone that successful implementation of every Five Year Plan in our country has only resulted in increasing the unemployment in the country. While the Economic Survey of 1986-87 makes a tall claim that "the basic thrust of industrial policy has been growth in order to boost production and generate employment" the situation of employment in manufacturing came down from 62.6 lakhs (6.26 million) at the end of March '83 to 61.8 lakhs (6.18 million) at the end of March '85.

Over and above this, the new policy of indiscriminate computerisation had led to a serious situation among the educated unemployed. In this situation the Congress (I) rulers are desperately trying to divide the unemployed by offering some money to some individuals selected by them through "Loan Melas" so that they can utilise this section to sow confusion and pit the unemployed against the employed.

The Working Committee meeting held in February '87 had decided to organise a special discussion on the subject. The reports placed below demands that the discussion takes place with a view to correcting this one big deficiency in our work.

1. The Assam Report states : Except general explanatory campaign no special steps has been taken. But as per decision of the last State Conference the State Committee meeting held on 17.2.87 decided to launch a State-wide movement step by step in the current year beginning with general meeting of the union, sample survey etc. and culminating in subdivisional and State mobilisation, if possible with other trade unions and mass organisations."

2. Punjab Report states : "Except two or three conventions nothing has been done to organise the unemployed in the trade union. Our understanding regarding unemployed is very much

ineffective and lack of vision in this regard. We consider only victimised or retrenched workers as unemployed whereas huge population is rural urban youth is there who can never get a job and needed to be organised. In coming days our State Committee will try to improve in this respect."

3. The Tamilnadu Report states: "As had been noted by us earlier our decision to observe anti-employment day during May Day Centenary Celebrations had become a ritual. But, after that some efforts are being made by us.

Our district committees have planned conventions and already the Convention at Madras is over. In this Convention also, we cannot claim that we have done our best. Efforts were not made to mobilise unemployed youth in large numbers. This weakness has been noted by the recent meeting of the State Committee.

Our unions all over the State, extended solidarity with the DYFI, and participated in the campaigns, when they conducted State-wide picketing on unemployment question.

Our union in the State Electricity Board, conducted State-wide campaign among the people, when 23060 posts were withdrawn by the Board.

Campaigns were also conducted by some of our unions for filling up vacancies but these campaigns involved only workers and not unemployed youths."

4. The Karnataka Reports states: "Unemployed workers' State Convention was held at Bangalore on 22.5.1986 which was inaugurated by Com. B.T. Ranadive. Local Conventions were held in some places. There was Dharna before employment exchange offices on 8.8.1986 demanding incorporation of "Right to Work" as a fundamental right in the Constitution, job or unemployment relief etc. Mobilisation was poor. Five thousand copies of a pamphlet on "Unemployment" written by Com. C. Nanjundappa were published and sold."

5. Report from Andhra Pradesh states: "Symposia were conducted during May Day Centenary in 5 towns about the unemployment problems, 25,000 workers participated in the demonstration conducted at State level by DYFI and SFI. Every year we are extending our solidarity by participating in the demonstration organised by youth and students."

6. Report from Orissa states: "The State Committee, in spite of its weakness, has raised the issue on several occasions, but very little could be done. A day was observed as "Day against Unemployment" during the observance of May Day Centenary.

A State level Convention against unemploy-

ment was organised at Bhubaneswar on 24.8.1986 by CITU State Centre. Though 145 Delegates from different parts of the State participated in the convention, still then mobilisation of different trade unions, employees associations and federations and mass organisations of Kisan, Youths and Students including women could not be wide. The Convention had decided for the observance of Anti Unemployment Day on 12th November 1986 in a befitting manner.

The Anti Unemployment Day was observed with processions, demonstration, public meetings and badge wearings at Rourkela, Jharasugua, Berhampur, Barbil, Joda, Kalta, Bhubaneswar, Balasore, Bhadrak, Paradeep, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Puranapani and Sonepur etc. The State Centre printed 6000 Posters and 25,000 Demand Badges. A Booklet on Unemployment written by Com. BTR was also printed in Oriya and 1000 copies were sold.

Again, in the last State Committee meeting held on 3rd and 4th March 1987, the Campaign Programme on unemployment has been decided. Our Unions have been asked to take up two month long campaign during March and April through wide-scale Wallings and group meeting. A day for unemployment will be observed on 11th May 1987 in form of general strike, militant demonstration and Gherao of employment exchange, Block Office and other Government Offices. Our Unions have been asked to undertake large scale preparation for participation of common workers on the issue.

The State Committee have decided to take several steps to overcome the weakness in coming future.

The Report from West Bengal states that even though CITU West Bengal Committee initiated the joint movement against unemployment in 1973, we must admit that we could not build up the movement against unemployment by mobilising the unemployed youths as indicated in the Central Programme of CITU. As a result the movement again continues to be movement of students and youths in West Bengal. Before 1984 Lok Sabha elections false promises were given by the leaders of Congress (I) that unemployed youths would be provided with employment and even forms were distributed in support of this promise and it was also asserted that after the elections, Congress (I) would reopen all closed factories and mills and these promised in a way influenced the voters. Following this election when these promises of Congress (I) leaders proved bluffs, we took up a campaign exposing the nature and policies of Congress (I) and its leaders. On 28th March 1985 we united all Central Trade Unions and organisations of Students, Youths and Women and observed 24 hours long squatting in Calcutta in protest against unemployment and on the next day, 29th March 1985 a massive united rally was held in

Calcutta as part of our movement against unemployment. On 29th March 1985 a Resolution was adopted unanimously in the West Bengal Assembly demanding reopening of all closed Mills and Factories and Establishments. In the programme on observance of May Day Centenary the issue of unemployment was taken up specifically.

It is hoped that the special discussion on the subject will lead to the CITU Unions taking initiative for the growth of movement of the unemployed. The leading role of the working class in fighting for the cause of the unemployed would have to be established so that the bourgeoisie is not able to divide this militant section of our population on divisive slogans weakening the general democratic movement.

### The State of our Organisation

The Kanpur Conference give a clarion call for strengthening the CITU and stated "it goes without saying that the tasks outlined cannot be fulfilled without strengthening the CITU, including the mass membership of the CITU unions, functioning them democratically and making the CITU the foremost central organisation. May the efforts of all of you be directed towards this goal so that working class and trade unions of our country are able to discharge their contemporary responsibilities."

We have to analyse our work in the background of this call. The point is how we have taken the call to the working class? Did we take any special steps for ensuring democratic functioning of the unions, for running a campaign for strengthening CITU, increasing the mass membership while attending to all the special tasks about important segments of our people. We have to study this problem on the basis of the report that have been received so far.

Take for example the question if we have taken any special steps for carrying forward the message of the Conference. From the reports it could be seen that every State Committee did strive in their own way to carry forward the message. Special Trade Union classes were arranged. The Conference reports were sold among general members. Karnataka State Committee started publishing a journal of CITU in Kannada language. But the changes that should have followed these efforts do not appear to be there. We take up the question of democratic functioning of the unions—**meaning involvement of the mass of members in decision making.** The reports sent by the State Committees state :

#### Delhi

After returning from Kanpur in April, 1982 State Committee was convened in which the reporting was done regarding the Conference decisions. It was decided that activists meetings be held at the

district levels and the decisions reported centrally to the activists. Accordingly, such activists meetings were held in Delhi, Faridabad and Ghaziabad. Emphasis was given regarding the implementation of the decisions. Activists were called upon to make special efforts to implement the same.

Prior to the Kanpur Conference, we held a state conference where certain decisions were taken regarding ensuring democratic functioning. The decisions included strengthening the State and District centres, strengthening democratic functioning in the unions, collecting sufficient funds, developing new cadre and holding of a trade union school. After the All India Conference, we took steps to implement these decisions, one by one. We thoroughly discussed the problems and State of the Trade Union movement in the State and conference guidelines were given in the form of a note.

Our State Committee directed the unions to :

1. Organise monthly meetings and report the decisions taken to their members.
2. To take proper decision regarding struggles, report them to the workers, and conduct timely reviews.
3. To hold Annual Conferences and review their yearlong activities and divide future tasks therein.
4. Maintain proper accounts of the unions and send their annual returns and affiliation fees in time.

It was also decided that the State Secretariat will check the accounts and reports of the unions. We have been fairly successful in this regard. Proper working committee meetings are taking place, decisions are being more regularly reported to the members. Annual conference and election of office bearers are taking place regularly. Day to-day problems, demand charters, line of negotiations and struggles are properly being discussed in the working committees and then taken to General Bodies. There has been sufficient progress in this regard as also in the matter of maintaining accounts registers.

On 13-14 April, 1986 we held our Delhi State Conference in which we decided certain immediate tasks on the basis of the All India Conference understanding. The State Committee discussed regarding the implementation of decisions taken in the State Conference. The continuing stagnation over the years resulting in fall in membership was seriously discussed to break out of this and increase the membership of the state by 30% over the last year in 1986. In order to implement this decision we organised huge meetings of activists in all three districts which were attended by all members of the State Sect. This gave results and many unions increased their

membership by more than 30% Ghaziabad Disst. increased 4-4%, Faridabad by 18% and Delhi by 22%. The total increase in the State membership is 22%. Now, our membership has exceeded 100. It has been observed that due to planned activity we have succeeded in not only overcoming stagnation and increasing the membership but also achieved overall progress in struggles and activities. This has enthused the State Committee and it has decided that in 1987 a target of 35% increase in membership has to be achieved. In February, 1987, once again activists meetings were held in the three districts in which a distinct improvement to the number and quality was noticeable.

### Punjab

After the Kanpur Conference 1000 copies of Presidential Address and General Secretary's report were sold among the workers. In some centres workers meetings and extended executive meetings at different unions were held to report the decisions of the CITU conference. But it is a fact that the efforts to propagate the decisions and resolutions of the CITU conference were not undertaken as it should have been done.

Our State Committee has tried to improve the democratic functioning of different unions by involving mass of the workers in making out decisions. Different centres have been allotted to leading comrades who check and see whether annual delegate sessions of unions according to constitution take place and election of office bearers of the union are being done democratically and regularly, working committee/Executive Committee meetings are held. It is being noticed that some improvement has been taking place in this regard. Most of the unions hold their annual/biennial session in which good number of workers take part. It will not be incorrect that still mass of the workers remain passive and only during agitation like strike etc. they become active. Participation in demonstrations are also not up to the mark. They don't take part as they should to frame the policies of the union and take appropriate decisions more and more vigorous efforts are to be made in future to ensure democratic functioning of the unions.

### Karnataka

1. "In most parts of the State meetings of workers were held in 1983 where Kanpur conference decisions were reported. They were also published in 'Aikayaranga' weekly. In pursuance of the decisions of CITU State Council which met at Dandeli in February 1984 decided to bring out Kannada monthly of CITU viz, "CITU Sandesha". It began to be published from May 1984.

However, Kanpur Conference decisions which indicate the tasks before the CITU could not be communicated to the entire mass of member of CITU in the state which deficiency we have to fight and overcome in the days to come.

2. In almost every meeting of CITU State Committees and State Council the need for democratic functioning of trade unions and involvement of the masses of members in decision making of the unions is stressed. Half of our unions fulfill the constitutional requirement of holding annual or biennial general body meetings or conference, and periodic meetings of executive committee or working committees. Efforts are made to see that the remaining unions also adhere to constitutional requirement of holding meetings. Many unions hold mass meetings to decide on agitation and strike and to get mandate for settlement. But for this involvement of the masses of members in decision making of the union is a far cry. We are yet to make persuasive and convincing efforts to embark on the path of involving masses of members in decision making of the union.

### Andhra Pradesh

1. "The decisions of Kanpur Conference were propagated through articles in CITU monthly "KARMIKA LOKAM". The Presidential speech and Secretary's report were published in Telugu and sold each in 2000 copies. A Pamphlet on Kanpur CITU conference was written by Com. N. Prasada Rao and sold, in large numbers.

2. The need of democratic functioning is being stressed in every meeting. The State leadership when even it visits a place oversees the functioning of the Unions and corrections are made whenever this principle is violated. There is no incident in the state where agreements had not got prior sanction of mass of workers. Even struggles are being taken up after consulting the general body meetings. There is definite improvement in the state in this regard. Unions often consult the State CITU Centre about agreements, and send copies of the final agreements to it.

The State Committee is particular about this aspect of our functioning and this insistence of democratic functioning even resulted in desertion of certain leaders. But because of proper handling of such disruptions, the damage was minimised everywhere."

### Assam

"The delegates reporting from the Kanpur Conference reported back the decisions to the executive committee and General Body meeting of their respective unions. A brief report also appeared in weekly Gansakti (Assamese).

Normally all important decisions at first are taken in the Executive Body meeting of the union and then approved by the General Body meeting. On important issues the State Committee is also consulted."

## Tamil Nadu

"The decisions of Kanpur Conference were reported to leading cadres in district wise meetings and in some of the major industrial centres. But, we can't say that this was done to satisfy our needs.

CITU foundation day and Trade Union unity day were observed in the State and these meetings were also utilised for explaining Kanpur Conference decisions.

Over and above all these, our journals, CITU-SEITHI (of the State Committee), POKKUVARATHU THOZHILALAI (Transport), and MIN-KATHIR (Electricity) published in details, the speeches, proceedings and decisions of the Conference.

While deciding on future programme in our state conference we had followed the spirit and decisions of the All India Conference. Three important decisions were taken.

1. To collect Re. 1/- from each member of CITU towards a fund for kisan movement in the State. We had given Rs. 40,000 each in 1984 and 1985 and Rs. 30,000/- so far in 1986 to the State Kisan Sabha.

2. Observance of January 19th as Martyrs Day every year so that the heroic past of the working class movement and the task ahead can be explained to our workers.

3. Observance of 1st June (The International Day of Children) as a day against exploitation of child labour considering the fact that the number of children working in various industries is on the increase in the State.

Though there are still weaknesses, all these 3 decisions are being implemented by our unions in such a way that the policies of ruling parties are explained to the workers.

On this, a lot has to be done by us. Generally, the term democratic functioning is understood as regular meetings of the main committee or holding of the General Bodies annually or as stipulated by the union bye-laws. Even on these things, there are failures in some unions. The question of ensuring democratic functioning and involvement of workers in decision makings were reported to all union and insisted to our cadres generally.

Though, much has to be done in this, our district committees have started working on these lines.

One of the recent examples of involving the workers, which has given us good results is our work among the State Transport employees.

At the time of submission of new charter of

demands a draft was prepared and sent to branches of our affiliates in the statewide Federation. Discussions were arranged and the Charter was finalised and was widely publicised among workers. This involvement of workers in finalising charter helped our union later on to conduct powerful struggles. When the discussions with the Government started the result of the discussions were informed to workers all over the State within 24 hours through circulars. This increased the prestige of our unions and at the same time forced other unions to take up firm positions in the negotiations. Finally, we could reach an acceptable settlement. After the agreement membership has increased in all the areas and the involvement of workers during the struggle for wage increase has helped the union."

## Orissa

The call of the Conference was being communicated through General Body meetings of the workers articles in the Sramik Ekata, the monthly organ of CITU State Committee. But no systematic programme could be taken up immediately due to the impending work in connection with August 9th Bandh in the State. Late on, in various occasions the call has been sought to be implemented, of course it cannot be told that there is marked rise in the level of consciousness in this regard. Rather, our unions have not been free themselves conventional type of work and struggles.

Through General Body Meetings, resolutions, writings in Sramik Ekata, the journal of State Committee and a State level class held at Tenna from 3.8.85 to 6.8.85 efforts have been made to raise the level of consciousness of the leaders, organisers and workers during the ensuing period.

By the time of Kanpur Conference there was serious draw back in the functioning of the unions barring two or three unions like Jharsuguda Industrial Mazdoor Union, Heavy Water Project Employees Union etc., those were practising the method to involve the common workers in day to day functioning. Most of the Unions were not taking care to convene the executive body meetings. Charter of demands were being finalised by the leadership alone and agreements were signed without the workers' sanction. No reports were being sent to the State Centre by most of the unions.

Though there was some efforts to educate the unions regarding democratic functioning before Kanpur Conference but that was mostly of casual nature and the practice being confined to two or three unions. But after the specific direction of Kanpur Conference constant efforts were being made in this regard.

The State Committee had discussed the matter several times in its meetings, tried to convince the State Committee members first, who are the direct leaders of different unions. In the Conferences and

ral Body meetings, in the public meetings and private meetings, during finalisation of charter of demands and signing of agreements, apart from going with constitutional provisions, we have failed to percolate the understanding that

- (i) No charter of demands can be finalised or agreements can be signed without the involvement and consent of common workers.
- (ii) Real functionaries of the unions should constitute the office bearers and executive body.
- (iii) Constant reporting from Unions to the State Centre and vice versa.
- (iv) Day to day decisions of the unions must be taken either by executive or office bearers in meetings but not by one or two individuals or a group of individual leaders.
- (v) Accounts to be placed regularly before the executive and be passed.
- (vi) Conference are to be held with adequate preparations and efforts to be made to see that general workers get involved in it.

The State Committee members, Union Organisers and general workers have been constantly fighting about the importance and necessity of democratic functioning, as a result, we have got some results in cases of some unions, whereas in some other cases it is yet to be understood and implemented.

The defect on the part of the State Committee is that it could not evolve a system for regular check-up except in some casual manner.

However, during the period, the leaders have become conscious for getting the sanctions of workers before signing the agreement in most of the cases. In a recent case, in an agreement with western India, in Rourkela Steel Plant, the workers were not involved in the discussion and agreement or which the AITUC could mobilise the workers against us and created many problems. This does not mean that in all other cases the method of involvement of common workers in discussion and agreement is followed. Particularly this lacks at Bhubaneswar, Reya gada and certain other places".

It may be seen from the above that many of these reports do not include the concept of involvement of the masses of workers in decision making. Hence the Executive Meetings become perfunctory. That the involvement of the members help heightening the consciousness of the workers is missed. We have to correct this deficiency as early as possible.

The next question arises about our affiliated unions discharging their duties of showing solidarity with various sections of the toiling masses. Reports about peasantry, agricultural labour, unemployed etc have been given earlier. During this period some calls for giving financial aid as

solidarity to various organisations were given from the centre. The picture is given in Annexure-1.

From the figures it would be clear that the response is not adequate. This also we have to rectify as early as possible.

It is a matter of pride for all of us that the CITU could be strengthened despite all repression, closure, lock-outs and retrenchment which had affected membership of the unions in a very big way. The report from Haryana state that, "Hissar Textile Mills employed 5000 workers. It belongs to DCM group. Instead of implementing the tripartite agreement, the management closed down the Mill rendering 5000 workers jobless though CITU fought against retrenchment and closure, it was of no avail". The management can make more profit by selling land. And finally the Mill was closed on 23.6.84. The CITU had a strength of more than 3000. After the closure of the mill CITU strength came down to nil.

Hansi Spinning Mill, Hansi: Employed 1600 workers. Only CITU union was there. Instead of implementing the tripartite agreements the management locked out the factory on 13-7-84 by saying that the factory was running into losses. The factory remained closed for seven months. All the previous agreements were broken. The factory was opened on 13-1-85. By that time several hundred workers have left the factory. Fresh recruitments were made and lower wages were given. But we have again been able to revive the union with 900 as membership."

It must also be understood that the membership of trade unions according to ILO report had been declining. The report published in Financial Express, on 19-2-85 is as follows:—"Membership of trade unions varies widely from country to country ranging from nearly 100 per cent of the workforce in industrialised socialist countries to less than 10 per cent in some developing states, the ILO report notes.

Total membership has declined the several countries during the past few years, mainly as a result of the general economic recession and structural changes in the manufacturing sector. In the United Kingdom for example, union enrolment fell by 3.6 per cent in 1980 and 5.9 per cent in 1981. In both the Netherlands and Sweden the decline was about 4 per cent. The Federal Republic of Germany recorded a drop of 2.5 per cent.

The level of unionisation, as a proportion of the economically active population ranges between 30 and 40 per cent in Canada, Greece, Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland and between 15 and 30 per cent in France, Portugal and Spain. In the United States it has stagnated around 22 per cent for more than a decade. Only in Denmark and Norway has the trade union movement gained members in recent years.

It may be noted that despite what has been

noted in our constitution the earlier practice of submitting annual returns and clearing of affiliation fees only before conferences is still being adhered to by several unions. The position is especially bad in Bihar, U.P., M.P. and Maharashtra as can be seen from the annexure II. Then for special efforts the annual returns for 1985 were submitted by many unions but submission of their returns for 1983 and '84 and clearing their arrears affiliation fees was not done. It is hoped that by the time we meet at Bombay the lacunae in these states will be overcome.

One more point would have to be taken into account that unless the attempts are made to organise the vast section of unorganised workers in a planned manner the position of membership of CITU will not go up very much. It is further noted that some of the State Committees have already engaged themselves in the task of organising the unorganised sector. It is hoped that everyone would carry forward this task still further.

It was pointed out in our Working Committee meeting held in September 1986 at Delhi that :

"The link between the unions and the State Committees and Central Office appears to be growing weaker. This, in many cases is either a residue of the old revisionist practices or due to the growth of "Federalism" even in the CITU organisation. Otherwise there could be no explanation as to why a normal legal provision of the Trade Union Act viz submission of Annual Returns by 30th April every year is not being strictly observed and the affiliation fee is not being paid by 30th June every year as the CITU constitution enjoins on them.

The great harm done by indifference to submit return is not realised by our unions. It obstructs the CITU's task in defending the workers at all forums. Central unions whose membership is known to be inflated get preference in important committees, thanks to this neglect. This indifference is born out of parochialism and a testimony to the fact that the unions concerned have not yet developed class consciousness, the necessity of acting as a class. This failure is now resulting in betrayal of those who laid their lives to found the CITU and who are daily undergoing suffering to strengthen the all India organisation."

Though it is true that there is a greater realisation about the necessity of submitting returns there is no spectacular improvement. The Working Committee meeting while drawing the attention of the members to the impending verification of membership as on 31.12.86 directed that appropriate steps should be taken to keep the records clear so that the conspiracy to deny CITU its rightful place, on the basis of its strength, could be defeated. There has been some response by the unions as will be seen from the statement at Annexure II. It is hoped that the figure of our membership for 1986 will be much increased by the time when we met at Bombay.

One point which concerns reorientation of our

work which was called for by the Kanpur Conference relates to submission of regular reports and review of struggles. The Working Committee meeting held in February '87 directed the State Committees to submit their reports on certain specific points as stated above. Reports from only Tamilnadu, West Bengal, Karnataka, Orissa, Assam and Punjab were in time. Goa State Committee had sent a report but not on these points and hence could not be used. Maharashtra State Committee had rendered their report to the State conference in English and hence could be made use of. Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi submitted a report in the first or second week of April '87. Non-submission of reports has become a chronic failure. Worst is not reviewing the struggles or work. The Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh reports claim in general line that they review the work or struggles. In some cases they have also recorded that they have not been able to review the particular struggle. Essentially by not reviewing the struggles and by not making the reports and reviews available to the Centre for circulation among all, the CITU is being deprived of the opportunity of introducing the system of sharing of experience and developing a sense of collective functioning.

#### Strengthen the CITU

Today the CITU is slowly emerging as a fighting force for the cause of unity and national integration, and the most important fighter for trade union unity. With the growing intensification of capitalist crisis in the country and the consequent authoritarian measures, attack on the workers' jobs, wages and trade union and democratic rights would also increase. Unless we overcome our defects as early as possible and strengthen the CITU by drawing the unorganised sector especially the women and the minority communities, the working class will not be able to fulfill the responsibility which develops on its shoulders. We can ignore this task only at our own peril. I am sure that all comrades would give this report due consideration and try to relate their experience with the same

Before concluding I thank all comrades, particularly from the State Committees and the affiliated unions for their prompt response to the CITU calls and I am sure that their response in future would be more energetic.

Let us intensify our fight for trade union unity defeating all games of disruptors to defend the workers' interest ;

Fight for unity and national integration defeating all attempts of communal and divisive forces who are being aided and abetted by imperialism in their vain attempt to destabilise our country.

Fight for peace and against nuclear war defeating the imperialist designs of global domination.

Let us hold high the banner of proletarian internationalism and march hand in hand for securing a nuclear war free world at the end of this century.

Inquilab Zindabad.

Samar Mukherjee  
General Secretary

JUNE 1987