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# COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)

## Central Committee Office

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### Review of the Work on the Trade Union Front And Immediate Tasks

*(Adopted by the Central Committee at its meeting -- November 22-24, 2002)*

#### 1. Introduction

The Central Committee undertook a review of the work on the trade union front and took note of the new issues and problems, which have arisen in the recent years, and set out some immediate tasks.

For a Communist Party, the working class has a special role. It is the class which will play the leading role in the revolutionary movement consisting of all other oppressed and exploited sections of society. We have to constantly educate the entire Party and in particular the Party cadres working on the trade union front about the basic aim of working in trade unions. As the 1967 **Tasks On the Trade Union Front** stated and which was restated in the 1983 trade union document: *“For the Marxist-Leninist Party the tasks on the trade union front do not comprise only the tactical line of running the trade unions as organs of daily struggle for the effective defence of the economic interests of the working class under given conditions, while defending the daily interests they aim at organising a disciplined working class with revolutionary consciousness, drawing it nearer the party, with its best elements joining the party in hundreds enabling the class as a whole to play its historic role in the revolutionary struggle.”* Herein lies the difference between the reformist and Marxist-Leninist approach to trade unions.

The Central Committee had adopted the **Tasks on the Trade Union Front** in the year 1983. This was a comprehensive document which built upon the 1967 task resolution and was meant to act as a guide to our work on the trade union front. Despite repeated decisions in successive Party Congresses, the Central Committee was unable to take up the periodical review of work on the trade union front and set out immediate tasks in the light of the 1983 resolution. The failure of the PB and the CC in this regard is now sought to be corrected. Because of this long delay, it is difficult to undertake an exhaustive review for a period stretching to nineteen years since 1983. What is attempted here is to take stock of the major changes which have occurred internationally and nationally in the last one decade or so which have brought about a radically different situation from that obtaining in the early 1980s. These changes have

had a major impact on the working class movement. Without taking them into account, it is not possible to discuss the problems facing the trade union movement and the orientation which we must give to our trade union work.

## 2. Major Changes Since 1983

The later half of the 1980s and the decade of the 1990s witnessed a big offensive by imperialism and capitalism. It gathered momentum after the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the setbacks to socialism. The aggressive steps taken by US imperialism utilizing its military power, go side by side with the neo-liberal offensive of globalisation. The drive for liberalization and privatization all over the world spearheaded through the IMF-World Bank-WTO have had a major impact on the whole industrial scene with its adverse consequences for the working class and the trade union movement. In India, with the changeover to the policies of liberalization; and the retreat of the State from the economy, the trade union movement was faced with new problems. The liberalization policies of the past one decade meant a complete shift from the earlier path of capitalist development. The policies of liberalization and structural adjustment programmes imposed on the developing countries including India resulted in:

- Privatisation of valuable assets of public sector undertakings and cuts in public investment.
- Drastic reduction of the workforce to reduce labour cost.
- Large-scale closure of sick and unviable units resulting in slowdown of economic development.
- Free entry of MNCs for investment in developing countries.
- Emergence of Export Processing Zones with non-implementation of labour laws and bad working conditions for workers.
- Massive retrenchment of workers through the so-called VRS route.
- Drastic curtailment of working and living conditions of workers, social security benefits and existing amenities.
- Large-scale destruction of small scale, tiny and traditional industries leading to pauperisation of the people.
- Attack on trade union and democratic rights of the working class through labour law amendments.
- Emergence of WTO leading to further worsening of terms of trade against the developing countries and changes in patent regime.
- Withdrawal of quantitative restrictions resulting in flooding of the markets in the developing countries.

The changes in the world capitalist system and the emergence of the imperialist-driven globalisation in the last part of the twentieth century have led to a radically altered situation. It has led to an all-round attack on the working class both in the advanced capitalist countries and in the third world. Without going into the features of contemporary capitalism, it can be said that the present situation is marked by an unprecedented onslaught on the workers. The

restructuring of industry, development of new sectors with advanced technology, outsourcing of production etc have led to de-industrialisation of certain sectors, large-scale loss of permanent jobs and growth of casual and contract employment. The hard won trade union rights are under severe attack and measures taken to redefine the working and living conditions of the workers. In the face of this worldwide offensive, it is necessary to build a wide-ranging unity of all those affected by the globalisation-liberalisation processes. The trade union movement has to encompass all sections of the workforce, the unorganised sector, the growing service sector and the women workers who are in large numbers outside the organised sector. Effective resistance requires the concerted and united movements of the working class and all sections of the rural working people.

The onslaught on the working class cannot be fought in one industry or sector alone. The situation called for an appropriate response to the new problems posed. Correctly, the CITU has sought to develop a powerful all-India movement to meet this offensive. The key to developing such a movement has been building trade union unity at the all-India plane to fight these policies. The fact that through united platforms like the Sponsoring Committee or the NPMO, six all India one-day general strikes were conducted, is a result of these efforts. There has been a series of protest actions and protracted battles to halt the privatization drive and the dismantling of the public sector. One example is the dogged battle to stop the opening up of the insurance sector. It was only in 1998 that the ruling classes succeeded in insurance sector liberalization with the combined support of the Congress and the BJP.

It is due to the initiative and the fight put up by the CITU and the independent federations in which our Party comrades work, that the resistance to these policies have been widened and intensified.

In all the major advanced capitalist countries from the 1980s through the 1990s, the trade union movement faced an extremely hostile climate. The trade union membership fell and their striking capacity was affected. The trade union movement in India was also affected by this hostile environment. The CITU determinedly faced these adverse circumstances. The Party should properly understand the situation and the problems which have arisen due to international capitalist offensive and its national impact. We have to tackle the new situation and problems effectively, so that the current phase of defensive struggles go forward step by step to a situation where ground is regained and the offensive rolled back. It is necessary to combat the attempts by a section of the trade union leadership to compromise with the liberalisation drive. Even though individual struggles in specific sectors may not achieve success, it contributes to the process of resistance being built up. It is crucial that we develop a powerful and multifaceted struggle involving all sections affected by the total attack representing anti-labour and anti-people policies.

### **3. Danger of Communalism**

During the eighties and nineties, the communal forces have been rousing chauvinist sentiments and gaining ground among the people. The RSS and its various outfits have been openly campaigning for their fascistic ideology and advocating the establishment of a Hindu rashtra in India. After the formation of the BJP government at the Centre, in collaboration with several secular but opportunist parties, the RSS has been making systematic efforts to penetrate into all arms of the state viz. the executive, judiciary as well as the army. How to counter this reactionary and divisive force amongst the working class has to be accorded priority.

The CC's election reviews in the nineties noted the success of the BJP in many working class centres in the urban areas. The communal outlook and ideology has penetrated sections of the working class, the degree may vary from region to region. Once the communal ideology penetrates the working class, it takes a long and difficult struggle to dispel it and create a secular democratic consciousness.

The Shiv Sena in Mumbai continues to exercise influence over substantial sections of the working class. In Gujarat, the Hindutva forces have succeeded in communalising the atmosphere to such an extent wherein the trade union movement led by the Left and secular forces was totally marginalised during the recent communal carnage. In the eighties, the closure of the textile industry in Ahmedabad had weakened the trade union movement and broken the common bonds which existed between the Hindu and Muslim workers. The tasks of fighting the policies of liberalisation, the fight against the reactionary communal forces and efforts to divide the workers and disrupt the working class movement must be carried forward simultaneously. It cannot be, that the task of fighting communalism is assigned to the Party while the trade unions take up the economic struggle against the liberalisation offensive. No doubt, the basis of trade union work will be the economic issues, fighting against economic policies, which affect the workers interests. But the politicisation of the working class that we talk about cannot take place without the active and direct role of the working class in the struggle against the communal forces and their reactionary ideology. The experience of the last four years also shows that even on economic issues, the policies which attack the economic interests of the workers are being imposed vigorously by the ruling party which subscribes fully to the RSS ideology.

The CITU documents, which analyse the political situation, do not fully reflect the dangerous implications of the growth of communal forces on the working class. Of course in recent years every report of the CITU has highlighted the danger of communalism in general, especially after the BJP has come to power. But the way the communal ideology has invaded sections of the working class in certain areas and how communalism has disrupted the unity of the working class and enabled the reactionary forces to extend their influence over the workers, has not been properly estimated or sufficiently highlighted.

In the CITU propaganda there is an absence of concrete political-ideological exposure and attack on the activities of the RSS and other communal outfits amongst the working class. For instance, the BMS purveys communal ideology amongst the workers. Being a wing of the RSS it takes the RSS outlook to the workers. But in the propaganda material of the CITU including '*The Working Class*', there is an absence of propaganda and concrete exposure of how the communal ideology operates and how it affects the working class. There should be no hesitation to take on the BMS on such issues. The NPMO campaign against communalism in August 2002 and the decision of the Party to fully support it was not properly implemented by our trade unions in several States, which clearly indicates our shortcomings in this struggle.

We have to lay emphasis on countering the communal forces amongst the working class. For this we have to:

- Prepare material, which can be intelligible to the ordinary workers explaining the disruptive and reactionary character of the communal outfits.
- Workshops will have to be conducted of party activists on the trade union front on how to take this propaganda amongst the workers.
- The trade unions should conduct social and cultural activities in the working class areas covering the families of workers too where the communal organizations are working in different ways.

The Party sub-committees or the trade union fraction committees must discuss which are the working class areas in which concentrated efforts should be made through a network of activities to combat the communal forces.

#### **4. Politicalisation of Working Class**

The 1983 document had drawn an important distinction between agitation and propaganda. The former concerns the agitations in daily struggles and campaigns on economic and immediate issues. The latter being the more basic propaganda, which connects the immediate problems and issues to the Marxist standpoint, educates the workers on the need to fight politically the system and the ruling classes i.e. acquire a socialist consciousness. The Party has to undertake the second category of work directly among the workers. It cannot be done by the trade union platforms. Some steps were taken in this direction but they were desultory and have not become widespread.

The communist work in the trade unions and the Party's direct work of propaganda in the working class and their habitations is still neglected by and large. It is still understood that this sort of political work is to be conducted through the trade unions. Both communalism and casteism are to be concretely taken up for agitation and propaganda among the workers.

- i. Developing political consciousness of the working class requires special attention by the Party to raise the political-ideological level of the Party members on the trade union front.
- ii. Both the Party and the Trade Union front should take up the anti-communal propaganda among the working class seriously.
- iii. The anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic issues are only formally taken. For instance, there is no serious attempt to take up the casteist ideas, which divide workers, and to build up a campaign on anti-caste lines. The good initiative taken in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh on anti-caste issues must be taken up in the trade union movement in appropriate forms.

Party and trade union activities amongst the working class should extend to the life of the workers outside the factory or workplace. The trade unions must start organising a network of activities, which involve the workers and their families. Social and cultural activities; questions of housing, education and health -- all these need to be taken up through appropriate organisations. Leaving the field open to the bourgeois and reactionary forces in this arena is one of the biggest obstacles to developing political consciousness of the workers.

### **Ideological Struggle**

The imperialist driven globalisation includes also the ideological offensive to discredit the class struggle and to denigrate the role of the working class. In the background of the mounting offensive of de-ideologisation by the ruling classes and the media in order to detach the working class movement from its class and political understanding, the task of intensifying our ideological work among the working class has assumed tremendous importance. In Indian conditions it is necessary to conduct a consistent ideological campaign to counter the alien ideologies which are purveyed within the working class. They pertain to: class collaborationist ideas which seek to undermine the role of an independent working class movement; and a host of feudal and divisive ideologies such as Hindutva, caste and regional chauvinist ideologies which seek to keep the working class divided and erect barriers against working class unity.

### **5. Uniting the Class & Building Trade Union Unity**

The 1983 document correctly emphasized: *“The central part of our activity in the trade unions is directed towards uniting the class, through growing trade union unity. All talks of equipping the working class to play this historic role, leading the people, is meaningless if the class does not get growingly united for its economic demands”*. In the light of the liberalization-privatisation offensive which has developed over the last one decade, the task of building trade union unity and uniting the class has assumed utmost importance. It is necessary to briefly review the work done in the last two decades for building trade union unity.

The CITU's emphasis on trade union unity and defending the rights of the working class from various onslaughts did result in important united struggles and joint platforms emerging of the trade unions. In the 1980s, the National Campaign Committee of trade unions was formed, this was followed by the Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) which was formed in the mid eighties. In the 1990s following the policies of liberalisation being introduced, the CITU's initiative led to the formation of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions which had all the central trade unions except the INTUC and the BMS. The first all India strike in November 1991 paved the way for this. The Sponsoring Committee played an important role in initiating the National Platform of Mass Organisations (NPMO) in 1993. In the one decade between 1991 to 2001, six all India general strikes took place. These strikes saw growing participation of more unions and sections of the working class and employees.

The CPSTU also played an important role in fighting the onslaughts against the public sector. The public sector strike of 16<sup>th</sup> April 2002 was spearheaded by the CPSTU. There were in the last one decade important united struggles launched by different sections of the workers whether they be postal, telecom, bank, insurance, coal miners and state government employees.

After the first phase of liberalisation during which some illusions about the policies were existing in certain sections of the trade union movement, the disastrous impact of these policies soon created grounds for the widest unity in the struggle against the liberalisation offensive resulting in large scale closures, retrenchment and privatisation.

The struggle for the widest trade union unity is seen in this phase. The INTUC and the BMS are the two major central trade unions affiliated to the two big bourgeois parties, the BJP and the Congress. On the one hand the central leadership of the INTUC and the BMS have been forced to come on joint platforms and campaigns against the anti-worker policies. At the state level they have even joined general strikes and bandhs. On the other hand both the INTUC and the BMS have refused to participate in all India general strike actions against the policies of the government. In the case of the INTUC they are opposed to such strike calls, while the BMS has adopted dilatory tactics time and again. The other aspect of the situation is that the unions affiliated to the INTUC and the BMS have joined strike actions in different sectors. In the year 2001 despite the decision approved by the Party to go ahead for a general strike which involved not only the trade unions but all other mass organisations, it was not possible to push this through the united trade union platforms because of the obstruction of the BMS and the INTUC. The BMS being guided by the RSS will not join all India actions against the Vajpayee government. In such a situation how to carry on the struggle for wider trade union unity at the all India plane has to be considered.

In the past too, as the CITU experience itself shows, we had to take a firm position of building up through sustained campaign and pressure for going for a strike action. In 1991, it was after the CITU took a firm stand for going ahead with the strike against the newly initiated policy of liberalisation, even if other trade unions would not come forward to join, that the first countrywide united action against the liberalisation could be called in November 1991. It is this strike which resulted in the formation of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions. Similarly, the CITU's independent strike action in the coal industry for three days in 2001 paved the way subsequently for united actions of the coal unions against the policy of privatisation and other issues.

In this context, we must keep in mind that our efforts to consolidate trade union unity is for furthering the political struggle against the policies of the ruling class. This purpose cannot be achieved if we compromise our stand on struggle. Rather the experiences of past struggles assert that constant and vigorous pursuit of the line of countrywide struggle can mount pressure on the reformist TU leadership to join the united platform of action.

Further, the experience shows that the grass root level unity and urge for united action at the industry/workplace level did play a vital role in drawing the leadership of the reformist trade unions into united action at the national levels. This experience directs us to prioritise on workplace level independent campaign by our trade unions and the party to create such urge among the common workers and build pressure from below for united class action.

The CITU gave the slogan of forming a confederation consisting of all the central trade unions as a step towards forging the unity of all sections of workers. The other central trade unions, including the AITUC, did not accept this proposal. The slogan did not make much headway due to this lack of response. It underlines the need to conduct an intensive campaign among the workers to popularise the slogan of unity, so that the question of confederation becomes a practical proposition.

The NPMO has played a useful role in developing all India campaigns and protest actions. It should be activated for joint movements encompassing the demands of all sections of the working people. While the trade unions will play a key role in this regard, more efforts are required by the Party committees to broaden the scope of involvement and participation by the other mass organisations.

## **6. Our Shortcomings**

Despite the increasing urge and response to united struggles, we are yet failing to utilise the full potential of the situation because of our shortcomings in approach and organization. The pursuit of the exercises for unity with the other trade unions, sometimes give rise to a trend of compromise with the issue of struggle itself within our own ranks. We must remain cautious about such

trends, while dealing with the emerging possibilities of united countrywide action and must remain clear about our goals.

The direction of the Task document (1983) is still relevant to pinpoint our task in this regard. It noted: *“The fact that the struggle for trade union unity is also an instrument to fight alien influence in the working class movement should not be missed. The workers should see that we are struggling for a consistent line and should learn to judge all others in terms of our line. If this is not done, it will be difficult to overcome the likely vacillations of our partners on critical occasions.”*

Moreover, despite increasing response to united struggle, the mobilization and response could not yet be taken to the required height to pose a determined challenge to the fast growing offensives. Even now a large section of the workers are not be drawn to the fold of united struggle not because of their reluctance to join the struggle but because of our inability to reach them. In all our agitations and propaganda work, both at the mass front and at the political level, there exists a tendency not to go beyond the usual periphery or to make a conscious effort to reach the widest section of the working people, making them ritualistic.

All these organisational weaknesses, despite our pioneering effort and marked progress towards developing united trade union movement in the country, have led to little organizational gains except in a few pockets of influence, which in turn affected the organizational consolidation of the united movement as well. This also reflects the lack of our realization of the basic fact that without strengthening the revolutionary stream of the working class movement, which upholds the principle of class struggle, the united trade union movement cannot be advanced consistently in the right direction.

These shortcomings have resulted in our failure to make full use of the opportunities created by growing disillusionment among the people on the character of the current NDA regime. Unless we quickly address these shortcomings, there is a danger of demoralisation and weakness creeping in among our own ranks.

Hence the consistent independent campaign and mobilization by the trade unions and the party committees at all levels with a focused approach to reach the widest section of the working people, beyond the usual and familiar periphery, has become all the more necessary to confront the vacillations and to sustain the conditions for united trade union actions against the policies, and maintenance of its continuity in the face of growing offensives. One of the major shortcomings of ours in this respect is that despite numerous successful united actions both at national and industry level, we failed to maintain the continuity effectively.

## 7. Uneven Development & Organisational Weaknesses

The CITU membership stood at 32,68,528 in 1999. Between 1991 and 1999, the trade union membership increased by 38.6 per cent. But the bulk of the membership comes from four states – West Bengal, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh (26.3 lakh). Of the nine lakh membership increase between 1992 and 1999, 6.75 lakhs came from these four states. In Maharashtra and Gujarat which are the two states which are at the top in terms of industrialization, the CITU is weak in the first and has only a symbolic presence in the second. The weakness in the Hindi-speaking states continues even though there has been some development in terms of struggles and membership in certain parts. The organizational weaknesses pointed out in the CITU document **On Organisation and Our Tasks** adopted in Bhubaneswar in 1993 are still relevant. They comprise absence of centre functioning in many states, lack of democratic and collective functioning, lack of unified understanding among the leadership both at the Party and mass front level, absence of planned initiative and prioritization. In the weak states we are still unable to develop unions in the key sectors, big industrial units and the vast unorganized sector.

The extreme unevenness within various sectors of industries and services also exists. In many states our presence in the organised sector and modern industries is minimal. There is a distinct tendency to leave the strategic industries totally out of our plan in many states. We have not made any planned attempts to penetrate into new economic sectors and the units of the MNCs. At the same time we are yet to reach the vast sections of unorganized sector workers as well. Sufficient stress is to be given to the independent campaign and mobilization by the CITU so that it reaches the widest sections of the workers beyond the usual and familiar periphery. Even in Kerala where CITU is strong, as the Kerala State Committee review of 2000 points out, out of the 50 lakh workers, organised and unorganised in the state, our trade union membership was around 8 lakhs then. Without building the independent strength of the CITU, it will not be possible to create conditions for wider united trade union actions against the policies of the central and state governments and forcing them to reverse some of these policies.

For the Party to guide the trade union front properly, it is necessary to do away with the still persisting practice of confining trade union matters to the trade union leaders for discussions. The 1983 document had correctly pointed out that without the Party's intervention, socialist consciousness cannot be created among the working class. This cannot be done through the trade union platform alone. It is therefore for the Party committees from the CC down to the district committees to discuss reports of the trade unions' work and take steps for taking political issues to the working class directly by the Party.

Review of the trade union work would also mean taking up the vital issue of building the Party on the trade union front. There have been occasions when important countrywide actions by the working class have not been taken

seriously by various Party committees and left to the trade union initiative only. Such an approach undermines the importance of our work among the working class and strengthens the trend of reducing the trade union work to economism.

Just as the Central Committee has now taken up the review of the trade union front, though after a long time, it is necessary that Party state committees take up the review of the work on the trade union front, steps for politicization of the workers and Party building on the basis of this document and then take it down to all the Party units for implementation.

## **8. Functioning of the Trade Union Centre**

The CITU Centre has a crucial role in developing the trade union movement and implementing the tasks set out by the CITU for organising the working class. The key responsibility for this lies with the leading Party comrades working at the Centre. The Bhubaneswar report on organisation of the CITU had set out certain guidelines for strengthening the functioning of the Centre keeping in mind the state of affairs existing in 1993.

The experience of implementing the various long term and immediate tasks shows that the Centre has not yet been able to prioritise its work and plan its activities keeping in mind the decisions of the organisation. For instance, the non-implementation of the decision of the Cochin conference to raise the membership of the CITU to 40 lakhs is mainly due to the absence of working out a planned growth of the organisation. The Centre has not been able to concentrate on expanding the activities and strengthening the organisation in the weaker states despite repeated decisions taken in all-India meetings. Some efforts had been made to hold meetings of the CITU leaders of the Hindi-speaking states to plan out work, but they are insufficient since the follow-up is still not there. Both for the independent growth of the CITU and to consolidate the new influence gained through united struggle, it is necessary to review the struggles. Proper review at the level of the secretariat or the TU sub-committee and the lessons drawn for follow-up action has not become part of the functioning.

While the office bearers at the Centre are discharging various responsibilities, there is an urgent need to improve the team work at the CITU Centre. Instead of collective functioning, uncoordinated activities by individual leaders results in losing the focus on the perspective set out in the 1983 document and subsequent decisions. Strengthening of the independent campaign and activity involves also, the CITU Centre coming out in criticism of the leadership of other trade unions on ideological and other policy matters, so that the independent image of the CITU is developed among the workers.

At present, the daily meetings of the available secretariat members shows a deterioration. Frequent meetings should be held to plan out the monthly activities and review the implementation of the decisions taken.

## 9. Position In Key Industries

The Party has been emphasizing the need for strengthening our position in the key sectors of the economy. We have to review our position since it has a great bearing on the all-India united movement. The striking power in a key sector of the economy has a significant role in the fight against the policies of the government.

### Transport Sector

**Railways:** In the railways, we are a sizeable force in only two zones working through the unions affiliated to the AIRF (Central and Eastern). In Southern Railway, there is a CITU union with a membership of 15,000. In Chitranjan Locomotive Works we have a major union (it is not affiliated to the AIRF). Because of our limited strength we are not able to force the reformist AIRF leadership to join the strike actions planned at the national level. As for the category-wise organisations in the railways, most of them have become inactive. It is only the All India Loco Running Staff Association which is active. Though there has been some decline in its influence, it is still a force to be reckoned with. The All India Railway Employees Federation which consists of the category wise unions has become ineffective. In this situation, we must emphasise work in the unions affiliated to the AIRF.

**Road Transport:** In road transport we have a sizable presence and our membership is above 2 lakhs. Though we have been able to form a coordination committee of CITU, HMS and AITUC unions and united campaigns are launched at the national level, we are still weak in a sector where over 50 lakh workers are working. We have formed the All India Road Transport Workers Federation, which is active, but more attention is required to spread our activities all over India. Our main influence is among the bus transport workers. Our weakness among carrier transport, taxi and auto rickshaw transport needs to be removed to cover several remote areas in the country.

**Water Transport:** In this sector we are in the third position among the federations working in the port and dock industry. HMS is in the leading position in this sector. We are strong in Kolkata, Kochi and Jawaharlal Port Trust. Among the seamen, we are recognized in Kolkata, while HMS is the leading force in Mumbai. In the home trade we have got influence and are a major force from Mumbai to Kochi and Lakshadweep Islands. We have to strengthen ourselves in all costal shipping. The Water Transport Workers Federation of India has 12 to 15 per cent membership of port and dock workers in the country. The Party fraction work in this industry is weak. It has to be reorganized and strengthened.

**Air Transport:** We have a sizeable presence in the Indian Airlines but there is deterioration in our work due to organisational problems which has to be

attended to. Our comrades are holding leading positions in the Air Transport Authority of India. Sufficient attention has not been paid to building Party units, education of cadres and fraction functioning in the civil aviation sector.

## **Energy Sector**

**Coal:** In the coal sector we are able to organise a nation-wide strike on our own strength. This is the only key sector in which we are in a position to do so. However, our membership is only 15 per cent of the total work force in the coal industry. There are more than 2000 comrades who can be educated and used to strengthen our activities in the industry. The task of holding classes has to be arranged on a priority basis. The functioning of the mine-level branches needs attention. Since we have a negotiating status in most of the companies, reformist trends are visible among a section of our comrades. There is an urgent need to form a central coal fraction of the Party.

**Electricity:** In this sector we have more than one lakh membership. We have formed a united front with other trade unions, federations and engineers. A nation-wide strike of power workers was organised but it was not effective. Our federation (EEFI) has been able to expand in some weaker areas.

**Steel:** In the steel industry, we are having the second position, next to the INTUC. We have recognized unions in Durgapur, ASP, Salem, CMO and Bhadravati. We are weak in Bhilai, Rourkela and Bokaro. We do not have unions in the private sector steel plants. The SWFI is functioning regularly and it has been able to bring together different unions on some common issues facing steel workers.

**Financial Sector:** In the insurance sector, the All India Insurance Employees Association which has the support of around 70 per cent of the employees is led by our Party comrades. The insurance employees are in the forefront of all the nation-wide joint struggles. They also waged a protracted struggle against the privatization of the insurance sector and in defence of the rights of collective bargaining. While the union is strong and gives a correct political direction to the movement, Party building is uneven in this sector.

**Banks:** : In banks, the BEFI has a membership of over one lakh while some of the Bank unions led by our comrades are still affiliated to the AIBEA, which is the major organisation in the banking Industry. All the nine federations in this industry including officer's organisation have formed a common committee to launch joint movement against privatisation of banking industry. Our comrades have leading position in Regional Rural Banks and Reserve Bank of India. In the recent wage agreement we did not sign due to opposition to some retrograde clauses. We are facing victimisation by the banks.

**Defence Production:** All India Defence Employees Federation is a major organisation in this sector in which apart from us AITUC, HMS and some independent forces are functioning. The INTUC and BMS have separate

organisations having small influence. We are campaigning for a determined struggle against privatisation. The Defence Federations gave a joint call for strike against privatisation on two occasions. However, on achieving some minor economic concession the call of strike was withdrawn. We alone do not have sufficient strength to pressurise others for a strike. Defence employees participate in NPMO programmes chalked out at the national level.

**Public Sector:** In the public sector, we are playing a leading role at the national level. We have improved our position in the NTPC, BHEL, Hindustan Petroleum, ONGC and some other industries. In most of the major industries, we have negotiating status but our membership is weak. There is some improvement in our position in Bangalore based industries where we are weak. In many of the units our unions have very small membership and we have not been able to reach out to a large section of workers. Party building in these public sector units has also not been given proper attention.

**BSNL:** With the corporatisation of the telecom department, the BSNL union led by us has become a major force. There are 3 lakh non-executive employees in this public sector enterprise. In the recent referendum to decide on recognition, the O.P Gupta union got recognition. It won 35% of the vote while the BSNLEU led by us polled 30% getting 89,496 votes. The main weakness was the low vote polled in Maharashtra and Karnataka. In the Hindi region, we fared poorly in Bihar, Jharkhand and UP (West). The Party state committees should pay serious attention to guide the cadres on this front to strengthen the union.

**Party Building/Party Fractions:** The question of Party building and the role of Party fraction committees in the key and major industries, has to be addressed seriously. The few reports that we have, show that there is continuing neglect of this basic task. One of the reports submitted will illustrate the position. The All India Insurance Employees Association is one of the strongest unions led by the Party. In many states Party members from the insurance front are helping the Party in a number of ways, yet the actual position of the Party building and membership as per the report of the central fraction shows the actual state of affairs. The states where there is larger party membership is as follows: Tamilnadu – 459, West Bengal – 276, Kerala – 150, Andhra Pradesh – 91 and Karnataka – 84. In all the other states the Party membership is comparatively very low. In the northern states, Bihar has 14, UP has less than 10, Rajasthan 6, Haryana 4, MP 7 and Chattisgarh 24. Himachal and Delhi are slightly better with 39 and 16. Maharashtra has 14, Punjab (including Chandigarh) 19. These figures indicate that even in the strongest unions, the Party building is lagging. In fact some of the weaker state committees do not even have the information on the Party membership which exist in these sectors.

In all trade unions outside the CITU, more attention has to be paid to the functioning of Party fraction committees and Party building. The Party units in

insurance, FMRAI (medical representatives), telecom etc need to be properly attended to and developed.

## **10. Work In The Unorganised Sectors**

Despite technological advance in the country, small scale production still dominates the Indian economy and overwhelming majority of our working class belongs to the unorganised sector. The largest chunk of the unorganised workers is in the agriculture sector.

We have been able to strengthen our work among Beedi workers, plantation workers, construction workers, garment workers, handloom, coir, cashew workers, where large number of unorganised workers are working. We have along with the AIKS formed a common federation of fisheries workers. Our activities among the bricklin workers have also registered some progress. However, compared to the size of the unorganised strata of the workers our influence is still only symbolic. We have organised workers in the service sector in the urban areas in many states. We have to take steps to build organization among the vast sections of artisans engaged in manufacturing work in the rural areas. Absence of any law to protect the working and living conditions of the unorganised workers is also creating difficulties in organising these workers. We are fighting for such legislation for agricultural workers and unorganised workers in India.

With policies of liberalisation, a sizable section of organised workers are being converted into unorganised strata. The Government policy to encourage engagement of contract workers is also swelling the ranks of the unorganised strata of the working class. The minimum wages fixed are quite often below the poverty line and the wages are not being implemented.

There is need to have more planned activity in this sector. Of late the system of home based workers is increasing and majority of them are women workers. The EPZ workers are also in the category of the unorganised workers and the CITU has taken the initiative in organising the workers in EPZ, despite victimisation, for formation of unions.

There is a growing section of white-collared service sector employees in sales and marketing, retail trade, hotels, hospitals, security, transport and financial services in the private sector. This is a development which has accelerated after the policies of liberalization. These sectors employ lakhs who are contract, casual or self-employed non-formal sector workers. We must pay attention to organizing them after taking into account their conditions of work. Qualified cadre who can deal with the issues in these new sectors must be selected and deployed.

With the restructuring of industry going on and the shrinkage of employment in the organised sector, it is essential to concentrate on organising the vast strata of unorganised workers, if we wish to develop a powerful working class

movement. Our party committees should plan strengthening of our work among this highly neglected section so that class struggles are intensified by involving the vast multitude of the toiling sections in these struggles.

## **11. Building Worker-Peasant Alliance**

It is not enough to make general statements about forging worker-peasant alliance and adopting resolutions for solidarity with the struggles of the peasantry. In actual terms, the worker-peasant alliance can be built up only with the trade unions actually taking up the issues concerning the peasants and the agricultural workers. While not much has been done in this direction, some steps were taken by the trade unions of Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. They are making annual fund collections from the trade union members to help the Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers Union. This is a commendable effort, thereby a new awareness is created among the working class on the need for the getting together of these sections.

The CITU and Kisan Sabha had only one joint meeting to consider the question of building worker-peasant alliance. However, the deliberations did not go beyond formation of a joint federation of fisheries workers at the national level.

The Party committees must take the initiative in this regard. Specific areas can be identified where there is a strong trade union with Party members in that union. Issues which can be taken up jointly by the workers and the peasants/agricultural workers can be identified. On this basis, joint actions of the trade unions and the Kisan Sabha or agricultural workers union can be organized. Some of the issues which can be immediately taken up are the public distribution system which affects both industrial workers and the rural poor; the issue of local development which affects the working people of the area whether it be roads, water supply, electricity etc. At present there are acute problems for the peasantry due to the drought. Trade unions can be asked to take up their demands and conduct local movements in cooperation with the Kisan and agricultural workers organisations.

The Polit Bureau and the Central Committee must monitor the work being done to foster the joint activities of the workers and the peasants and the steps being taken to concretise worker-peasant alliance.

## **12. Struggle Against Growing Unemployment**

With advancing globalisation and liberalisation reduction of the workforce has become a key aim of the capitalist class. During the last decade the employment in the organised sector has drastically come down. The urban unemployment has exceeded 4 crore while rural unemployment has gone beyond 8 crore. With such huge unemployed manpower the industrial situation in India is becoming precarious. In the public sector alone, more than 3 lakh workers lost their jobs in the garb of voluntary retirement schemes. In the private sector, the estimated surplus manpower has reached 45 lakhs.

Even in the Central government sector, vacant posts remained unfulfilled while the decision of the Central Government to reduce manpower by 2 per cent every year is leading to massacre of jobs. The downsizing of manpower by the State Governments has also become the order of the day.

The trade unions have to reach out to the unemployed, both those who have lost their jobs and lakhs of unemployed youth of proletarian and semi-proletarian origin. They are part of the working class. Their problems must be taken up wherever possible with the DYFI and other mass organisations and independently by the trade union movement. Since the convention on right to work held a decade ago by the CITU, there has been no notable initiative on this front. The fight against unemployment, the right to work, for job creation and for providing relief to the unemployed must be taken up by the trade unions as part and parcel of the struggle against the policies of liberalization.

### **13. Our Work Among Working Women**

The 1983 CC resolution on **Tasks on the Trade Union Front** noted the very small membership of women and their negligible participation as a weakness of the trade union movement. It deplored that the trade unions by and large neglected the problems of women and did not fight against unequal treatment, discrimination in promotion, etc. It also pointed out: “even in industries and concerns where women form the majority of the workers they are hardly to be found among the active leaders and functionaries of the organisations.” To rectify this weakness, establishing of working women’s committees and ensuring election of women workers to the leading bodies of the organisation in adequate numbers were outlined as the most urgent tasks.

The CITU Centre has made some efforts towards this end. Coordination Committees/sub committees of working women have been formed in many States and a few federations/unions. The work among working women and the class perspective of CITU were discussed at the meetings of the CITU. At the initiative of the CITU the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers consisting mostly of women was formed in 1991, in several States. Women’s membership in CITU has increased over time. From 6.2% of CITU membership in 1979 it has increased to 12% in 1991, and 17% in 1998. Participation of women in our trade union activities has considerably increased during this period. There is marginal improvement in the representation of women in the CITU committees and in the working committees of the federations and affiliated unions. Only two women are among the office bearers of CITU out of the total 35. In the working committee of CITU the number has increased to 10 out of 148 (6.75) and in the General Council to 40 out of 470 (8.51%) now. At the State level, all the major states have included at least one woman as office bearer. The number of women in the State committees and District Committees of CITU has also increased.

But mostly, women are included due to pressure from the higher committees, particularly CITU Centre. Most of the women's sub-committees in CITU unions are not functioning. A large number of women in the committees do not attend the meetings. There are complaints that the concerned committees do not provide for their travel expenses. Whenever there are financial difficulties, women are the first to be excluded from attending the committees, even in advanced States. A tendency to treat women's problems as problems to be tackled by them alone continues even now. The insurance union has taken up this work in right earnest. Some progress has been witnessed in the activities among women in banks and insurance employees. The progress made in unionising the anganwadi workers has to be kept up. Due attention must be paid to organising home-based workers where women are predominant.

There is still a patronizing and patriarchal outlook towards women workers prevailing among the male cadres working in the trade union front at all levels. The Party sub-committees on the trade union front should monitor the efforts to draw women in the trade unions, increase their participation and promote them in the union bodies.

#### **14. Our Approach To New Technology**

New technology is being introduced in most of the industries at an unprecedented rate. Particularly the IT sector has advanced in a big way and software is finding good export potential. Foreign investment has been quite sizable in this sector.

As communists, we are not opposed to the introduction of new technology since it leads to development of advanced means of production and will ultimately result in the growth of the productive forces in society. We have, therefore, not opposed new units coming up with modern technology.

However, as Marxists, we also know that such technology will be used by the capitalists to reduce the work force involved in production; increase productivity and maximize profits. We have to understand both these aspects while formulating our approach in the trade unions on the introduction of technology.

When new enterprises or industries are opened with new technology, we don't oppose it, because of the first factor. However when new technology is introduced in existing enterprises where it entails loss of jobs, increasing the workload of the remaining work force and cutting down facilities, workers interests will have to be protected and the unions will have to fight to save jobs and get the best possible agreement, depending on the situation. Introduction of new technology in every specific case therefore has to be seen by the trade union movement from the following perspectives:

- a) Immediate threat to employment of the workers in the specific industry.

- b) Survival of the Industry in the given environment i.e. whether technology upgradation/new technology is essential for the survival of the industry.
- c) Larger interests of the country and the people, e.g. safety and pollution aspects.

### **15. VRS Scheme -- A New Device of Retrenchment**

With an avowed objective to reduce the workforce in various enterprises, Voluntary Retirement Schemes are being introduced in several industries in the public and the private sector. It is a part and parcel of the cost cutting exercise by industrial undertakings in the name of competitive environment under liberalisation. At times the managements offer “liberal” packages, which ultimately result in savings in their operating costs. It has been observed that some of our leading activists have also fallen prey to such schemes, which creates frustration among the employees.

Trade unions should oppose VRS plans which are purely retrenchment schemes. However, despite the stand and campaign of the unions, if individual employees avail of the scheme, they cannot be prevented by the unions. Whenever managements resort to coercive methods to get employees to accept VRS, then the union will have to take steps against such methods.

### **16. Against Privatisation**

In any developing country, the role of the public sector is vital for developing a self-reliant economy. In India, through privatization of PSUs that basis is being destroyed and domestic investment curtailed. In the name of enlisting strategic partners, the government is fostering private monopolies. A marked feature of the recent period has been the struggles against privatisation of the public sector units. In this, a notable struggle was that of the insurance employees led by the AIIEA against the opening up of the insurance sector. The union collected 1.2 crore signatures from the people in a mass mobilization against the privatisation move. There was the 67-day long united strike action by the workers of BALCO against privatisation.

A recent example of the widening protests against privatisation is provided by the NALCO struggle. A bandh took place in Orissa against privatisation of NALCO and the protest movement has the support of all political parties, trade unions and mass organisations. Increasingly, the resistance to privatisation must see wider unity of the workers and trade unions and the more it extends to mobilizing other sections of people, as in the case of NALCO, it will be possible to halt such moves. The fight against privatisation of profitable public sector units and those in the key sector must be converted into popular movements, with the Party taking the lead to draw other sections of the people to support the trade union struggles.

### **17. New Attacks on Labour**

The recommendations of the Second National Labour Commission is designed to put into effect the efforts of imperialism and big business to abolish the limited rights of the working class with regard to job security, the right to strike and to give the employers a free hand to change the working conditions of the workers. The CITU and the unions led by our Party should unleash a massive campaign so that a strong all-India united movement can be developed to defeat the implementation of these retrograde recommendations. The BJP-led government's attempt to attack the working class and erode its strike power must be opposed firmly and the rights of the workers gained through prolonged struggle be defended.

## **18. Taking Up Social Questions**

One of the symptoms of the narrow approach of the trade union movement is the lack of proper understanding and the neglect in taking up the issues of social oppression which affect a major segment of the proletariat. A sizeable section of the working people in India belong to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. They suffer from not only class oppression but also from caste oppression. Experience has shown that by taking up only economic issues based on class exploitation, an important dimension of the dalit problem is ignored. This alienates them from the general trade union movement. Further, sections of the upper caste workers carry caste prejudices and express them in their work place and day-to-day life which creates a barrier to forging class unity. In the vast unorganized sections, the dalits are confined to doing the most back-breaking unskilled and low paid work. There is no protection for them whatsoever. Apart from adopting resolutions against caste oppression, the trade unions led by us have done little to educate the upper caste workers to shed caste prejudices. It has not taken sufficient steps to promote cadres from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to leading positions in the unions. There have been cases where workers are reluctant to accept dalit leaders because of caste prejudices.

The CITU and the unions led by the Party have to directly take up the question of caste oppression and fight all forms of caste discrimination and casteism within the trade union movement. There are scheduled caste leaders and organizations which seek to keep away dalit workers from common trade union struggles. Every effort must be made to forge links with the dalit workers and draw them into the common movement. With the increasing privatization, the SC/ST reservations in jobs is being lost and we must champion the demand that the reservation in these units continue as before so that the right of the SC/ST worker is protected.

Trade unions must be active in taking up social questions like dowry, which affect the lives of the workers due to the huge expense involved in marriages. The sexual harassment of tribal and dalit women must be taken up and fought as part of the fight against exploitation by the employers and their agents. Social problems of the adivasis and problems like child labour and bonded labour which affect sections of the proletariat must be tackled. This is part of

the working class struggle against feudal, bourgeois and extra-economic forms of exploitation.

## **19. Work In Reformist Unions**

Despite clear-cut directive given by the 1983 document to work in the reformist unions to keep close contact with mass of workers and strengthen our activities among them, we have not been able to make much headway in this regard. Many of our comrades are satisfied with small unions and remain isolated from general workers. This tendency is obstructing the growth of our influence. We must educate our cadres to understand the significance of this aspect and identify reformist unions where our comrades should work.

Party committees have paid scant heed to Communist approach to work in reformist unions. There is no justification to the formation of small splinter unions while a majority of the workers remain in the reformist unions. If our work among key and strategic industry sectors is to advance, working in the reformist unions and guiding it through Party fractions will become more and more important.

## **20. Democratic Functioning**

The 1983 document had stressed the importance of democratic functioning in the trade unions. The subsequent CITU reports have also emphasised this aspect. However, the progress in this sphere is limited and uneven. While some attention has been given to regular holding of union elections in many centres, the real essence of democratic functioning is still to be grasped and implemented. This requires a review by the trade union sub-committees and Party committees of the following: a) workers' participation in union meetings, b) expression of different views and minority opinion, c) representation of minority views on union committees, d) regular holding of elections with Party proposals for key posts being decided after consulting the fractions, e) young and new cadres being promoted instead of concentration of all responsibilities in one leader, f) steps to curb growing trend of bureaucratism and checking unhealthy practices.

## **21. Party Building In The Trade Unions**

The 1967 trade union document had forcefully pointed out the serious deviation existing in our trade union cadres and the failure to recruit large number of workers inside the party and equipping them for discharging responsibilities of party membership. Despite the number of struggles conducted by the working class over the years, the progress in this respect is not satisfactory in the strong states and in most of the weaker states there is no progress and in several places deterioration. One major reason for the lack of increase in Party membership from the working class is the crisis in the industrial situation, with closures, retrenchment, VRS and ban on recruitment having their impact. But even where the work force exists and our trade unions

work amongst them, the Party membership is in no way commensurate to our work and influence.

The main reason for decline or low Party membership in the Party is the absence among our Party members and leaders working in the TU Front, of the perspective, that, *“while defending the workers’ daily interests, Marxists have to aim at organising a disciplined working class with revolutionary consciousness, drawing it nearer the Party, with its best elements joining the Party in hundreds, enabling the class as a whole to play its historical political role in the revolutionary struggle.”*

Conscious and planned efforts must be undertaken by the Party committees to inculcate this perspective among the Party members working in the TU front and consistently reviewing and monitoring the recruitment drive.

The party membership by class origin in some of the states was as follows at the time of the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress: West Bengal 15.75%, Kerala 50.50% Tripura 16.1%, Tamilnadu 39.3%, Andhra Pradesh 10%, Punjab 5.37%, Madhya Pradesh 38.25%, Jharkhand 12.09%, Haryana 21.04%, Maharashtra 15.4% and Rajasthan 23.95%.

The neglect of Party building among the workers organised in CITU unions becomes starkly clear when we see the ratio of Party members drawn from the working class to the total membership of the CITU in a state. According to figures available (for 1999), in West Bengal 2.5 per cent of the CITU membership were Party members, in Andhra Pradesh it was 2.6%, in Maharashtra it was 1.6%, in Assam 3.8%, in Rajasthan 2%, in Punjab 1.0%, in MP 4.3% and in Delhi 1.8%. Except Kerala, nowhere is the percentage of Party membership from the workers in CITU affiliated unions even 5 per cent. The Party cadres working on the trade union front along with the concerned Party committees have to seriously address the question why Party building is lagging behind so much in the working class.

The process of recruitment in the Party of workers is also faulty in many places. Organisational reports show that a considerable section of party membership do not carry out the basic tasks and a section is even inactive. This applies to working class party members too. Unless attention is paid to raise the political consciousness of the workers whom we recruit into the Party through auxiliary groups and as candidate members, it will not lead to active participation in Party work, regular attendance at branch meetings etc. Further, our party members and fractions in trade unions do not consciously identify militant activists thrown up in the struggles or in the election campaign or other activities, fraternise with them and acquaint them with the party's political line. If the recruitment process is in isolation of the above required political background, the work of the party members from the working class suffer from inactivity or drop out eventually. Without the consciousness there is resistance to pay levy.

Another failure on the part of our Party Committees is their inability to actively engage the Party members in political-organisational work among the workers.

In several cases, the working class Party members do not involve themselves even in any mass organisational activity, except attending union meetings, paying membership fees and responding to trade union calls for action programmes. There are instances where Party membership is taken just to secure or stay on in trade union positions. There is also a tendency to leave all trade union functions to be carried out by whole timers only and worker Party members remain just passive participants. Our Party Committees also have not mastered the art of utilising working class Party members, skillfully and in a planned manner, for Party building, for carrying on agitational and propaganda work among the mass of workers and for performing the Party's organisational tasks. Our lack of initiative to unleash the potential of part-time (worker) Party members in the task of expanding the Party is also a major weakness.

## **22. Role Of Sub-Committees And Fractions**

The report of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party had enumerated the tasks of the Party Sub-committees and Fractions. They, in the main, are:

- a) Overall supervision of implementation of party policy in specific mass front.
- b) Conducting political-ideological work among the respective masses.
- c) Distribution and sale of Party literature.
- d) Identifying sympathisers for recruitment in the Party.
- e) Assist the Party Committees to implement decisions regarding the mass front.

Though most State committees have constituted trade union sub-committees and fractions, reports show that a majority of them do not discharge the elementary work of a sub-committee on this front. In actual practice, the Party Sub-committees and Fraction committees persist with the practice of confining themselves to discussing the day-to-day matters connected with the functioning of the mass organisations or preparation for conferences and deciding the panel of office bearers etc. Many a time, such functioning results in stultifying the process of democratic functioning of the trade union itself.

Reports from some of the State conferences and organisational reports of State Committees confirm that the trade union sub-committees and fractions are not paying adequate attention to party building, expansion of the trade unions and politicisation of the workers. The guidelines formulated by the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party in this regard, should be properly implemented.

Party Committees and leaders working on the TU front at all levels must strive to achieve a break through in this respect and ensure that the trade union sub-committees and fractions address to the tasks outlined for them.

The Central TU sub-committee has been meeting regularly in the recent years. In the last three years, they have met on an average of once in two and a half months. The TU sub-committee should monitor the functioning of the Trade Union Centre and the work being done in the trade union front as a whole

which includes the independent federations. The TU sub-committee has to submit periodical reports to the PB for discussion on the various issues arising on the trade union front. Since most of the members of the TU sub-committee work at the CITU Centre, it is necessary that the PB should also be involved in discussions on review and policy matters.

### **23. Party & Mass Organisations**

The 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party has decided to update our 1981 resolution on Party and mass organisations based on subsequent experience. This decision was taken after noting that our repeated efforts to implement the correct understanding of relations between Party and mass organisations has not been successful at all levels. There is still a basic failure to understand the role of a trade union as a broad organisation of the workers irrespective of political and other affiliations. The independent functioning of the trade unions based on their constitution and with party members working as communist fractions within them has still to be mastered. The problem of trade union leaders bypassing the Party and functioning in their independent way also continues in many instances. Recent experience shows that where factionalism has existed in the party all norms regarding party and trade unions have been violated keeping factional interests in mind. On the other hand, there is the failure of the Party committees particularly the state and district committees in monitoring and supervising the work of the Party members within the trade unions, discussing how the Party's line is being implemented on the trade union front and guiding the work so that the working class movement is united and expanded.

### **24. Observing Communist Norms**

Our trade union cadres and leaders must adhere to Communist norms in their functioning. This will increase their prestige among the workers and earn their confidence. The rectification document of the Central Committee in 1996 had noted that there had been instances of corrupt practices and misuse of trade union funds by some of our cadres. Party functionaries in the trade unions should not have improper relations with employers. The Party committees should constantly check up on this aspect and chalk out guidelines whenever necessary.

The reformist style of work of some trade union leaders leads to a complete divorce of trade union work from the basic line of the Party. Some trade union leaders concentrate on individual cases in labour courts to the detriment of other essential organisational work. In the absence of ideology and politics, trade unionism becomes a career for some. There are instances of some trade union leaders who retain their Party membership as it gives them legitimacy, but refuse to democratically run the unions and recruit Party members. Even now, there are a number of cases where a leader heads innumerable unions. Some of the Party committees are unwilling to discipline such cadres. Prompt steps should be taken to correct such deviation.

## 25. Tasks Ahead

The review of our activities during the last decade and the experience we have gained in this period underline the immediate tasks to be taken up on the Trade Union Front.

1. On the trade union front, continue the line of building unity of the class to fight the liberalisation policies and rally the widest section of workers on alternative policies to protect the interests of the working people and economic sovereignty. Widest unity can be forged on privatisation, against dismantling of the public sector and attack on workers rights.
2. Build the independent strength of the CITU by expanding to new sectors, organising the unorganised workers and strengthening the membership base of the trade unions by intensifying enrollment. Demarcate from the vacillation of other trade unions whenever necessary.
3. The Party must take steps to take its political and ideological campaign directly to the working class and counter all the anti-working class ideologies purveyed amongst them. Special attention must be paid to the CITU and the trade union platforms to combat the communal ideology of the BMS and Hindutva forces.
4. Pay special attention to organising women workers and ensure their involvement in union activities and promoting them to leading positions.
5. Take up the issue of the unemployed seriously and fight for employment generation and relief to the unemployed. Question of social oppression should be taken up actively by the trade unions particularly involving dalits, tribals and women.
6. Take steps to foster worker-peasant joint activities on common issues so that worker-peasant alliance is forged. For this joint conventions to take up common issues must be held.
7. Priority to be given for building the Party among the workers organised in the trade unions. Recruitment of Party members and developing them to take responsibility in leading positions must be undertaken. Proper functioning of Party units and fraction committees must be taken up immediately. The Party committees should discuss the work on the trade union front regularly and give proper guidance to the Party cadres working on the trade union front.