

Clarion Call Of CITU Working Committee

Prepare For Countrywide Industrial Strike

The Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Delhi from September 1 to 3, 1991 gave a clarion call for a countrywide industrial general strike against the sweeping economic measures taken by the Narasimha Rao Government, which constitute a sell-out of the country's economic sovereignty to the IMF and the multinationals.

The meeting welcomed the joint move taken by several Central Trade Unions and national federations in this direction in a broad based meeting held at Delhi on 13th August, having formed a Sponsoring Committee and convened a national convention at Delhi on 17th September, from where the call for the strike will be given.

The Working Committee appealed to all trade unions and all sections of working people irrespective of affiliations, in the public and private sector and to central and state government employees to join this massive countrywide strike action. It appealed to the patriotic and democratic sections of people and all those adversely affected by the economic policy to support the movement in the interest of the economic and national sovereignty of the country.

The Working Committee noted with appreciation the preparations and campaign already launched by the various state committees and the massive twenty thousand strong convention held in W. Bengal towards successful materialisation of the strike, and appealed to the Sponsoring Committee to fix up the date of strike at the earliest to be announced in the Convention.

Address by the President

Responding to the demand of the situation, the meeting was attended by a record number of 121 members including two special invitees. E. Balanandan, in his presidential address dealt with the international situation in depth in the light of the latest developments in Soviet Union, the activities of the imperialist backed counter revolutionary forces and called for intensified struggle against imperialism and for defence of socialism in the spirit of the October revolution. On the national situation he warned against the IMF conspiracies to draw India into the neo-colonial net of imperialism and called for united direct action of the working class to get the IMF dictated economic policies scrapped.

(The full text of the Presidential address is being published in this issue—Ed.)

General Secretary's Report

M. K. Pandhe in his General Secretary's report referred to the international situation as explained in the Presidential address and linked it to the national situation, elaborating how the Narasimha Rao Government of Congress (I) had surrendered to the full prescriptions of the IMF. Beginning with the IMF loan, he elaborated in the report the dangerous consequences of the devaluation, the trade and industrial policies and the Union Budget, which would not only impose unbearable burdens on the common people, but also expose all sections of the people to newer forms of neo-colonial exploitation by imperialism and threaten the economic and national sovereignty of the country. By taking the IMF loan with its accompanying conditionalities, the government had pushed the country nearer to the debt trap. Devaluation will further widen the trade imbalance and put pressure on the foreign exchange reserve. The Industrial Policy with its diabolical IMF prescriptions of delicensing, decontrol, deregulation, 51 per cent foreign equity shares, and dismantling of the MRTP Act was nothing but to allow the multinationals to control the Indian economy. Denigration of the public sector, unbridled development and entry of the private sector and the multinationals into the domain of public sector in the name of high technology was a severe blow to all efforts to build a self-reliant economy. Even the small scale and tiny sectors have been allowed to be ravaged by big business, both Indian and foreign. The hike in railway freights and fares and the Union Budget with its high indirect taxation, deficit financing, cut in subsidies, rise in fertilizer prices, etc in fact completes the IMF prescriptions to bleed the common people white.

The report referred to the efforts made by the CITU in mobilising the opinion of other central organisations and federations, which culminated in a broad based meeting and formation of a Sponsoring Committee to organise two national conventions at Delhi—one of public sector workers on 16th September and the other the national trade union convention on 17th September, wherefrom the call for countrywide strike is to be given. It further referred to the Delhi Chalo programme on 27th September given by the Left-NF parties against the economic policies and called upon the CITU unions to participate in it in a massive way.

The report also dealt with various other activities of the CITU in the sphere of unorganised sector, on the working women's front, and struggles in various industrial sectors. The report drew pointed

attention to the police firing at Dalla Cement factory, which killed a number of workers, who martyred themselves to save the public sector and called for all India support to their ongoing struggle to revoke the privatisation deal. The report pointed to the unabated danger from secessionist and communal forces represented by the Khalistanis, Jamaite-Islami and the RSS-BJP-VHP combine and called for continuous vigil and struggle for national unity. The report reviewed the implementation of the Seventh CITU Conference decisions, regarding observance of unity week, Com. BTR's death anniversary day on 6th April, raising of CITU Special Fund, the progress in the construction of Com. BTR Memorial Trust, etc. The report especially stressed on all organisational aspects including drive for membership, democratic functioning, etc as discussed in the 7th Conference and the Kanpur General Council. Concluding the report Pandhe called for brisk preparations to mobilise the mass of workers at the grass root level and participate in the two conventions with the preparation to materialise the countrywide strike.

Two separate notes were also placed respectively by Kali Ghosh on the ESI Scheme and by V. B. Cherian on the Employees' Pension Scheme as proposed by the Central Board of Trustees (Provident Fund).

Deliberation Directs to Strike Action

Discussions on the General Secretary's report directed towards the countrywide strike action as the only recourse to meet the challenges posed by the economic measures taken by the Government. Members after member pointed to the consequences of the economic measures which had started coming to surface in various industries and states. They pointed to threat of closures, price rise, privatisation of various departmental works in public sector, resistance to concede economic demands, etc as the immediate results of the policies. Simultaneously, taking advantage of the international situation, a campaign was brewing up to divide the trade union movement and isolate the left trade unions. Members specifically pointed to the role of the BMS in this respect, which supported the policies of the Government and towed the line of the managements. The Working Committee members elaborated the programmes being taken at State, District and union levels to mobilise other trade unions and the workers at grass root level to wage united mass actions to culminate into strike by explaining the anti-working class, anti-people and anti-national features of the economic policies. Simultaneously, they expressed their resolve to defend the gains of the October Revolution and carry forward the anti-imperialist tradition of the Indian working class and the people.

Initiating the debate, Biren Roy (W. Bengal), asserted that socialism cannot fail. Experience of the capitalist system is bound to give rise to working class struggle. However, proper education and campaign have to be launched in this direction. On

the economic policies of the Government he urged for serious campaign against the IMF loan and other measures and alternative policies in preparation for the strike. Kali Ghosh (W. Bengal) pointed to the danger of regionalism as a result of economic imbalances that will follow from the new economic policies. He further pointed out that as per the Government's pronouncement, the sick units will be referred to the BIFR. This means that these units will go into liquidation and the workers will not get any compensation even. Besides, the policy will lead to closures of the small units. West Bengal, which is leading in the development of small scale industries, will thus be badly affected. He referred to the massive convention held at Calcutta, which was participated by INTUC also and said that W. Bengal was fully prepared for the strike action in early October. Shyamal Chakrabarty (W. Bengal) elaborately dealt on the Soviet development and narrated the action programmes being launched in W. Bengal against the acts of vandalism by the counter-revolutionary forces in Soviet Union.

N. Padmalochanan (Kerala) made a scathing criticism of the policies. He said Kerala's economy was mainly based on the cashew and other traditional industries, which will be ruined by the new economic policies. He briefed various programmes that are being launched throughout the state in preparation for the strike in the form of convention, demonstrations, educative campaigns, seminars, etc. The CITU publication on the economic policies by M. K. Pandhe had already been translated in Malayalam and distributed to workers in thousands.

A K Padmanabhan (Tamilnadu) said that in the public sector, the Hindustan Petroleum, Salem Steel plant, etc are facing problems. In the unorganised sector, the handloom, powerloom and the hosiery units have fallen deeper into crisis due to the policies. Prices of yarn have further gone up. Cotton is not available due to its export. The employers have started closing down the units. He also briefed about the joint action plan taken in the State for the preparation of the all India strike. The CITU publication is being utilised fully. He suggested for further educative pamphlets and articles both on the economic policies and on the international situation.

Chandrasekhar (Punjab) pointed out that nearly 50 percent of the small units in Punjab have already closed down after the new industrial policy. He informed that joint state level convention has already been decided in the state. They have launched full campaign for the one day countrywide strike to be materialised in October.

Amal Ghosh Dastidar (Assam), D G Narasimha Rao (AP), J S Majumdar (Bihar), S N Solanki (Haryana), Hethram Beniwal (Rajasthan) S Kumar (MP), V J K Nair (Karnataka), Harsahay Singh (UP), S B Bharadwaj (Delhi), Subodh Mehta (Gujarat), Shivaji Patnaik (Orissa) and other members briefed about the preparations being launched in their states for the strike. Despite problems being

faced from some other trade unions, they showed their preparedness for the strike action in October.

Struggle against Privatisation of Dalla Cement

While dealing with the question of privatisation, members referred to the Dalla cement factory firing and the programmes of solidarity being launched in various states and industrial centres.

P K Ganguly moved a resolution on the grim struggle of the Dalla cement workers against the privatisation, which was being carried forward at Dalla as well as at Lucknow, where one worker had died. The struggle was being conducted under the banner of Ekta Samity comprising of all the trade unions and the officers' association. Sunil Basu Roy while supporting the resolution, reported about his visit to Lucknow alongwith Shivaji Patnaik and Haradhan Roy.

Members also discussed on the reports on ESI and Pension Scheme and pointed out the various anomalies. The meeting authorised the Secretariat to prepre the concrete stand and suggestion of the CITU on the subjects.

A resolution on Punjab was adopted, being moved by Balwant Singh and supported by K. Ramani. Another resolution in support of the proposed Bank Strike was moved by Md. Amin and supported by V B Cherian. A resolution on Tripura denouncing the semi fascist regime and supporting the valiant struggle of the workers was moved by V B Cherian and supported by P K Ganguly. The resolution on operation of Bank Account was moved by Ranjit Basu and supported by P K Ganguly.

Main Resolution

After all discussions, the main resolution of the meeting viz on the Economic Policies of the Government was moved by R Umanath and seconded by Manoranjan Roy. K N Ravindranath, P K Ganguly and Ramnika Gupta also spoke on the resolution. The resolution analysed the economic measures in the light of the discussions and gave the stirring call for a countrywide strike action demanding their reversal. (The resolution is being published hereunder).

After reply by M K Pandhe, the report was adopted unanimously. The meeting concluded after summing up by E. Balanandan with the clarion call to all unions to go ahead with the mobilisation of all workers and trade unions for the countrywide strike action and gear up the entire organisational machinery in this respect.

The meeting further decided to observe Nov. 7 to 17 in defence of October Revolution. A leaflet will be brought out for this purpose.

Working Committee Resolution

On Economic Policies of the Government

This Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Delhi from September 1-3, 1991 denounces the minority Congress(I) Government of Narasimha Rao for adopting sweeping and unprecedented economic policies which constitute a sell out of the country's economic sovereignty to the IMF and the multinationals.

The meeting rejects the Government's argument that there was no alternative to the IMF loan to tide over the present BoP crisis. The crisis is the making of the Congress (I) itself. The same argument was forwarded by the Indira Gandhi Government in 1981, when it took similar IMF loan under Extended Financing Facility, which is given under stringent conditionalities, and the policy of liberalisation further followed by the Rajiv Government, has brought the country to the present serious situation, aggravating the BoP crisis. Indiscriminate imports being financed by international borrowing, have raised the debt service ratio to about 30 percent of the export earnings from about 10 to 12 percent during the eighties, which have caused a drainage on the foreign exchange reserves. In order to create a panicky situation so that the people accept this sell out, Indian gold reserves were pledged to the Bank of England. By taking the loan the Government has taken the country nearer to the debt trap, similar to the Latin American countries.

All the other measures like the devaluation of the Rupee by 20 percent, change in the trade and industrial policies, and the railway and general budgets came as unavoidable and inevitable corollaries to the loan conditionalities.

The argument that devaluation of the Rupee and changes in the trade policy will lead to increase in exports and fall in imports is not tenable by facts. Experience has shown that exports from India and other Third World countries have not been responsive to devaluations made earlier. On the contrary, trade balance has been progressively negative. 20 percent devaluation will increase the import bills and further widen the trade imbalance, putting further pressure on foreign exchange reserve.

Further, this will automatically increase the prices of the imported goods and as a chain reaction, of all other commodities and spiral the inflationary pressure. It will decline the real wages of the workers and lead to shrinkage of the domestic market, recession, closures and growth in unemployment. The IMF loan and devaluation alone will thus push the country into a vicious circle, exposing the common people to the ruthless neo-colonial exploitation by the imperialist countries.¶

The Industrial Policy announced by the Government threatens to completely undermine India's self-reliance. By allowing entry of the private sector

both Indian and foreign, in the domain of core sector, which was exclusively reserved for the public sector in the 1956 Industrial Policy Resolution, the Government has opened of floodgates for them, particularly the multinationals, to control the Indian economy. By delicensing, de-regulation, de-control, by diluting of FERA through 51 percent foreign equity, and by virtual dismantling of the MRTP by removal of ceiling on assets, the Government has given a go-bye to planned national economy. The Government has taken a move to hand over Banking and the service sector to the multinationals to have full control over the national economy. The Patents Act and Intellectual Property Rights are also likely to go in the process. The US imperialists may not require to keep the Super 301 and Sepcial 301 hanging over India like a Damocle's Sword.

As if this was not enough, the monopolists and the multinationals are also being allowed to enter the small scale and tiny sector of industries. The opening of the agro-industries sector to foreign capital will allow them to fleece the peasantry, who are already the worst exploited under the long rule of the Congress.

The new Industrial Policy will lead to further closures and sickness. It has brazenly announced that all public sector sick units will be referred to the BIFR, with a view to their liquidation. The policy will ruin indigenous technology, the traditional and small scale industries and further aggravate the unemployment situation in the country.

The Union Budget which has come in the wake of the above economic measures and the hike in Railway fares and freight, has put further burdens on all sections of toiling people. The steep hike in the fertilizer prices will hit the peasantry and agricultural labourers. The hike in petrol, cooking gas and sugar prices will hit hard the common man. The cut in subsidies as a consequence of IMF conditionalities has put the public distribution system under severe strain. Increase in indirect taxation and deficit financing have been kept as constant weapons to fleece the people. It is reprehensible that the Government has not increased direct taxation or wealth tax, nor made any efforts to mop up the huge black money for resource mobilisation.

The total gamut of the IMF dictated economic measures constitutes an all round attack on the working class and common people. It will have its impact on the labour policy of the Government also and lead to new offensives on the working class and their trade union rights. The policies not only pose a danger to the country's economic sovereignty, but also to its freedom and independence.

The meeting welcomes the alternative suggestions given by the Left Front Government of W. Bengal and the statement adopted by the left economists' convention in defence of economic sovereignty sponsored by the left parties held at Delhi in July and condemns the Central Government for not accepting the same. The Working Committee calls upon

all affiliated unions to take these alternatives to the mass of the workers.

The Working Committee heartily greets the near total unity forged by the trade unions in W. Bengal against the new economic policy of the Government of India, and takes favourable note of their joint request to central trade unions to organise a day's protest strike.

The Working Committee calls upon the entire working class and trade unions irrespective of political affiliations to unitedly rise to the occasion and launch massive protests and countrywide strike action demanding scrapping of the economic measures. It appeals to all patriotic sections of the people to support the movement in the interest of the nation. It appeals to all sections of people who are adversely affected by the new economic policies of the Government to join and strengthen this movement.

The meeting welcomes the decisions of several central trade unions and federations to jointly organise all India conventions at Delhi of public sector workers and against economic policies of the Government on September 16 and 17 to decide the date for a countrywide industrial strike to protest against the economic measures.

The meeting congratulates the employees and officers in the banking industry for their decision to go on strike on 6th September against the move of privatisation of the banks. It calls upon CITU unions to observe the day along with other unions to oppose the policy of privatisation.

The Working Committee expresses its solidarity with the peasantry who have come out on struggle against the rise in fertilizer prices in various parts of the country.

The meeting welcomes the decision of the Left N. F. parties to organise a countrywide rally of workers and peasants and other mass organisations at Boat Club, Delhi on 27th September to protest against the economic measures. The Working Committee appeals to all sections of workers to join this massive rally in large numbers.

The meeting appeals to all sections of workers and employees in the public and private sector, the Central and State Government employees to join this massive strike action and forge ahead unitedly with further militant actions to uphold the banner of national sovereignty and force the Government to reverse the policies.

Editorial Board

M. K Pandhe (*Chairman*)

P.K. Ganguly (*Working Editor*)

Manoranjan Roy, Niren Ghosh,

M.M. Lawrence, Vimal Ranadive, Ranjit Basu

**Working Committee Meeting
1 to 3 September '91 New Delhi**

Presidential Address

E. Balanandan

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of all of you let me pay homage to the heroic workers of Dalla Cement Factory (U.P.) who fell victims to police bullets during their struggle against privatisation.

In Punjab many more innocent lives have fallen victim to terrorist bullets. Let me pay homage to them on your behalf. The semi-fascist terror unleashed by the Congress(I)—TUJS rule in Tripura continues unabated. With administrative and police connivance, hired goondas and police have killed scores of left-front supporters during the last general elections. Let me pay homage to these martyres on your behalf.

I also pay homage to the memory of all the leaders and cadres of the working class and other democratic movements who departed during this period.

Before proceeding with other issues let me first congratulate Com. Jyoti Basu, our Vice-President, and the Left-Front on your behalf for their magnificent victory in the last general elections. The people of West Bengal have reposed their faith in the Left-Front for a record fourth term which in itself is unique. We are glad to note that the working class centres of West Bengal generally rallied behind the Left-Front and ensured its victory. The government of West Bengal has served the people of the State within the constitutional and other constraints. It has earned them enormous goodwill among the people of the State and the country as a whole. West Bengal once again has emerged as the advanced outpost of democracy in the country.

In our 7th Conference held at Calcutta from 13th to 17th of February, 1991 we had assessed in brief the then prevailing national and international situation. Six months have elapsed since then. Very disturbing developments have taken place in international and national sphere during this period. In the Presidential Address to the 7th Conference, Com. Jyoti Basu referred to the Gulf War and observed among other things that "The issue in this case became the control of the oil rich areas of West Asia; after all the world's 1001.5 billion barrels of proven oil deposits, Saudi Arabia—Iraq, UAE, Kuwait and Iran possess 55 per cent". The United States together with its imperialist allies and supported by many Arab regimes crushed the Iraqi resistance.

While the restoration of independence of Kuwait was demanded by the democratic forces of the world, the real aim of US and other imperialist forces was

not confined merely to get Iraq out of Kuwait's territory. They continue to stifle Iraq under the cover of various UN resolutions and through substantial military penetration into Iraqi territory. They continue to build up their military presence in Middle East in a bid to establish control over the oil rich areas of West Asia. We should not lose sight of the fact that this strategic hold out of imperialists in the Middle East—junction of the three main continents of Europe, Africa and Asia—poses a potential danger to the independence and sovereignty to the countries and peoples of these continents.

The above build up is in addition to their already existing global net-work of more than two thousand military bases which include such giants like those at Deigo Garcia, Clerk-Field, Cubic Bay, etc.

One point needs special mention here. The role played by the USSR in the United Nations' fora in the wake of the Gulf war was one which in effect dove-tailed the US position. It is unfortunate that China also was not consistent in demarcating itself from and effectively setting itself against U. S. intentions.

After the victory of the Gulf War, the USA is now attempting to weaken the PLO, the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The Arab unity has become a casualty especially after the Gulf War. The Organisation of Arab States (OAS) and Arab League are not able to mobilise the Arab nations against the imperialist offensive and encroachments. The new international conference which is proposed to be called, is to by-pass the PLO exploiting the divisions existing among the Arab countries. The attempt is to further weaken the PLO and to widen the disunity among the Arab people. This will further help to consolidate and strengthen the Israeli position.

Non-Aligned Movement Weakened

The Non-Aligned Movement stands weakened today, thanks to the Soviet Union's changed foreign policy perceptions. The unity of the Third World is also weakened today. The counter-revolutionary forces are quite active in Mozambique, Angola and many other African countries. The success of counter revolution in Ethiopia, and the growth of fundamentalist forces in Algeria etc add to the setbacks and reverses to revolutionary and national liberation movements.

The Burmese military clique has refused to transfer power to the elected representatives of the

people and the people's resistance against this is continuing. In Pakistan the elected government of Benazir Bhutto had been toppled and a government under IJI established through a fake election with the backing of the military.

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka continues to worsen with each passing day. The Sri Lankan Government's policy of pitting the LTTE against other Tamil groups and the Sinhala Chauvinists against the Tamils has only compounded matters and resulted in widening the rift. Keeping the Indo-Sri Lankan accord as a basis, a rational solution, within the framework of the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka will have to be found.

Despite the above set backs, some progress was also noted during this period. The victory of national liberation movements like the winning of independence of Namibia; the agreement reached for plebiscite under UN auspices in Western Sahara; the progress being made by the ANC in the fight against apartheid and the advances being registered in the path towards total independence of South African people; the improvement in Kampuchean negotiations; weakening of insurgency in Afghanistan; the emergence of the Communist Party as the second force in Nepal; restoration of democracy and parliamentary system in Bangladesh, the improvement in Indo-Chinese and Sino-Vietnam relations etc are worth mentioning.

The Presidential address to our 7th Conference noting developments in Eastern European countries and observing their clamour for capitalism stated that "But experience alone will teach the people that such a path cannot bring in salvation, however much Western capitalist countries may be encouraging them" (Presidential speech page 4). Today we know that 40 to 50 per cent of the active work force in these countries are unemployed. A system of proper unemployment benefit is still to be introduced in these countries and therefore they are put into very serious difficulties. The prices of essentials of daily use have gone sky high which is a new experience for the people of these countries. They had enjoyed assured employment, free medical care, free, education, subsidised food and housing together with other benefits under socialism. The people who clamoured for change, through their own experience have started realising though gradually the difference between capitalism and socialism and have begun to organise resistance against the attacks on rights hitherto enjoyed by them.

Developments in the Soviet Union

In our 7th Conference we had noted the disturbing developments in the Soviet Union and noted the two conflicting forces at work one for complete disbandment of socialism, and, the other for economic reforms within the framework of socialism. We observed that we can only wait with anxiety to see the results. It also noted that "It's position as a great power vis-a-vis USA has weakened". Now

during the last 6 months the situation has further worsened in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Communist Party leader Mr Gorbachev came out with the treacherous suggestion that they will be giving up Marxism-Leninism—the ideology of the working class—and further they are going to change the Communist Party into a social democratic party. The attempt is to completely submit to bourgeois ideology and trying to facilitate capitalist change over in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, on August 19th early morning came the news that a Emergency Committee has assumed charge of the Soviet administration. This decision was taken, by the whole cabinet including the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, as admitted by Mr Yeltsin.

The progressive people hoped that this will help in strengthening the Soviet Union and the socialist system and stall its slide to disaster. During Gorbachev's absence Mr Yeltsin was daily in contact with Bush. After coming back to Moscow and assuming charge Gorbachev declared that he was resigning from the leadership of the Communist Party and recommended the dissolution of the Party Central Committee which was elected at the 27th Party Congress. In the Russian Parliament he declared that "we need a major regrouping of political forces. We need a reliable government". He has signed an agreement with Yeltsin wherein it is stated that "We have agreed that if one of us cannot carry out his duties then automatically the other immediately takes over his rights". Is it a private business venture? Mr Gorbachev and Yeltsin have mutually given their consent for inheritance to administer the Soviet Union. It is a ridiculous arrangement by all standards.

Activities of the Communist Party have been banned or suspended in many republics. Throughout the USSR anti-communist hysteria is being whipped up which is intended only to pave the way for the restoration of capitalism and weaken the resistance in defence of socialism. Communist Party offices and properties have been sealed and seized by the authorities in many republics. The chosen heir of Mr Gorbachev, Mr Yeltsin has banned the party from functioning in the factories and services in the Russian Republic. The Communist Party is under attack throughout the Soviet Union. Mr Gorbachev who is talking of legal functioning ousted Lukhyanov from the Chairmanship of the Supreme Soviet without any reference to the Supreme Soviet. This is the sort of democracy that the Western powers have been clamouring for. The so called Union Treaty which was to be signed on the 20th August contained the following dangerous provisions :

In the sphere of economy, foreign trade, banking and finances, Gorbachev gave concessions to alter the balance in favour of the republics. Taxation is given as the exclusive preserve of the republics. The central budget requires the clearance from the republics and the foreign trade is left to the control of the republics.

If this so called union treaty was signed on August 20th, it would have completely emasculated the power of the Soviet Union and with the republics being given more powers than the centre it would have definitely gone against the very existence of the Soviet Union itself. However, now, this process is being made easy by the anti-communist frenzy which is being whipped up.

The process of disintegration has already set in motion—the three Baltic Republics have already declared their independence followed by Ukraine, Byelorussia and Moldavia. Georgia and Armenia had already declared their non-acceptance of the Draft Union Treaty.

Ethnic strife within Soviet Union has also reached enormous proportions. The policy being pursued of late—disbandment of the Communist Party—closure and seizure of party offices and properties, desecration of respected and esteemed Bolshevik leaders' statues and symbols are nothing but a full scale attempt by counter revolutionary forces to roll back the history of the last 70 years.

The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 radically changed the destiny of the entire mankind. It gave birth to the first socialist state, brought into existence the first non-exploitative society, liberating one sixth of the world from capitalism and other exploitative systems, embracing in it more than eight per cent of world population, thus translating into reality the cherished dream of emancipation of the oppressed, exploited and downtrodden. It sent waves of enthusiasm across the world and inspired the working class and the oppressed and enslaved people of the world to rise against exploitation and enslavement. After the emergence of Soviet Union there came into existence two worlds—one of socialism and the other of capitalism. The first socialist state—Soviet Union—from its inception has been acting as the king pin of the expanding world of democracy, freedom, peace and progress for the whole of humanity. Soviet Union with its magnificent victories in defending and developing socialism continuously defeating the game of imperialism and world reaction to suppress it, had been the main source of inspiration to the working class the world over and the liberation movements in the colonial countries.

In a short span of time after revolution in backward Russia, a powerful socialist state was built up by the Soviet people under the leadership of Com. Stalin and CPSU on the foundation laid by Com. Lenin and Bolshevik Party and registered progress with zooming speed in almost all spheres of social life, clearly establishing the superiority of socialist system on capitalism or any other system mankind has known so far.

The Soviet people and CPSU led by Com. Stalin decisively defeated the fiercest military power of that time—Nazi Germany and its axis forces—and saved

the entire humanity and prevented from setting up the clock of history backwards.

The historic anti-fascist victory paved the way for a winning spree of many a national liberation movements of Asia, Africa and Latin America, liberating the people of these countries throwing away the centuries old colonial yoke to the dust bins of history. Soviet Union, despite the fact that on its economy the war had a devastating effect, could make up for the losses in an astonishingly short period after the war and elevated its position to effectively repel and counter every threat from the imperialist forces. It was again the towering leadership of Soviet Union that served as a main source of inspiration for the Great Chinese Revolution which brought the most populous country of the world into the fold of socialism. It again gave electrifying inspiration to the peoples of backward Korea and Vietnam to brave the military might of US and other imperialist powers to give them ignominious defeat. In the post war period it was the immense assistance of Soviet Union that helped most of the newly independent countries of the Third World to resist neo-colonial exploitation that is being perpetuated on them by imperialist powers.

It helped to bring honour and prestige to the Non-Aligned Movement. And it was again that pioneer socialist state that saved the entire humanity from a nuclear holocaust by acting as the bulwark for world peace defeating the nefarious tactics of the war mongers of the imperialist camp.

Till early 50s, even though some grave mistakes were committed in the process of dealing with the problems of development of socialism in a single country, the leadership given by Soviet Union to the working class the world over and to the peace and freedom loving people of the world in their fight against exploitation and subjugation and war was unparalleled. But for this the present day world could not have achieved the amount of freedom and the level of progress and peace that exists now.

Now the new developments in the Soviet Union constitute a setback not only for socialism, but for the whole humanity since it is going back from the path they travelled for 70 years in changing the world for social progress and for the good of humanity and again now it is going backwards to capitalism leaving everything to be decided by the United States, the only super power in the world today. All the Third World countries will be put into difficulties. The world capitalist system controlled and led by the transnationals will now hold their sway in the Third World and the underdeveloped areas of the world for expansion of their market and will keep these areas backward. So again a chapter is being opened for the re-emergence of imperialism with the danger of direct intervention and suppression for the Third World.

Through internal subversion imperialism and

capitalism have succeeded in rolling several socialist countries back to capitalism. But the faith of the working class in its scientific ideology remains unshaken, undaunted. It rests upon its shoulders to unflinchingly uphold the socialist ideology. The working class will have to win back sections which may have got disillusioned by the developments during the last two years.

Though the imperialists are boasting of the benefits of capitalism, no capitalist country in the world could provide a better life for the majority of its people. Not only is unemployment on the increase in the developed capitalist countries, but massive cuts also are being engineered on the social security benefits achieved by the workers through big battles. Now an attempt is being made to cut down welfare measures under the argument that they are not contributing to improvement in production and productivity. The income of the lowest strata of the people in these countries are declining and the people living under poverty line is on the increase. The President of the US, Mr George Bush has opposed publicly the 5.5 billion dollars proposal introduced by the Democrats in the American Congress for extending the unemployment benefits for 4 more weeks. In the World Bank report it is stated that the economic crisis in the capitalist world is still continuing. Therefore, the argument that capitalism can provide a permanent alternative for the improved life of the people is wrong. It is not proved by experience and socialism has proved otherwise too. Therefore, the going back of Soviet Union to capitalism is a dangerous signal to the working class the world over and also a danger signal to the Third World countries in general. The emergence of American imperialism as the only super power in the world is a very serious development. Comrades, the capitalist countries even while being united in their onslaught against socialism, are quarrelling amongst themselves for domination. With the unification of Germany, fears of its growing economic might have arisen. The Japanese already ahead in the electronic industry have now virtually invaded the US car market, compelling the US to impose restrictions. The inter-imperialist contradiction is bound to further intensify in the coming days.

At this crucial juncture one cannot forget the fact that India, since independence deeply owes for many things for which we can really be proud of this pioneer socialist country—Soviet Union. Pakistan, with the strong backing of US imperialism, when tried to use the UN forum to tear Kashmir apart from India, it was Soviet Union who vetoed it down and it had consistently stood with us on the Kashmir issue.

The developed capitalist countries who refused to give any assistance to our efforts to build up our economy during the period immediately after independence, showed willingness to help only when Soviet Union came out with the real helping hand to provide us with core industrial sectors like steel, heavy engineering, oil, power etc which formed the

basis for a self-reliant economic development. It was the socialist Soviet Union who came for our rescue and dissipated the threat posed by the 7th Fleet of US Navy during the days of Bangladesh liberation.

The Neo-Colonial Plunder and the New Offensive

Comrades, you know that four-fifths of the world's population are living in the under-developed countries. They have still to grapple with the various kinds of backwardness accrued out of their hundreds of years of colonial past. They have just started limping towards progress. They are burdened with a colossal sum of \$ 1500 billion which they have to pay back to the World Bank and IMF. This is the case of many of the countries where the debt servicing eat away more than fifty percent of the foreign exchange earnings.

The New International Economic Order (NIEO) proclaimed by the UN envisaged 'transfer of resources from the developed areas to the underdeveloped' on the basis of mutual trust, respect for sovereignty of each nation, etc. But the World Order now being aimed at by the US is based on total negation of the above concept. Their real aim is to establish global hegemony of imperialism. The 'bank fund' is being used as a major driving force to perpetuate neo-colonial domination over the Third World by the imperialists. The idea of transfer of developed world's resources to underdeveloped areas is replaced with unequal competition. Comrades, the IMF and World Bank are organically linked. No country can borrow from the World Bank, unless it is a member of the IMF. The philosophy of IMF as shaped by the developed capitalist countries, among whom in the power structure of IMF the US possesses a unique status, is based on dogmatic prescriptions of the devaluation, liberalised trade and industrial policies, privileged treatment to foreign capital cut backs in public investment and withdrawal of all subsidies etc. This approach is closely linked to the interests of the dominant countries on the Board of IMF. The IMF's decision making structure is based on a quota system which determines the voting power. Major decisions of the Fund need a 70 per cent majority with 85 per cent of votes. The significance of the 85 per cent rule is that it gives the US, which retains 19.5% of votes, in effect veto power with the US.

Comrades, now you can see why double standards are adopted by the Bank-Fund people, while dealing with the developed countries and under-developed countries. IMF imposes no conditionalities on US and tolerated massive and chronic trade and fiscal deficits in the US, a country which now has the largest deficit in the world. But IMF is intolerant to the much smaller deficits of the Third World. Experience hitherto gained by almost all the Third World countries show that the IMF conditionalities have had on them the effect of slowing down growth, increasing dependence on the developed countries, undermining national economic institutions, cutting subsidies directed at the poor, chopping down welfare

measures, drastic reduction of real wages, etc.

The IMF has been wide off the mark in forecasts of the beneficial effects of its policies. In the Indian case the IMF's projections made at the time of 1981 loan, of the total debt, interest payment and debt servicing for the rest of the decade have totally gone wrong. The failure is documented in cases in countries like Brazil, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Jamaica, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Lesotho, Ghana, etc some of which have already fallen into the debt trap. IMF is not oriented to tackle any of the genuine problems being faced by the Third World. It is in fact operated in a way that it is quite detrimental to the basic interests of underdeveloped countries. At present the world capitalist economy especially that of the highly industrialised countries is passing through a deep and complex crisis. The imperialist powers are trying to transfer the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the peoples of the Third World and thus to tide over the crisis while increasing attack against their own workers and people. Here I am not attempting to dilate the various aspects of the current capitalist crisis. But this very fact has been admitted, inter alia, in the World Bank's development report for the year 1991. The report says *"increasing exposure to external influences undoubtedly puts the developing countries at risk. High industrial country fiscal deficits, potentially high international interest rates, weaknesses in the financial institutions in the United States, deterioration of some aspects of the financial situation in Japan, and protracted and inconclusive negotiations in the Uruguay round of trade talks will all take their toll"* (P.3 WB DR 1991).

It is in this background one has to view the gravity of the present situation created by the Cong (I) government by treading on a dangerous path by taking recourse to dependence on IMF loan surrendering to its humiliating conditionalities. The various aspects of the conditionalities and consequent changes made in the various policies of the government and its ongoing impact on our socio-economic life etc are dealt in detail in General Secretary's report. We have to take initiative alongwith other trade unions to mobilise the entire working class and give the lead to bring together all patriotic forces in the country to check and foil the attempt, the imperialist designs aimed at undermining our economic sovereignty, self-reliance and growth, as economy in the final analysis decides the polity. The dangers inherent in these policies threatening our very existence as an independent sovereign nation has to be brought out and widely propagated.

I have already dealt at length the immediate consequences of the setback suffered by the socialist system, the neo-colonial offensive of imperialism and the dangers inherent in toeing the IMF line by the government of India.

The secessionist challenge in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam continues unabated. Pakistani rulers

backed by US imperialism are openly aiding and abetting the separatists in Punjab and Kashmir. With the ULFA menace rising in Assam, a dangerous situation has been created in the State.

The secular character of our Republic, the very basis of the country's unity is seriously being threatened by the development of communal forces. Not only they are dividing the people on communal lines, but also threaten the unity of the working class.

With utmost contempt for democracy and democratic institutions, the Congress(I)—TUJS government in Tripura continues in its attempt to stifle the Left Front supporters. The semifascist terror unleashed by it sees no signs of respite.

Therefore, the fight for democracy, for national unity, assumes special importance. In order to meet the challenges—the attack against working class ideology, self-reliant economic development, national unity and integrity, democracy and national independence, the trade unions have to gear up and achieve the maximum possible unity. Besides, the consequences of the implementation of new economic policies will further aggravate all the ills—more closures, retrenchments, lay off, wage cut, denial or curtailment of welfare measure—will become the salient features. Hike in prices has already started which according to the present trend can even be double that of last year. The CITU should take the initiative in mobilising all the trade unions to fight back this dangerous situation.

The CITU Secretariat has already taken steps to mobilise the trade unions for common action against the IMF dictated policies pursued by the government. A convention of the Central Trade Unions is being organised on 17th Sept. for forging broadest unity and chalking out a programme of action.

It would also go in for joint action with all those progressive forces who are coming forward to fight against the impending danger to the nation. Therefore, we have decided to join hands with the Left Parties and participate in the massive demonstration at Delhi on 27th September 1991.

Comrades, the working class should stand as the front-rank fighters to counter the attacks on our national unity and the infringement of our sovereignty. Our working committee should therefore take steps and mobilise the whole working class to effectively intervene and fight back these retrograde policies.

Before I close, I wish to say by way of caution—that the totality of the situation is pregnant with serious dangers. The attack against democratic rights including the trade union rights cannot be ruled out since world imperialism has been given a greater say in our politics—reply has to be strong united resistance.