

Political-Organisational Report Adopted At The 18th Congress

Part I

Implementation of the Political-Tactical Line Adopted At the 17th Congress

The political-tactical line of the 17th Congress had laid out that:

“The crucial task in the coming days is to defeat the BJP-led government and work for a secular and democratic alternative. This calls for the rallying of the broadest sections of the people and all the secular and democratic forces.

“It must be accomplished in such a manner as to pave the way for the advance of the Left and democratic forces. The CPI(M) must undertake a leading role in this struggle, uniting the Left and rallying all patriotic and democratic sections of the people. The struggle to develop the Left and democratic alternative must be taken up to show the country a new path.”

To ensure the success of this task, the Party was called upon to continue the fight to isolate the communal forces on the political and ideological plane; struggle with redoubled vigour against the BJP government’s policies of liberalisation and privatisation and oppose the pro-imperialist policies of the Vajpayee government.

In the past three years, the Party accorded priority to the task of fighting the communal forces and isolating the BJP-led alliance. The horrific communal violence in Gujarat had taken place just before the 17th Congress. Immediately after the Party Congress, a campaign was conducted to expose the nature of the State-sponsored communal pogroms against the minorities in the state. Funds were collected for relief for the victims of the violence. The Left Front in West Bengal alone collected Rs. 47 lakhs. The party centre received a total of Rs. 19 lakhs for the relief work.

The party also backed the call of the NPMO in June 2003 to conduct an intensive campaign upto the village and mohalla level to warn against the danger of the Gujarat type of violence in the entire country.

In the past three years, the Party has been active in opposing all the steps taken under the BJP-led government to promote the communal

platform. Along with that it has sought to mobilize other democratic and secular forces to unitedly oppose such moves.

The Party opposed the gameplan of the Vajpayee government to use the Kanchi Shankaracharya as a mediator to pressurize the Muslim community to handover the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya to the Hindus for temple construction. It was due to the strong stand taken by the Party and the Left that the Kanchi Shankaracharya's dubious role in trying to persuade the All India Muslim Personal Law Board to hand over the Babri Masjid site as a goodwill gesture was exposed. The episode further exposed the Vajpayee government's brazen role in aiding the RSS-VJP combine in its temple campaign. The campaign conducted by the Party in September 2002 stressed the necessity to resolve the Ayodhya dispute through a judicial verdict and opposed efforts to bypass the judicial process.

When there was a terrorist attack on the Swaminarayan temple at Gandhinagar, which led to heightened communal tensions, the Left parties gave a call to observe October 2, 2002 as **communal harmony day** to counter the moves for fomenting communal tensions.

The Party condemned the Mayawati government for not issuing a fresh notification in the Babri Masjid case against Advani, Murlu Manohar Joshi and others based on the CBI chargesheet. Such a notification was necessary to overcome a technical flaw pointed out by the High Court judgement. Subsequently, when the Mulayam Singh government assumed office and backtracked on implicating Advani and others in its affidavit to the Supreme Court, the Party criticised this stand too.

The communalization of education which was stepped up under the regime of Murlu Manohar Joshi as HRD minister was constantly exposed and the widest forces rallied to defend the secular content in education. The National Curriculum Framework and the NCERT issuing two textbooks which promote the communal ideology became the focus and the Party played its role in uniting with all secular forces to oppose these moves.

The Party criticised the compromising stand of the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh where its Chief Minister sought to compete with the BJP on issues such as ban on cow slaughter and not taking a firm stand against the BJP-RSS stir to take over the bhojshala in Dhar. The party also firmly opposed the provocative activities of the RSS outfits such as the distribution of trishuls in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

The BJP-led government was emboldened to bring an anti-cow slaughter bill in parliament. Our Party opposed it. It fell through due

to the widespread opposition which included most of the non-BJP partners of the NDA.

The victory of the BJP in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh assembly elections in December 2003 underlined how constant communal propaganda and activities have impacted on the people. Attacks on minorities and communalization of education and other institutions continues apace in these states.

Whenever the BJP faced an electoral setback it has fallen back on raising its hardcore Hindutva agenda. After the Lok Sabha election defeat in 2004, the BJP decided in its Mumbai National Executive session to take up the Hindutva core issues and rely more on the RSS. L.K. Advani after assuming the Presidentship of the BJP in a speech at the National Executive declared that if Vajpayee had come back to power, the Ram temple would certainly have been built in Ayodhya.

The championing of V.D. Savarkar and the attempt to cloak its communal platform with the national flag in the Uma Bharati case were attempts to mobilize the Hindutva following. Though it did not make much of an impact, in the coming days efforts will be made to pick up such issues to gather support. The Party has warned about such moves and asked people to be vigilant.

Reviewing our work in the anti-communal sphere, it must be noted that there is still insufficient campaign and mobilisation against communal slogans and activities. The NPMO campaign referred to earlier, was disappointing, as in most states it was taken up in a formal manner. The mobilisation was limited and not all the mass organisations were involved in the campaign. Electoral campaigns and electoral setbacks to the BJP do not by themselves weaken the communal forces. The RSS works among the people through various fronts and their work must be ideologically and organisationally countered through conscious intervention and planning.

After the Lok Sabha elections and the formation of the UPA government, the Party is striving to ensure that the damage done to the institutions of State under the BJP rule is undone and the provisions of the CMP in this regard are implemented. Cleansing the State apparatus and institutions from RSS penetration is one such task. The Central Committee and the PB has set out this as one of the important tasks which should be undertaken by the UPA government.

Along with this, as the Political Resolution for the 18th Congress points out, it is necessary to build on the success of dislodging the BJP from the Centre by initiating a broad campaign to roll back the vantage points gained by the communal forces in different spheres of society, political, educational and cultural.

Fight Against Economic Policies

The second area in which the Party has intervened to implement the political-tactical line has been to intensify the resistance to the harmful economic policies pursued by the BJP-led government. Between 2002-2004, the agrarian crisis intensified with the distress of the rural poor mounting. The severe drought of 2002-03 accentuated the crisis. The Kisan and agricultural labour movement conducted a number of struggles to ensure relief for the drought-affected people, supply of cheap food and food-for-work programmes, drinking water and fodder for the cattle. The BJP-led government stepped up its drive to dismantle the public sector and privatise the most profitable public sector units. The VSNL was sold off and plans for selling off the BPCL and HPCL drawn up. The first major protest action against privatisation after the Party Congress took place with the 16th April public sector strike in which nearly 15 million employees participated.

Struggles against privatisation during this period led to the stoppage of Nalco in Orissa being sold off and slowing down the pace of HPCL, BPCL disinvestments which finally could not take place after elections were announced. The Party extended full support to all the struggles to defend the public sector and national sovereignty. The Party worked for mobilizing all the different streams of struggle so that it could merge into a general all India working class protest action. Two general strikes took place in this period. The May 2003 general strike called by the central trade unions which was synchronized by protest actions by the Kisan Sabha and agricultural workers unions who decided on *rasta roko* and *rail roko* on their own demands. This was followed by a general strike on February 24, 2004 in which the main focus was on the defence of the right to strike in the wake of the Supreme Court judgement and against the policies of privatisation.

The Party's campaign against the harmful economic policies was stepped up. Since the Party Congress, the Central Committee gave three calls for nation-wide campaigns against the economic policies, communalization and the pro-imperialist stance of the BJP-led government.

The Central Committee gave a call for campaign and movement from September 20 to 30, 2002. This was on six demands which included dismissal of the Narendra Modi government, immediate relief measures for the drought affected areas, opposition to the RSS demand for trifurcation of Jammu & Kashmir; provision of adequate security forces to Tripura by the Centre to combat terrorist outfits and unmasking the opportunist alliance of the Congress and the INPT and opposing the US plans to militarily attack Iraq. September 20 was observed as drought-relief day in the form of demonstrations in front of Central government offices and FCI godowns. The last day, September 30, was observed as Tripura Solidarity Day. One of the

highlights during this movement was the siege of government offices in all districts of Kerala by five lakh people.

The second call given by the Central Committee was in August 2003 for a campaign against the harmful policies of the Central Government and to highlight the urgent problems facing the country.

The demands were: 1) oppose the pro-imperialist foreign policy of the Vajpayee government; no Indian troops for Iraq and stopping of military collaboration with Israel; 2) Resolve the Ayodhya dispute through the judicial process; initiate dialogue to provide maximum autonomy to Jammu & Kashmir; 3) Stop dismantling of the public sector and the privatisation of profit making PSUs; 4) step up public investment in agriculture and rural development; initiate food-for-work programmes; re-negotiate WTO terms; 5) oppose measures to dilute land-ceiling laws, distribute surplus and waste lands, comprehensive legislation for agricultural workers; 6) provide for universal public distribution system, release foodgrains at antyodaya prices for drought affected areas; 7) stop communalization of education; legislation for state intervention to regulate admission norms and fees in private educational institutions; and 8) one-third reservation for women in parliament and state legislatures.

This campaign culminated in state-level rallies. It was found that there was wider participation of the people in this campaign than in the previous calls in the recent period.

The third call was given after the formation of the UPA government. The Central Committee decided to observe a countrywide campaign from August 25 to September 1, 2004. The campaign was utilised to explain the Party's stand vis a vis the UPA government and the implementation of the pro-people measures in the CMP. The 11-point demands also included the Party's opposition to raising of the FDI caps in the telecom and insurance sectors and the privatisation of the Delhi and Mumbai airports. Opposition to the repeated increase in diesel and petrol prices and the demand for a central legislation so as to empower state governments to regulate admissions and fee structures in higher educational institutions. September 1 was observed as anti-war day where the necessity for an independent foreign policy and to end the pro-American and pro-Israel tilt in foreign policy of the previous BJP-led government was stressed.

A number of mass struggles and movements took place in the states and local levels against the impact of the policies of liberalisation and to protect the people's basic rights to food, land, employment and education. There was a series of student struggles against the profiteering and commercialisation of professional educational institutions.

All these struggles and campaign in which the working class, peasantry, agricultural workers, students, women and youth were mobilized, helped to create the atmosphere for the isolation of the BJP-led government and contributed to the defeat of the BJP alliance in the Lok Sabha elections of 2004.

Anti-Imperialist Activities

The main focus of the anti-imperialist activities of the Party was the impending threat of war on Iraq which became evident by the second half of 2002. The Party began campaigning against the US plans for war from September onwards. This was followed by the Central Committee's call in November 2002 for protests against the war threat and the anti-war protest gained momentum in February, March and April 2003. One of the highlights of the anti-war movement was the big march organised in Kolkata on March 30 in which 300,000 people participated. The Party took the initiative to organise protests and rallies all over the country. Most of them on united platforms while big mobilisations took place in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, the Party and the united anti-war platforms also organised activities in other places. The Party Centre published a pamphlet in English and Hindi against the war on Iraq which was also reproduced in various other languages. After the invasion in Iraq, funds were also collected in solidarity with Iraq in West Bengal. The Party and the left played the main role in the anti-Iraq war movement. Given the weakness of the Party in many states it could not become a more popular and widespread movement because of the failure of most of the secular bourgeois parties and in particular the Congress to mobilize the people against the US war on Iraq. The influence of the BJP-RSS combine and its constant propaganda that India is with America in its war against terrorism and purveying anti-Muslim sentiments had also some impact on the people.

This notwithstanding, the campaign was able to rouse feelings against the United State's aggression and reinforce the popular impression that the Vajpayee government was eager to appease the Americans.

The firm stand of the Party and the Left helped to rally the opposition parties finally so that strong pressure was built on the government for adopting a parliament resolution deploring the war and calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq.

It is this campaign which was taken forward when the government considered sending Indian troops to Iraq. Under American pressure, the Vajpayee government had more or less agreed to send a division of troops. The Central Committee gave a call in June 2003 to organise protests against such a move. The CPI(M) and the Left parties conducted protest meetings and demonstrations in different places. Finally when all the opposition parties opposed the move the

government had to drop the plan to send troops. **This was a significant success as India sending troops to Iraq would have strengthened the American occupation and provided the legitimacy which would have enabled more countries to send troops to Iraq.**

The Party's outlook of building a broad-based anti-imperialist movement was the reason why it participated in the World Social Forum activities. The Asian Social Forum held in Hyderabad in 2003 and the World Social Forum in Mumbai in 2004 were successful in bringing together a large and varied gathering of anti-imperialist and anti-globalisation forces. They included communists, social democrats, ultra-leftists, Greens, feminists and religious pacifists. This platform should not be left to those who will co-opt it to the corporate globalisation forces or reduce it to sectarian platform.

The Party will continue to work for a broad platform of all anti-imperialist and anti-war forces and seek to extend such cooperation with forces in South Asia. The anti-war assembly held in Hyderabad in December 2004 can be carried forward in this direction.

Defence of Democratic Rights

The Party strongly opposed the Pota law and continuously campaigned against it. It also took up the defence of the right to strike in the light of the Supreme Court judgement declaring that government employees had no right to strike and other adverse remarks. A big campaign for the right to strike was conducted by the Party and the trade unions. It was part of the countrywide campaign called by the Central Committee in August 2003. The Party also opposed the BJP-led government's decision to change the procedure of elections to the Rajya Sabha by doing away with the state residency clause and by going for open ballot for election to the Rajya Sabha. The Party has also worked for change in Article 356 to ensure that safeguards are incorporated to prevent misuse. The Srinagar meeting of the Inter State Council has come out with recommendations which are in this direction.

Political & Electoral Tactics

The party pursued its political line where the central task was to isolate and defeat the BJP and its allies. In 2002 after two months of President's rule in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP and the BSP got together to form a government. Mayawati gave an opportunity for the BJP to once again try and consolidate its position in the biggest state of the country. The party saw this combination as opportunist and the contradictions between the two incompatible forces would lead to a crisis. This happened soon after. Our Party was of the view that the ouster of the Mayawati government would be a setback to the BJP at the national level. Our Party supported the Samajwadi Party and demanded that the Governor allow a vote of confidence when the SP was able to muster sufficient support to put the BSP-BJP alliance in a minority. The Congress initially refused to extend support to the SP but later relented. With Ajit Singh's RLD joining hands with the Samajwadi Party and the Congress decision to work together with the rest of the opposition, the chances of ousting the Mayawati government increased. Finally the BSP-BJP alliance broke down in August 2003.

In Manipur, a big popular movement developed after the killing of a woman, Manorama Devi, who was taken into custody by the Assam Rifles. The demand for the scrapping of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act became the main focus of the movement. The Polit Bureau discussed the situation in Manipur and supported the demand for the shifting of the Assam Rifles headquarters from the Kangla Fort; strict action against those guilty for the killing of Manorama and a review of the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Later, when the movement continued, the Central Committee held that the draconian powers under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act need to be amended and the Centre should work out the legal basis for stationing the armed forces to perform certain duties in the North East without recourse to such draconian provisions.

The next issue where the electoral tactics had to be worked out in the light of the political-tactical line was the Andhra Pradesh assembly elections. Chandrababu Naidu had decided to advance the holding of the elections by dissolving the assembly in November 2003. The Central Committee met in an emergent meeting to decide the Party's tactics for the elections. The TDP's support for the BJP government at the Centre was a crucial link. The defeat of the TDP-BJP alliance would be an important step in weakening the BJP government and the NDA alliance. Keeping this in mind, the Central Committee decided that the Party in Andhra Pradesh should work for the defeat of the TDP-BJP alliance. For this, the state committee should contest only in seats where we have an effective presence. We should appeal to all the secular and democratic forces to support our candidates just as we will be extending support to the candidates of the Left and secular

parties who can defeat the TDP-BJP in areas where we are not contesting. At the same time, the Party would conduct an independent campaign in the entire state to mobilize the people against the TDP-BJP combine.

In December, the BJP won three out of the four assembly elections held in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. This led to the BJP advancing the Lok Sabha elections. The Andhra Pradesh assembly elections were postponed by the Election Commission to be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha elections.

The Central Committee met in Hyderabad in January 2004 to work out the election tactics for the Lok Sabha polls. The Central Committee decided on the following approach:

“In the political campaign which we will conduct during the elections, we should highlight the danger posed by the BJP with its communal agenda. The steps taken to penetrate the State apparatus and communalise Indian society must be halted and reversed. We have to mobilise the people against the harmful and anti-people policies which have played havoc with the lives of the ordinary people. The BJP's pro-American policies which are harmful to the national interests and national sovereignty must be exposed. The opportunist nature of the alliance which is the NDA must be highlighted. In doing so, we must be able to set out the alternative policies that the CPI(M) and the Left represents. This will require an independent campaign alongwith the joint platform and united campaign that we may conduct.

“We have to rally the secular and democratic parties in the different states, so that the widest forces can be mobilised to defeat the BJP and its allies. While doing so, we cannot have any alliance or joint platform with the Congress. We must expose the harmful economic policies of the Congress. We should mobilise the people on our political platform so that we are able to increase the influence and strength of the Left.

“Like in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, there is no possibility of having an all India alliance for the elections. We have to see the situation in each state and the political forces operating there and work out our election tactics which should help to target the BJP and its allies and forge an understanding with the non-Congress secular parties. We should see that the division of the anti-BJP votes is minimised to the best extent possible.”

The Party gave the call of three goals to the people: 1) defeat the BJP and its allies; 2) formation of secular government at the Centre; and 3) strengthen the CPI(M) and the Left representation in the Lok Sabha.

The Party in keeping with this approach worked to ensure the maximum success in our three strongholds, West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura where we campaigned for the defeat of the BJP alliance and opposed the Congress policies and projected the Left as the alternative. In other places, given the situation in each state, the Party worked out concrete electoral tactics in which we contested only seats where we had an effective presence and sought to have an understanding with other non-Congress secular parties if they existed in strength such as the RJD in Bihar, DMK in Tamilnadu, JD(S) in Karnataka etc. In Andhra Pradesh where there was no other party strong enough to fight the TDP-BJP combination, the Party along with the CPI came to an adjustment with the Congress in some seats, while contesting in other seats where we had some effective electoral strength where we could give a fight. The Party conducted its own independent campaign.

In Andhra Pradesh, in the November 2003 CC meeting, it was decided to draw up a list of our seats and announce them with an appeal to the secular opposition parties not to put up candidates in our seats and in turn we would extend support to those candidates who can defeat the TDP-BJP alliance. After the January CC meeting, the process of finalizing the seats led to talks with the Congress leadership both in Andhra Pradesh and the national level for a seat adjustment. Finally seat adjustment in 9 seats was worked out and we contested in four others against the Congress. For the Lok Sabha, we contested only one seat in adjustment with the Congress; the CPI also contested one seat.

In Orissa, we did not contest any Lok Sabha seat and we contested for the Assembly in three seats with an adjustment with the Congress. The CPI also had adjustment in five seats with the Congress. In these constituencies, we had joint meetings apart from our own campaign.

In Punjab, we contested the Hoshiarpur seat. The Congress supported our candidate and joint meetings and campaign was organized. In both Orissa and Punjab, there were seat adjustments with the Congress and joint campaign. This gave the impression that there was a state-wide understanding with the Congress which was not envisaged in the approach decided by the CC.

In Tamilnadu, where the Party had an understanding with the DMK, it also had a wider alliance with parties like the Congress, PMK, MDMK, Muslim League and CPI. Given the past experience of the pattern of electioneering in Tamilnadu where all parties constitute themselves

into a front or alliance, it was decided that along with the joint campaign, the Party should organize on its own platform election meetings. According to the Tamilnadu PC over a 1000 public and street corner meetings were held under our auspices. But most public meetings organized by us became joint in character with all the leaders of the DPA speaking at these meetings while the main speaker was ours. Though to some extent it helped to project our independent line, the joint platform character of the meeting acted as a constraint.

In other weaker states where we could fight only in one or two seats, the Party campaigned in general for the defeat of the BJP alliance and extended support to the strongest candidate of the secular opposition without having any joint campaign with the Congress. Whatever strength we had, we played a role in minimizing the division of votes amongst the secular parties. It is these tactics which contributed to the success in defeating the BJP and its alliance.

Post-Election Situation

The Central Committee meeting held in May 2004 immediately after the election results decided our approach to the formation of the government. The Central Committee decided that it should extend support to the Congress-led alliance to form the government as only with the support of 61 MPs of the Left that a majority can be ensured for the new government. The Party decided not to join the Congress-led government given the class character of the Congress and its basic policies were for liberalisation and privatisation. However, given the popular verdict against the Vajpayee government, the Central Committee set out the broad issues on which the new government should formulate its policy direction.

“They concern the removal of communal penetration in the institutions of the State, educational and cultural bodies; restoring the secular principle; an independent foreign policy; economic policies which provided relief to the people from the onslaught of neo-liberal reforms, priority to agriculture and upliftment of the rural poor and employment generation. Streamlining of the public sector and halting the privatization of profitable public sector units. Strengthening of the public distribution system, increased public expenditure in education and health; women’s reservation and repeal of Pota; correcting the imbalances in Centre-state relations, particularly in the financial sphere.”

It was based on this approach that the Party asked the Congress leadership to formulate a Common Minimum Programme which can be the basis for the Left’s support. As the Polit Bureau met in Kolkata in May 2004 and prepared a note which contained the issues and the

policy framework which the Party wanted the UPA government to adopt. What emerged as the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA contained some elements of the Party's demands. The CPI(M) and the Left parties decided to broadly endorse the CMP. But while doing so the Party noted:

“that there are differences in certain areas of the CMP. These concern advocating privatisation in various sectors, the refusal to go in for an universal public distribution system as against the present targeted system and fiscal policies which can affect the common people. The CMP talks of increased role for private sector in generation and distribution of power. The Party has also expressed its opposition to the break-up of linguistic states being included in the CMP by the inclusion of the reference to the formation of a new state of Telengana after consultations and consensus is arrived at. The CMP bears the impact of the people's verdict in the Lok Sabha elections. The Congress and its allies have taken into account some of the harmful effects on the people's livelihood due to the six years of the Vajpayee government. However, it must be underlined that the CMP does not change the basic thrust of the policies of liberalisation. It only reiterates its commitment to “economic reforms.”

Soon after the formation of the UPA government, the Congress proposed to the Party to make Somnath Chatterjee the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. The Polit Bureau discussed the issue in its May 25, 2004 meeting in Kolkata. It was decided to accept the offer. The Speaker is not part of the government. It was felt that with a person of Somnath Chatterjee's stature, the post can serve to strengthen democratic processes and the democratic functioning of the house.

Approach To The UPA Government

The approach of the Party towards the UPA government was spelt out by the Central Committee its July 30-August 01 meeting which was as follows:

“The CPI(M) and the Left parties have extended support to the UPA government to ensure that there is a secular government at the Centre. Further, in the present situation, after the ouster of the BJP from the Central Government it is important to continue to work for the isolation of the BJP and its allies so as to prevent a comeback by these forces. The approach to the UPA government is based on our political-tactical line.

“While extending support to the UPA government, the Party will have to play an independent role. That role consists of supporting such measures of the government which are in keeping with the CMP, making a break from the political agenda of the BJP-led government and those which are in the interests of the people. That role also implies demarcating and opposing such steps of the government which are against the people’s interests, or are a departure from the CMP and which are a continuation of the same type of policies as the previous government.

“The independent role would entail that the Party and the Left conduct political campaigns to project the independent positions of the Left and popular mobilisations and struggles to defend the rights and livelihood of the people. The mass organisations have to play an active role in forging the widest movements both for pressurising the government to implement pro-people measures included in the CMP and to fight against the ill-effects of the continuing policies of liberalisation and the effects of imperialist-driven globalisation.

“The independent role of the Party does not mean confining to dealing only with the CMP and government related issues. It means the taking up of the demands of the Left and democratic programme set out in the 17th Congress of the Party. The issues of land, wages, democratic rights of the working people have to be taken up and struggles conducted. The issues of the basic classes have to be championed and fought for. Not taking up such issues would mean undermining the independent role of the Party and weakening the struggle of the Left and democratic forces.”

It was based on this approach that the Party has been adopting its stand vis a vis the UPA government and its policies during the past ten months. The Party has supported the repeal of Pota, the removal of some of the RSS connected elements in the higher educational institutions, the disbandment of the enquiry commission on tehelka tape exposure and handing over of the investigation to the CBI and the setting up of an enquiry commission on the Godhra railway arson case. The Party also supported the steps taken for promoting the Indo-Pakistan dialogue. At the same time, the Party has criticised and opposed a number of policy issues during this period. They concern the raising of FDI caps in telecom, insurance and banking, the move to sell issues of profitable public sector units, the patent amendment ordinance and bill and the repeated increase in diesel and petrol prices.

The Polit Bureau after the adoption of the CMP, discussed the necessity of having some forum to discuss the implementation of the CMP and other policy issues. The Congress leadership and the UPA should be held accountable for policy implementation and should not be given free rein to do whatever they wish. Our Party and the Left mooted the idea of a coordination committee between the UPA and the Left. The UPA in an alliance and the Left parties have a coordination committee and there should be a coordination between these two entities.

The Left proposed six members to represent them: HKS Surjeet, Sitaram Yechury, A.B.Bardhan, D.Raja, Debrabata Biswas and Abani Roy. The Congress leadership responded by proposing a five member team to constitute a UPA government-Left coordination. All the five members were from the Congress: Dr.Manmohan Singh, Sonia Gandhi, Pranab Mukherjee, P.Chidambaram and Ahmad Patel. We had wanted representation of some of the major UPA partners in the committee, but the Congress pleaded inability to select only a few from its 12 partners. Instead it proposed that; the Left be part of the general UPA committee. Since we did not want to be part of the UPA, we decided to accept the UPA government-Left coordination committee. The Left parties also decided to attend the UPA meetings whenever required so that we can be in touch with the non-Congress UPA partners, or to discuss major issues that require wider consultation.

The Coordination Committee has met seven times since it was constituted. As stated elsewhere, we have used the meetings to put forward our views on implementation of CMP and to oppose any policy measure which we disagree with. On such policy matters, we have been submitted written notes which are also made public. Some political issues such as developments in Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir were also taken up.

The Party also was uncompromising on questions of national sovereignty such as induction of representatives of foreign institutions in consultative committees of the Planning Commission and the general measures to further liberalise the financial sector to foreign finance capital.

The government is not taking up a number of pro-people measures in the CMP such as the comprehensive legislation for agricultural workers, the one-third reservation for women in parliament and legislatures and the review of the electricity act etc. The Party has emphasized in the recent days the necessity to mobilize and organise struggles by different sections of working people in defence of their interests and for pressuring the UPA government to implement some of the pro-people measures in the CMP. The Party and the mass

organisations should take the lead in launching struggles and building movements against the wrong policies of the UPA government.

It is in keeping with this understanding that various mass organisations have launched campaigns and movements for implementation of the CMP promises which concern education, employment, food-for-work, defence of public sector, against privatisation and profiteering in education. The March 22, one-day strike by bank employees against FDI and liberalisation of the banking sector, the struggle against the privatisation of the Mumbai and Delhi airports and the student and youth mobilisation on their demands have taken place. It is by such struggles and sustained movements at the local level that the CPI(M) and the Left parties can expand their influence and also check the government pursuance of wrong policies.

In the new political situation the Party and the Left have got the opportunity to take the Left's platform to the people in a bigger way. On a series of policy measures the Party has not only opposed the UPA government's policies but also put forth alternative policies along with the Left. The Note submitted by the Party and the left on the raising of FDI in telecom, insurance and banking, on the interest rate of EPF, on the note of review of the electricity act, the patent amendment bill etc have provided the opportunity for the Party to take its distinctive policies to the people in a big way.

Independent Line Of The Party

In the presidential elections 2002, after the proposal to support Shri K.R. Narayanan as President fell through due to the Samajwadi Party going back on its commitment, the Party decided not to support Shri Abdul Kalam who was put up by the NDA and to whom the Congress also declared support. The Party, alongwith the Left parties, decided to put up Dr. Lakshmi Sahagal as the presidential candidate. In order to propagate the Left's independent standpoint, meetings were organised for Dr. Sahagal in various state capitals.

In the 17th Party Congress there was a review undertaken of the political-tactical line with reference to united front tactics. Based on this review, efforts have been made to assert the independent line of the Party and to correct some of the weakness in our united front tactics. In the election review adopted by the Central Committee after 2004 elections, one of the weakness in projecting the independent line of the Party was pointed out in the context of the election campaign.

“In many of the weaker states, apart from contesting the one or two seats, we have failed to conduct an independent campaign in the rest of the state to take our political message to the people. Only some states like Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh has done so all over the

state. In some other states it was done in a few areas. In the absence of such a campaign, there are reports that even some Party members in some areas did not go by the Party line in supporting candidates of other parties. The state committees must ensure that in future, independent campaign takes place in the state outside the seats where we are contesting.”

Wherever we enter into electoral understanding with secular bourgeois parties, whether it be the RJD, SP, the DMK or others, it is also important to maintain our independent political positions and take them to the people. Such electoral understandings should not be treated as permanent alliances. After the Lok Sabha elections, the PB helped the Tamilnadu State Committee to work out its approach to the Democratic Progressive Alliance led by the DMK. We had an electoral understanding with the DMK and this helped to achieve the sweeping victory against the AIADMK-BJP combine. After the elections, the DMK's effort has been to consolidate and project their alliance as a permanent front keeping in mind the 2006 assembly elections. The Party decided we should disentangle from the alliance without causing a rupture with the DMK. We should continue to cooperate with the DPA while maintaining our independent positions. We should also independently conduct campaigns and movements and demarcate from the DMK on any political position whenever required.

The 17th Congress resolution had stressed the importance of developing local struggles on a sustained basis. In order to expand the Party's mass base it is essential to take up immediate burning issues of the people and conduct a sustained movement. Often our struggles are limited to token protests such as dharnas and demonstrations. Problems of land, food, defence of livelihood and development issues should be taken up by the local Party units and mass organizations and struggles developed so that they can be continued till some of the partial demands are met. In the last three years, such struggles have been conducted in certain states which have yielded good results. They relate to land, such as the struggle for government land occupied by landlords in Bantumalli mandal in Krishna district and the land struggle of the tribals in Polavaram agency area in Andhra Pradesh, or the anti-eviction struggle in Krishnagiri district in Tamilnadu. There have been anti-eviction struggles involving forest lands in Assam, Maharashtra and other places. The movement which developed for supply of irrigation water in Ganganagar district in Rajasthan which went on for three months and five people were killed in police firing is a good example. This struggle helped the Party and the Kisan Sabha draw in new sections of people into the movement. After conducting such struggles, there has to be organizational work to consolidate this influence gained in the mass organisations and the Party.

However, such struggles are still not being developed everywhere and on a larger scale. When such struggles develop, the Party committees should pay full attention and leaders should personally participate and guide the course of the struggle.

The other aspect which needs emphasizing is the Party taking up social issues, particularly caste oppression and discrimination. The experience of Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu is noteworthy in this regard. The anti-caste discrimination committees in the former and the anti-untouchability campaign in the latter have brought new sections within the influence of the Party particularly dalits. Unfortunately, despite the direction given in the 16th Congress that such issues must be taken up by the Party and activities organized particularly in the Hindi-speaking states, not much has been done. The 18th Congress resolution also reiterates this need and states: "The Party should work out concrete tactics in different areas taking into account the caste and class configurations" to take up caste oppression and to campaign against caste-based politics. Without the Party's intervention in this field, the increasing caste appeal and fragmentation which is hampering the advance of our movement, cannot be countered.

Need For Third Alternative

Before the 17th Congress, the Party had taken the initiative for the formation of the People's Front which comprise the Left parties, the Samajwadi Party and the Janata Dal (S). The Political Resolution of the 17th Congress had qualified this development and noted that **"This combination is a partial expression of the immediate need for a third force"**. But this formation did not last long. When the presidential elections came up in 2002, our Party was for the continuance of Shri K.R. Narayanan as the President. A delegation of the People's Front, including the Samajwadi Party leader met Shri Narayanan to request him to contest the election. The Congress was also inclined to support him. The BJP till then had contemplated putting up P.C. Alexander for the post. However, after seen the support gathering for Narayanan, the BJP decided to put up Shri Abdul Kalam. The Samajwadi Party declared support to Kalam going back on its earlier commitment. The stand of the Samajwadi Party, on this vital question, disrupted the People's Front.

The CPI(M) has reiterated the need for a third alternative as against the existence of two bourgeois-landlord combinations – one led by the Congress and the other by the BJP. But in order to create such a force, it is necessary for the parties concerned to have a minimum common policy framework and joint activities based on that. It cannot be merely an electoral combination. Further, experience shows that to make such an alternative stable, the independent strength of the CPI(M) and the Left should increase.

At present, our efforts are directed towards maintaining relations and cooperation with those secular parties who are within and outside the UPA. The Samajwadi Party and the Janata Dal (S) are such parties which are outside the UPA and within the UPA we are maintaining relations with the non-Congress partners as directed by the Central Committee in its August 2004 meeting where it was stated:

“The Party will maintain relations with the non-Congress secular parties who are in the UPA and those outside. Though there are no immediate prospects for a third alternative, the Party will explore possibilities for joint actions and electoral understanding with these parties whenever the need arises.”

In the coming days, we must make efforts to draw such forces onto joint platforms on agreed issues for conducting campaigns and movements.

Left Unity

Since the 17th Congress there has been progress made in projecting a united Left platform at the national level. The Left stand on economic policies of the UPA government has seen a growing convergence and common understanding emerging between the CPI(M), CPI, RSP and Forward Bloc. The CPI(M) and CPI coordination has also improved. On the question of joining the Congress-led government, the CPI was for joining the government. However, it decided to abide by the common stand of supporting the government from outside in the interest of Left unity when the CPI(M) and other parties decided not to join the government.

The most significant advance has been in the formulation of policy alternatives by the Left parties after the UPA government took office. On a series of issues we succeeded in the Left parties adopting a common position. The meeting of the Left parties have become more regular. This has also been in response to the need for a coordinated stand of the Left parties in the UPA-Left coordination meeting which are attended by six representatives of the Left parties. There is a common understanding on opposing some of the UPA government's economic policies and its departures from the CMP.

However, this does not mean that there are no divergence of views or differences. The CPI continues to prefer going along with the Congress or other bourgeois parties in states where the Left is weak. The approach of the CPI on the Telengana issue and their attitude towards the TRS and the problem in Bihar where its state unit had taken an outright anti Laloo Prasad/RJD stance were sought to be overcome by discussions at the national level. The Forward Bloc and

the RSP continue to express the line of equidistance between the BJP and the Congress.

But these differences notwithstanding, the political situation obtaining after the Lok Sabha elections when the Left emerged with the highest number of seats ever, has helped to strengthen Left unity. There is also the impact of popular opinion wanting the Left to work unitedly. As against the oft-repeated proposal by the CPI for unification of the two parties, we stress the immediate necessity for strengthening Left unity and the united activities of the CPI(M) and the CPI. At the same time however there can be discussions on political, ideological issues which form the basis of our differences in programmatic outlook.

In the present situation, it is necessary to strengthen Left unity further. Outside the four Left parties there are a large number of pro-Left and Left-oriented groups, elements and individuals. All these elements can be mobilized on a number of issues such as the threat of imperialism, the defence of national sovereignty, fight against communalism and protecting the rights of the common people. On specific issues, platforms drawing in all the Left and democratic forces can be created and through this process the accretion of the strength of the Left can be achieved.

Part II

On Certain Policy Matters

During recent years, many theoretical issues having a bearing on policy matters with practical implications have arisen. These relate mainly with the current phase of globalisation taking place in the world capitalist system, the consequent wide scale socio-economic-cultural changes in general, and, in particular, its serious implications through domestic economic reforms for the Indian economy and the Indian people.

Globalisation

Globalisation, as the present phase of capitalist development is known as, is a process that must be understood in its totality. The internal laws and the dynamics of the functioning of the capitalist economic system dissected by Karl Marx and enriched subsequently by Lenin show that as capitalism develops, it leads to the concentration and centralization of capital in a few hands. The consequent accumulation of capital, in turn, needs to be deployed to earn profits which is the *raison d'être* of the system.

Towards the end of the 20th century, more specifically in the decade of the eighties, this process of centralization led to gigantic levels of accumulation of capital. The beginning of the nineties saw the internationalisation of finance capital which had grown in colossal leaps. This globally mobile finance capital had acquired unprecedented dimensions. At the turn of the 21st century, the turnover in the global financial transactions was estimated to be over \$400 trillion, or, nearly 60 times the annual global trade in goods and services estimated to be around \$ 7 trillion.

This huge accumulated finance capital required a world order that places absolutely no restrictions on its global movement in search of predatory speculative profits.

Simultaneously, the huge accumulation of capital taking place with the multinational corporations, the assets of some of whom outstrip the combined GDPs of many developing countries, also created conditions which required the removal of all restrictions on the movement of this industrial capital in search of super profits. Similar pressures also developed with capital engaged in international trade and commerce seeking the removal of all trade barriers and tariff protection.

Thus, the laws of capitalist development by themselves created the objective conditions for the current phase of globalisation whose

essential purpose is to break down all barriers for the movement of capital and to dovetail the economies of the developing countries to the super profit earning drive of multinational capital. The objective that clearly emerges is one of seeking the economic recolonisation of the developing countries or the third world.

There are three main features of this process of globalisation that merit attention. First, globalisation is accompanied by the utilisation of vastly growing scientific and technological advances not for the benefit of the vast masses of humanity but for strengthening the rapacious plunder for greater profits. The nature of capitalist development, where consumption power of vast masses of people lags far behind the productive power of society, makes large number of people redundant and create huge army of unemployed. The net result is, while moderate growth is achieved, it is done without generating employment and, in fact, reducing its future potential. This is the phenomenon of "jobless growth", which in many developing countries is assuming the form of "jobloss growth". The character of employment is rapidly changing with deteriorating job security and service conditions; casual/contract jobs are replacing regular employment.

Secondly, this phase of globalisation is accompanied by sharp widening of inequalities. This is true for both between the developed and the developing countries and between the rich and the poor in all countries. This is starkly illustrated by the fact that the combined assets of 358 billionaires in the world is greater than the combined annual GDP of countries constituting 45 per cent of the world's population, or, 230 crore people. The share of the poorest 20 per cent in the world's population is less than one per cent down from 1.4 per cent in 1991. The Human Development Report, 2004 shows that 46 countries have become poorer now than in 1990. A distinctive feature of this phase of globalisation is the acute agrarian distress that has spread in all developing countries marked by alarmingly growing levels of starvation and destitution. We in India continue to experience this in the recent years as noted in our political resolution.

Thirdly, such large-scale impoverishment of the vast majority of the world's people means the shrinkage of their capacity to be consumers of the products that this globalised economy produces. This renders the entire process of globalisation to be simply unsustainable.

The only way imperialism seeks to sustain this unsustainable exploitative order is by intensifying its political and military hegemony. The burdens of the economic crisis will surely be shifted to the people who are already groaning under the globalisation onslaught.

As this process of globalisation was underway came the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe. This convergence at the beginning of the decade of 1990s set in motion a renewed aggressiveness by imperialism led by the USA.

The visions of a "new world order" under the US leadership unfolded. The efforts to impose a comprehensive US hegemony on all global matters was unleashed. The post-Cold War bipolar international situation instead of moving towards multi-polarity is sought to be short-circuited by USA to create a world of uni-polarity under its tutelage.

However, anticipating in many ways the contours of such developments, the CPI(M) Updated Party Programme notes: *"Despite the fact that the international correlation of forces favour imperialism at the end of the twentieth century and capitalism continues to develop productive forces with the application of new scientific and technological advances, it remains a crisis-ridden system apart from being a system of oppression, exploitation and injustice. The only system, which is an alternative to capitalism, is socialism."*

The struggle for an alternative socialist order has to be based on the revolutionary transformation of the existing order. **This, in turn, needs an engagement (i.e., joining issues) of the revolutionary forces with the existing world realities with the sole objective of changing the correlation of forces in favour of socialism.** This process of revolutionary transformation has to be based on such an engagement and not on the wishful thinking of escaping from the existing realities. **The entire history of the revolutionary movement led by the working class is the history of such an engagement with the existing realities in order to shape the material force required to establish the alternative in socialism.**

International Capital Flows

The essential feature of the present phase of globalisation is the rapacious drive to maximize profits by removing restrictions on the movement of capital. This necessarily entails the movement of foreign capital in search of superprofits. The flow of both foreign direct investment and foreign institutional investment (primarily for speculative profits in financial markets) is something that will take place. This is the case, as long as the socialist alternative to globalisation does not command a significant force internationally.

Under these circumstances, we, as Communists, will have to deal with the situation by mustering sufficient social and political strength to impose conditions on such flows of international capital.

In this context, given the fact that globalisation seeks to undermine, if not nullify, national economic sovereignty, our effort should be directed to protect and strengthen this sovereignty. The surrender of national sovereignty to imperialism makes the task of revolutionary transformation all that more difficult. On the contrary, strengthening popular resistance to this sharpens the class struggle contributing to the shift in the correlation of class forces in favour of the revolutionary forces.

Recognising this reality, the CPI(M) Programme notes that following the completion of the democratic stage of the revolution, the People's Democratic State will: *"Allow foreign direct investment in selected sectors for acquiring advanced technology and upgrading productive capacities. Regulate finance capital flows in the interests of the overall economy."* Till this stage is achieved many interim slogans and approaches will have to be worked out.

Under such circumstances, the flow of foreign capital into our country, in the present conditions, must be regulated by stipulating the following conditions: a) such capital should augment the existing productive capacities in our economy; b) such foreign capital must upgrade the Indian economy technologically; and c) such capital must lead to employment generation.

While foreign capital will seek to exploit our natural resources and labour to garner superprofits, the struggle for imposition of these conditions will, apart from making the resistance to the task of eroding national sovereignty more effective, render some benefit to the Indian economy and the people.

Apart from these conditions, the entry of foreign capital into specific areas (like, for instance, with respect to agricultural sector, for example, land use regulations, trade tariffs, seeds, fertilizers etc) which can have negative consequences for our economic and political sovereignty must be opposed. This must be based on our programmatic understanding to regulate capital flows in the interest of the overall economy. The havoc that speculative capital can wreak on the economy was nakedly visible in the East Asian crisis. There is therefore an urgent need to regulate such flows of finance capital.

Our opposition to neo-liberal policies that undermine our economic sovereignty and the reasoning for the same must be accompanied by the projection of our alternative set of policies.

Public Sector

The public sector in India was built by the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes to provide the basic infrastructure for advancing the capitalist path of development in independent India. The CPI(M) never had any

illusions that the public sector constitutes the “socialist component” of the Indian economy. The public sector was the bedrock on which the growth of the private capitalist sector took place leading to massive profits and capital accumulation in the hands of the Indian ruling classes which, in turn, as the Party Programme notes, paved the way for the demand for the privatisation of this very same public sector. Privatisation of public assets is the most convenient loot bolstering super profits.

However, with the State taking over the key natural resources and the financial sector after independence, the consequent strengthening of the public sector continues to remain a bulwark against all efforts to undermine India’s economic sovereignty under globalisation. The CPI(M)’s defence of the public sector, in the era of globalisation, thus, must be seen in this context of protecting India’s economic sovereignty. Further, the public sector plays an important social role in Indian conditions including implementing reservations in employment.

The public sector, however, is neither homogenous in its composition nor free from innumerable problems. Further, it must be underlined that many public sector units were created when the State took over sick private industries in order to protect both the industry and the workers.

In this context, the public sector will have to be seen in four different categories: a) giant profit-making units in the core and strategic sectors usually referred to as *navaratnas*; b) medium size profit making public sector units; c) loss making but potentially viable units; and d) unviable and or, chronically loss making units.

The former two categories must remain in the public sector and any erosion in their equity must be resisted. Public sector institutions dealing with research and development must be protected and strengthened as these significantly contribute to strengthen our economic sovereignty. Similarly, the drainage of exhaustible mineral resources must be stopped. There are certain public sector enterprises which serve a social purpose. These cannot be judged only by the criteria of profit-making. Such enterprises are generally in public utilities and public services. There has to be a strong public sector in these areas, such as public transport, even when the private sector exists in them.

These industries must be dealt with in accordance with the CPI(M)’s programmatic understanding: *“Strengthen public sector industries through modernisation, democratisation, freeing from bureaucratic controls and corruption, fixing strict accountability, ensuring workers participation in management and making it competitive so that it can occupy commanding position in the economy.”*

As far as the third category is concerned, all efforts must be made for the revival of such units. Similarly, all efforts for the revival of the fourth category must first be made. If such efforts do not succeed, then other options may be considered, including joint sector, or, in the final eventuality the disposal of these units. Under all circumstances, the interests of the workers must be protected. In cases where the terms of the sell off or closure of units are weighted against the workers, we should lead or support the struggle of the workers for a more equitable package. These decisions, however, must be taken with the full confidence of the workers and the management by the government. The same approach must be undertaken by the state governments in relation to state public sector undertakings.

CPI(M)-Led State Governments' Approach To Foreign Loans

Under globalisation, the neo-liberal policies reduce state governments to extreme penury, by reducing central transfers to them, by charging usurious interest rates on loans given to them (including even on small savings loans raised within the states themselves at much lower rates of interest), and by precipitating recessionary conditions and peasant distress. On the other hand, the imperialist agencies come with "aid packages" to these very governments to "help them out" of their fiscal predicament. If the Communist-led governments accept these packages or other "special packages" prepared by the Central government, then they are projected by the media (largely controlled by the globalisation agenda) as compromisers or in charitable terms as "pragmatists". On the other hand, remaining bogged down within fiscal constraints (which the Indian Constitution does not allow state governments to overcome on their own) and reducing expenditures on the people's welfare jeopardizes the existence of these governments.

These CPI(M)-led governments have come into existence and have survived against all odds as a result of years of massive arduous and dedicated struggles by the masses under the leadership of the Party and its committed cadres, hundreds of whom lay down their lives in the process. These governments constitute the outposts of the Indian people's struggle for better livelihood and for an eventual social transformation. Defending these governments in West Bengal and Tripura and the vantage position in Kerala is the absolute prime task of every Communist, of everybody ranged against imperialist globalisation.

It however must be kept in mind that under the Indian Constitution, the central government alone defines and implements major economic and industrial policies. The state governments have little autonomy in implementing any alternative policies.

Under these circumstances, the people expect these governments to protect the interests of the people without succumbing to imperialist blandishments and resisting the pressures of neo-liberal economic policies.

These governments, therefore, may accept aid for developmental projects but the important criteria that needs to be adhered is that there should be no conditionalities which are against our basic interests and policies. In no case should we go in for loans which involve structural adjustment programmes. Such programmes entail conditionalities like privatisation of certain sectors, downsizing staff, cutting subsidies and fiscal conditionalities.

The CPI(M)-led state governments have to function under constraints, including those imposed by imperialist-dictated policies at the Centre, which the Party fights to overcome. The Party's fight against such policies, therefore, is simultaneously a defence of the interests of our state governments. Whenever our governments hard-pressed for funds but duty-bound to provide relief to the people are offered loans by imperialist agencies and western governments, the Party should consent to such loans only if it does not weaken its fight against the imperialist-dictated policies. In all cases, where the Party agrees to such loans from international agencies like World Bank, ADB, DFID, JBIC etc, it must take the people into confidence and explain to them the justification for taking such loans.

Increasingly, in this phase of imperialist globalisation, a large number of western governments and agencies patronized by them fund developmental activities in third world countries. The question of accepting such funds will, once again, have to be based on a similar approach by evaluating the conditionalities that are attached. The thumb rule that must guide our governments as well as other institutions in deciding the acceptance of such funds must be based on an evaluation that this will provide some relief to the people and lead to economic improvement without compromising the state government's autonomy in economic decision making. Our attitude towards accepting such funding must strictly be based on such an understanding.

Withdrawal Of The State From Meeting Social Obligations

Globalisation, in its very nature, implies the rapid withdrawal of the State from meeting all social obligations to the people. All spheres, including public spheres, are to be privatized in pursuit of profits. Prominent amongst these are the spheres of education and public health.

The privatisation and commercialization of education and health sectors is proceeding rapidly and alarmingly. The State abdicates its

responsibilities in the name of lack of resources while throwing open these sectors to the caprices of private capital.

While opposing such abdication by the state and mobilising public support and intervention against it, the CPI(M) shall also simultaneously work for the regulatory control of such privatisation and commercialization in favour of meeting people's interests. Such intervention, in itself, is an instrument of popular mobilization against this privatisation. The struggle for social control over private institutions of higher education; control to regulate fees and oversee content are steps in this direction. Likewise is the struggle to ensure that a percentage of patients are treated in private hospitals free. Such instruments of popular intervention must be strengthened. These, in the final analysis, will cumulatively accrue to the mobilizations and struggles against globalisation.

Opportunities For Popular Intervention

One such opportunity arose in the field of literacy with the state rapidly reducing financial allocations making the achievement of the constitutional directive of "free and compulsory education upto the age of 14 years" an impossibility. This soon expanded into spheres of science policy and science popularization. Subsequently, newer opportunities and areas opened up. The Party's experience in the popular science movement and the consequent guidelines drawn way back in 1995 continue to remain valid today for other spheres as well.

The 1995 CC document "On People's Science Movement", generalizing the experiences of over a decade, noted: *"Since the formation of the network, the range of issues taken up have increased and so has the participation of the people in them. The objective of the Party members, however, must be clear: whatever be the issue on which these activities are organised, they must contribute to further deepening the democratic secular consciousness of the Indian people and strengthening their scientific temper. In this, they must be able to effectively counter the twin challenges posed by ruling class policies, and play a role in the defense of national sovereignty and secular and democratic rights and values. It is only through this that the Party will be able to advance its objectives and this must be the yardstick by which the activities are chosen and determined."*

While doing so, it is necessary to recollect some of the formulations of this document which continue to remain a valid guide for work in other areas as well. The document also warned: *"There are associated risks in such an approach. One such is the risk of co-option, where Party comrades, working in close contact with administration and the government, tend at times to assume the role of government officers and thus jeopardize our larger objectives. Another associated risk is that of "flush funding". The large amount*

of state resources can make some comrades susceptible to its influence. On both these counts, it is the absolute vigilance on the part of the Party committees which is important. No funding of any specific project, whatsoever be its dimension, can be accepted by our Party members working in these organisations without the prior approval of the respective Party committees and fractions. Unless this is strictly adhered to such risks can undermine the objectives....

“Any new body that is being set-up by us, any funding that is being received by any such body will have to be taken only after prior approval of the Party committees at the Centre, state or respective levels.....

“Under no circumstance should organisations associated with the Party, either directly or through sponsored organisation, accept foreign funding. Foreign funding here means any funding that requires clearance under the FCRA.”

Finally, while all the above applies equally to all Party comrades working in all spheres, the following must be adhered by all working with popular social movements: *“Our Party members have both the right and the liberty to author and produce literature that is within the broad framework of the Party’s understanding. But, any literature that contains formulations that are in divergence or not discussed by the Party earlier, must be cleared necessarily in the central or state fractions. The dissemination of literature coming from these organisations by the Party members leading them, is quite rightly construed as having the approval of the PB and CC. If such prior discussions in the central fraction and approval is not obtained, it would eventually amount to disrupting that very purpose of strengthening people’s consciousness which is the declared objective of these bodies. Notwithstanding the past experience, the failure to do so will be subject to Party discipline.*

“It needs to be clarified that in an organisation whose broad activities and the diversity of the people associated with these will both necessitate the production of literature whose language and formulations may not be similar to that of the Party’s. In fact it should not be so. But this cannot be treated as a license to propagate viewpoints, by Party members, even for discussions, without the prior discussion and approval of the relevant Party committees.”

This is the general approach that must guide the Party in working in all such organisations aimed at popular intervention. Our approach to NGOs and others must be based on these guidelines.

Our Stand On NGOs

Two decades ago, the Party had warned about the activities of foreign funded voluntary organizations, some of whom were consciously serving the purpose of diverting attention of the people from the organized Left and to wean away young activists.

Since then NGO/voluntary organizations phenomenon has grown by leaps and bounds. It is not only the World Bank and other international agencies which promote the NGOs, from the late eighties, successive governments in India have officially adopted the policy of involving NGOs in development and welfare activities. This also fits in with the neo-liberal prescription that the State should hand over many such functions to NGOs and "civil society". This facilitates privatization of such important sectors such as education, health and social welfare. Over the last decade and a half, large amount of Government funds is made available in areas like rural development, women's empowerment, education, environment and social welfare measures to NGOs. NGOs are given consultative status in many governmental programmes. All this has led to the rapid proliferation of NGOs in a range of sectors.

Many NGOs are set up with the sole purpose of receiving government funds and then misusing them and diverting them for private use. Such racketeering siphons off funds meant for development and welfare activities.

Since 1987, there is a foreign contribution regulation act (FCRA) under which NGOs have to register to receive foreign funds. According to the reports submitted annually by the Home Ministry, the number of organizations and the amounts received are steadily increasing. 22,924 organisations were registered under the FCRA as on 31 March, 2001. Foreign contributions to the extent of Rs.4871.9 crore were received in 2001-02 as compared to Rs.4535.5 crore in 2000-01. Between 1999-2000 And 2000-01 there was a 15.6 per cent increase and between 2000-01 and 2001-02 there was a 7.4 per cent increase.

While some of the funds come in for bona fide charitable and welfare activities, a substantial amount comes for work among the tribals, women, dalits and other oppressed sections. In recent years there are also quite a few NGOs and social movements who have refused to accept foreign funds.

Western donor agencies aim, amongst others, to use the NGOs to spread depoliticisation. A large number of NGOs act in a manner so as to prevent the development of the organised movements of the different sections of the people and to discourage people from participating in political activities. During the course of holding the World Social Forum (WSF) in India in 2004, the Party had defined our attitude towards the NGOs. A large number of NGOs do participate in

the WSF and there has been a constant engagement between those who call themselves as “people’s movement” and the political movements led by the mass organisations affiliated to communist parties. It is true that a large number of these NGOs are funded by agencies that belong to the same countries that promote and impose globalisation. If this be the case, why do such NGOs play an important role in the WSF? Clearly, there is an ideological motivation behind this. The World Bank has consciously spoken in terms of sharing official and non-official platforms with political opponents of globalisation. This is a conscious effort to ensure that the growing protests against globalisation are kept within the framework of capitalism and imperialism, and the people are allowed to speak, literally to let their steam off!

Such an effort necessarily needs to be backed by an ideological construct. Shorn of its high-flowing terminology and minor variations, the ideological positions of the NGOs’ “people’s movements” can be summarised as below: the alternative to globalisation can come only when we achieve people’s control over the world’s resources. This means that the movements against globalisation must oppose both the corporate control over resources and the state control over resources. By opposing corporate control they seek to present themselves as being opposed to capitalism. By opposing state control, they seek to present themselves as opposed to the experience of the socialist countries and therefore to socialism itself. It is this nebulous concept of people’s control that they advocate, which essentially dilutes the effective opposition to globalisation and projection of the socialist alternative.

It is this ideological battle that must be joined. True, in the final analysis, the communists also seek the people’s genuine and sovereign control over resources as well as social activity. But which is the socio-economic system that gives people both the legitimacy and the legal sanction to exercise this power? The only system that can provide such genuine people’s power is socialism. Socialism, therefore, is the only alternative to imperialist globalisation.

Given the ideological and political character of the promotion of NGOs, our Party must constantly campaign that the State cannot abdicate its responsibilities in basic sectors like education and health and farm them out to NGOs. NGO work can at best be a supplement to the main work of the state in these areas.

We must also counter the efforts of some NGOs who seek to foster separate identities based on caste, ethnicity and region and seek to keep certain sections away from common movements.

The Party should work out the concrete stand keeping the above in mind:

a) The Party members should not participate in NGOs which are foreign funded especially when they are in the field organizing different sections of people. Any exemption will have to be cleared by the state committee and approved by the Polit Bureau.

b) There may be some NGOs which are working in a particular place and taking up the genuine problems of the people. It is for the concerned party committees to assess their role and decide if they can cooperate with such groups on certain issues. Mass organisations may have to work with such NGOs in a broad based platform and this can be done after approval by the Party.

Given the fact that considerable government funds for development in various sectors are being routed through NGOs, it may be necessary, especially where we are running governments, to set-up NGOs so that development work for the people takes place. In such a case the State Committee must formulate guidelines. Here too, it is to be noted that:

i) The deployment of Party cadre for such NGOs must be strictly decided by the concerned Party committees and approved by the higher committee.

ii) If party associates with some NGO set up for the purpose stated above, there must be mechanism to check the accounts and monitor the use of funds.

iii) Any organisation/NGO set up with Party approval or mass organisation should not receive foreign funds as defined in the FCRA. Any exemption will have to be cleared by the State Committee and approved by the P.B.

iv) Any such organisation, if it is to take government funds, must also get the approval of the concerned Party committee. In weak states, this must be approved by the State Committee.

On Self-Help Groups

The Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are being promoted as official policy. It began with NABARD programme in 1992 and the Central Government now provides funds under the Swarnjayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) to the state governments for self-help groups. The SHGs have grown rapidly and overreached the target of one million (10 lakh) groups under the NABARD scheme before the scheduled year of 2007. The four southern states account for 75 per cent of the existing groups. 90 per cent of the members are women.

SHGs have helped provide women some opportunities to raise resources, create savings and get some relief from money lenders. It

has also given them some avenues to be independent. But the limitations and defects have also to be understood. They can be briefly stated as follows: i. For the poorer sections of women, savings from the SHGs are not used for generation of income and creating productive assets but goes into consumption needs, food, health etc. Self-employed women are better able to use the loan to promote economic activities. ii. Lack of marketing facilities for their products and iii Bank linkage and support is inadequate and interests on loans are high.

Conceptually, the Government and the World Bank project micro-financing and SHGs as an alternative to rural credit which has drastically declined after liberalization. SHGs cannot be a substitute for institutional rural credit. Such an approach has to be opposed. SHGs should also not be seen as a vehicle to bypass panchayats for schemes such as sanitation, housing etc. As in West Bengal, the SHGs must be working under the panchayats, or in coordination with them.

According to state conference reports, there are 400 SHGs being run by the women's organisation in Tamilnadu and thousands more by the science movement and other organisations jointly. In Andhra, the women's front is taking up the issues of SHGs and established contacts with them. In other states like Karnataka, Bihar, Maharashtra and Assam, the women's organisation has set-up SHGs. In West Bengal, the number of SHGs have grown rapidly.

SHGs and their development cannot be ignored by the Party. There are some questions whether such a programme will not further the World Bank model of development. While utilising the SHGs, we should refuse to accept the concept of using SHGs to further privatisation and giving access to MNCs to use them to sell their products. It will be useful to study the West Bengal experience and the Kudumbashree projects undertaken during the LDF government in Kerala between 1996-2001. A workshop must be conducted at the earliest with representatives from states to further concretise the Party's approach to SHGs.

Part III

Organisation

The 17th Congress set out the following immediate organisational tasks for implementation in five important areas.

- i) Strengthen Party Centre
- ii) Rapid expansion of the Party and mass fronts
- iii) Strengthening ideological work
- iv) Membership recruitment, functioning of auxiliary groups and branches
- v) Rectification campaign

The Party has tried at all levels to implement the decisions of the 17th Congress. A serious review of the experience of the implementation, the achievements, the persisting shortcomings and weaknesses and the emerging new issues are necessary to identify the future organisational tasks.

MAJOR TASK – EXPANSION OF THE PARTY

The Political-Organisational Report of the 17th Congress had correctly identified the major task as being the expansion of the Party and mass fronts and their influence. It is in this light that the Party Congress directed the PB and CC to prepare concrete plans for expansion of the Party and the mass fronts, both in the weak and strong states. One of the main proposals was for the Central Committee to identify certain states as priority states and concentrate its efforts on them. Similarly, in the states, priority districts/areas should be selected to concentrate work.

Priority States

The Central Committee meeting held in May 2002 selected Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra as priority states to concentrate efforts for expansion. The Party considers West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu as organisationally strong states. Three PBMs attended the meetings of the state secretariat and state committees of priority states and prepared one-year work plans in these priority states. With the help of PB and CC, other state committees also made plans for remedying the shortcomings and weaknesses and for expansion. The state committees also identified priority districts and areas for concentrating efforts for expansion.

To what extent the Party has been able to achieve expansion during this period can be assessed by reviewing the expansion of the Party membership, rallying strength of the Party, electoral strength of the

Party, strength and expansion of the mass fronts in which Party members are active, level of consciousness of the Party members and their ability to undertake political and ideological struggle etc.

Growth of Party Membership

Party membership figures:

2001	2004	Increase	% of increase
7,96,073	8,67,763	71,690	9

The membership increased from 7,96,073 in 2001 to 8,67,763 in 2004 and the increase is 71,690 (9 per cent). 18 states showed growth in membership and eight states showed decline. The states where membership declined are Punjab, Bihar, Karnataka, Chattisgarh, Andaman & Nicobar, Goa, Manipur and Sikkim. Tripura, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Maharashtra registered a membership increase of more than 20 per cent. The combined membership of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura is 74.04 per cent of the total membership in 2004. The average rate of growth of membership from 2001 to 2004 in these states is 9.77 per cent which is higher than the total average percentage of increase in other states, which is 9 per cent.

In the case of priority states, the membership increase from the 17th Congress is 7.3 per cent and in the case of Hindi-speaking states, it is 6.2 per cent. 17th Congress noted a continuous decline in membership of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi and in the case of Bihar, a decline from 16th Congress. Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi showed increase but the decline in membership in Bihar is continuing.

Party Membership -- Priority States

2001	2004	Increase	% of increase
44,418	47,679	3,261	7.3

Growth of Membership of Mass Fronts

Membership Figures Of Mass Fronts

2001	2004	Increase	% of increase
4,06,38,003	4,91,54,970	85,16,967	21

The total strength of mass fronts increased from 4,06,38,003 to 4,91,54,970 and the percentage of increase is 21, which is higher than 8.8 per cent growth achieved between 16th and 17th Congresses. The

following tables show the membership figures of various mass fronts and membership figures of mass fronts in priority states.

Membership Details Of Each Mass Front

Organisation	17 th Congress	18 th Congress	Increase	% of increase
TU	32,96,943	34,36,282	1,39,339	4.2
Kisan	1,46,86,579	1,71,78,772	24,92,193	17
Agricultural Workers	25,77,108	29,37,261	3,60,153	14
Youth	1,12,71,248	1,42,89,210	30,17,962	26.77
Student	24,73,578	31,88,760	7,15,182	28.9
Women	63,32,547	81,24,685	17,92,138	28.3
Total	4,06,38,003	4,91,54,970	85,16,967	21

The student, women and youth fronts registered an increase of 28.9 per cent, 28.3 per cent and 26.77 per cent during this period. The growth in TU front is the lowest among the mass fronts and achieved only 4.2 per cent increase.

Membership Figures Of Each Mass Front In Priority States

Organisation	17 th Congress	18 th Congress	Increase	% of increase
TU	2,00,218	2,08,329	8,111	4
Kisan	5,79,696	7,00,274	1,20,578	20.8
Agricultural Workers	1,66,800	2,06,283	39,483	23.6
Youth	2,38,968	3,20,057	81,089	33.93
Student	88,787	1,07,297	18,510	20.8
Women	1,52,723	2,16,055	63,332	41.46
Total	14,27,192	17,58,295	3,31,103	23.19

The growth rate of all mass fronts in priority states is 23.19 per cent.

The Party membership and mass front membership figures show that the mass front membership is 56.64 times larger than the Party membership and the situation varies from state to state. The comparative figures in states show that in the case of certain states, there is weakness in building mass fronts compared to the strength of the Party and in the case of some other states, there is weakness in Party building compared to the strength of the mass fronts.

Votes Secured In Lok Sabha And Assembly Elections

Party membershi	Mass front membershi	Votes secured in 2004 LS election	Total votes secured in
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p	p		assembly elections from 2000 to 2004
8,67,763	4,91,54,970	2,20,70,614	2,01,44,232

The table showing Party and mass fronts membership and the votes secured in Lok Sabha elections reveal that the votes secured by the Party is roughly half of the membership strength of mass fronts on all-India basis. Since the Party is contesting only a limited number of seats, an exact comparison is not possible. Yet, the figures give some indication of the situation. The situation also varies from state to state. This aspect underlines the need to raise political consciousness of the masses who come into contact with the Party and mass fronts.

The review report of Lok Sabha elections, 2004 had noted that outside the states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, "If we exclude Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh, where we had an understanding with a strong electoral combination, there is no improvement in the Party's voting pattern in the rest of India, except to some extent in Maharashtra. In fact, our electoral performance in terms of votes, or, the percentage polled has declined in Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Hindi-speaking region in general."

Even though we have been conducting various struggles on the issues of the working class, peasants and other sections of the working people, we have not been able to expand our political influence which would have reflected in the electoral performance in the weaker states. To put it in another way, the election results show that there was a gathering discontent amongst different sections of working people affected by the policies of the BJP-led government and its allies in the states. But we have not been able to benefit from this discontent despite our various campaigns and activities.

Experiences Summed Up

The growth of the Party membership, mass front membership, the rallying strength of the Party and mass fronts and the electoral strength of the Party do not show that the Party has achieved expansion during this period. The overall situation is that the Party is maintaining its strength in stronger states and slowly declining in many weaker states and areas.

The work reports in state conferences assert that improvements were made in activising the Party, particularly during the first two years after the last Party Congress. Many assembly elections and Lok Sabha elections came in between. The Party had to concentrate on these elections. The all-India Party Centre also could not give more attention because of other pressing responsibilities. Hence, the tempo

of the implementation of the tasks began to slow down. But the overall experience is that improvements can be made, if determined planned efforts are made. The experience also reveal the fact that selection and deployment of adequate number of equipped cadres is essential for carrying out the tasks for expansion of the Party. The style of work of the present cadres has to be appropriately changed. The state conferences' reports and discussions sum-up the experience that wherever and whenever serious and sustained efforts were made, there the Party was able to achieve expansion. The state reports show that the present situation offers new opportunities for Party's advance. The immediate task before the Party is how to make use of the present opportunities for rapid expansion.

FAILURES AND WEAKNESSES

The decline in electoral strength of the Party and the decline in the Party membership in certain areas are taking place in the context of the growing prestige of the Party at the all-India plane. The political developments have proved that the Party is generally taking a correct political stand on all important political issues. The Party is also playing an important role in the political life of the country. More and more sections of the people are looking at the Party for help and guidance. Despite all these, why the Party has failed to achieve rapid expansion is a matter that requires serious introspection. The last three year's work and review of the experiences revealed that the following weaknesses and shortcomings are hindering the efforts for rapid expansion.

Quality Of Party Membership

The expansion of the Party mainly rests on the improvement of the quality of the Party membership and the efficiency of the Party members in carrying out the multifarious responsibilities. The Party members should be always active in taking up the various issues affecting the people, organising them in agitations and struggles, building their mass organisations, conducting ideological and political struggles, building Party etc.

The state reports show that a considerable section of the Party members are inactive except at the time of elections or at the time of other important political work. Some of them do not attend Party branches regularly. The Party Constitution insists that all Party members should work in a mass front unless exempted by the Party. This has not implemented in the case of a large number of Party members. The political, ideological and organisational level of a large section of Party members are below the expected standard. The new recruits in the Party are not trained adequately on political and organisational matters. They come into the Party with the vices seen in the present society and wrong organisational practices of the

bourgeois-political parties. All these are causing a slow decline in the quality of the Party membership. Because of the low political, ideological and organisational level of a considerable section of the Party members, the agitational, political, ideological and organisational work is not properly organised in many places. Many non-Party ideas and practices are seeping into the Party. This is one of the major reasons that restricts the efforts of the Party for rapid expansion. In some states, the drop out rates are very high. This floating nature of the Party membership is another reason for the declining quality of the Party members.

In order to activate the Party members and to raise their quality, the Central Committee issued a detailed circular in 2002 explaining the guidelines for membership recruitment, scrutiny and renewal of Party membership, branch functioning, formation of auxiliary group and other related matters. The Central Committee instructed all state units that attempt should be made to organise auxiliary groups under branches/committees. The respective Party committees should provide political and organisational education to all new recruits in the auxiliary groups, monitor their activities and on the basis of assessment, candidate members should be recruited from the auxiliary group members. Only those candidate members who successfully fulfil the minimum requirements should be promoted to Party membership. The renewal of the Party membership should be based on the Party and mass organisational activities, attendance in branch meetings, general body meetings and Party classes. The Central Committee also instructed that all branches and committees should keep record of activities of each member and the minutes of deliberations and decisions. The annual check-up and renewal of the Party membership should be organised in the presence of a higher committee member. The report on check-up of Party membership and renewal by a branch/committee should be sent to the next higher committee for confirmation and registration. At the time of renewal, each member should fill a renewal form which provides basic data such as name, address, age, year of joining the Party, educational qualifications, income, front, class based on occupation and other details specified in the performa sent to the committees. Party branches and the respective Party committees should submit a consolidated statement on the particulars of the Party members to the next higher committee. The district committees and the intermediate committees should organise annual review of the branch functioning at the time of renewal based on the guidelines chalked out by the state committee.

The Party Centre took up the matter at the time of preparing one-year plan in priority states. Many other states also made review of the present situation in order to chalk out future tasks.

The Central Committee made a detailed analysis of the one-year plan prepared by the priority states as per the direction provided by the 17th Congress. This had provided the Central Committee lot of inputs about the state of affairs of the Party organisation. From the stage of recruitment of the Party members to their activities and functioning in the Party branches, the picture that had emerged was the failure to observe the norms for recruiting Party members, training them to discharge their responsibilities as Party members and for their check-up. The CC took up this matter again and directions were given to the states to implement the tasks set out by the Party Congress and CC on these matters.

The state conference work reports reviewed the experiences in states about forming auxiliary groups and membership recruitment. After the 17th Congress, there is some improvement in organising auxiliary groups, their political-organisational training, assigning work to them and promoting qualified persons to Party membership. But, still weaknesses are existing in many states.

The work report of the Tamilnadu state committee states: "Though many thousands of auxiliary members are enrolled every year as there was not enough efforts to train them, to promote them as candidate members, they are remaining as auxiliary members or a sizeable of them getting dropped from membership continues".

Karnataka state work report states: "The state committee has reviewed that lack of attention given to auxiliary group is the reason for not increasing the membership. As we have not implemented the rules strictly, there were liberal attitude in many cases and chaos in some cases in the process of recruitment to the Party."

The shortcomings and weaknesses in forming auxiliary groups by recruiting militants, their training, their deployment, monitoring their work and promotion to Party membership – all have to be remedied. The expansion of the Party and the improvement in the quality of the Party members to a great extent depends on this.

Class, Social Composition, Age & Recruitment Of Women Party Members

The percentage of Party members from working class, poor peasants and agricultural labourers are: Andhra Pradesh 44.49 (50.82 in 2001), Assam 62.13, Bihar 69.10 (76.8 in 2001), Chattisgarh 39.18, Gujarat 93.52, Haryana 60.63 (73.3 in 2001), Himachal Pradesh 51.36, Jharkhand 69.65 (80.1 in 2001), Karnataka 64.78, Kerala 85.71 (85.6 in 2001), Madhya Pradesh 74.51 (72 in 2001), Maharashtra 78.54 (92.3 in 2001), Orissa 75.38 (based on partial figures), Punjab 82.96, Tamilnadu 82.2 (68.7 in 2001), Tripura 75.75 (62.3 in 2001), Uttaranchal 81.18, Uttar Pradesh 45.44, West Bengal 52.98 (51.6 in

2001). The reports from states show that there is no substantial increase in the percentage of Party members from working class, poor peasants and agricultural labourers. In the case of certain states, the membership declined from these sections. Serious attempt should be made to recruit more members from the basic classes.

The percentage of scheduled castes in different states are: Andhra Pradesh 18.76 (19.89 in 2001), Assam 7.06, Bihar 19.48 (20.7 in 2001), Chattisgarh 18.59, Gujarat 9.74, Haryana 27.79 (25.6 in 2001), Himachal Pradesh 12.89, Jharkhand 16.76 (9.9 in 2001), Karnataka 17.35, Kerala 15.86 (12.5 in 2001), Madhya Pradesh 21.25 (20 in 2001), Maharashtra 6.16 (7.3 in 2001), Orissa 17.55 (based on partial figures), Rajasthan 1.44 (18.1 in 2001), Punjab 34.54, Tamilnadu 24 (30.2 in 2001), Tripura 19.93 (17.9 in 2001), Uttaranchal 12.06, Uttar Pradesh 16.53 (22.6 in 2001 – based on partial figures), West Bengal 20 (20.9 in 2001).

The percentage of scheduled tribes in different states are: Andhra Pradesh 10.89 (10 in 2001), Assam 7.64, Bihar 1.1 (1.4 in 2001), Chattisgarh 13.75, Gujarat 14.3, Himachal Pradesh 3.61, Jharkhand 23.26 (17.5 in 2001), Karnataka 9.27, Kerala 1.04 (1.04 in 2001), Madhya Pradesh 12.45 (14.3 in 2001), Maharashtra 49.6 (50.8 in 2001), Orissa 13.33 (based on partial figures), Rajasthan 10.03 (20.3 in 2001), Tamilnadu 1 (1.5 in 2001), Tripura 29.99 (27.4 in 2001), Uttaranchal 1.2, West Bengal 5.06 (5.8 in 2001).

There is no improvement in the composition of Party members from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Some states recorded decline also. This reveals the fact that no serious attempt has been made to recruit from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in many states. The Party should take up the task of recruiting more Party members from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the most socially and economically exploited sections of people.

The percentage of Muslim minorities in different states are: Andhra Pradesh 4.1 (3.24 in 2001), Assam 17, Bihar 8.93 (11.8 in 2001), Chattisgarh 1.42, Gujarat 9.59, Himachal Pradesh 0.78, Karnataka 6.05, Kerala 9.44 (8.3 in 2001), Madhya Pradesh 5.42 (4.4 in 2001), Maharashtra 5.49 (5 in 2001), Orissa 0.37 (based on partial figures), Punjab 0.45, Rajasthan 9.78 (5.3 in 2001), Tamilnadu 4.4 (Muslims + Christians) (7.4 in 2001), Tripura 5.12 (5.2 in 2001), Uttaranchal 4.94, Uttar Pradesh 9.46 (12.8 in 2001 – based on partial figures), West Bengal 14.9 (15.2 in 2001). There is no perceptible change in the situation. Party has to recruit more members from the minorities and should try to expand its influence among them.

The percentage of Party members upto the age of 25 years are: Assam 5.64, Bihar 0.52, Gujarat 9.71, Haryana 12.62, Himachal Pradesh 7.22, Jharkhand 24.21, Karnataka 8.07, Kerala 18.17, Madhya Pradesh

7.58, Maharashtra 10.74, Orissa 8.14 (based on partial figures), Punjab 4.54, Rajasthan 8.05, Tamilnadu 19.4, Tripura 8.80, Uttaranchal 17.12, Uttar Pradesh 3.10, West Bengal 16.64. The percentage of Party members between the age group of 26 to 50 years are : Assam 65.79, Bihar 63.49, Gujarat 82.4, Haryana 59.26, Himachal Pradesh 82.91, Jharkhand 63.54, Karnataka 54.69, Kerala 62.54, Madhya Pradesh 72.05, Maharashtra 69.04, Orissa 57.71 (based on partial figures), Punjab 45.45, Rajasthan 62.27, Tamilnadu 62.7, Tripura 67.7, Uttaranchal 51.74, Uttar Pradesh 39.88, West Bengal 49.53. It is not possible to compare the figures of the 17th Congress as the slab fixed was different at that time.

A big majority of the Party members have joined the Party after 1992. In West Bengal, 71.28 per cent, in Kerala, 71.13 per cent and in Tamilnadu 76.3 per cent of members have joined the Party after 1992. In Tripura, 58.44 per cent of members have joined the Party after 1994. This underlines the importance of political, ideological and organisational education of the new Party members.

There has been progress in the number of women members in the Party. If we take the five major states – West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh – they constitute more than 90 per cent of the total Party membership. If we see the proportion of women Party members in these five states that will give a fair indication of the position of women Party members in the total membership. The figures are as follows: Kerala 10.11 (7.77 in 2001), Tripura 20.11 (17.6 in 2001), West Bengal 9.37 (7.72 in 2001), Andhra Pradesh 10.17 (7.5 in 2001), Tamilnadu 11.02 (9.8 in 2001). West Bengal can do more for recruiting women into the Party. There is a steady increase in these five states and for the first time, the number of women members in the Party has touched 10 per cent in the membership of the five states put together. Other states with substantial women membership are Maharashtra 12.9, Assam 13.49, Gujarat 14.12, Karnataka 16.18, Madhya Pradesh 11.38 and Delhi 18.3. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand have poor representation of women membership. Punjab has the lowest, 1.31.

Attention has to be paid to see that the women recruited into the Party are provided adequate education and training and steps taken to increase their representation in the Party committees.

Branch Functioning

On three occasions, the Party reviewed the functioning of the Party branches during this period – the first occasion was at the time of preparation of the one-year work plan, immediately after the 17th Congress; the second occasion was at the time of review of the implementation of one-year plan; and the third occasion was at the time of the state Party conferences. There is some improvement in the

functioning of the Party branches in certain states during this period. The improvement was much more during the first year after the Party Congress when one-year work plan was implemented in states.

Even though the maximum number of Party members in a branch is fixed as 15, the average membership in branches differs from state to state. West Bengal, with 2,74,921 members, has 25,650 branches, but Kerala with 3,16,305 members has only 24,414 branches. This shows that the average membership in branches in Kerala is higher than the average membership in West Bengal.

The situation of the branch functioning also varies from state to state. In some states, majority of the branches are functioning properly, but in the case of many states, majority of the branches are inactive. This inactivity of the Party branches is restricting the efforts to expand the Party.

According to Andhra Pradesh report, 70 per cent of the branches are functioning properly. 27 per cent of the branches are functioning in a limited manner. Only 3 per cent of the branches are working for names sake only.

Assam report states: "A large number of branches in our state do not have their meetings regularly. A lot of branch members do not attend the branch meetings. In such a situation, most of the branches remain inactive".

Tamilnadu report states: "Of the 10,934 Party branches in the state, one-third of the branches meets regularly. Another one-third of the branches meets at the instance of the highest committees for implementing the calls of the Central Committee. The balance one-third of the branches meets once a year for renewal and are not in a position to carry out the normal Party branch activities".

Karnataka report states: "A large number of branches meet only once in a year at the time of renewals. The 17th Congress directive that the branches should meet at least once in a month, by and large has not been implemented and such inactive branches restrict the growth of the Party."

Tripura report states: "At present, there are 3,490 Party branches, leaving aside a few branches in the far-flung hilly area, others have organised at least seven or eight meetings annually.

Kerala report states that only 50 per cent of the branches are functioning properly.

The branch is the living link between the masses of workers, peasants and other sections of people within its area or sphere.

One of the main reasons for Party's inability to make use of the opportunities for expansion is the weakness of the functioning of the Party branch. It is the responsibility of the Party branch to deploy Party members into different class and mass fronts, areas, to make plans for expansion, to take up local issues, to rally different classes and sections of people who can be rallied in the people's democratic front, to organise agitation and propaganda work to isolate and expose Party enemies, to organise auxiliary groups etc.

The weaknesses of the branch functioning should be reviewed by the respective higher committees and concrete remedial measures should be taken. The expansion of the Party depends on its success.

Even though it was stressed in the 17th Congress Political-Organisational report to hold periodical meetings of the branch secretaries and their training, that was implemented only in some places. Many branch secretaries are not politically and organizationally capable to lead the branch in its multifarious activities. The yearly review of the branch functioning at the time of renewal of membership is also ignored by the higher committees in many places. In order to make use of the opportunities for expansion of the Party, the functioning of the Party branches should be substantially improved.

Local Committees/Zonal Or Area Committees

In between the district committee and branches, there are committees at two levels – local committees just above the branches and zonal/area/taluk committees above the local committees in stronger states and stronger districts.

Local committees play an important role in the effective functioning of the branches. In West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu, local committees are organised above branches. In Assam and Bihar, local committees are organised below the district committees in certain districts but not in all places. In Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, there are no local committees except in one or two districts. It was decided that Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra should constitute local committees. The local committee should be activated to improve the functioning of branches.

Guidelines for organising local committees, zonal/area/taluk committees should be prepared for the guidance of all state committees.

District Committees

In West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu, district committees are functioning properly compared to many district committees in the weaker states. The reports of the one-year plan and the experience of its implementation revealed the weakness in district level functioning in other states. In many districts, district centres are non-functioning. A district centre with the secretary and one or two district secretariat members attending regularly is absent in many places. District committee meetings are held in a haphazard manner with only a few hours devoted for the meeting. Much of the time is taken up in reporting of the state committee and fixing quotas and decisions to be implemented. There is no collective functioning in many places.

In weaker states, the state committees are not able to tackle organisational problems in important districts. Problems of factionalism, individualism and other violations of democratic centralism are allowed to continue and accumulate creating a deadlock in the overall functioning. In some places, the functioning of the district committee secretary or the differences among the state committee members of that district are the cause of factionalism.

The idea of selecting priority districts in priority states was to ensure that greater attention is paid to developing mass movements, streamlining the Party organisation and building mass organisations. In practice, many of the state committees tend to lose the focus of the priority districts and continue in their routine way of functioning. Neither any cadre was allotted nor any special attention was given.

State Committees

State centres and state committees are functioning properly and effectively in West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu. In many other states, different types of problems are existing.

One of the problems emerged from the discussions and reports from the weaker states was with the state leadership. The importance of a functioning state centre with a team of comrades working collectively, intervening in all important political issues, monitoring the implementation of the work plan, giving guidance on organisational matters was still not fully grasped and put into practice in some states. Here, the role of the state secretary is important. In many states, there is no daily meeting of the available state secretariat members. Some state secretaries have the wrong notion that as secretary their ideas on matters should be implemented and they have some sort of veto power over the opinions of other members. It is the responsibility of the state secretary to take initiative in strengthening the collective functioning of the PC centre, PC secretariat and the PC. After reviewing one-year plans prepared

by the priority states, the Central Committee gave concrete suggestions for improving the functioning of the state Centre. Many of the organisational problems are related to the lack of collective functioning of the secretary and other members. Periodical review of the collective work of the Party Centre, state secretariat and state committee should be conducted and concrete tasks should be formulated.

Cadre Policy

17th Congress noted the shortage of cadres and the need for a continuous increase in the availability of efficient cadres at all levels. This issue was discussed in state committees after the Party Congress. West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu are giving attention to these aspects. But the situation in many other states are different.

The reports from the priority states show that the selection of wholetimers and attention to their development and needs are not done in a planned way, or, with any organisational priorities in mind. The selection of cadres and their activity is mostly left to spontaneity. Most of the district committees in the weaker states are unable to meet the minimum requirements for wages for the wholetimers. In Bihar, most of the wholetimers at district level are unpaid. It is only when the state committee provide some funds for wholetimers, their wages are paid. In Maharashtra, the state Centre pays for 30 of the 150 wholetimers which includes some of the wholetimers working in the district level also.

In Uttar Pradesh, 16 wholetimers are paid by the state Centre, of which six are working in districts. The Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand committees are dependent on the assistance of the Central Committee and mass front centres of kisan, youth and women for the wages of the state level wholetimers.

The Party needs cadres in all states for carrying out the various activities of the Party organisations and institutions.

One of the reasons for the slow down of the implementation of the expansion plan of the Party was the inadequacy in deploying cadres for implementation of the new tasks. The experience shows that the reorganization of the work of the present cadres alone is not sufficient to successfully carry out the new tasks. The Party should recruit young cadres from states and strong districts in weak states and deploy them in areas where Party is weak. Special attention should be given to recruit cadres from women scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities. The selection and promotion of cadres should

be strictly on the basis of his/her political-organisational capacity and performance.

The state reports show that in some states, the wages and allowances of the wholetimers are not paid regularly. In some places, their wages are inadequate and very low. The state committees should examine this aspect and make appropriate arrangements for ensuring payment of wages and allowances taking into consideration the minimum livelihood requirements. The all-India Party Centre should help those state committees which do not have sufficient resources to pay wages for efficient cadres. The PB and CC should prepare a guideline explaining the aspects of cadre recruitment deployment, monitoring their work, promotion, education, payment of wages etc.

The 17th Congress noted the existence of factional tendencies in certain parts which created difficulties for objective evaluation of cadres. In certain places, cadres were eliminated through factional elections. The same situation is continuing in certain places. The higher committees should examine this aspect and effective remedial measures should be taken.

Party And Mass Organisations

The Party and mass organisation relation should be improved as decided by the CC documents.

The Central Committee document "*On Approach to Mass Organisations*" reviewed the relation between the Party and mass organisation for expansion of the mass fronts and the Party. The CC document reviewed the present practice in three important areas. They are:

1. Developing the independent functioning of the mass organisations, so that they acquire a broad character and reach to new sections of the people.
2. The democratic functioning of the mass organisations and the case of youth, student and women organisations maintaining its character as a democratic platform.
3. A proper understanding of the Party's guiding role and Party building.

After reviewing the relationship between Party and mass organisations, the CC document gave the following directions:

"1. Ensure the independent role of the mass organisations and their democratic functioning.

“2. The day-to-day work of the mass organisation must be conducted by the office bearers of the relevant elected committees.

“3. The principles and methods of Party functioning should not be imposed on the mass organisations which have their own rules and procedures. Party cadres should be educated about the correct role of Party subcommittees and fraction committees of the mass organisation.

“4. Party members working in the mass organisations are bound by the discipline of the Party and they should abide by the decisions taken by the Party forums. They should contribute to the development of the Party apart from their mass organisation work, by doing the specific political and organisational work for the Party.

“5. A regular report should be submitted to the Party committees about the work done in every mass front for building the Party and a review of the general direction and implementation of the policies of the Party must be undertaken by the Party committees at least once a year.

“6. To ensure democratic functioning, state committees must check up which are the mass organisations and trade unions which have not held conferences and executive committee meetings regularly. The Party should hold the Party functionaries concerned accountable for this inaction.

“7. Steps should be taken to separate the Party and mass organisation funds where it is not so. Separate and proper accounts should be maintained of the mass organisations which should be checked up periodically.

“8. In each state, ensure that the key functionaries of class and mass organisations devote their main time to the work of that organisation. To begin with, in weaker states, this should be taken up for review at the state and district levels.

“9. Insist that Party members work in a mass organisation. Party committees should allocate adequate cadres for the mass organisations’ and review their requirements periodically.

“10. Function sub-committees and fraction committees on the principle of the Party. They should not discuss the routine work of mass organisations. They should discuss

questions of policy, Party building, recruitment into the Party, purvey Party literature and Party views to members in the mass organisations etc. and submit reports to the Party committee.”

The Central Committee also instructed the state committees to review the situation in each state and concretize the tasks. The state review reports and conferences made some efforts in reviewing the situation and formulating the tasks. But, it should be noted here that adequate attention or seriousness has not been given for the review in many states. The state committees and the lower level committees should undertake this important task immediately after the Party Congress. The mass fronts should be able to rally wide sections of people who are coming out to oppose bourgeois-landlord policies and policies of globalisation. The Party should make plans to contact the people who are rallying in agitations and struggles to raise their political consciousness and to train politically, ideologically and organizationally the militants among them and to recruit them into the Party. This work should continue unremittingly.

New Mass Organisations

In various states, mass organisations for specific sections of the people have been set-up which are outside the traditional mass organisations. In West Bengal, there is an organisation for the disabled people, which has now a membership of fifty thousand in all the districts. In Andhra Pradesh, seven organisations for people having different professions and artisans such as weavers, shepherds, potters etc are functioning. They are coordinated at the Party level by a coordination committee. There are artisans' organisations in Kerala and Tamilnadu. These organisations are helping to reach different unorganized sections of people and bringing them closer to the influence of the Party. We must study the experience of these organisations and see how they can be utilized to reach unorganized sections in other places also.

Children's movement is organised in Kerala, West Bengal and in some other states. Children's movement should be organised in all states. The experience of the building of the children's movement in different states has to be reviewed and guidelines should be given from the All India Centre.

Failures And Shortcomings In Organising Agitations And Struggles And Also In Taking Up Partial Demands And Local Issues

In many places, agitations and struggles are organised on the basis of all-India calls and state calls only in a token manner. The importance of organising wide propaganda work among the people and rallying

wider sections on the issues are ignored in many places. Only a section of Party members and close sympathizers are rallied in such activities. This reduces the observance of the all-India and state calls in many places as just ritualistic and cannot make any political impact.

The Party has been insisting the importance of taking up the partial demands and local issues for organising agitations and struggles on a sustained basis. The overall experience is that whenever and wherever the Party has taken up partial demands or local issues, the Party has been able to rally wider sections of the people. The recent experience of the struggle in Rajasthan is an encouraging example for this.

In the present situation, many spontaneous struggles may come up. The Party and mass fronts should intervene in all such struggles and should try to guide them through active participation. While taking up partial demands and local issues, the Party should educate the masses that the partial demands and local issues are reflections of the basic issues and a final solution rests with the successful completion of the democratic revolution.

There are weaknesses in many places in taking up such issues. The Party can be strengthened only by taking up the issues affecting different sections of the people, in particular, the working people. Conducting struggles on partial demands and local issues and linking these struggles to the broader political mobilisation for a Left and democratic platform open the way for Party's expansion. All weaknesses in taking up partial demands and local issues should be remedied.

Social Issues

The first part of the Political-Organisational Report reviewed the experiences of taking up social issues particularly caste oppression and discrimination during this period. Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu made some efforts in this direction. As explained in the Political resolution, caste system contains both social oppression and class exploitation. Party and mass fronts should make the non-dalit poorer sections of the people conscious about the evils of social oppression, discrimination and economic exploitation. Party and mass fronts should come in the forefront to fight against caste oppression and attendant exploitation. The Party and mass front should try to rally poorer sections among the dalit in united struggles with the poorer sections among the non-dalits on issues such as land, wage, social security measures, employment, expansion of institutional credit, health, education etc. The important task is to rally all poorer sections together.

The Party and mass fronts should concretize the issues on which agitations and struggles against social oppression and economic exploitation can be conducted. The dalits and the scheduled tribe people constitute a large section of the poorer people in the country. The experience of the stronger states and stronger areas shows that the strength and expansion of the Party in those areas depend, to a greater extent, on Party's ability to rally the poorer sections belonging to all social groups.

Weaknesses In Consolidation And Party Building

The weaknesses and shortcomings in consolidating the new contacts by raising their consciousness and organising them in mass fronts and auxiliary groups and then in the Party is continuing in many places. The higher political, ideological and organisational consciousness will not arise spontaneously among the masses. This should come from outside and by the organised work of the Party. In many places, this aspect is neglected. This is the main reason why even the masses who were rallied in militant struggles and that too for a long period, drifted away at a later stage. All weaknesses in consolidation and Party building should be concretely examined and appropriate organisational measures should be taken.

Strengthening Ideological Work

The tasks set forth in the 17th Congress for strengthening ideological work were as follows: strengthen ideological work; organise Central school for educating different aspects of the Party Programme; prepare a syllabus for Party education to cover all Party members; increase circulation of *People's Democracy/Loklahar* and *The Marxist*; activise agit-prop committee and publish more materials; and increase circulation of dailies and weeklies in states.

The 17th Congress stressed the importance of strengthening the ideological work. Serious attempts should be made to raise the ideological level of the Party members. Many of the new recruits in the Party do not know Party's basic understanding of Indian revolution, the classes and different sections of the people that are to be rallied in the people's democratic front and the present tactics of the Party. A considerable section of the Party members do not have adequate understanding of dialectical materialism and are incapable of applying that approach. In the name of social pressure, many comrades are following unscientific obscurantistic practices. Because of the low ideological level, the need to fight these tendencies is ignored. The Party should also be vigilant about the danger of the caste influence in the society and its nature to permeate in to all organisations.

The Party, alongwith mass fronts and Left and progressive forces, should launch a campaign against all sorts of obscurantism, superstition and for developing scientific temper and the spirit of enquiry and reform.

A Central Party school to provide an indepth understanding of the Party Programme was organised in New Delhi from July 25 to 30, 2002. 101 comrades attended from states. The class notes were printed and circulated to states for organising classes in states.

The Polit Bureau decided to observe the birth anniversaries of A.K. Gopalan and B.T. Ranadive from October 2 to December 19, 2004. During this period, many state committees conducted ideological campaigns on the following issues:

- The role of the Communists in the struggle against British imperialism and the relevance of the anti-imperialist struggle today.
- How Marxism provides a scientific method to analyse the problems of Indian society and shows the way for ending class and social exploitation.
- The relevance of socialism in the contemporary world as the only alternative against imperialism and the exploitation and disruptive aspects of modern-day capitalism.

The state reports show that in West Bengal, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, permanent Party schools are functioning. Other state committees have also organised Party schools for cadres and members. Considering the needs, much more has to be done. Party, at all levels, should give more attention for political, ideological and organisational education of Party members. At the Centre, there should be at least one school every year, including for the frontal cadres.

Agit-Prop Work

As part of the agit-prop work, a meeting of the Urdu-speaking comrades from different states were held on August 31, 2002. As per the decision taken in this meeting, a monthly *Shabtaab* has begun to publish from April, 2004. However, the circulation of the Urdu monthly is very low. Most of the states have not taken up the sale of *Shabtaab* seriously.

During this period, CPI(M) Publications published 58 titles including the Party Congress and Central Committee documents. For the Lok Sabha election campaign, ten folders on various topics were brought out. The agit-prop committee met four times during this period. This is insufficient.

Even though it was decided to increase the circulation of *People's Democracy*, *Lok Lahar* and *The Marxist*, that has not been achieved.

The theoretical quarterly, *The Marxist* has been regularized and ten issues have come out after the last Party Congress.

There is expansion and strengthening of the Party organs in some states and other propaganda materials.

Kerala : In Kerala, *Deshabhimani* had increased its circulation upto 4.5 lakhs but that has come down. Two weeklies – one political weekly, *Chintha*, and another cultural weekly, *Deshabhimani Weekly* – are published regularly in Malayalam. AKG Study and Research Centre is publishing a quarterly *Marxist Samvadam*. The Chintha Publishing Centre is publishing Marxist, Left and progressive books.

West Bengal: *Ganashakti* in West Bengal has begun its new edition from Durgapur. Two weeklies – one in Bengali, *Deshhitaisee* and another in Hindi, *Swadhinta* – are published regularly. *Nandan* is the cultural monthly regularly published in Bengali. *Marxvadipath* is the theoretical quarterly published in Bengali. The National Book Agency is publishing Marxist, Left and progressive books.

Andhra Pradesh: *Prajashakti* is the Telugu daily published in Andhra Pradesh. *Prajashakti* has been publishing a monthly theoretical bulletin regularly since November, 2001. Prajashakti Publishing House has expanded its publication network throughout the state.

Tripura: *Desharkatha*, the daily organ of the Party shifted its office to its own building, adjacent to the state Party office and commenced its publications. The size of the paper was increased to eight pages. The progressive-cultural journal of *Purbabhas* has also started its publication. According to the state report, remarkable success was achieved in 2004 in respect of the sale of Party literature.

Tamilnadu: *Theekkathir* is the Tamil daily published from Tamilnadu. A theoretical monthly *Marxist* and a cultural monthly *Semmalar* also being regularly published in Tamil. A new publishing house, 'Bharathi Puthakalayam', has been started. Selling outlets have been opened in 15 districts.

Uttar Pradesh: *Lok Samvad*, a fortnightly, was started its publication in Uttar Pradesh from 2004. This fulfilled a longstanding decision.

The weeklies, *Jeevanmarg* in Maharashtra, *Ganashakti* in Assam, *Aikyaranga* in Karnataka, *Samyabadee* in Orissa and *Chintan* in Gujarat and fortnightly *Lok Jatan* in Madhya Pradesh are being regularly published.

Agit-prop work assumes greater importance in the present situation. More attention should be given to improve the quality of the agit-prop work of the Party at different levels.

PERSISTING WEAKNESSES AND SHORTCOMINGS AND RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN

The 17th Congress had set the task of organising rectification campaign for strengthening democratic centralism, collective functioning, combating factionalism and parliamentarianism and enforcing Communist norms.

Democratic Centralism

The 17th Congress directed the Party Central Committee to organise a rectification campaign throughout the Party for fighting against the evil of factionalism and strengthening democratic centralism. Each Party committee was instructed to review the condition of democratic centralism and collective functioning at its level and formulate tasks for remedying and rectifying shortcomings and failures. It was also pointed out that the work should be completed at all levels within a period of one year and the work for strengthening democratic centralism was a continuing process and periodic review should be organised.

The Political Organisational Report of the 17th Congress dealt, in detail, about the deviations and mistakes persisting in the Party. After the Party Congress, efforts were made in most state committees to review the condition of democratic centralism at all levels and to take appropriate decisions to strengthen democratic centralism and collective functioning.

The review made in the state committees showed that the present state of democratic centralism was far from satisfactory. Many state committees made serious introspection about the situation of democratic centralism. Different types of shortcomings, mistakes and deviations are existing in the Party. One state committee stated : "Factionalism, careerism, federalism, individualism, parliamentarianism, bureaucratic attitude, ignoring collective functioning, weakness of not encouraging criticism from below, electing persons on the basis of group allegiance, taking advantage of low organisational and political consciousness of Party in the committee elections, for the purpose of factionalism incompetent persons are recruited in the Party only to prepare one's own supporters, ignoring mistakes of comrades to gather support for factional purposes, factional division of the Party committee etc are the evils existing more or less in this, or, that unit in the state which are weakening the principle of democratic centralism".

One of the important aims of democratic centralism is to strengthen collective functioning. The importance of collective functioning is ignored at many levels. The Party should function as the embodiment of collective will. Social change is achieved only when lakhs of people are moved. Individualism should give way to democratic and collective functioning. All trends that weaken collective functioning should be examined and eliminated.

Factional tendencies are leading to federal tendencies and both factionalism and federalism are weakening democratic centralism in the Party. With firm determination, the Party has to fight and eradicate all factional and federal tendencies in the Party in order to strengthen democratic centralism and collective functioning.

There are many reasons for weak state of democratic centralism. The new Party members are not trained to practice the organisational principles of Communist Party. The persisting weakness in training new Party members is a major reason for the existence of wrong organisational trends and violations of democratic centralism. The Party members are living in the environment of various non-proletarian classes such as big bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, landlords, rich peasants and others. The Party members differ in quality as they differ in social background and have come under different social influences. The enemy classes are exerting their influence on Party members in ideology, in living habits and in action. Each Party member has to fight these wrong tendencies collectively and individually. The factional tendency in certain places is the result as well as the cause of the weak state of democratic centralism.

Kerala: Inner-Party Situation

The 17th Congress noted the factional tendencies in Kerala. It instructed the state leadership to intensify efforts to eradicate the factional tendencies in the Party, to work consciously and consistently for strengthening collective functioning, not to tolerate any violation of organisational norms from anybody and to organise a serious political and organisational education campaign.

Immediately after the 17th Congress, the state Party tried to carry out the directives of the Party Congress. They achieved some initial success in their efforts. But, gradually the situation began to deteriorate. Certain political, ideological and organisational questions came up before the Kerala Party. The issues they could not settle were sent to the Polit Bureau for its guidance. The Polit Bureau meeting held in January 2004 at Hyderabad discussed these issues and formulated its opinion. The PB's opinion was explained in the PC and three regional meetings of the Party cadres. After a short period, the old debates again began to hot up. At the time of the

conferences, factional tendencies again came up openly. According to the work report of the Kerala state committee, factional tendencies appeared in seven districts.

The Polit Bureau received letters and reports from PB, CC and other Party comrades about the inner-Party situation in Kerala. The bourgeois media in Kerala was full of reports highlighting the factional quarrels and trying to make use of the situation to harm the prestige of the Party. Many of these reports were based on leakages from within the Party. Speculations were rife about how a show down would take place in the state conference at Malappuram.

In that situation, an urgent meeting of the Polit Bureau was called in Kolkata on February 13, 2005. The PB discussed about the inner-Party situation in Kerala and adopted a resolution. The PB resolution contained the following points:

- It expressed serious concern at the reports it had received about the inner-Party situation in Kerala. The PB stressed the need for maintaining unity on the basis of political-organisational principles of the Party.
- The political, ideological and organisational questions which were discussed and settled during the past three years should not be reopened.
- Other issues which have come up cannot be dealt with in the platform of the state conference, but can be taken up for consideration afterwards.
- Some of the ideological issues which have arisen should be dealt with through a process of discussion and pinpointing the wrong trends and correcting them.
- The Polit Bureau was opposed to any move which seeks to eliminate those holding differing views. This will be considered factionalism and against the principles of Communist Party.
- It urged the state committee to unify the Party on the basis of the work report they have adopted for the conference. It pointed out the responsibilities of the PB members, Central Committee members and state secretariat members to see that the state conference strengthens unity in the Party.

The resolution of the Polit Bureau was reported to the state committee before the conference began its proceedings. The content of the PB resolution was also explained in the conference before the work report was presented. But the tenor of discussion of the work report was marked by personal attacks, raising allegations and counter-allegations. Only a few comrades touched on the contents of the work report, the political situation in the state, the challenges, the opportunities and the future tasks. The content and the manner of discussion of a considerable section of comrades showed factional considerations.

At the time of preparation of the panel by the state committee, differences appeared. The six PB members who were present in the conference met to avoid a division in the conference. With the intervention of the PB, the PC secretariat and the PC prepared a unanimous panel of 76 names in an 80-member state committee. Four places were kept vacant to be co-opted after the Party Congress. In the conference, 12 comrades came forward to contest. The conference elected the panel of 76 names which was unanimously proposed by the PC secretariat and PC.

There was no dispute in the election of Control Commission or delegates to the Party Congress. The intervention of the PB helped in containing the damage. Overwhelming majority of the comrades in the PC and the conference welcomed the intervention of the PB. The contest taking place despite the PC's unanimous panel and the PB's intervention indicates the disunity in the leadership. There was wholesale leakage of the entire proceedings to the media.

The Party should continue the fight to eliminate the factional tendencies and to unify the Party at all levels. The Party leadership in Kerala has an important responsibility. They should collectively and individually make a serious introspection about all the deviations – political, ideological and organisational – in their functioning and should change and fall in line with the Party positions. There are immense possibilities for expansion of the movement. All differences – political, ideological and organisational matters – should only be discussed and decided in Party committees. The Party leaders should not make any public utterances expressing their differences either impliedly or explicitly. If they fail to come to any understanding on any of the political-ideological-organisational issues, they should seek the help of the PB and CC. Because of the factional atmosphere prevailing for a long time in Kerala, comrades are finding it difficult to come out of their factional leanings. Some of them behave like members of some bourgeois political party. A serious political-ideological and organisational education should be conducted inside the Party. The Party leadership in Kerala has an important responsibility to unify the Party. The democratic, collective functioning of the Party state secretariat and the PC should be strengthened.

The Party expresses serious concern at the persisting disunity and factional tendencies in Kerala, which is one of the strong centres of the Party in India. The Party cannot allow such a situation to continue.

The new PB and CC should take appropriate steps to eradicate factionalism and to strengthen unity of the Party in Kerala.

Communist Norms

As per the decision of the 17th Congress, many state committees undertook the task of rectifying the mistakes and the wrong trends in maintaining Communist norms. Disciplinary actions were taken in the case of erring members. Some were expelled from the Party and many others were subjected to different types of disciplinary actions. Many state committees issued guidelines for maintaining Communist norms. One state report states: "Because of liberalisation policies, our cadres and leaders are getting influenced by consumerism, status, consciousness, longing for things and fascination for private sector, spread all around."

Kerala state committee issued a general guideline for fund collection. It contained the following important points:

- Party leaders should avoid collection of funds from tainted persons.
- Fund collection should be done collectively.
- Party should give importance to collecting funds from common people.
- Amounts more than Rs. 5,000 should be collected only with the knowledge of the district committee.
- All money collected should be entered in the books of account and donors' identity should be specified.

The Andhra Pradesh state committee issued the following guidelines for the people's representatives in panchayats, legislative assembly and parliament: "People's representative should work from office, not from homes. They should compulsorily attend Party meetings. They should create rapport with the people. They should not participate in pooja, worship etc against the Party values. They should extend their help to other areas also as per Party directive in addition to the area represented by them. They should help other areas of their district. They should deal with other bourgeois party representatives without compromising on Party identity, independence, prestige and movements. They should not attend meetings of caste organisations and felicitations. They should lead a Communist life. They should not accept gifts and complements from others. Directly or indirectly, they should not take up contracts. They should not take commissions or portions of profits. Particulars of property held should be periodically put before the Party in a transparent manner. They should take prior permission of the Party in case they want to acquire property newly. They should participate enthusiastically in raising funds for the Party.

West Bengal state report states: "In the matter of conducting rectification campaign, continuity is important. Chinks in the ideological armour against the continuous bombardment from temptations of various kinds must be looked into and sealed

effectively. The districts do not show as much interest as is expected of them in the matter of check-up every three months of Party members. This tendency must be dispensed with”.

Tripura state report states: “In the document of rectification campaign, a call was given to the Party members to carry out a ceaseless struggle against non-Communist propensities. Over the last three years, incidents of contradicting such propensities have not been on the wane and inner-Party wall of resistance too has not been strengthened upto the expectations. The business as usual mindset and apathy of a section of Party members has not disappeared.....Various types of decadence among a section of Party members like incompatibility between income and lifestyle, concealment of the income source from the Party, acceptance of costly gifts, unprincipled amassing of wealth, acceptance of dowry in marriage, apathy to prosecution of women, religious dogmatism and compromise with superstition, connivance at corruption etc are on the rise”.

The reports underline the urgent need to continue rectification campaign against violation of Communist norms. The atmosphere created by the liberalization policies and the practice of the bourgeois political parties is influencing a section of comrades. The Party members and committees should show courage and determination in fighting all wrong tendencies and practices alien to Communist Party and its norms. The fight against these tendencies is a continuous one. Periodical reviews should be organised at all levels.

Work In Tribal Areas

The Central Committee noted the necessity to plan and concentrate work in the tribal areas, especially in the states where there are substantial tribal population. In the review report of the Assembly elections of 2003 held in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, it was noted that the RSS had been able to create a base in the tribal areas of these states which enabled the BJP to score a big success. Similarly, in the review report of Lok Sabha elections, 2004, the Central Committee stressed the importance of our work in the tribal areas. Many anti-Communist forces are active among the tribal people and they are trying to divide them and to divert them from the mainstream of the Left democratic movement.

After the 17th Congress, the Party did take up work on the tribal front. After the Central Committee adopted the tribal policy document, an All India Tribal Convention was held at Ranchi in November 2002. It was attended by 321 delegates from 16 states. A 25-member tribal coordination committee was also set-up as per the decision of the convention. The tribal sub-committee of the CC met twice in this period. Reports from the states show that Andhra Pradesh has taken

up work in the tribal areas seriously and taken up a number of issues affecting the tribal people. This has helped to increase the Party's influence among the tribal people. The adivasi organisation in Kerala also launched a major struggle for land and hundreds were jailed during the agitation. Party's influence among the adivasis has grown. State tribal convention was held in Orissa.

The PB and CC had decided that in the states where there are substantial tribal population like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa, the state committee should plan out work for the tribal areas by selecting at least two centres for concentrating work. Cadres should be identified and deployed for work in these areas. The plan for the tribal work should be submitted to the PB and assistance can be given for deputing wholetimers in these areas. Such planning is still to be done in most of these states. This should be taken up as a priority after the Party Congress.

Planned Development In Neighbouring Areas

Here, apart from examining the weaknesses in our political intervention and our conducting political campaigns amongst the people by taking into account, the special situation in each state, we have to seriously examine how at the organisational level, we have to take steps to expand our influence. The strong states have to play a role to supplement the efforts of the PB and the Party Centre. West Bengal state committee is already assisting by looking after the work of states like Sikkim and Andaman & Nicobar. They are also extending assistance whenever required to the neighbouring districts/areas in Jharkhand, Orissa and Bihar. This should be given a greater thrust with coordination between the concerned state committees. The Kerala state committee can assist the Karnataka state unit in reviving and strengthening the work in the South Karnataka district adjoining Kasargode. This area had a traditional influence of the Communist movement and is now faced with strong RSS/BJP presence. The Kerala state committee can also help in forming a Party unit in Lakshadweep. Tripura state committee can help the Assam state committee with work in the Karimganj/Cachar area. In the priority states too, more assistance has to be given both at the level of the Party and the mass organisations to develop the movement all-round in selected areas.

Work In Local Bodies

Outside the three strong states, the role and work of the elected representatives of the Party in the local bodies, both the panchayats and the municipalities, have assumed importance. The elected representatives are in constant touch with the people and had to take their various problems and see that government programmes and

schemes are implemented properly for their welfare. In many state conference reports and the discussions, this issue has been addressed.

There is generally a lack of supervision, guidance and monitoring of the elected representatives by the Party committees, particularly the district committees and the state committees. Very often, in the weaker states, the elected representatives get adjusted with the system which is corrupt. The importance of showing the differences between our representatives and those of the bourgeois parties has to be understood. If the elected representatives function properly, it will be of great help to the Party for expanding its contacts and influence.

In Andhra Pradesh, for instance, there are 675 sarpanches, 294 mandal parishad territorial constituency members, 15 zilla parishad territorial constituency members, 20 mandal presidents and 38 councillors. The state committee has formulated some guidelines for their conduct. In Tamilnadu, workshops have been held at four centres for representatives of the local bodies. District level meetings were held in six districts where their performance was reviewed.

All the state committees should pay attention to this aspect of work as a large amount of funds for development are now going through the panchayats and local bodies and we should be able to properly guide the Party members and supporters who are elected to these bodies.

Fund Collection

Most of the committees are collecting Party funds regularly every year to meet the expenses of the Party, but some state committees are not regularly collecting Party fund. They meet the expenses of the Party using levy collection and income from trade unions. The Party units should collect Party fund every year for their regular functioning and paying wages to the wholtime functionaries. Fund collection should be planned as a political-organisational work and collect the funds mainly from the common people. Adequate funds are required for Party's expansion.

The experience in states where funds are collected regularly show that the common people are generously contributing to the Party fund. If the Party committee is inactive and not taking up the issues of the common people, the people may not contribute to the Party fund. The weakness in fund collection reflects the overall weakness of the Party. The issue before such committees is to win the confidence of the common people through sustained activities in taking up their issues.

Accounts Of The Party

As per the law, a political party is exempted from income tax liability if it submits its full accounts audited by a chartered accountant before

the income tax authorities every year. The Party Centre is submitting the accounts to the authorities regularly. But the Centre is finding it difficult to get the accounts in time from some states. Steps should be taken by the state committees to implement the instructions given by the PB in its circulars in this regard.

Similarly, as per the law, the Party has to file statements of election expenditure at all levels within 60 days of completion of elections to the Election Commission. This includes by-elections. Here also, non-submission of accounts in time is causing a lot of problems. The state committees should take immediate steps to evolve a mechanism to ensure such accounts are prepared and submitted in time.

Tsunami Relief

The West Bengal state committee collected about Rs. 1.5 crores in cash and about Rs. 60 lakhs worth of materials. This money and materials are being used for relief and construction of houses, schools, community halls in Tamilnadu and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. West Bengal state committee also sent a team of doctors for relief work in Tamilnadu immediately after the tsunami attack.

In Kerala, about Rs. 1.25 crores was collected from Kollam and Alappuzha districts and *Deshabhimani* daily collected Rs. 1 crore for relief work. This amount is used for the relief work for construction of houses, schools etc in Kerala.

From different states and individuals, the Party Centre received Rs. 19,70,179. Rs. 10 lakh was given to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund and the balance was paid to Tamilnadu state committee for relief and rehabilitation work.

Most of the state committees organised fund collection effectively and the response from the people was good. Many mass fronts also collected fund for relief work.

Parliamentary Work

The Party's work in Parliament had undergone a major change during the periods since the last Party Congress.

The first phase of work in the Parliament involved a continuation and intensification of efforts "to expose and mobilize against the BJP led government" and its extreme right wing policies in all the spheres, particularly economic, social and strategic spheres. The culmination of these efforts was the campaign against the "Shining India" campaign of the BJP and the government. Similarly, in exposing the communal character of the government with abetment of the State-sponsored genocide in Gujarat and the subsequent denial of justice to

the victims, the resistance to the communal drive in the sphere of education, culture and media also constituted a major aspect of the parliamentary work. In fact, the work in the Parliament complemented the Party's effort to ensure the mobilization of the secular forces against the NDA government.

The election has ensured the highest ever presence of the CPI (M) in the Lok Sabha with a tally of 44. Together with other Left allies, Party now has a solid block of 61 members. Together with 14 in Rajya Sabha, Party has 58 members in the Parliament.

After the elections, Party is playing a major role in the Parliament. On the one hand, Party has to continue the exposure of the past policies of the earlier government and, on the other, to try and influence the policies of the new government. The Party has to criticize and oppose such steps which are against the people's interests or are a departure from the CMP and which are a continuation of the same type of policies as the previous governments. This involves a complex and nuanced intervention stressing the intervention of the government for a course which ensures employment generation, greater public spending in social sectors, agriculture, rural development, rural infrastructure and re-secularisation of public life particularly spheres of education.

All these necessitated a very complex and creative application of parliamentary strategy and tactics in Parliament. And to ensure this, it was necessary that the full potential of the Party's strength was effectively translated in actual work. To evolve such a course of development, the parliamentary group worked with the help of the Party Centre and held a two day workshop in July 2004 which was attended by almost all Parliament members of the Party.

The workshop concretized a plan of action in terms of an appropriate political action and commensurate organizational road map.

A research Centre was set-up that would allow to centralize research activities to evolve studied position on major contentious issues on which Party has to engage the government.

The parliamentary committee is holding more meetings and interacting with the Party Centre on all important issues. The parliamentary group is holding regular general body meetings jointly and separately for each House. A permanent coordination of the Left parties has been set-up. And recently coordination mechanism between government and the Left parties has also been set-up to engage the government on issues concerning legislation and policy.

The most important task at this stage is to strengthen parliamentary group's links with the mass movements outside, so that the

parliamentary group can more effectively articulate the peoples' concerns. The parliamentary committee has decided to attach a member or two with each State so that issues related to people from the States can be integrated in our overall parliamentary work. This arrangement has started working though much more has to be done. Working groups have been constituted comprising of MPs in six major specialized areas since legislative work today involves a lot of technical and specialized understanding and knowledge. However, this is not yet functioning to the extent they ought to. The other aspect of the work is to form sector-wise parliamentary forums to highlight and lobby for sectoral issues.

The new situation does provide opportunities to address important concerns regarding clearance for projects and financial allocation by the government particularly in states where the Party run the State governments. Coordination with the state Party committees and the government concerned is a must for this and there has been some improvement also in this sphere.

Overall, the new situation provides new opportunities for Party's working in the Parliament to pursue the multiple objectives. The essential thrust of Party's work is to capture these multiple objectives in further strengthening the basic political objectives of the Party.

REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE PARTY CENTRE, POLIT BUREAU AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Party Centre

The tasks set forth in the 17th Congress for strengthening the Party Centre were as follows: strengthen Party Centre; constitute necessary sub-committees and departments; chalk out time-bound programmes for implementation and monitor the performance; update of document "*On Certain Ideological Issues*" adopted by the 14th Congress; write the history of the Party by constituting a competent commission; and update the resolution on "*Party and Mass Organisation*".

Six Polit Bureau members – Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Prakash Karat, Sitaram Yechury, S. Ramachandran Pillai, E. Balanandan and M.K. Pandhe – are working from the Party Centre.

Available PB members at the Centre are meeting regularly every day and intervening on all important political and organisational issues. After the formation of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government at the Centre, the work of the Party Centre has increased in scope and load. The Party has to intervene in all policy matters with our concrete alternative proposals. The Party Centre is guiding the parliamentary Party committee on all important issues. With the help of Party members who are experts in different areas, the Centre

has prepared notes explaining the Party and Left position and alternatives on many issues such as:

- Raising FDI cap on telecom;
- FDI in insurance;
- Restructuring PSUs;
- EPF interest rate;
- Inputs for note on review of Electricity Act;
- Patents Amendment Bill;
- Employment Guarantee Bill;
- FDI cap in banking;
- Proposal for Union Budget etc.

Apart from this, the Centre, in coordination with the parliamentary group, has to deal with a large number of representations from individuals, mass organisations and trade unions to take up matters with the government. The Party Centre has been interacting with other political parties and Communist parties of other countries.

Polit Bureau

The 17th Congress elected a 17-member Polit Bureau. E.K. Nayanar died during this period. Out of the 16 members, four members – Jyoti Basu, Biman Basu, Anil Biswas and Buddhadeb Bhattacharya (working as Chief Minister of West Bengal) – are concentrating in West Bengal. Other than West Bengal state responsibilities, Biman Basu is discharging some responsibilities of the Party Centre in Jharkhand, Manipur and Assam and as Convenor of Tribal sub-committee and North-East sub-committee. Two members – V.S. Achuthanandan and Pinarayi Vijayan – are concentrating in Kerala. P. Ramachandran and R. Umanath shifted to Chennai after the 17th Congress and are discharging their responsibilities allotted to them from there. Manik Sarkar is working as Chief Minister of Tripura and concentrating in that state. Koratala Satyanarayana is concentrating in Andhra Pradesh.

Responsibilities Of PB Members

Harkishan Singh Surjeet	:	General Secretary.	State responsibility of
E. Balanandan	:	Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.	
Prakash Karat	:	Vice President of CITU, convenor of TU sub-committee. State responsibility of Maharashtra.	
	:	Party Centre coordination, convenor of organisational sub-committee and agit-prop sub-committee, in-charge of progressive printers, Leftword publications, Lekhak Sangh and <i>The</i>	

Marxist. State responsibility of Uttar Pradesh.

S. Ramachandran Pillai: President of All India Kisan Sabha, Convenor of kisan-agricultural labour sub-committee, finance sub-committee, parliamentary committee. State responsibility of Assam and Karnataka.

Sitaram Yechury : Editor of *People's Democracy* and *Loklahar*, in-charge of student-youth fraction committee, science fraction and international department. State responsibility of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra.

M.K. Pandhe : President of CITU. State responsibility of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh.

P. Ramachandran : Convenor of education sub-committee and in-charge of school and college teachers fractions.

R. Umanath : In-charge of women's front and of bank and insurance

Biman Basu : Convenor of tribal sub-committee, north-east sub-committee. State responsibility of Manipur and Jharkhand

PB Sub-Committees:

The following PB sub-committees were constituted.

Organisational sub-committee : Prakash Karat (convenor), S. Ramachandran Pillai, Anil Biswas, Pinarayi Vijayan and Koratala Satyanarayana.

Finance sub-committee: S. Ramachandran Pillai (convenor), Harkishan Singh Surjeet, E. Balanandan and Prakash Karat.

The Polit Bureau met 26 times during this period which is an average of once in six weeks.

Immediately after the 17th Congress, the PB and CC had undertaken the task of writing the history of the Party. A commission consisting of Harkishan Singh Surjeet (convenor), Jyoti Basu, E.K. Nayanar, P. Ramachandran, Koratala Satyanarayana and Anil Biswas was

constituted for writing the history of the Party. A team of comrades provided by the West Bengal state committee are helping the commission in its work. The first volume is being released in the Party Congress and the work of the second volume is in progress. It will be released next year.

The Polit Bureau and the Central Committee reviewed the implementation of the resolution "*On Mass Organisations*" of 1981 and adopted a document on "*Approach to Mass Organisations*" in October, 2004.

The Polit Bureau and the Central Committee reviewed the work of the trade union front and adopted a document "*On The Review Of Work On TU Front And Immediate Tasks*" in November, 2002. The PB and CC also reviewed the work of kisan and agricultural workers fronts and adopted "*Review Of The Work On Kisan And Agricultural Workers Fronts And Future Tasks*" in June 2003 explaining the present tasks.

The women's fraction committee has prepared a draft on "*Tasks on Women's Front*" and submitted it to the PB in October 2004. This should be taken by the new Central Committee for finalisation.

The PB initiated the task of updating the document "*On Certain Ideological Issues*" adopted at the 14th Congress. A group consisting of Sitaram Yechury, Prakash Karat, P. Ramachandran and Anil Biswas was constituted to prepare a draft. The committee started work but was unable to complete the assignment due to preoccupation with other works. This important task remains to be done.

The PB and CC members attended the state secretariat and state committee meetings and tried to help the committees in tackling organisational and political issues. The PB members attended the secretariat and state committee meetings to prepare the one-year work plan, its review of implementation after one year in priority states and in other state committees. In many states, PB members attended the state committee meetings not only to report the documents "*On The Review Of Work On TU Front And Immediate Tasks*" and "*Review Of The Work On Kisan And Agricultural Workers Fronts And Future Tasks*", but also to prepare documents formulating the tasks in the states based on them. The Party Centre and PB gave more time and attention to settle certain ideological and organisational issues that came up in Kerala. More attention was given to certain organisational problems in Karnataka state. This does not mean that the PB has discharged all its tasks satisfactorily. Due to shortage of personnel available at the Party Centre and due to the increased workload of the Centre, adequate attention has not been given to many areas.

Central Secretariat

The Political-Organisational report of the 17th Congress suggested that the Secretariat members should be the whole-time functionaries of the Party Centre for making it a cohesive body. The issue of constituting Central Secretariat was discussed in the PB and CC in May 2002. The PB and CC found it difficult to constitute the Secretariat as many of the members suggested were the main functionaries of the mass organisations and would have found it difficult to function as wholetime functionaries of the Party Centre.

In such a situation, the Central Secretariat was not constituted. Instead, it was decided to associate the Central Committee members who are working from the all-India Centre of different mass organisations, with the Party Centre's work. K. Varadharajan, W.R. Varada Rajan, Jogendra Sharma, Hannan Mollah, Sukomal Sen, Kanai Banerjee and Brinda Karat are helping the Party Centre in taking up different responsibilities. Hari Singh Kang is in-charge of the Central Committee office and discharging some responsibilities related to the international department.

In the international department, one comrade has been inducted as a wholetimer and he is in-charge of preparing monthly bulletins on international developments. 33 bulletins have been issued.

In the Parliamentary office, a research unit has been set-up with one qualified comrade. He is in-charge of the research unit and he will coordinate with other experts for preparing notes and background materials for the Party Centre and also for the Parliament group.

Central Committee

The 17th Congress elected a 77-member Central Committee. Suryanarayana Rao, E.K. Nayanar, Ramsumer Yadav and M. Narasimha Reddy died during this period.

State Responsibilities

Uttar Pradesh	:	Prakash Karat and Kanai Banerjee
Bihar	:	Sitaram Yechury and Benoy Konar
Assam	:	S. Ramachandran Pillai, Biman Basu and Mohd. Salim
Maharashtra	:	Sitaram Yechury and E. Balanandan
Jharkhand	:	Biman Basu
Punjab	:	Harkishan Singh Surjeet
Jammu & Kashmir	:	Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Mohd. Salim
Karnataka	:	S. Ramachandran Pillai, M.A. Baby, K. Varadharajan

Madhya Pradesh	:	M.K. Pandhe
Chattisgarh	:	M.K. Pandhe
Orissa	:	K. Varadharajan and Surjyokanta Mishra
Gujarat	:	Sukomal Sen
Rajasthan	:	Hannan Mollah
Haryana	:	Hannan Mollah
Himachal Pradesh	:	W.R. Varada Rajan
Delhi	:	Jogendra Sharma
Uttaranchal	:	Brinda Karat
Sikkim	:	Ashok Bhattacharya (West Bengal PC)
Andaman & Nicobar	:	Gautam Deb (West Bengal PC)
Manipur	:	Biman Basu and Noorul Huda
Goa	:	M.K. Pandhe

Suneet Chopra and A. Vijayaraghavan are concentrating on agricultural workers front; Kanai Banerjee and W. R. Varada Rajan are working in the trade union front; Brinda Karat and Subhashini Ali are working in womens front; and K. Varadharajan is concentrating in kisan front. Apart from his state responsibilities and as member of Parliament, Hannan Mollah is working in agricultural workers front. Other Central Committee members are concentrating in their respective states.

The Central Committee held 14 meetings during this period.

CC Sub-Committees And Fraction Committees

The following CC sub-committees and fraction committees were constituted and responsibilities of the PB and CC members in states was fixed.

TU sub-committee	:	E. Balanandan (convenor)
Kisan-Agricultural		
Labour sub-committee	:	S. Ramachandran Pillai (convenor).
Education sub-committee	:	P. Ramachandran (convenor)
North-East sub-committee	:	Biman Basu (convenor)
Tribal sub-committee	:	Biman Basu (convenor)
Parliamentary committee	:	S. Ramachandran Pillai (in-charge)
Student-Youth fraction		
committee	:	Sitaram Yechury (in-charge)
Women's fraction committee	:	Brinda Karat (convenor)
Cultural fraction committee	:	M.A. Baby (convenor)

The organisation sub-committee of the PB met five times in this period. It prepared the priority states plan and the processing of the

one-year plans and their review. It also worked out the guidelines for the conferences and related matters for the PB.

The trade union sub-committee met eleven times during this period. It took up the tasks on TU front document for discussion and its implementation, the right to strike movement, and other issues of various sectors of the trade union movement.

The kisan-agricultural labour subcommittee met seven times. It prepared a draft for the PB of the immediate tasks document.

The student-youth fraction committee has also been meeting as and when required.

The women's fraction committee met seven times after it was constituted. It prepared a draft of the tasks document for the women's front.

All these sub-committees and fraction committees have functioned. But there is a lot of room for improvement. Written reports/notes being submitted, will help business like discussions. Convenors and in-charges of these committees need to spare more time to go through the material and reports available and to formulate the subjects for discussion.

The PB and CC have discussed work in the trade union and agrarian fronts on the occasion of the updating of their tasks documents. Review of the work of the other mass fronts must also be undertaken on a yearly basis which we have not been able to do so far.

The long pending decision to set-up an all India cultural fraction committee was implemented. The fraction committee was constituted and it has held 3 meetings in this period. Work has begun on preparing guidelines for work on the cultural front. Some regional workshops have also been organized for street theatre groups, one in Hyderabad and the other in Guwahati. Decision to celebrate 125th birth anniversary of Premchand and the birth centenary of Pablo Neruda was taken. It was also decided to publish a bulletin of the activities on the cultural front. The first issue has just come out.

Strengthen Party Centre

The strengthening of the Party Centre is a political-organisational necessity. In the present situation, the plans for the heightened political intervention and expansion of the Party can be fulfilled, only if the capacities of the Party Centre are augmented. This requires more leading personnel at the PB and CC level working from the Centre. Only then can the PB and secretariat function more

effectively. To cope with the increased work, more cadres to discharge the multifarious work will also have to be recruited.

Conclusions And Tasks

The review of the organisational situation lead to the following immediate tasks:

1. Concrete plans should be prepared for making use of the present opportunities for expansion at all levels. Priority states, districts and areas should be identified. The plan should include identification and deployment of cadres by assigning them specific tasks, improvement of the class and social composition of Party members, activation of the Party members, branches and committees at all levels. The implementation of the plans should be reviewed every year. This should be done from the Central Committee to all lower levels.
2. Agitations and struggles should be organised at the all-India level. Give adequate importance to organise local struggles by taking up partial and immediate demands of the common people. The mass fronts should be activated. The review of work based on the CC document on mass organisations should be undertaken.
3. There should be continuous efforts in raising the political, ideological and organisational consciousness of the Party members. The PB, CC and state committees should chalk out appropriate Party education programmes for this purpose. The ideological and agit-prop work of the Party should be increased in order to popularise our views on various issues and to meet the challenges of the ideology and propaganda of the enemy classes.
4. The CC should adopt a document on ideological issues which should be the basis for inner-Party discussions. Such a document should be prepared within a year from the Party Congress.
5. The Party should recruit more young cadres at all levels, deploy them in different parts by assigning specific tasks, monitor their performance and promote them on the basis of their efficiency. Adequate attention should be given to recruit cadres from basic classes, women scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities. Party committees should ensure payment of adequate wages to meet the minimum requirements of the cadres. If there is any deficiency, Party Centre should help the state committees.
6. A rectification campaign should be launched to eradicate all violations of organisational principles and to streamline the Party at all levels. Efforts should be made to eradicate factional and federal tendencies and to strengthen democratic centralism and collective functioning. Periodic review should be organised. The rectification

document has to be updated taking into consideration the present situation and the experience of its implementation.

7. All violations of Communist norms should be pinned down and fought against. The efforts should be a continuous one.

Part IV

REPORT ON MASS FRONTS

Trade Union Front

The period after the 17th Party Congress witnessed growing attacks on the working class by the NDA government which was committed to accelerate the policies of globalisation. The reckless drive towards privatization evoked growing united resistance from the working class. Despite decision of the NDA government to privatize public sector banks it could not carry it out due to the threat of indefinite strike by the all 9 unions in banking industry, including officers. A six-day call of strike by all the 5 federations in coal industry prevented the privatization bill from consideration and passing by Parliament. The heroic and united struggle of Nalco workers and one day strike all over Orissa to privatize it, forced the NDA government to abandon the move to privatize the NALCO, a premier public sector undertaking. The three day strike of oil workers against the proposed privatization of oil industry, the struggle of the airport authorities employees against privatisation of Mumbai and Delhi airports, struggle of the electricity employees against privatization and trifurcation of power sector and the Electricity Bill were other major struggles. The insurance, bank and BSNL employees and the state and central government employees participated in sectorial struggles on various issues on trade union rights and on their own economic demands.

Growing Resistance

In this period two nationwide strikes were organized by the united trade union movement. Apart from that, on 9th December 2002 public sector workers all over India downed their tools in protest against the policy of privatization and economic policies of the government. On May 23, 2003, the general strike called by the central trade unions was a success. Except INTUC, all central trade unions participated in the strike on 24th February 2004. Over 4 crores of workers went on strike in protest against the Supreme Court judgment denying the workers the right to strike and against pro-globalisation economic policies of NDA Government. In six states the struggle was converted into state level bandh.

The heroic struggle of the 13 lakh Tamilnadu state government employees and teachers on longstanding demands was brutally suppressed by Jayalalitha government. Thousands of employees were summarily dismissed and various stringent punishment was imposed on several others. After the crushing defeat in the parliament elections, Jayalalitha withdrew some of the anti-employees measures.

The workers joined in a countrywide movement in large numbers against cut in rate of interest on PF, the retrograde bill passed by Parliament on short term employment, introduction of fictitious insurance scheme for unorganized workers without bringing legal enactment and the anti-working class recommendations of the Second National Labour Commission which was boycotted by CITU and other Left TUs. The making of pension scheme for state and central government employees contributory who have joined service after 1st January 2004 was resolutely opposed by the employees through several protest actions.

Another notable feature of the struggles in this period is the struggles of the unorganized workers and workers engaged in traditional and tiny industries who faced closures and retrenchment in construction, cashew, coir workers, handloom and power loom workers. The construction workers had to face brutal police repression in several parts of the country. The struggle of the cycle manufacturing workers in Punjab as well as of brick kiln workers in Northern India deserves mention. In Kerala on January 28, 2003, at the call of the CITU, 5 lakh workers and their families laid siege to the state secretariat and the district collectorates with demands which included protection of the livelihood of workers of traditional industries. Unfair competition by Indian large scale industry and MNCs and the central government withdrawal of protective measures towards these industries, were the root causes for their plight.

Labour Policy Of UPA Government

With the advent of UPA Government at the Centre, despite the adoption of National Common Minimum Programme the labour policy continued to be the same as the NDA Government. The policy of privatization was carried forward by the UPA Government in spite of NCMP agreed to strengthen the public sector undertakings. The Employment Guarantee Bill failed to ensure any worthwhile employment for 100 days in a year and the content of minimum wages was not spelt out. The bill on unorganized workers drafted by NDA Government and opposed by all the trade unions was again circulated by the UPA Government without any modifications. The new Government is trying to implement all the anti working class commitments made by the NDA Government.

The trade union movement had to organize country wide agitation to oppose the policy measures of the UPA Government. Among the notable struggles were of the workers against reduction in the rate of interest on PF deposits, against privatization of Mumbai and Delhi airports by the airport authority employees, against enhancing FDI cap to 74% by the telecom employees, against the proposal for the insurance sector to raise the FDI by the insurance employees, against banking sector reforms by bank employees, against drug policy and Patents Amendment Bill by medical and sales representatives, agitation of electricity employees against the Electricity Bill, struggle of the J&K and Himachal Pradesh Construction workers for TU rights and minimum wages. Several state level and local struggles are also being organized against attacks on the working and living conditions of workers.

The Party has to make efforts to converge the several local and sectional struggles into a nation-wide movement to oppose the detrimental policies of the UPA government. Such a nation-wide movement should also focus on pressurising the government to fulfill some of its commitments made in the CMP such as non-privatisation of profit-making public sector units, review of the Electricity Act and expanding social security welfare measures for unorganized workers. A powerful educational campaign amongst the workers has to be initiated to prepare the working class for intensifying the level of these struggles.

Our Major Weaknesses

While the trade union front has been active in the struggle against imperialist globalisation, sufficient attention has not been paid to the task of fighting against communalism. A sizeable section of the working class still votes for the communal parties. The largest trade union centre in India according to verified membership by the government is one that owes allegiance to the RSS and plays a disruptive role in the trade union movement. In the Review of Work on the Trade Union Front adopted by the Central Committee in November 2002, it was pointed out: "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."

In order to strengthen the work amongst the working class against communalism, the suggestions made in the trade union document must be taken up which includes preparation of material for the ordinary workers explaining the reactionary and disruptive character of the communal outfits; workshops for training Party activists on the trade union front on how to take this propaganda amongst the workers and the trade unions should conduct social and cultural

activities in the working class areas covering the families of workers since communal organisations are working there.

The trade union document had pointed out that it is not enough to make general statements about forging worker-peasant alliance and adopting resolutions for solidarity with the struggles of the peasantry. The Party committees were advised to identify issues which can be taken up jointly by the workers, peasant-agricultural workers. Joint actions by the trade unions and the Kisan and agricultural workers mass organisations should be conducted. The only commendable initiative in this direction taken in the recent period was in Tamilnadu. In December 2004, 2000 CITU activists went to Thanjavur, Tiruvavur and Nagapattinam districts as part of the observance of the anniversary of the Kilven Mani massacre of dalit agricultural workers. In the four-day long campaign they stayed in the villages and took up the issues of the rural poor and campaigned for a worker-peasant alliance for struggle on these issues.

In the experience of united front struggles we have been able to ensure participation of larger and larger number of workers and salaried employees. However, certain negative features are also emerging in these struggles. Disruptive forces have been making planned attempts to keep the struggles at a lower key, to adopt dilatory tactics to postpone the programme of action on even to sabotage the struggle from within. Attempts are also made to create ideological confusion among the workers about the policies of globalisation and demoralize the workers. The T.U. front led by our Party must remain vigilant about such trends and fight against them so that the class struggles register further advance.

To develop wider struggles, the National Platform of Mass Organisations which consists of the other mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, youth, students, women, employees etc should be activated.

TU Sub-Committee

The TU sub-committee of the Party met 11 times since the 17th Party Congress, thrice each during 2002 and 2003, 4 times during 2004 and once during 2005. It considered the draft document on the review of the TU front and considered the issues from time to time referred by the industrywise fractions. The TU sub-committee further discussed the problems of united movements against the economic policies of the government and gave direction to the TU comrades. The TU sub-committee also considered preparations for the meetings of the central trade union fraction. Compared to the pre-17th Party Congress period the TU sub-committee showed some improvement in its performance. The frequency of the meetings was increased and it considered more issues than previous period. However, more attention needs to be given towards preparation of the meeting.

The frequency of TU sub-committee and its performance should be further improved so that it can discharge its responsibilities more effectively. The TU sub-committee has also to periodically monitor the implementation of the tasks laid down in the review of the TU front and brief the CC about the progress in this regard.

The major task allotted by the Party to the TU sub-committee is the question of developing political consciousness among the working class and to involve them in political struggles led by the Party. The question of building Party among the working class and enrolling more members from among in the Party also remained unattended by the TU sub-committee. Absence of this agenda in the meetings of the TU sub-committees is a matter of serious concern to the Party.

Central TU Fraction

The Central TU fraction met 5 times since the 17th Party Congress, once in 2002, thrice in 2003 and once in 2004. It discussed the issues before the united TU movement and also reviewed the action programmes. The review of the TU front was explained to the fraction members and clarifications were given. The attendance to the meetings of the Central TU fraction was satisfactory. However, the decision to hold a minimum of 2 fraction meeting in a year could not be adhered to. Since this is the only forum when Party leaders working on the entire TU fronts meet to consider the Party policy, its functioning should be given more importance by the Party. PBMs other than those working on TU front should also attend these meetings.

The experience of the last three years of central TU fraction functioning underlines the need to prepare for these meetings more systematically so that their outcome will be more effective and meaningful. We have also to consider formation of fractions in industries where we have a sizable strength so as to plan proper functioning and expansion of our activities.

Industrywise TU fractions are functioning in Central and state government employees, insurance and banking sector, pharmaceuticals, airlines, defence, anganwadi, railways and atomic energy. Decision to form fractions in construction, coal, oil, road and water transport were taken but not implemented. The fractions have to play an important role in ideological development of the Party members. At times the fraction only discussed the economic issues before a union and the task of building the Party gets neglected. This approach also marginalises the role of the elected committees of the unions. The insurance fraction is the only one which has submitted a report on Party building in their front.

Strengthen Work In Strategic Sectors

Despite repeated emphasis by the Party in its documents, our work among the strategic sectors of economy continues to be weak. Our leadership of the T.U. front as well as State Committees have not been able to give adequate stress on this aspect in our trade union activities. The sectors like Energy (coal, oil, gas and power), Transport (road, rail, water and air), we have strong presence in transport and coal but weak in other sectors. Financial (banking and insurance), sector we are weak in banking while strong in insurance. In communications we have strengthened our position in co-operation with others. The BSNLEU led by our comrades were able to win recognition in the ballot held in December 2004 in alliance with some other unions. This alliance polled 1,39,827 votes which is 53 per cent. We must work in a planned manner to consolidate our position. Defence industry also requires more attention to increase our strength in the united movement.

Slow Growth Of Membership

The membership of trade unions in which our comrades are working does not show sufficient rise with the result that our mass influence of the unions is higher than the membership record. Despite closure and loss of jobs through retrenchment, VRS etc. compared to the size of employment, in the unions led by our Party comrades the membership is very small.

The CITU is the major central trade union where our comrades are working its membership increased by 4.2 per cent during the period between the two Party Congresses. Compared to the activities conducted by the organization the growth of membership is just symbolic. Our comrades are working in several middle class salaried employees organizations. More attention has to be paid to developing the political-ideological level of the membership, so that they can be drawn into wider political activities beyond the confines of their trade union issues.

Absence of efforts to develop the membership base in a planned manner is the root cause of this weakness and Party committees at various levels should seriously ponder over this aspect seriously so that organizational strength of our trade unions is rapidly developed. To intensify the class struggles in the forthcoming period against the policies of globalisation the organizational strength assumed vital importance. Even to develop effective united TU struggles against the harmful policies of the Central government, this weakness should be overcome without delay.

Directives Of The 17th Party Congress

The 17th Party Congress correctly noted that a considerable section of members of the trade unions do not participate in day to day activities. To overcome this weakness the centenary observation of BT Ranadive's birth was utilized to organize countrywide campaign among the cadres.

As per decision of the 17th Party Congress the central committee adopted a review of the work on the Trade Union Front. Though it was explained in most of the state committees there was no systematic follow up of the conclusions drawn in the document. Despite directive by the PB state committees have not prepared a review of the TU activities in the state and laid down task to overcome the weaknesses in the respective states.

Though some improvement has taken in some states by and large most of the tasks laid down in the document have not been implemented. In some states the TU document was not explained below the level of the state committee with the result that it has not gone into the consciousness of the rank and file Party activists in the trade union front. The PB & CC should check up on how the tasks document is being implemented during the periodical review of the trade union front.

Implementation Of The Tasks On The TU Front

As the trade union document of 2002 points out the tasks of building the Party on the trade union front continues to be neglected. Compared to the size of the membership in the TU front, the membership of the Party is highly inadequate. Comrades working on the TU front do not consciously make efforts to develop political consciousness among the members of the union with a view to draw them to political activities of the Party and enroll them as members of the auxiliary group of the Party. The deep rooted economism among the members of the Party is also preventing the development of political consciousness among the advanced working class TU cadres.

Party units and members in the insurance and medical representatives unions led by our comrades have been in the forefront in helping the Party in various ways in the weaker states. But there is a lot of scope for recruitment and expansion of Party membership in both these sectors. This must be taken up seriously.

The Party has been consistently emphasizing the independent role of the trade unions. The review of the TU work and document on mass organizations has also stressed this aspect in a clear-cut manner. There has been some improvement in the matter, yet by and large there is a tendency in several Party units to treat TUs as adjuncts of the Party. Party leaders assuming key roles in public functions of trade unions continues even today. Though Party has to guide the members working on the TU front attempts are made to make the trade unions as an adjunct of the Party.

This attitude prevents non-Party masses joining the trade unions in large numbers. It also adversely affects democratic functioning of trade unions, since most of the decisions are taken at the Party level. The trade union committees do not have any initiative in deciding the union policies. It has also brought in the forefront the role of TU bureaucrats who do not keep close touch with the rank and file workers.

Despite some efforts and progress democratic functioning of the trade unions is still not fully implemented. The responsibility for this lies with the leading Party cadres working in the trade unions. Unions which are functioning democratically have registered sizable growth in membership and improvement in ordinary workers participating in union activities with more enthusiasm.

The trade union document had stressed the importance of the trade union leaders and cadres adhering to communist norms in their functioning. Serious efforts should be made to eliminate corrupt practices and misuse of trade union funds. In one instance, the Polit Bureau had to intervene to see that a trade union leader in Coimbatore, Tamilnadu was removed from the Party for corruption. Bureaucratic style of functioning alienates workers and hinders the expansion of the influence of the trade unions. This must also be checked and corrected.

The Party Committees and sub-committees at all levels must take up the question of social oppression which affects a major part of the working class as they belong to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Systematic efforts should be made so that workers shed caste prejudices which become a barrier to forging class unity.

The trade union document has underlined the importance of trade unions and increasing their participation. There has been some improvement in women's membership in trade unions from 12% in 1991 to 17% in 1998 to 19.6% in 2002. However, much more needs to be done, to increase women's membership in the trade unions and to see that they are represented in the committees.

The Party has to pay more attention to overcome the shortcomings on the TU front since development on this front will have great impact on the developments on of the Party itself.

Kisan Front

The period after the 17th Congress witnessed growing resistance of the peasantry against the anti-peasant globalisation policies. During this period, many planned and spontaneous agitations and struggles took place in different parts of the country. Kisan front was active in many states during this period.

The Central Committee of the Party reviewed the work on Kisan and Agricultural Workers fronts and the implementation of the CC document, *“Review Of Work On Kisan Front And Future Tasks”* and adopted a document *“Review Of The Work On Kisan And Agricultural Workers Union Fronts And Future Tasks”* in June, 2003. In some states, the review of the kisan front work on the basis of this document has not been completed.

All India Kisan Sabha and All India Agricultural Workers Union jointly held a seminar in Thiruvananthapuram in December 2003. After the seminar, Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers Union adopted an *“Alternative Agricultural Policy”* document updating the *“Alternative Agricultural Policy”* document of 1993. This has helped in exposing the policies of the Central government and concretizing our demands on specific issues. Involving the important cadres of kisan front, agricultural workers front and women’s front, a four-day workshop was organised on March 23 to 27, 2005 in Bangalore to discuss certain immediate practical issues.

Land Struggles

Land struggles were organised in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Orissa, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and other states. In Bihar, the struggle to keep the possession already occupied land is continuing. The overall experience is that land struggle was confined only in certain pockets. The struggle conducted was mainly for occupation of government land, village common land and forest land without green cover. Ceiling surplus land was occupied only in one or two places.

Resistance movements were organised in Assam, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and other states against the moves of the state governments evicting the tribals from the forest land as per a Central government circular. The two Left Front governments in West Bengal and Tripura did not implement the Central government circular.

Even though it was stressed in many documents of the Party and kisan front to take up land issue in places where semi-feudal relations are relatively dominant, enough attention has not been given to this. This

weakness is restricting kisan front's expansion among the poorer section of the peasantry. Kisan and agricultural workers fronts and the Party should take up this issue and launch struggles. All attempts for reversing the land reform laws are also to be resisted. Powerful movements have to be organised.

Struggle Against Liberalisation, Privatisation And Globalisation Policies

During this period, kisan front took up issues such as the price fall of crops, uninterrupted supply of electricity, water, expansion of institutional credit facilities, minimum support price for crops and opening of procurement centres, subsidies etc. The movements in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab were significant. The governments were forced to give some concessions to the peasantry on certain issues. Certain crop-wise conventions were called on a regional basis involving neighbouring states. Many united actions were also organised.

In Rajasthan, the peasantry and the common people conducted a powerful struggle for the supply of water in districts of Sri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh and Bikaner. The state government unleashed a reign of terror against the struggling peasants and common people. Five peasants were shot dead and one more peasant died due to water cannon used by the police. Hundreds of people injured in the brutal police lathicharge. Curfew was imposed and military was deployed. The peasants and the common people stood firm. The government conceded all the demands of the people. The struggle in Rajasthan is an illustrious incidence of how a local issue, if taken at an appropriate time and the struggle is organised in appropriate form, it can rally wider sections of the people and force the government to accede the demands. The struggle has increased the prestige of the Party and kisan and agricultural workers fronts.

Commensurate with the growing crisis in agriculture, agitations and struggles are not taking place. This reflects the weakness of the Party, kisan and agricultural workers fronts in organising agitations and struggles. This weakness has to be concretely examined and appropriate remedial measures should be taken.

In the context of the growing crisis in agriculture and growing unrest among the peasantry, there are possibilities for building wider resistance. The Party and the kisan front should be vigilant enough to take up such issues and whenever spontaneous struggles come up, Party and the kisan front should intervene in such struggles by giving them appropriate guidance and direction.

Social Issues

The decision to take up social issues was taken up only in certain states. State and district conventions were organised in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. Campaigns and direct actions were organised in Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. Wherever these issues have been taken up, kisan front has been able to expand its influence among the oppressed sections. Some committees showed hesitation to take up such issues. They even claim that there are no caste oppression in their state or region. In some places, certain comrades are showing resistance in taking up social issues on the pretext that will alienate a section of people. All such issues should be concretely examined and rectified. Party and all mass fronts together should take up all issues related to caste discrimination, caste oppression and exploitation.

Developmental Issues

Issues such as public education, public health, culture, sports etc have been taken up in many places. Certain state committees are ignoring such issues.

West Bengal Experience

In West Bengal, agricultural workers are also enrolled in the kisan front. The powerful West Bengal kisan movement has been organising activities covering the entire life of the peasantry such as taking up all land-related issues, encouraging and helping the peasantry to increase productivity and production, developmental issues, organising cultural and sports activities, literary movement, health movement, strengthening the functioning of the panchayats, organising and re-activising cooperatives, ensuring fair wages for agricultural workers etc.

Struggles On Local Issues

The Party and kisan front have been consistently emphasizing the importance of taking up local issues and partial demands. The recent experiences in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamilnadu show that if we take up partial demands and local issues, wider sections can be mobilized. If these issues are taken up with sufficient strength and in appropriate form, certain concessions can also be gained. The experience also shows that struggles and agitations have helped in rallying the poorer sections who constitute the overwhelming majority among the peasantry and isolating the enemies. More attention should be given to take up local and partial issues in a sustained manner.

In some places, no attempt has been made to enroll the new sections that have rallied in agitations and struggles and also to raise their

political consciousness. Organisational consolidation work and ideological work should immediately follow all agitations and struggles.

Expansion Of The Movement

The membership of the kisan front increased from 1,46,86,579 in 2000-2001 to 1,71,78,772 in 2003-2004. There is an increase of about 25 lakhs of members during this period and the percentage of increase is 17. Out of this, 21.5 lakh increase is from West Bengal, Increase from West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala together is 23.2 lakh. The membership declined in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Manipur. The Rajasthan membership went up to 1,08,940 in 2001-2002 but declined to 44,740 in 2003-2004. The membership increase in Rajasthan was because of the struggles and agitations during that period and the decline was due to lack of organisational work at the state and district level.

Andhra Pradesh membership is fluctuating due to lack of attention given to membership enrollment. Recently, some efforts have been made. The present West Bengal membership is 77.29 per cent of the total membership. If West Bengal and Kerala put together, the percentage is 88.16. There is no substantial change in the unevenness in growth. Some efforts are there in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa for expanding the movement. The overall experience shows that if serious efforts are made, there are possibilities for expanding the movement.

The decision to hold conferences upto the block or taluk level after every membership campaign is being done in many states. This is helping in activising members and lower level committees. There is some improvement in activising the members during this period. But much more has to be done. After every membership campaign, conferences upto block or taluk level should be held. The district committees should be strengthened to activise the local level committees.

Democratic Functioning Of The Organisation

All India conference and state conferences are held regularly. The 30th All India Conference of the All India Kisan Sabha was held in Jallandhar in March 2003. There are certain weaknesses in holding conferences and meetings of the district committees and lower level committees regularly in certain weaker states. There is no distinction between the Party and the mass organisation at different levels, particularly at the lower levels in many places. In many places, postering, wall-writing, issuance of pamphlets are seldom done in the name of kisan front. Even in mass meetings, certain speakers often forget that they are speaking in a kisan front meeting. There are

instances that Party decisions are mechanically imposed on mass organisation giving an impression that the mass front has no independent stature or existence. Due to these shortcomings and weaknesses, common people in many places do not find any difference between Party and kisan front. The projection of the democratic and independent nature of the kisan sabha is necessary to reach wider sections.

Wholetimers

In many states, even the main functionaries of the kisan front are not giving enough time in kisan front activities. There is shortage of wholetimers mainly doing kisan front work in many states. West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra have cadres at the state centre doing mainly kisan front work. In other states, the decision to allot two to five cadres mainly working for kisan front is yet to be implemented. Two to five cadres should be allotted in all state centres mainly doing kisan front work. In districts where there is a kisan movement, one to three comrades should be allotted taking into consideration the comparative strength of the organisation. The decision that all members not only in Party branches, but also in higher committees of the Party in rural areas, except those who have been assigned work in other mass fronts, should join and actively work in kisan or agricultural workers fronts has not been implemented in many places. This is restricting our efforts in expanding the kisan and agricultural workers fronts.

Agricultural Workers Front

All India Conference

The agricultural workers front held its 5th all-India conference at Thrissur in Kerala in April 2003, seven years after the 4th all-India conference in 1996. The 5th all-India conference decided to take up the issues such as employment, poverty and minimum wages, distress migration, food security, functioning of the public distribution system, land, forest, house sites, water, passing a comprehensive central legislation for agricultural labour, fight against casteist and communal forces, atrocities on scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and to ensure more participation in agricultural labour struggles by women.

Agitations And Struggles

These issues were taken up in different forms in different states during this period. In order to ensure higher wages, mass campaigns and struggles were organised in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Tripura, Haryana, Punjab, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Struggles against the use of combined harvestors and use of machine for food for work programme were organised in Maharashtra, Haryana,

Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. In Andhra Pradesh, Agricultural Workers front and Kisan front organised drought relief work in 2003. The issue of equal wages for equal work for men and women has been taken up in a number of states. Much more work has to be done on this. Kerala unit organised the issues of pension and welfare fund. The issue of BPL ration cards and the planning commission's new norms for identifying people below poverty line, PDS supplies and kerosene have been undertaken in many states. Punjab agricultural workers front took up the issue of agricultural workers getting high electricity bills while landlords were getting free electricity. Tripura unit organised agitations for proper implementation of the state legislation. Tamilnadu organised agitations and struggles for implementation of the welfare board provisions. Against eviction and distribution of forest land, struggles of the tribals were organised in Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Bihar. Agricultural workers also participated in large numbers in the Rajasthan struggle for water supply.

Activities On Social Issues

Many state units organised struggles for burial grounds for agricultural labourers, against the two-glass system, against caste atrocities, against caste panchayat abetted murders of those who enter inter-caste marriages and against rape. Such struggles took place in Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. The Agricultural Workers front is more active in taking up the social issues and local issues after the last Party Congress.

Expansion Of The Movement

The membership of the All India Agricultural Workers front has grown from 25,77,108 at the time of our 17th Congress to 29,37,261 in 2003-04, representing a growth of 14 per cent. The membership increase is concentrated largely in the southern states. Membership in Kerala increased from 15,49,233 in 2000-2001 to 16,62,438 in 2003-04, a growth of 7.3 per cent. In Tamilnadu, it increased from 2,09,225 to 2,26,330 in the same period, an increase of 8.17 per cent. In Karnataka, the increase is 163.21 per cent, from 8,730 to 22,979. In Andhra Pradesh, the increase in membership was 26.47 per cent from 4,40,000 to 5,56,470. The membership of Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh that was 85.64 per cent of the total membership in 2000-01 is now 84 per cent. Membership in Tripura increased 43.42 per cent from 1,10,000 to 1,57,770. In Orissa, membership increased from 4,620 to 6,500. In other words, the uneven growth of 2000-01 has become sharper over the years.

This is especially true of the states of northern India. The membership of Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, UP, Bihar and M.P, was 7.97 per cent of the total in 2001-02. Now it is only 8.47 per cent. Many states of the North have failed to take up seriously the issues affecting agricultural workers and to develop their organizational strength. While Haryana saw a 47.82 per cent growth, UP has registered a downward trend as have Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Punjab has shown an increase in Membership in 2003-04 over the year before, but in the period between the Hyderabad Congress and now, its membership has declined by 2,259. The Bihar membership is fluctuating during this period and the membership declined in 2003-04 from 2001-02 and 2002-03 figures. And this is happening in the face of growing participation of agricultural workers in struggles. This reflects the failure to organize even those drawn into militant struggles launched. State units should remedy their organisational weaknesses. In West Bengal, agricultural workers are enrolled in kisan front. West Bengal kisan front is taking up all issues that are related to agricultural workers.

The '*Review of the Work on Kisan and Agricultural Workers Fronts and Future Tasks*' adopted by the Central Committee meeting held at Kolkata on June 7-9, 2003, has noted "the weakness of the agricultural workers movement and the Kisan Sabha, in spite of the favorable conditions, constituted one of the important weakness of the democratic movement in the country... it called upon the Party to realize this and chalk out concrete plans for deploying Party cadres for the expansion of the agricultural workers and the Kisan movement."

Despite the 2003 document saying that an agricultural workers organization be started in all states except Bengal, the message has not filtered down in many parts. In this period, the state of Gujarat, which had a membership of 2200 in 2001-02 has not sent in any membership from 2002-03 onwards. The state of Madhya Pradesh continues to enroll only 3000 every year. No other new state has started enrolling members since the last Party Congress, despite all efforts of the Agricultural Workers front. Clearly, a number Party state committees have not taken up the issue of organising agricultural workers front seriously. This is restricting the efforts for expansion. The weakness in organising agricultural workers should be remedied on a time-bound basis. State committees should make concrete plans for taking up the various issues affecting agricultural workers and expanding the movement among them.

Agricultural labourers are adversely affected by the new economic policies. The number of days of farm-work available for agricultural workers has declined on account of mechanization and the shift from food crops to cash crops. Moreover, nearly four crore peasants have swelled the figures of the rural landless in the last decade or so, and

this has had an adverse affect on wages and livelihood, forcing distress migration on ever larger numbers of agricultural labourers all over the country. A failure to organize this section on its pressing demands for employment, land, wages, food and social justice will help casteist organizations to expand their influence.

The agricultural workers front should organise wage struggles where the front has some presence. The unemployment issue should be taken with other mass fronts and organise agitations and struggles. Enough attention should be given to take up partial demands and local issues. Many state units and lower level units are neglecting this aspect.

Special efforts should be made to expand the influence of the agricultural workers from among scheduled caste and scheduled tribe sections.

Lack of adequate number of cadre is another reason for not being able to build a powerful agricultural workers movement. The situation is continuing and worsening in some places. Many cadres working in the agricultural workers front are deployed in other work and this practice is weakening the agricultural workers front in many places. Party should ensure adequate number of cadres in the agricultural workers front. Special attention should be given to recruit cadres from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, women and minorities.

Organisation

1. ALL INDIA CENTRE

All India Centre is functioning with three comrades. The Centre tries as far as possible to give an all India direction to the struggles on issues outlined above and attended many organizational and agitational activity in different states. The work of the all India Centre has to be reorganized and strengthened.

2. STATE COMMITTEES:

State committees are formed in 11 states. Rajasthan has a state organizing committee. In Madhya Pradesh they have some membership. In Gujarat, after initial activity, the state unit is not working at present. The functioning of other state committees continues to be weak. States like Kerala, Tripura, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh have functioning state committees. In the Hindi region the functioning has improved in Punjab, while both Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are facing problems related to cadre deployment. Efforts are being made to ensure that those mobilized in struggle are organized in the movement as well. In Maharashtra, Orissa and Haryana more democratic functioning has led to a higher level of

activity. In Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan major efforts have to be made to expand the organization. In Karnataka, agricultural workers front, though limited in its operation, is becoming active again. The major tasks confronting the state organizations are to ensure the proper functioning of the state centres, democratic decision making and conducting statewide agitations. However to expand, consolidate the membership and movement, the agricultural workers front has to rectify the prevailing weakness in the functioning of district or village level committees and to ensure that sufficient number of wholetimers are recruited at the state and lower levels of the organizations. Their recruitment, training, deployment and regular payment of wages should be attended.

3. DISTRICT AND VILLAGE LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS

Village and district level organizations can play a leading role in the expansions and consolidation of the movement to new areas and sections. Last all India conference had given a call to expand agricultural workers front activities to 200 districts. Even though it was not able to fulfill this quota, the activities have expanded to more than 160 districts. The main weakness of district committees is the lack of proper cadres to deploy for day- to-day contact with the village organization. Committee meetings are not regular. This can be overcome by recruiting new cadres. Proper training and political education is needed for the district level activists from whom whole time workers of the union can be recruited. The collective functioning of the district committees should be strengthened.

The village level organization helps to maintain regular contact with agricultural workers on the ground. The call given by the last conference to conduct annual village level conferences after the membership campaign was not implemented in most of the states. This was one of the weaknesses, which prevented conducting independent campaigns under the banner of the All India Agricultural Workers Union on a wide scale. Enrollment of membership, maintaining records, keeping and regular contact with ordinary workers, and taking up their day-to-day problems are the main tasks of the village organizations. The Central Working Committee meetings are regularly reviewing this aspect and instructing the state units to ensure independent functioning at the village level. In weaker states, village units are yet to be formed in many places. Such states should take urgent steps to form village units.

Unity Of Peasants And Agricultural Workers

In the context of growth of capitalism in agriculture, the contradictions and conflicts between agricultural workers and other sections of the peasantry are intensifying and creating practical problems in building unity of peasants and agricultural workers.

Kisan and agricultural workers fronts should organise united actions on many agrarian issues – against globalisation policies, strengthening of public distribution system, expansion of public education, public health, campaign against communalism, social oppression etc. Frequent meetings of the kisan and agricultural labour sub-committee should be convened to plan united actions and to build peasant and agricultural labourers unity. In many states, kisan and agricultural labour sub-committees are not functioning.

Worker-Peasant Alliance

Some attempts has been made during this period to organise united actions of workers and peasants. Kisan, agricultural workers and trade union fronts joined together in the campaign against patent ordinance promulgated by the UPA government. Joint conventions of workers, peasants and agricultural workers were organised on the issue of crisis in tea, price fall of cardamom, pepper, coffee etc. in states.

In the Rajasthan struggle for water, peasants, agricultural workers, workers, traders, middle class employees, all joined together. The decision to build united activities by bringing trade union, kisan, agricultural workers, student, youth, women fronts together on issues such as fight against imperialist pressures, expansion of public education, public health, campaigns for social reforms, literacy work, science awareness etc has to be taken up at all levels. On many other issues, united action is possible. Serious efforts should be made to build broader unity among all mass fronts.

Future Tasks

1) The Party should make concrete plans such as identification of priority districts and areas, priority issues, deployment of cadres, monitoring their work etc for expansion of the kisan and agricultural workers fronts in weaker areas. The growth and expansion of the Party to a great extent depends on its success. Periodical review of this work should be made by the Central Committee.

2) Ensure correct class orientation in building peasant unity -- There is weakness in taking up the issues affecting the poorer sections in some places. Party committees should review the work of kisan and agricultural workers fronts in order to ensure correct class orientation in building peasant unity centered around agricultural labourers, poor peasants, rallying middle peasants as reliable allies and win over rich peasants. Emphasis should be given for the demands of the poorer sections. Enough importance should be given to take up the issues of agricultural workers and to organise them. This has to be concretely examined and specific tasks should be formulated.

3) Take up local issues and partial demands -- Emphasis should be given to take up local issues and partial demands. On certain issues, all-India agitations can be organised either independently or unitedly. Efforts should be made in states for organising united actions with other organisations. Wherever there is spontaneous protests or struggles, kisan and agricultural workers fronts should intervene and guide them.

4) Take up social issues – Social issues such as social discrimination, caste oppression, atrocities against scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes should be given. Special efforts should be taken to formulate women’s demands. Cultural activities and sports should be taken up in appropriate manner.

5) Strengthen kisan and agricultural workers fronts at all levels – The All India Centres should be strengthened to take up the new responsibilities. The office work should be reorganized by inducting competent cadres.

Two to five cadres each should be allotted at all state Centres mainly doing kisan and agricultural workers fronts work. One to three cadres should be allotted in districts taking into consideration of the relative strength of the organisation. More wholtime cadres should be identified and deputed for kisan and agricultural workers front’s work.

6) Regional groupings, cadres, fund collection – Some regional groupings of district centered around some strong organisational centres can be admitted in bigger states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh for effective deployment of cadres and pooling of resources. Priority districts and areas should be selected for concentrating the efforts for expansion. Fund collection - both in kind and money - should be organised and steps should be taken to ensure payment of adequate wages to the wholtime workers.

7) Party building and ideological struggle – It is the main responsibility of the Party units in rural areas to organise kisan and agricultural workers fronts. The militants who are rallied in agitations and struggles should be enrolled in auxiliary groups and continuous efforts should be made to raise their political and organisational capacity. Sustained efforts should be made for expansion of the Party.

8) All Party state committees should review the work of kisan and agricultural workers fronts, on the basis of the CC document of June 2003 and concretize the tasks within six months. The functioning of the kisan and agricultural labour sub-committee should be activated at all levels.

Women's Front

This report deals with four aspects of political and Party work among women: firstly, the main issues facing the mass of women and our approach and intervention on these issues at the level of the mass organisation as well as the Party; secondly, the organizational aspects of the work; thirdly, recruitment of women in the Party and related issues; and fourthly, relations between the Party and mass organisation.

1. Issues And Role of Mass Organisation & Party

In this period, the role of the mass organisation among the mass of women has increased substantially, also reflected, though less than the potential, in an increase in the membership of the organisation.

Recently the national conference of the mass organisation reviewed the advance of the organisation and the expanded reach and intervention of the organisation on a number of important issues. The effective work of women activists in the organisation has enabled the mass organisation to emerge as one among the premier women's organisations in the country. It is perhaps the only women's mass organisation which has done so without any external or official funding. It should also be noted that in numerous cases women activists work in the face of problems ranging from financial distress to opposition to political work from within families. The women activists in Tripura have displayed tremendous courage and commitment by their powerful role in the struggle against extremist activities. Many became martyrs in the last three years. In West Bengal and Kerala also women activists have been fearless in their participation in struggles that have often seen violent attacks by opposing reactionary forces.

In all the electoral battles, women cadre have been very active. The Lok Sabha C.C. election review noted the large and active participation of women activists in the campaign especially in the door-to-door campaigns. In a large number of Party's public meetings women have been equal to and also outnumbered men. The points for the election campaign were first discussed by the all India fraction committee and notes were prepared from the centre which were helpful to the states campaigns. In many states women's groups organised by the mass organisation had an independent campaign for left candidates. However a big problem is how to translate the sympathy for our understanding among the mass membership to actual votes. In many of the weaker states the mass membership does not vote for us but for other bourgeois parties though only very rarely for a communal Party. It is important to work out ways to bridge this gap while keeping intact the independent functioning and nature of the mass organisation.

The national conference highlighted the main tasks in the context of the changed political situation in the wake of the general elections and the defeat of the NDA combine. The need for initiatives and a wider mobilization of women to utilize the favourable opportunities was the focal point.

The fight against the communal forces particularly in the wake of the State sponsored genocide in Gujarat and targeting of Muslim women as also the economic and social impact of neo-liberal policies on women on the other have been the main areas of work in the years since the last Party Congress.

The Gujarat genocide and related demands and issues, dominated the anti-communal campaigns in the State and at the national level, organized by the women's organisation. In spite of the limited reach of the organisation in Gujarat, the intervention was notable through an effective political campaign against the sangh parivar combined with direct intervention through relief to the victims. The organisation played an important role in the united actions and campaigns at the national level with other women's organizations and also fraternal organizations on the Gujarat issue. Numerous programmes were organized to build women's unity against communalism. Some of the largest women's mobilizations against communalism were organized by the mass organisation. At the same time to help our own activists understand the issues involved, a booklet was published on the basis of which a fairly widespread campaign in the organisation in all States through general body meetings was held. Importantly, the house to house campaigns in many areas and States on the issue of communalism and its dangers has been useful including against the communal use of religious festivals.

The dangers of communalism and communal polarization go beyond the electoral fortunes of the BJP and should not be underestimated. The increased commercialization as well as glorification of religious rituals is a disturbing trend that has also seen an increased participation of men and women in different States. Obscurantist beliefs have also deepened and increased. Some efforts though inadequate have been made to counter these trends. Much more attention needs to be paid in this area. In this respect more joint efforts along with fraternal organizations are necessary. The Party should note the increase in superstition and irrational beliefs even amongst our ranks and as part of the rectification campaign struggle against these trends.

An increasing number of Muslim women have joined the organisation in this period. The experience points to the importance of efforts to take up specific issues facing Muslim women including rank discrimination against them in Government polices and benefits while

at the same time building unity among women. Championing the cause against communally biased policies against the minority community is essential also to fight fundamentalist forces within the community. The organisation has also been in the forefront of raising the voice of Muslim women against the refusal of fundamentalist forces to reform Muslim Personal Law. Wherever the Party is working amongst the Muslim community, initiative should be taken to work for reforms within the community and to support the efforts of those working for reforms within the community.

The organisation has had independent as well as joint struggles against liberalisation. It has tried to identify and specifically take up demands that could also bring some immediate relief to women. In this period, the increased reach of the work was among the poorer sections of rural women on the issues of food security, ration cards, the exclusion in the name of BPL cards. It is estimated that as a part of these struggles around five lakh women were involved in the struggles and campaigns at different levels, around 50,000 women deprived of cards got the cards as a result of our struggles, many militant actions also took place organised by our women.

The organisation also took up different aspects of violence against women. These included a renewal of the struggle against the practice of dowry and related violence as also the struggle against so-called "honour killings." This type of violence relates to the opposition to self-choice inter caste marriages when the girl is from the upper castes and the boy from the lower caste and is prevalent in some states including Haryana, Punjab and some areas of UP. The violence includes lynchings or planned killings of the young couple and in particular of the young woman who is said to have bismirched the "honour" of the family.

The demeaning portrayal of women in the media is a matter of grave concern and the commodification of women is at least one factor in the increasing violence against women. Intervention on these issues have increased but joint movements are required.

It is welcome that in some States as for example Haryana as well as Bihar and Tamilnadu, the Party has been directly involved in mobilizing the people against violence against women in several cases. At present the organisation is through the direct intervention of its units and its State level and district centers, running hundreds of legal aid cells. A very conservative estimate is that the organisation is dealing with over one lakh cases in a single year concerning different aspects of violence and injustice to women.

The Party will also take into account the experience of the women's front in working in the self-help groups so that a correct approach to the SHGs is formulated.

The mass organisation has taken up many issues of dalit women in certain States like Tamilnadu, UP, Uttarakhand, and Bihar. These efforts have to be expanded. A continuing weakness of the organisation is to take up issues of migrant women workers as well as tribal women. More attention should be paid to taking up the issues of these sections of women.

Liquor has become an easy avenue for revenue earning going upto to over 7000 crore rupees in some States. The mass organisation in its recent conference has taken a position against indiscriminate licencing and increase in the numbers of liquor vends, although it has not supported the demand for prohibition. Most women's organizations do support the demand for prohibition. The Party has to develop a comprehensive policy on liquor.

While the women's front has made commendable efforts on issues like dowry, sex determination tests and violence against women, the Party has to directly also take up such issues. Dowry has become a widespread phenomenon which has led to inhuman violence against women. The Party has failed to take up this issue directly. It is also necessary for the Party and all other mass organisations to campaign against the evil of dowry which is putting many families into debt and forcing peasants to mortgage or sell their land. The Party should also take up the decline in juvenile sex ratio. Such issues should not be allowed to be dealt with by the women's organisations alone.

Organisational Aspects

Since the last Party Congress the membership of the mass organisation has increased by 28.3 per cent. The membership increased from 63,32,547 to 81,24,685. It is true that the uneven development among the States persists. However in the numbers of women brought into the mass organisation in the Hindi speaking States or in other States, is not inconsiderable. There has been an increase in the membership though as stated earlier the membership does not reflect the work being done on various issues in these states. A much bigger membership is possible. Unfortunately in many States the membership depends on individuals and if they are unavailable for any reason, then the membership of this or that area suffers. The continuing and major weakness in the functioning of the mass organisation is the inability to have a regular and sustained contact with the mass of membership. This has to be consciously fought and overcome and is the responsibility of the leadership of the mass organisation at all levels.

The leading committee adopted a set of organizational guidelines on five different issues of organizational functioning including the concept of mass membership, building and functioning unit

committees, accountability of leadership, importance of independent functioning etc. Classes have been held at different levels. They have been helpful in building a common understanding of how to take the organisation forward. Classes have also been held on various issues concerning women's emancipation.

The three term limit for main office bearers has had a very positive impact on the organisation and has been implemented at all levels with only a few exceptions. The promotion of younger cadre has been enabled by this constitutional provision. At the same time, conscious efforts have been made to include different social sections in the committees. At the national level at the last conference additional seats in the committee were provided to include minority, dalit, tribal, and poorer sections of women.

The paucity of wholetimers still remains a problem. There is not much improvement since the last Party congress with wholetimers in the mass organisation financially aided by both the mass organisation and the Party stagnating at around 500. More women are willing to become wholetimers however there are financial constraints. The Party must make special allocations for women wholetimers wherever such a need arises. More efforts have to be made in West Bengal and Tripura to increase the number of wholetimers.

The organisation has had a functioning centre which has been able to respond to the challenges. The interventions of the centre on multiple issues concerning policies, legal reform etc. have given a direction to the movement and to united struggles with different women's organizations. With the induction of new cadre in the mass organisation leadership, this will be further strengthened.

There has been an improvement in ideological work with more publications from the mass organisation centre as well as some of the states. At present the organisation is bringing out monthly/quarterly magazines which are more or less regular publications. At the same time there have been important pamphlets and books let's brought out by the Centre and the states which have helped educate our activists and have also given direction to the movement. The research centre has also done two important studies on agricultural women workers as well as on minority women. Both studies are to be published. There is scope for many more studies.

Party Fraction Functioning, Recruitment Into The Party etc.

The central fraction under the guidance of the PB has helped the front and the result is a unified leadership with a common understanding which has been of great help in expanding the organisation and in building the prestige of the organisation. The FC has discussed policy issues and also reviewed from time to time the state of recruitment of

women in the Party, relations between the Party and mass organisation etc.

A crucial aspect of the Party fractions tasks among the membership of the mass organisation certainly concerns the need for sustained efforts to raise the political consciousness of the mass of women starting with the membership of the mass organisation. Where the Party is strong and where political consciousness has been part of a historical process of developments in the state, the political level of the women in the mass organisation is certainly better. However in most states there is a big lag between the members of the mass organisation and left and democratic politics. One indicator is voting patterns. For example where the mass organisation is supporting a particular candidate in an election, in an area where we have several thousand members it is found that the candidate gets far less votes than the number of members of the mass organisation. The FC has discussed the issue several times. One continuing weakness is the lack of regular contact with the mass membership that has a direct impact on the ability to influence political thinking.

The women's recruitment in the Party has registered some improvement by two to three per cent in many states. Tripura has the best record in numbers of women Party members who now constitute 20 per cent of the membership up by 3 per cent. Tamilnadu has 11.02 per cent. West Bengal state leadership has made special efforts to recruit women Party members. It was directed that Party branches must recruit atleast one women as a member. However, the women membership is just below ten percent highlighting the need to overcome traditional attitudes. The entire Party will have to push for recruitment of a much larger number of women into the Party. In this the help of women's fraction committees and women leaders at different levels of the mass organisation should be used.

The Party has not paid adequate attention to promotion of women cadres. In some states, women who are of the requisite level do not find place in the Party committees. There are hardly any women in the state secretariats. Tamilnadu is the one state where conscious efforts have been made to promote women cadres. There are 104 women members in the district committees and 25 women members in the district secretariats.

The women's fraction committee had prepared a document on the tasks in the women's front. This document was submitted to the PB in October 2004. But because the schedule of conferences began soon after, the PB and the CC were not able to discuss and finalise the document. This should be taken up after the Party Congress.

Relations Between Party And Mass Organisation

The CC resolution of October 2004 had stressed certain important aspects of the independent functioning of the mass organisation and the observance of certain norms in the functioning of the mass organisation. There has been some improvement in this respect at the level of most State Committees of the Party. However from the unit to the district levels, more direct and inappropriate intervention of the Party is seen on the question of panels in many cases. Since in many states the Party is paying the allowance for wholetimers, the wholetimer is expected to be accountable to the Party committee and her work in the mass organisation often loses its priority. This is opposite to the injunction in the CC document which prioritises work in the mass organisation of its wholetimers. This is not to undermine in any way the responsibility of the wholetimer to build the Party through her work in the mass organisation. The question here is of the daily work she should be doing in the mass organisation.

There has been a conscious effort to run offices independently and not in Party premises. At present 13 State Committee offices out of 18 have separate offices. However at the district level almost all offices are in the Party premises.

The practice of Party leaders addressing women's conferences has more or less stopped unless there has been a specific reason to invite the leaders to address the gathering such as their being involved directly in any issues that the mass organisation has been taking up.

At the same time there are many cases when the women cadre are still dependent on the Party for the most minor things. This is an unhealthy practice that should be firmly discouraged by the Party.

The functioning of fraction committees in the states must be monitored and improved where necessary.

Conclusion

The women's front has made progress in the period since the 17th Party Congress in terms of expansion and prestige of the organisation. The women's organisation has established an independent image among women and in general due to the range of issues they have taken up. However, there is further scope for expansion to new areas and among wider sections of women including Muslim, dalit and adivasis women where the work is weak. While the mass organisation has taken up the issue of poor rural women, at the same time, a bigger attempt must be made to organise women in the unorganized sector, including home-based workers and to organise women in self-help groups with a correct perspective.

The Party should pay attention to recruitment of women in the Party and for their education and training. Promotion of suitable cadres in the Party committees must also be undertaken.

The Party committees at all levels must realize that many of the issues taken up by the women's organisations have wider democratic and political significance and the Party should directly take up such issues and not leave it to the women's front to take up as "women's issues".

Youth Front

The period since 17th Congress has witnessed notable achievements in the activities of the Youth Front. Its membership was 1,12,75,248 in 2000 and it has enrolled 1,42,89,210 youth during the year 2004. The burning issues of the youth community especially those related to education and employment were raised constantly by the organisation. Activity wise, membership enrollment wise, campaign and agitation wise, youth front's activities got a momentum during this period, especially in the backdrop of the nation wide resistance against anti-people policies of the governments. It could have more successful in its activities, if the growth of the organisation was uniform throughout the country. The stagnation in some states, mechanical functioning, lack of initiative and even reversal in some states and regions have curtailed the possible achievable growth. Being a country with a huge percentage of youth population, (More than 54 crores) the youth front have to give more attention to the problems of the younger generation with special care.

Youth In Contemporary India

Youth are constantly being denied their rights and opportunities. The brutal assault by imperialist globalisation on social welfare has badly affected the younger generation. Education has become a costly commodity and even judiciary has legalised the free play of market forces in education and thus made the students simply as customers. Many meritorious students have been forced to discontinue their studies. There is a constant decline in employment opportunities during the last decade in organised as well as in unorganised sector.

The Indian economy is recording a "jobloss" growth. There is a permanent ban on recruitment in central, state and quasi government employment. No job security is prevailing, minimum service conditions are disappearing. In organized sector this period has witnessed a negative growth in employment generation. The rate of growth of employment, which was 2.7 per cent per year in the period of 1983-1994 has declined to only 1.07 per cent per year in the period of 1994-2000.

The unemployment rate has increased from 5.99 per cent in 1993-94 to 7.32 per cent in 1999-2000. Employment in the organized sector declined by 0.8 per cent in 2003 due to a decline of the public sector employment by 1 per cent in 2003. The total employment in agriculture sector has dropped from 60 per cent to 57 per cent in 1999-2000. In a situation where employment as a whole is shrinking, rural employment is the worst affected.

Moreover the service conditions, Welfare Acts, Labour Laws were restructured to serve the capitalist interest. Contract system, which is

the order of the day, has further jeopardized the future of job seeking youth.

This complex situation prevailing in the country seeks to depoliticise the younger generation. The campaign against political activities and progressive ideas, the influence of decadent culture, the compulsion of education loans debt trap and the venom of communalization etc. created a very complicated situation for the youth organisation in its activities to organize and mobilize youth community under its banner.

Amidst these problems the youth front has been successful in advancing in many respects. During this period in our country there were two phases of activities undertaken by the organisation- the period of NDA Govt. and the period of the UPA Government. There was a constant and continuous effort from the organisation to mobilise maximum strength against the communal/corrupt NDA Government. Youth front was successful in organising grass root level campaign on communal harmony independently and jointly. Anti-imperialist struggle and campaign was launched successfully throughout this period. The burning question of unemployment was raised continuously during this period and two national level rallies were organised in Delhi.

Campaign & Movement

The question of unemployment and the task of organizing the mass of youth against the anti-people policies were continuously and constantly addressed by the youth movement during the period. Nationwide agitations and campaigns were undertaken from unit level to All India level. Two massive campaign programmes culminated in All India Youth rallies at Delhi. One in 2002 November and another in November 2004.

As part of the campaign for November 2004 rally more than one crore signatures were collected. Before the Delhi rally, almost all states had organised different kinds of activities including state level rallies. A memorandum was submitted to the Prime Minister. This initiative taken by the youth front just after the formation of UPA government at the Centre has helped in sending a message to the younger generation about the youth front's stand to fight and safeguard the interest of the youth.

- During this period youth front observed 28th March every year as anti-unemployment day throughout the country undertaking different types of agitational programmes.

- **Against anti-people policies** The All India General Strike of May 2003 was totally supported with a *Rail Roko Rasta Roko* call.

●**Education for all, Jobs for all.** Raising the demand against commercialisation of education, there was a commendable initiative in many states for militant agitation along with student front. On 15th September every year youth front has undertaken the programme of state level rallies on the slogan of Jobs for all, Education for all.

●**Against Imperialism.** During this period upholding the glorious legacy of anti-imperialist struggle and to give further impetus to its campaign against the onslaughts of imperialism the youth front organized several demonstrations opposing the war in Iraq and to pressurize the Indian Govt. gave the slogan “no troops to Iraq”. The organisation gave a call to boycott Pepsi Cola and Coca- Cola during this period while raising the demand of safeguarding economic sovereignty.

Apart from this the youth front has campaigned and mobilised support for the peoples resistance against imperialist globalisation at international level participating in the 4th world social forum held in Mumbai in January 2004 .The Youth Front took active part in the preparations of this big event organized a seminar on Globalization and its impact on youth.

National Workshop on Employment:

The general situation of employment in the country from the alarming growth of unemployment to vanishing job security, labour laws and casualisation of employment etc. were critically evaluated in a two day workshop organized by the youth front at Delhi on 15-16 March 2005. The workshop decided for a nation wide agitation from 23rd March to 28th March.

Against Communalism

During this period the Youth Front campaigned amongst the youth highlighting the dangers of communal politics and work for the communal harmony. To help the child victims of Gujarat carnage the youth front gave a nation wide call to collect the school kits and other materials. The Front distributed 45 thousand school kits in Gujarat. The Front strongly condemned and protested against the planned efforts of the communal forces to take up the issues which can create communal tension and Communalism to galvanize all the secular minded people.

Election Campaign

The Youth Front played an important role in the campaign for the Lok Sabha, Assembly and local body elections held during this period. After taking note of the political situation and BJP led NDA government’s plan of advancing the dates of General election the front

took up the campaign task seriously and to kick start the nationwide campaign a historic youth rally was organized in Kolkata on 15th February at Brigade ,well before the actual announcement of the Poll dates. During the campaign the Youth Front raised the burning issue of unemployment and the false promise of the BJP Govt. to create one crore jobs per year in a big way. The Front published election special issue of YOUTH STREAM and emphasize before the youth to vote for the Left and secular forces to the ensure the defeat of the BJP.

Joint Left Youth Movement

During this period the Youth Front took initiative and organized a joint left Youth Student convention in the Delhi against the anti youth policies of the NDA in 2002.After a month long campaign state level joint rallies and conventions were organized in many states.

Movement On Local Issues

During this period to overcome the weakness in taking of local issues in many states especially in the North Indian states, the Youth Front organised a mini workshop for Hindi states in Delhi, focusing on the various effective ways to make such initiatives possible and successful.

Ideological –Political Education

The Youth Front undertook the task of ideological–political education seriously and organized several study camps during this period. Separate camps were organized for South, North and North Eastern states twice.

Multifarious Activities

In accordance with the guidelines of the 7th conference of the Youth Front ,to attract the youth from the various sections of society the Youth Front has taken the initiative of emphasising the importance of undertaking multifarious activities particularly in the weaker states. At central level the Youth Front has organized blood donation camps, free Medical Camp and has helped the states in planning and organized such camps and sports and cultural events on important occasions.

Relief Work

The Youth Front's initiative at the time of Tsunami for providing relief evoked a very good response from the general public. Thousands of volunteers took part in the relief work.

All India Young Woman And Tribal Youth Conventions

During this period the Youth Front has organised the first All India Young Woman Convention and first All India Tribal Youth Convention.

Organisation

Even though the youth front has emerged as one of the largest mass organisation even outside the traditional base of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, it could not galvanise the chances for growth in many areas because of the lack of proper understanding about the perspective and utility of the youth organisation especially where party is weak.

The utility of mass organisation and its character in making inroads among newer sections is not correctly understood by many Party committees. Instead of giving it a mass character by ensuring its democratic functioning and taking up popular local issues and organising multifarious activities involving mass of youth, some remain satisfied with a handful of dedicated cadres only to be used as and when necessary by the party. In some cases the independent initiatives taken by the youth front relating to social issues, sports and cultural activities and even mass membership is taken as wrong practices by some party committees. At least in some states the mass front cadres are compelled to halt their youth front activities for some period to engage with some other priority activities decided by the party, which may not directly be related to the youth front. Lack of balanced approach by party cadres working in youth front is also there in certain cases. In some places they act self-centred around their frontal activity only. The party committees should intervene to see that the Party cadres are properly integrated with the party's work.

In many cases youth front's priorities to get cadres deployed are ignored by the party committees. This naturally hampers the continuous renewal of leadership. In some cases the mass membership concept is restricted with an argument against dual membership ie student front's member or women front member should not be a member of the youth front and vice versa. This attitude is not helpful for the growth, synchronisation and strengthening of different fronts.

It is the responsibility of the respective party committees to deploy promising cadres on priority to the youth front. The practice of mechanically deploying and bureaucratically transferring cadres surely will not help for independent and democratic functioning. For the initiation of cadres in the party, a strict check up and evaluation of their performance in the mass organisation should be undertaken. The effective way of direction, evaluation and analysis of the mass front

should be done through sub committees. Regular meetings of sub-committee lack in many states. In certain places, subcommittees fail to discuss on major policy decisions and only use the committee as a platform to report the party decisions. Just opposite to this, at least in some places the entire planning of mass organisation activities is done in sub-committees. The regularity of sub-committee meetings is also to be ensured at the central level.

This weakness needs immediate attention. Without rectifying the weaknesses and positively building a proper understanding about the character of the youth front, the necessity of party building, the need of party guidance to the younger generation coming towards us, the requisite goal of our party cannot be achieved.

All India Conference

The 7th All India Conference has been held at Amritsar in 2003 November. 830 delegates from 24 states and 1 Union Territory were participated. Apart from other programmes the programme for peace and solidarity with Pakistan organized at the Wagah border attracted good public opinion. One major task, the conference has successfully completed was the updating of the youth front's programme.

All India Centre.

The functioning of the All India Centre generally has improved. The Centre's intervention such as responding to various issues, organising programmes and activities, attending state committees and state level programmes, the publication of journal and campaign materials, organising education camps, conventions etc. have recorded progress. In the given situation considering the need of the organisation the center functioning has to improve further. Now the number of cadres working from the center is only four, President, General Secretary, Treasurer and one CEC member. Apart from the four comrades functioning from the center the youth front is providing allowances to 11 other comrades in different states. The number of cadres working from the center have to be increased for which strong states should assign cadres. The center functioning in most of the states except few needs serious intervention by the state party committees. Without properly running the state centers the total organisation cannot move forward. In some states not even a single cadre is functioning from the center. The question of subsistence, allowance and fund for proper running of the organisation etc. has to be seriously discussed and decided by party sub-committees.

Publication

The publication of the Bimonthly Bilingual journal 'Youth Stream' has been restarted and regularized during this period. The publication of

Hindi journal 'Noujawan Drishti', which was not regular, has been integrated with the bilingual journal. The quality of the journal would further improve after the completion of the ongoing subscription campaign. The center has to make attempts to start the publication of Hindi journal separately. More initiatives have to be taken to publish booklets on various issues. But considering the necessity of such a journal in the Hindi states and other weaker areas, the enrolments of subscribers are not encouraging. On the other hand they don't have state level publication also. In West Bengal and Kerala, youth front state monthly journals have a subscription of around 1 Lakh each. Several other states have their own journals published regularly.

Policy Document On Youth Front & Political Education

Party CC has to take the initiative to discuss a document on youth front for developing clear understanding about the front's priorities and perspective. The need of a National level political schooling for student youth cadres by the party center has to be taken up immediately.

Weaker States And Weaker Sections

The weakness of not getting a breakthrough in weaker states still continues. The recent growth in Jammu & Kashmir, the successes to cut across to new sections like thousands of literacy promoters in Karnataka etc. can be shown as some different examples. The present day socio-political situation provides a fertile ground for the advancement of the youth front, and it is evidently visible wherever new initiatives are taken. The growth in activities in Rajasthan, Delhi and Maharashtra even though meager is a pointer to this positive situation. But at the same time the right wing forces are active to oppose the growth of Left and democratic influence among the youth. The murder of youth front leaders Radheshyam Yadav and Sanjay Yadav in Sultanpur in UP by land mafia with the help of rightwing parties is a glaring example.

The monetary assistance and subsidies to weaker states and whole timers have increased during this period. But in many states the wages and support to whole timers are not regular and enough because of the general backwardness, which prevails. Earnest introspection and decisions are needed to protect cadres for which the subcommittees have to discuss with state committees to implement proper cadre policy.

Student Front

During the period after the 17th Party Congress, the student front has been in the midst of an intense and widespread struggle against communalisation and commercialisation of education on the one hand,

and for the democratic rights of the student community and democratisation of education as a whole, on the other.

The 17th Party Congress decided that the Party should give more attention for building a powerful student front, rectifying the wrong understanding and practices with regard to the relationship between Party and mass organisation, conducting political, ideological and organisational classes to student front activists of the Party and pursuing a correct cadre policy.

More than 45.93 per cent of the population in the country fall in the age group of 10-35 years and this in itself underscores the need to concentrate on the building of student movement. This age group is characterised by idealism and romantic notions of life. The large majority of students are anxious about their future and are more absorbed in building their career. Students being the most sensitive section of the society are also the most impressionable and among the most vulnerable to various forms of imperialist propaganda. Caught up in the web of imperialist propaganda, large sections of the students today harbour illusions about globalisation and its benefits. Though the developments at the international and national level are to an extent helping to clear some of these illusions, notions of individualism and apathy towards politics in general continue to be prevalent among a considerable section. The deprivation and exclusionist process of globalisation is creating mass discontent, frustration and uncertainty among the student masses. Under such circumstances, while on the one hand, the process of depoliticisation is seeking to numb the thought processes of the student community, the various streams of communal, casteist and other sectarian and reactionary identity based politics are building their mobilisations on the breeding grounds of growing frustration and uncertainty among the student masses. At the same time, discontent emanating due to lack of job opportunities and denial of access to education are forcing them to unite and take to the streets and protest against the policies of the government. The challenge before us today is to direct the growing discontent among the student masses on to the revolutionary path for social transformation before the reactionary forces can mislead the intensifying frustration of the students and the young along fascist and barbaric lines or even before the left sectarian forces are able to make them victims of anarchism.

Expansion Of The Movement

It is in this background, through the efforts to live up to the challenges of the present times that the student front has witnessed a significant growth in the intervening period since the last Party congress. The student front has been able to identify many major national level issues concerning the students and launch sustained struggles on them. The struggles led by the student mass organisation during this time, saw heightened militancy. Most of the state organisations have been able to

correctly identify and conduct effective struggles on specific issues of the students pertaining to their respective states and particular regions within the states. All these have resulted in the growth of the student front membership from 24,73,578 (2000-01) to 31,88,760 (2003-04), an increase of 28.9 per cent. The student front activity also saw an extension into new regions and new educational institutions. The student union election victories achieved in quite a few new universities and many new colleges in new areas also are a result of the growing popularity of the student front among the students and the relentless struggles carried out.

In spite of these successes, there remain some weaknesses that need to be rectified immediately. The uneven growth in the organisation is still a matter of grave concern. While the increase in membership is laudable, a major part of this increase comes from a handful of states. The per cent of membership in the three states, West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura is 72 per cent in 2003-04 while it was 73 per cent in 2000-01. The percentage of membership of the three south Indian states (AP, TN, Karnataka) is 21 per cent in 2003-04 while it was 20 per cent in 2000-01. The percentage of membership in the rest of the mostly Hindi speaking states remained at 7 per cent, both in 2003-04 and in 2000-01.

The much-needed breakthrough in expanding the student front in the Hindi speaking areas is yet to be achieved. The recent student union electoral results along with the growth in the membership show the increasing image of the student front even in some of the weak states. Due to the absence of a concrete plan for the growth and expansion of the student front in the Hindi speaking states it is not possible to sustain the movements and organisation and attain consistency of organisational activity. Some states are still unable to take up the issues of students in their respective states and organise sustained struggles on them. Tokenism in struggles, both due to lack of a proper political-organisational perspective and also limited organisational strength exists. The Party Centre along with the state parties have to immediately concentrate to overcome these weaknesses. The question of caste oppression and discrimination, gender bias and building the student front in universities has to be taken up on a priority basis. A meeting of the state in-charges of the student front, which was decided in the 15th Congress, should be organised immediately.

Party Building & Cadre Policy

A proper policy to train and develop cadres has to be evolved and also the task of Party building addressed with due seriousness. The task of Party building and Party planning in the student front is not given the necessary priority and this is naturally getting reflected in the development of cadre and their allotment. Most of the time the conscious efforts needed to develop Party members in the student front is neglected. Most states lack a proper cadre policy and steps are not

taken to develop alternate cadre as future leadership. Even the traditionally stronger state are no exceptions in this regard. A comprehensive and effective Cadre Policy needs to be drawn up at the earliest and sincerely promulgated especially in the weaker states and its implementation monitored regularly. Party guidance to the comrades too has to increase in many of the states.

Political Education

Political Schools of the student front are organised regularly at the state level in many states but there is a failure to organise Party classes for the development of student cadre and ensure their continuity in the movement. This is also the reason for the lack of substantial and commensurate growth in Party membership in the student front. At the central level there is a failure to organise an all India school that is now already long overdue (since 1986). A review of the comrades working in the student front also needs to be undertaken.

Functioning Of The Sub-Committee: The meetings of the central sub-committee needs to be systemized and regularised. The same weakness can be seen in the functioning of many state sub-committees. Except in a few states regular meetings of the sub-committees are not taking place and in some states where the meetings are held, the agendas are not properly framed and discussed. In states where the Party is heading the government, before taking any new policy decision or position concerning education, appropriate level consultation between the Party, ministry and student front comrades should be organised. In some states, on many occasions the student front is completely neglected leaving it to spontaneity, while in some other states on other occasions, it is sought to be run completely according to the directions of the Party curbing the independent and democratic functioning necessary for a mass organisation. A balanced and effective approach has to be developed for the proper expansion and growth of the organisation.

All India Centre: Presently four comrades are working from the Centre. Another comrade from Kerala taken to the Centre did not ultimately join the Centre. Presently there exists a fine co-ordination and understanding among the Centre comrades. The student front's all India committee's meetings, though not always that well attended, have been consistently and timely held at regular intervals. The discussions in the meetings are generally participatory in nature and the decision making process collective. The student Centre functionaries have been regularly attending to most of the programmes in the states and are effectively intervening on all issues pertaining to education and also on ideological-political and organisational matters. Of late, the immediate intervention on the 'Minority Education Commission Act' and on the question of private universities are some of the important issues that the student centre was quick to react upon and formulate the mass organisation's position on them. The student Centre took up the issue timely of

commercialisation of education in a big way after the Supreme Court delivered the retrograde judgment on the issue of private unaided institutions. The student centre was also able to plan sustained struggles on such issues and help/guide the states during these struggles. The student centre should concentrate more on guiding the states to identify and take up struggles on regional, local and the larger social issues. A plan for identifying the priority issues and regions, educational centres and institutions, especially in the Hindi speaking states and building organisation in those regions and simultaneous strengthening of the organisation alongside growth and expansion are the major tasks in the coming days. Some of the important issues on which there were struggles at the all India level are given below.

Campaign Against Commercialisation Of Education: The erstwhile BJP led NDA government along with communalisation of education also pursued policies for rampant commercialisation of education. This period witnessed the rapid expansion of private educational institutions as the government systematically cut the grants for education and bled the government educational institutions to slow death. A glaring example of such policies was the Model Act of the UGC. This act is nothing but a photocopy of the Birla-Ambani Committee Report on education. It advises the universities not to depend on the grants of the UGC and suggests them to raise their own resources. The government was unable to convert the proposed Model Act into an actual Act because of the severe opposition to it from all quarters. The intentions of the government to convert education into a commodity and slowly withdraw the state from its responsibility are nakedly evident in the stand taken by the government in the Supreme Court in the TMA Pai Vs State of Karnataka case. The Supreme Court in its judgment in the above case absolved the state from all its responsibilities to control the private unaided institutions. The student front conducted a sustained campaign against the judgment demanding the enactment of a central legislation empowering the state governments to decide and control the process of admission and the fees of the self-financing institutes. Militant protests were organised in many states braving severe repression unleashed by both the respective state governments and also the managements of the private institutions.

- March to Parliament was conducted twice - once during the NDA regime on 19th August 2003. The second march was organised on 2nd December 2004 during the UPA regime and the government was given an ultimatum that if it failed to concede to the demands of the students, the participants in the rally would continue with the 48-hour hunger strike that was then called.
- A procession and dharna was organised in front of the HRD Ministry office in New Delhi on the 14th of July.
- A Model Act depicting the demands and expectations from the central legislation was prepared and submitted to the state and central governments.

- A successful all-India strike was organised on this issue on the 11th of December 2003 and against commercialisation of education and the policies of the NDA government on the 24th of February 2004.

The UPA government finally conceded the demands because of the popular pressure. This is a very significant achievement of the student movement.

Statewide struggles were organised in many states on local issues like fee hike in the respective states and universities, lack of democratic rights, and for the implementation of welfare schemes like scholarships etc and to increase their scope. Struggles carried out in states like Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh against fee hike were successful.

Organisational Activities:

- The 10th All India Conference of the student front had decided to update its Programme and Constitution in tune with the changed political situation and also new developments in the realm of education worldwide and at home. Accordingly, a draft was prepared and placed for acceptance at the 11th All India Conference. The Conference opined that more time was needed to discuss the draft more thoroughly in the entire rank and file of the organisation and accordingly the draft was accepted for further discussions. While accepting the draft for further inner organisation discussion before finalisation in a special conference to be held later, the conference resolved to retain and uphold in the updated version of the Programme and Constitution the ideological premise and objective as contained in the existing. After a thorough inner organisational discussion for almost a year, a Special Conference was organised for finalising the updated Programme and Constitution from 7th to 10th February 2004 in Guwahati. The updated Programme was ultimately accepted unanimously in the Special Conference.
- Immediately after the last Parliament elections an **all India Convention** of the student front on education was organised on the 13th and 14th of July 2004 in New Delhi, to discuss the new political situation and plan the future course of struggles accordingly.
- **Convention of girl students** was organised in Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan from 3rd to 5th August 2004 and an all India girl students' sub-committee was formed. Due to the sustained efforts and struggles against sexual harassment and patriarchy, girl students in increasing numbers are joining the student front. This convention focussed on the task to further expand and consolidate the student front among the girl students.
- **Professional education students' convention** was also organised in Thiruvananthapuram from 17th to 19th September 2004, mainly to

give a direction to the states for organising the increasing number of professional education students in our ranks. The professional education students' sub-committee was formed and the model of a central legislation to control the non-aided, private and self-financing institutions, on the lines of the kind of act for the said purpose that the student front is presently demanding, was also deliberated and drawn up by the convention.

- **A joint Left students' convention** was organised on the 1st October 2004 in New Delhi. It was intended to bring all Left student organisations in the struggle against commercialisation of education.

The Student Front's Organ: *Student Struggle*, the student front's bi-lingual (English-Hindi) monthly has come to acquire wide acclaim and appreciation among many in recent times. Since July 2001, the journal has been regularly and consistently coming out every month without break. This in itself is an achievement of sorts. Moreover the quality of content and print too has been continuously improving. But the circulation and sales of the organ is yet to increase and at least proportionately measure up with the potential of the organisation's reach and strength. The journal is also yet to emerge as financially self-supporting and this in turn is again linked up mainly with the question of sales and circulation. Apart from the all India organ, many state organisations have their own journals, though not all of these are always as regularly brought out as the *Student Struggle*. West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh are such of the states. Tamilnadu has a magazine brought out irregularly. The *Student Struggle* is presently brought out as a bi-lingual publication. Some low priced booklets dealing on specific issues and useful for easier assimilation of ideology and politics and for purposes of propaganda and agitation have to be brought out in the future.

United Action: The student front is putting in its best efforts for building united struggles against the government policies by bringing together all the Left student organisations. AISF has opted out of the joint action twice citing petty reasons. In spite of this attitude of the AISF, student front could successfully bring together the two other Left student organisations -- AISB and AIPSU -- and organise a march to the Parliament demanding a central legislation empowering the state governments to control the private self-financing institutes. In order to effectively discharge the appropriate role in joint movements nationally and/or internationally it is essential that the independent role and struggles of the student front should be strengthened further.

Statement of Party Membership
(After 17th Congress)

Name of State	Year			
	2001	2002	2003	2004
Andhra Pradesh	40,785	41,879	45,516	46,742
Assam	10,480	11,207	11,122	10,901
Andaman & Nicobar	172	140	124	90
Bihar	17,672	17,469	16,924	17,353
Chattisgarh	1,211	1,364	1,079	1,054
Delhi	1,162	1,360	1,417	1,408
Goa	172	35	40	67
Gujarat	2,799	3,214	3,383	3,398
Haryana	1,357	1,478	1,477	1,608
Himachal Pradesh	1,005	1,006	1,014	1,024
Jammu & Kashmir	625	720	830	850
Jharkhand	2,552	2,819	3,097	3,292
Karnataka	6,574	7,216	6,893	6,492
Kerala	3,01,562	3,13,652	3,18,969	3,16,305
Madhya Pradesh	2,243	2,862	2,488	2,320
Maharashtra	8,545	9,080	9,796	10,256
Manipur	340	330	270	300
Orissa	3,091	3,425	3,502	3,658
Punjab	14,328	11,000	11,000	10,050
Rajasthan	2,602	3,200	3,507	3,120
Tamilnadu	86,868	90,777	91,709	94,343
Tripura	38,737	41,588	46,277	51,343
Uttaranchal	700	720	740	829
Uttar Pradesh	5,169	5,541	5,477	5,877
West Bengal	2,45,026	2,62,882	2,58,682	2,74,921
Sikkim	200	180	65	75
CC staff	96	95	95	87
Total	7,96,073	8,35,239	8,43,896	8,67,763

Year-Wise Membership Increase

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Membership	7,96,073	8,35,239	8,43,896	8,67,763
% of increase		4.91	1.03	2.82

Membership Of TU Front
(After 17th Congress)

Name of State	Year			
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Andaman & Nicobar	1,863	1,613	1,807	2,417
Andhra Pradesh	1,86,968	1,76,481	1,72,358	2,43,594
Assam	45,450	54,102	56,531	58,726
Bihar	16,790	14,831	15,020	23,717
Chattisgarh	20,988	16,521	16,385	17,968
Delhi	48,634	36,033	32,208	28,308
Goa	1,319	1,216	1,168	1,147
Gujarat	13,704	5,562	7,784	7,599
Haryana	35,952	23,929	20,694	25,321
Himachal Pradesh	9,213	8,789	12,398	13,242
Jammu & Kashmir	581	533	398	910
Jharkhand	57,822	42,473	37,702	38,181
Karnataka	85,938	81,465	91,284	99,044
Kerala	9,79,531	9,82,762	9,47,045	10,19,507
Madhya Pradesh	19,714	8,917	10,915	25,220
Maharashtra	61,366	65,417	56,589	63,355
Orissa	21,816	21,411	25,644	31,749
Punjab	82,801	88,071	64,420	32,915
Rajasthan	36,426	34,276	31,225	31,840
Tamilnadu	2,66,573	2,70,835	2,54,553	2,78,745
Tripura	59,925	58,219	68,932	80,363
Uttaranchal	8,677	3,729	9,049	11,704
Uttar Pradesh	18,790	17,041	16,841	24,350
West Bengal	12,16,102	11,11,011	11,95,233	12,76,360
Total	32,96,943	31,25,237	31,46,183	34,36,282

Growth Of Membership From One Congress To Another

	15 th Congress	16 th Congress	17 th Congress	18 th Congress
Membership	23,57,766	27,89,587	32,96,943	34,36,282
% of increase from one Congress to next Congress		18.3	18.2	4.2

Membership Of Kisan Front
(After 17th Congress)

Name of State	Year			
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Andaman & Nicobar			500	
Andhra Pradesh	1,83,360	1,64,241	1,96,701	1,34,373
Assam	1,67,709	1,41,321	1,69,889	1,35,878
Bihar	1,24,393	2,20,000	2,22,000	2,30,080
Chattisgarh	3,790	5,514	7,729	4,500
Dadra Nagar Haveli			511	
Gujarat	7,300	12,860	18,180	18,120
Haryana	17,500	18,000	14,000	21,200
Himachal Pradesh	11,200	18,390	16,500	15,533
Jammu & Kashmir	4,000	6,000	10,000	12,500
Jharkhand	22,760	35,360	16,340	30,000
Karnataka	85,667	1,07,434	1,37,002	1,18,448
Kerala	17,96,520	18,02,848	19,65,305	18,66,061
Madhya Pradesh	39,897	32,270	46,460	36,297
Maharashtra	1,40,334	1,22,159	1,55,162	1,72,147
Manipur	10,000	10,200	2,200	3,000
Orissa	30,850	46,200	55,928	47,759
Punjab	1,39,700	1,20,000	1,23,833	1,48,758
Rajasthan	68,524	1,08,940	95,020	44,740
Tamilnadu	3,50,000	3,83,613	4,26,477	3,69,705
Tripura (KS+GMP)	2,27,820	2,61,703	2,87,000	3,46,678
Uttaranchal		16,573	17,000	11,823
Uttar Pradesh	1,24,500	1,34,959	1,48,599	1,32,169
West Bengal	1,11,29,955	1,20,03,582	1,28,97,554	1,32,78,998
AIKS Centre			5	5
Total	1,46,86,579	1,57,72,167	1,70,29,895	1,71,78,772

Growth Of Membership From One Congress To Another

	15 th Congress	16 th Congress	17 th Congress	18 th Congress
Membership	1,23,27,742	1,44,49,063	1,46,86,579	1,71,78,772
% of increase from one Congress to next Congress		17.2	1.6	17

Membership Of Agricultural Workers Front
(After 17th Congress)

Name of State	Year			
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Andhra Pradesh	4,40,000	4,67,560	6,22,784	5,56,470
Bihar	47,000	1,03,145	1,00,250	88,078
Gujarat		2,200		
Haryana	11,500	11,220	11,000	17,000
Karnataka	8,730	17,014	22,575	22,979
Kerala	15,49,233	15,62,281	16,10,987	16,62,438
Madhya Pradesh	3,000	3,000	4,000	3,000
Maharashtra	49,800	55,300	32,050	55,955
Orissa	4,620	3,655	6,165	6,500
Punjab	67,000	78,000	60,000	64,741
Rajasthan	7,000	15,540	15,540	13,750
Tamilnadu	2,09,225	1,91,520	2,25,655	2,26,330
Tripura	1,10,000	1,27,000	1,34,210	1,57,770
Uttar Pradesh	70,000	70,428	64,450	62,250
Total	25,77,108	27,07,863	29,09,666	29,37,261

Growth Of Membership From One Congress To Another

	15 th Congress	16 th Congress	17 th Congress	18 th Congress
Membership	21,42,541	23,07,976	25,77,108	29,37,261
% of increase from one Congress to next Congress		7.7	11.7	14

Membership Of Womens Front
(After 17th Congress)

Name of State	Year			
	2001	2002	2003	2004
Andhra Pradesh	3,04,590	3,28,600	3,20,000	3,30,000
Assam	40,178	46,750	43,224	60,271
Bihar	25,000	25,835	28,150	29,948
Chattisgarh			1,500	1,500
Delhi	60,746	63,720	68,302	73,442
Gujarat	11,650	8,927	6,700	9,676
Haryana	17,326	20,010	23,134	25,440
Himachal Pradesh	3,462	3,400	3,155	3,805
Jammu & Kashmir		800		
Jharkhand	7,500	11,100	12,500	25,000
Karnataka	25,482	29,320	24,818	24,041
Kerala	17,37,240	18,62,656	19,57,800	21,97,070
Madhya Pradesh	6,100	9,046	11,340	8,880
Maharashtra	50,045	45,433	54,524	61,686
Manipur	1,501	500	500	3,001
Orissa	10,500	12,444	13,002	21,260
Punjab	40,000	25,000	40,000	20,000
Rajasthan	15,300	15,886	10,690	14,770
Tamilnadu	3,28,219	3,86,322	4,15,236	4,60,007
Tripura	2,05,000	2,47,417	2,85,005	3,35,280
Uttaranchal	5,100	6,800	5,860	7,100
Uttar Pradesh	30,000	36,050	36,443	39,150
West Bengal	34,07,298	38,21,946	41,37,884	43,73,358
Total	63,32,547	70,07,962	74,99,767	81,24,685

Growth Of Membership From One Congress To Another

	15 th Congress	16 th Congress	17 th Congress	18 th Congress
Membership	41,20,788	52,12,017	63,32,547	81,24,685
% of increase from one Congress to next Congress		26.5	21.5	28.3

Membership Of Youth Front
(After 17th Congress)

Name of State	Year				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Andhra Pradesh	2,22,000	3,47,509	3,10,700	3,38,130	3,16,810
Assam	56,264	38,815	62,215	69,756	57,800
Bihar	71,804	84,284	1,02,333	1,06,949	1,13,450
Chattisgarh		4,315	5,003	5,722	7,450
Dadra Nagar Haveli			200	301	
Delhi	6,755	15,259	17,652	18,263	26,544
Gujarat	8,006	11,300	12,088	13,749	15,350
Haryana	17,005	12,188	15,122	7,404	9,472
Himachal Pradesh	12,364	13,960	20,545	17,324	12,353
Jammu & Kashmir	21,200	20,325	29,090	99,600	5,000
Jharkhand	15,100	20,590	25,287	26,876	28,500
Karnataka	39,705	31,450	52,918	58,837	75,187
Kerala	44,03,081	43,98,624	44,22,873	44,53,228	45,48,955
Madhya Pradesh	10,190	8,675	8,887	9,328	9,510
Maharashtra	71,794	68,210	74,357	80,697	82,907
Manipur	3,321	3,500	3,160	3,346	3,519
Orissa	34,882	35,511	29,960	30,170	34,293
Punjab	67,518	68,200	51,700	43,362	43,425
Rajasthan	29,345	36,032	49,677	51,127	53,114
Tamilnadu	6,09,305	6,60,730	6,10,254	6,35,910	7,68,108
Tripura	2,63,331	2,56,880	2,89,290	3,38,344	3,52,260
TYF		50,000	85,000	1,00,400	1,09,600
Uttaranchal		5,500	9,750	7,250	4,955
Uttar Pradesh	24,006	22,861	24,363	28,752	37,400
West Bengal	52,84,272	57,71,656	62,85,711	70,12,711	75,73,243
Centre				5	5
Total	1,12,71,248	1,19,86,374	1,25,98,135	1,35,57,541	1,42,89,210

Growth Of Membership From One Congress To Another

	15 th Congress	16 th Congress	17 th Congress	18 th Congress
Membership	92,79,605	1,02,74,260	1,12,71,248	1,42,89,210
% of increase from one Congress to next Congress		10.7	9.7	26.77

Membership Of Student Front
(After 17th Congress)

Name of State	Year			
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Andhra Pradesh	3,17,515	4,00,728	3,79,032	4,92,528
Assam	24,057	18,897	21,585	25,594
Bihar	21,627	15,317	23,555	27,876
Chattisgarh		2,575	2,575	Nil
Delhi	2,038	2,288	2,911	3,300
Gujarat	5,275	5,325	7,335	7,375
Haryana	11,479	13,542	15,500	13,122
Himachal Pradesh	17,723	21,382	22,946	26,926
Jammu & Kashmir	250	500	-----	Nil
Jharkhand	1,521	4,968	10,015	9,522
Karnataka	75,054	71,469	62,050	62,092
Kerala	8,15,896	8,66,044	8,69,865	8,57,729
Madhya Pradesh	7,500	6,993	5,239	Nil
Maharashtra	31,518	31,567	45,734	32,022
Manipur	6,100	5,697	7,438	1,025
Orissa	3,701	810	3,113	4,258
Punjab	8,300	5,000	8,025	8,500
Rajasthan	27,050	27,293	32,089	32,289
Tamilnadu	95,766	98,081	1,08,099	1,25,532
Tripura	70,000	85,000	89,500	1,10,892
TSU	8,000	12,240	12,500	23,590
Uttaranchal	9,500	7,463	8,957	8,751
Uttar Pradesh	10,064	14,046	14,161	12,283
West Bengal	9,03,571	11,52,620	11,71,021	13,03,482
CEC	73	73	72	72
Total	24,73,578	28,69,918	29,23,317	31,88,760

Growth Of Membership From One Congress To Another

	15 th Congress	16 th Congress	17 th Congress	18 th Congress
Membership	21,49,679	22,12,632	24,73,578	31,88,760
% of increase from one Congress to next Congress		2.9	11.7	28.9

Circulation of *People's Democracy* and *Lok Lahar*

State	<i>People's Democracy</i>			<i>Lok Lahar</i>		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05 (11 months)	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05 (11 months)
Andaman & Nicobar				10	10	
Andhra Pradesh	547	507	661	1	1	1
Arunachal Pradesh	1	1	1			
Assam	555	541	528	14	12	5
Bihar	160	129	125	1229	1167	1153
Chandigarh	32	32	37	29	37	53
Chattisgarh	14	17	18	299	312	259
Delhi	298	281	264	603	540	484
Goa	2	2	2			
Gujarat	13	10	12	78	67	56
Haryana	20	14	19	627	484	565
Himachal Pradesh	67	53	101	468	313	465
Jammu & Kashmir	39	33	19	37	23	20
Jharkhand	86	62	78	442	367	239
Karnataka	328	301	304	11	7	3
Kerala	2073	1168	314	3	2	1
Madhya Pradesh	24	20	15	503	427	306
Maharashtra	440	454	420	403	449	440
Manipur	18	2	6			
Meghalaya	17	15	14			
Orissa	276	250	279	17	16	10
Pondicherry	11	13	13			
Punjab	76	71	80	65	40	27
Rajasthan	22	19	21	538	464	498
Sikkim			1			
Tamilnadu	1167	1108	1047			
Tripura	612	599	592		1	2
Uttaranchal	5	6	7	317	294	304
Uttar Pradesh	119	125	122	1515	1515	1547
West Bengal	7,367	7,258	7,003	3546	3792	3678
Foreign	44	35	34	1	1	
Total	14,433	13,126	12,137	10,756	10,341	10,116

Circulation of *The Marxist*

State	2002 Vol. 18 (3)	2003 Vol. 19 (4)	2004 Vol. 20 (3)
Andhra Pradesh	174	213	211
Assam	89	102	84
Bihar	31	17	19
Chandigarh	19	10	10
Delhi	143	106	108
Goa	2	1	1
Gujarat	3	3	3
Haryana	6	7	4
Himachal Pradesh	22	15	18
Jammu & Kashmir	5	5	5
Jharkhand	18	15	13
Karnataka	143	141	141
Kerala	129	121	98
Madhya Pradesh/ Chattisgarh	11	11	11
Maharashtra	132	111	103
Manipur	23	13	0
Orissa	146	102	96
Pondicherry	5	1	0
Punjab	27	22	28
Rajasthan	8	2	3
Tamilnadu	222	188	215
Tripura	93	73	70
Uttar Pradesh	46	43	38
West Bengal	970	875	854
Foreign	4	4	4
Total	2471	2201	2137