

Presidential Address

Working Committee Meeting

Chandigarh, December 1-3, 1987

Comrades,

AT the outset all of us should pay homage to the memory of all those who fell fighting in Punjab carrying out the sacred task of defending the unity of our mother land. For the last three years or more Punjab has been the battle ground between the disruptors of national unity and the defenders of Indian freedom and unity.

A large number of our heroic comrades from the CITU, CPI(M), DYFI, and SFI from the AITUC and CPI have fallen victims to the anti-national assassins' bullets. Among them there are people whom I knew personally. I honour the memory of Com. Chanan Singh Dhoot, Member of the State Committee of CPI(M), a long standing leader of the people of Punjab. I honour the memory of Com. Darshan Singh of CPI whom I also knew personally. I pay homage to the memory of Deepak Dhawan, an young DYFI leader and all others who courageously carried on the work of protecting Hindu Sikh unity. I also honour the memory of all those who irrespective of their political affiliation were gunned down by the secessionists. And we should also not forget the police jawans and officers who laid down their lives fighting the terrorist menace to eliminate this source of disruption.

Comrades you all are aware that our CITU suffered a grievous loss in the sad and untimely demise of our well-loved comrade Nrishingha Chakraborty who for years fulfilled with great credits his responsibilities as a Secretary of our organisation. Having

worked with him for the last few years I could personally see what mettle this ex-Railway worker was made of. A man of gifted intelligence, of versatile grasp of deep devotion and strict discipline Com. Nrishingha could despatch ten men's work in a day. Very rarely one comes across such combination of knowledge of our movement, discipline and devotion. The CITU has suffered a big loss. The loss of the country's railway movement is equally big.

Comrades, we are meeting a month after the 70th anniversary celebration of the Great Socialist October Revolution. That great transformatory event has put its impact on world history by the successive changes inspired by it. On the 70th anniversary the Soviet working class and people have decided to open new period of still more rapid advance, diffusion of well being among the people and fuller participation of all in socialist building activities. The 15 year plan of quicker development, when the capitalist world is crashing, is a fresh reassertion of the superiority of socialist system. The CITU wishes the Soviet working class and people further successes in economic achievements and spread of socialist democracy.

The 70 years of October revolution have further demonstrated that the socialist system is a ceaseless defender of world peace, a ceaseless opponent of war. The pursuit of a foreign policy based on equality and freedom of all nations, opposition to war, and annexation and domination, and settlements of international disputes through the negotiations is the outcome of proletarian internationalism taught by Marx and carried forward by Lenin through his decree on peace. The CITU and India's working class pay tribute to this persistent endeavour of the Soviet Union for safeguarding world peace. The CITU hopes that sense will dawn on the American imperialists and all obstacles in the way of successful conclusion of negotiations on intermediate missiles will be removed. The CITU unions must pledge to fight for the cause of world peace and strengthen Soviet efforts to avert a nuclear war and save humanity from destruction.

Comrades, the CITU must send its warm greetings to the working class and the fighting people of Bangladesh who are carrying on a just struggle against the military dictatorial rule of General Ershad. The military regime has launched unheard of repression, illegalised the Communist Party and arrested two women leaders of the movement Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khal-

ida.

The CITU is confident that the working class of Bangladesh will discharge its historic responsibility in this struggle and enable the democratic forces to get rid of military rule and clear the way for a popular government. The CITU strongly condemns the killings of democratic fighters and expresses its deep sympathy for the victims of this military terror.

Comrades, the developments in Sri Lanka have naturally caused lot of concern among the people. The Indian Peace Keeping Force which was despatched to protect the Tamils from repression and to secure their just demands is now pitted against the LTTE, a militant organisation of Tamils. In some sections there is a demand that IPKF should be immediately withdrawn. These people are totally blind to the game that imperialism is playing in Sri Lanka. The attempt to settle the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka by means of an accord between the two countries was not liked by imperialist forces though they pretended to support it. With the signing of the accord, the initiative for settling the dispute passed into the hands of the two government removing the possibility of outside intervention. If the accord had been fully implemented it would have been a great victory of the friendship between two non-aligned countries and a defeat for the interventionists, destabilising forces of imperialism. Those who are fighting the accord and denouncing it, the LTTE, the Sinhalese chauvinists, all are objectively helping imperialist intervention in Sri Lanka. This ugly situation would not have developed had the LTTE not gone back on its word, and repudiated the accord which they solemnly accepted. There is no doubt that its leadership has fallen victim to suspicious and external forces and it is voicing the same charges against India as are voiced by the openly pro-American wing in Sri Lanka led by the Prime Minister of the country. The withdrawal of the IPKF will only mean a open license for the massacre of Tamil civilians by interventionist mercenary forces whom the reactionaries will call on to handle the situation. As matters stand the IPKF has been handling the situation with great concern for the life and safety of civilians.

Nonetheless it has to be realised that this is an extremely ugly situation in which the peace keeping force has to use its weapons against the LTTE. But if during the course of its peace keeping operations the IPKF is not able to rely growingly on the sympathy

of civilian Tamil population, if it is not able to growingly rally popular opinion in its support, then its mission must be deemed to have failed and then it will have to be withdrawn. And that will mean a terrific political and diplomatic defeat for the people of the two countries and a terrific gain for the interventionists and their allies.

Comrades, the economic situation in our country which was already critical and full of distress for our people may take a further sudden plunge in view of uncertainty in the capitalist world. The people of our country are faced with great uncertainty and the working class which is already suffering from retrenchment, lockouts and unemployment is likely to face more severe challenges in the near future.

It seems that the capitalist world is repeating the story of 1929 when in the midst of an outlook for increased prosperity it was faced with the biggest depression in history. Just on the eve of 1929 crisis the American President promised to that world that the USA was looking forward to a boundless era of prosperity. Again after so many years the same story is repeated. The American economy had shattered all previous records by entering upon in October 59th month of continuous expansion and no body thought that the end was in sight. Unemployment rate was reduced to 5.9 per cent, lowest since 1979 and indications of economic growth were there. And then suddenly came the stock exchange crash affecting the entire capitalist world, leading to huge losses and uncovering the soft belly of the economy. There is already panic in the market and there is serious debate whether this stock exchange crisis is a precursor of another great depression. Hasty measures are being taken but they do not seem to affect the downward trend. Economists are pinning down American budget deficits, higher interest rates, fall in dollar's value, and the systematic policy pursued by the USA Government as the source of the present uncertainties. But this leaves the basic causes out of sight. They are the domination of monopolies over the Governments of the advanced capitalist countries, the emergence of state monopoly capitalism under which the state intervenes in the economy to protect the monopolists, the emergence of a military industrial complex mainly in the USA which for its own selfish interests demands huge expenditure on military and destructive weapons, the increased strength of multinationals which introduce a further element of anarchy in the

international situation, the accentuation of the market crisis because of one third of the world going socialist out of the orbit of imperialist exploitation, the impediments in the way of inhibited looting of the backward countries following the collapse of old colonial system inspite of the fact that many of these countries have been caught in the debt trap.

The crisis is further sharpened by the uneven development of productive forces in the capitalist countries with the vanquished powers—Japan and Germany dominating the scene more than the victor powers—the USA and UK. It is difficult to imagine that the capitalist world will find an easy way to get out of the present predicament. And any upheaval affecting the western capitalist world is bound to affect India.

Drought and flood affecting a greater part of the country have complicated the situation still further. The huge loss of agricultural production is bound to affect industrial production, the loss of purchasing power in rural areas is bound to affect the demand for industrial goods and add to the crisis of the economy. Already the World Bank estimates that this year the growth rate in GNP will be zero, and the deficit in the balance of payment will be higher by one million dollars than earlier. India has once more to depend on rescue operation from this world agency. An additional loan of 300 million dollars is proposed to be given to ensure that "normal development" as envisaged by the World Bank is not prejudiced. What onerous terms will be laid down for this charitable operation, no one knows. In any case the Bank has already laid down the main frame-work of do's and don'ts for the operation of Indian economy. And the Rajiv Government's policy closely follows it.

The direction in which the World Bank is pressuring the Government is clear from the World Development Report, 1987: "The capacity licensing system has constrained competition between domestic industry and led to high rejection rate long delays and changing sub-section priorities making it a significant barrier to entry and growth." This is nothing but a call for complete deregulation of the economy and giving a free hand to monopolists and multinationals, to compete with others and ruin them.

It is recently reported in the Press that the Rajiv govt. had already made a blue print to meet these exorbitant demands of the World Bank. The new concessions it seems called for dismantling of the licensing system, relaxation of controls on monopoly houses,

more encouragement to foreign investment and import of technology. As a result of the proposed relaxation only 2 to 3 hundred of the larger companies would for the time being be subject to some control.

But the political atmosphere following the Bofors scandal forced the Government to defer the announcement of the new concession it was reported.

The pursuit of this policy for the last two years the policy of liberalisation, lower taxation for industry, pandering of self confessed black marketeers and smugglers of foreign exchange abroad have brought no relief to the crisis ridden economy. Even the planned targets have proved difficult to achieve. The Annual Report of the RBI says that during April 1986-87 that rate of growth decelerated in the manufacturing sector to 7.2 per cent from 10.6 per cent achieved during the corresponding period of the previous year. In the manufacturing section the engineering group of industries for which data are available till October reveals that the growth rate was halved to 6.7 per cent compared with that of 13.2 per cent during the corresponding period of the previous year. The other two sectors, mining and quarrying, the electricity generation reached higher growth rate. The composite growth of six infrastructure industries reached a lower growth rate of 7.4 per cent of the full financial year 1986-87 as compared with 7.9 per cent in the previous year. In addition the target and growth for all infrastructure industries which was fixed at 9.5 per cent for the year could not be achieved.

All the measures of liberalisation failed to bring relief to sick industries or the retrenched workers. The RBI report 1986-87 says "industrial sickness among the small, medium and large scale units continues to rise. This is causing concern due to its repercussions on the entire economy. According to available data as on the end of June 1986 the total number of units identified by Banks as sick rose to 1,30,606 with an outstanding bank credit of Rs 4,665 crores, accounting for 8.54 per cent of total bank credit or 17 per cent of bank credit to Industry (small, medium and large)".

Since June 1986 how many more have gone sick no body know. It is obvious that the malady of the economy cannot be cured by providing incentives to the capitalists while leaving the basic masses denuded.

The effect of this policy is seen in the growing distress of the

people, large scale unemployment and rapidly growing assets of the monopolists. Unemployment has increased to 3 crores and more; crores in the rural areas do not get regular jobs. Lakhs of educated men and women are unemployed. But all this does not stop the process of more concentration of wealth and capital in the hands of the monopolists. The Minister of State for Industrial development told the Lok Sabha recently that the assets of top 20 large industrial houses in the country increased by 18.7 per cent and 29.5 per cent during 1984-85 respectively over the preceding years. The assets of the top monopoly houses have increased from Rs. 13,103 crores in 1983 to Rs 15,448 crores in 1984 and to Rs 20,136 crores in 1985. Between two years the assets have increased by more than 50 per cent. No wonder the World Bank and foreign banks are praising the Indian govt. for the prudent management of the economy.

The assets of the first five top houses are as follows: BIRLA Rs 4,111 crores; TATA Rs 3,698 crores; THAPAR (a name which recently earned distinction): 1,067 crores; JK SINGHANIA : 1.057 crores; RELIANCE : 954 crores.

It is known that some of these gentry indulge in smuggling foreign exchange abroad. Hundreds of crores worth Indian foreign exchange is sent abroad using various devices. Rajiv Gandhi was rattled when one of these scoundrels was caught and asked to pay the penalty. What follows from this is the worsening condition of the economy prolonged closures, lock outs, forcible retirements and loss of jobs.

The figures recently released from West Bengal shows that 15 out of 56 jute mills remained closed in 1987. 19 jute mills were under lock outs, 12 were locked out in 1987 and 7 were under lock out from earlier year. Out of 39 cotton mills as many as 8 were under lock outs.

The demand for nationalisation of jute industry supported by all political parties of W. Bengal including the Congress-I has been rejected by the Central Govt. The central govt besides is unable to stop the competition from artificial fibres notwithstanding some measures which it recently announced. Both the jute peasants and jute workers are placed in an adverse position by the policies of the Central Govt. Equally bad is the lot of the cotton growers from Maharashtra and other states and the textile workers under the Central Govt. policy. The competition from artificial fibres has

affected the interests of the India's cotton growers, and the peasants are demanding that their interests should be protected. The reduction of prices for cotton when prices of other commodities are rising, the reduction of guaranteed prices to the level of support prices in Maharashtra has led to sharp discontent among the cotton growers.

So far the workers are concerned the new textile policy of the govt. has brought them no relief. The government is preparing to close some of the sick mills which have been taken over. It tried to fool the workers by asking them to run some of these mills by organising labour cooperatives. The trade unions have rightly rejected the proposals knowing its futility in the present conditions. The CITU must warn the workers against similar measures in other industries. Workers in some of the closed factories were persuaded by management to convert the arrears of their wages into the equity capital as a condition for reopening the factory. The workers accepted the proposal but the result was that they lost their claims over arrears and the factory also was not opened.

The NTC Mill authorities are trying to play same tricks on the workers in pursuance of World Bank pressure to return the taken off mills or close them. The official committee has formally recommended that 8 mills should be closed. The new strategy recently announced consists of attractive "voluntary" retirement scheme which will force hundreds of workers into unemployment. Secondly, there will be a drive for modernisation, import of more sophisticated looms. "There is excess capacity with the NTC which will have to be pruned if long term economic viability and profitability are to be achieved," the Deputy Minister for Textile is reported to have said. It is sheer madness to talk of excess capacity when half of India goes semi-naked and cloth consumption per head is actually less than what it was some years back.

To add to the woes of the workers, the unemployed and rural masses, prices of all commodities are continuously on the rise making nonsense of wage increases, increased incomes and family budgets. And what else can one expect if the purchasing power of the rupee is reduced to 9.7 paise. There is no seasonal fall in prices this year. Besides the effect of drought conditions is just starting. But the price spiral is progressing towards a double digit inflation. The prices of daily necessities are on the constant rise. The whole sale commodities prices for the week ended on 25 Oct. increased by

8.2 per cent over the 1987 March end figure. The present high prices follow on the increase of the earlier years and heap immense distress on the people. In this period edible oils rose by 30.6 per cent, foodgrains by 7.5 per cent and milk product by 12.3 per cent.

Naturally the consumer price index for industrial workers rose in September by 10.2 per cent over the corresponding month of last year. The CPI index rose by 8.5 per cent in the first half of 1986 it increased by 8.8 per cent in the first half of 1987-88. The worst sufferers are the agri-workers and the workers in unorganised industries who have no protection against the rising cost of living. The mass of factory workers and employees are also defrauded because the compensation provided is inadequate. To deprive them further the Central Govt now seeks to impose a new cost of living index series on the workers which will reduce the DA through statistical falsification. The CITU and other trade union organisations have rejected this new series.

Increased prices, cut in DA and increased unemployment—these are the weapons which are being increasingly used to “steady” the economy in the interest of big capitalists and multinationals.

Comrades, it is against this tortuous situation that the working class of our country has been fighting. And it must be admitted that it has been heroically waging the battle in the most difficult circumstances. A total of 819 industrial disputes resulting in work stoppages were reported during January to July 1987. In these disputes 10,33,000 workers involved and 1,30,29,000 man days were lost. During the comparative period of 1986 that is from January to July 1986 there were 1130 industrial disputes, with 9,57,000 workers were involved and 1,55,75,000 man days were lost. This shows the tenacity of the trade union struggle and speaks highly of the militancy and organised discipline of the workers even when faced by the most adverse circumstances.

Comrades, while referring to strikes I cannot but mention certain special features connected with the strikes of the employees of the Indian Express in Delhi. The strike arising from bonus was misrepresented deliberately as a conspiracy to hit at the Indian Express because of its exposure of Govt corruption. Several leaders of political parties joined in condemning the strike falling victim to the mendacious propaganda of the Editor of the paper. Those who proclaimed that they were defending the freedom of press had no hesitation in stifling the voice of the workers indulging in misinfor-

mation and taking a hand in breaking the strike with police help. It is a matter of shame that the Editor of the paper himself tried to organise strike breaking while chanting about freedom of press. Leaders of a political party in the name of defending the freedom of Indian Express also lent their hand in breaking the strike. When their actions were exposed they hastily retreated and saw that they were mere spectators but not participants who condemned these strike breaking operations and also the attitude of certain political parties' leaders deserve congratulation. But this episode should show that some of those who speak in the name of freedom of press do not accept the workers' right to organise and fight for their causes. The CITU while it stands in support of freedom of press cannot ignore that the owners of many papers as a profit making concern. It also warns the workers that while they should oppose Government action against press freedom they should also know that concentration of papers and press in the hands of monopoly often leads to misinformation and use of press agency to subserve the purpose of the monopolists.

Comrades,

Resistance to Rajiv's policies is now coming from all sections of employees and workers. In recent days public sector workers and their organisations have been fighting unitedly for their demands. They recently succeeded in securing the desired interim relief, the same that has been given to the officers. This was a big victory though the Government is now trying to deprive them of a part of the relief. Besides, the government has refused to pay interim relief to the engineering, cement, jute and cotton textile workers in West Bengal on the plea that they are covered by tripartite settlement or Wage Board' recommendations. It is totally discriminatory and violative of the agreement arrived at with the Central Trade Unions. All the central trade unions including the INTUC called for indefinite strike from November 23. The CITU has called for solidarity actions all over India in support of the strike. In recent times the officers of the public sector have also shown greater awareness and activities in defence of their rights and demands, this augurs well for the trade union movement. There must be close cooperation between the organisations of workers and of the officers. Both must fight Govt's attempt to import American expertise and training for management.

Besides the public sector workers other sections including the state government employees have been in the field defending their rights. The heroic strike of the Haryana State Government employees, of the U. P. employees, which withstood the terror and intimidation of the State Governments showed great sense of unity and solidarity and determination on the part of the employees.

Equally outstanding was the strike of university and college teachers. It brought together in an unprecedented wave of unity teachers from several universities and colleges. Such all India unity of teachers was never witnessed before. The strike was heading for a thumping victory. But because of bad and opportunist leadership it was virtually betrayed. The game of the Government to divide the college teachers from the university teachers succeeded. The leadership without consulting the broader executive entered into a deal with the Government and thereby created disruption in the ranks of the teachers. This should be a lesson to all. During the strike it is essential that all decisions are taken democratically and especially negotiations and power to take decisions is not concentrated in the hands of few a people.

Comrades, the economic policy of the Rajiv Government encourages the multinationals to penetrate Indian economy. At our Bombay Session we noted how this is affecting Indian industry and leading to loss of jobs for the workers. The process continues. What must be noted is that the multinationals are getting bolder and bolder in their arrogances and designs. The Drug multinationals are ignoring all legal controls inspite of several concessions given to them by a willing Government. The Indian Drug producers are complaining that they have no protection against the powerful multinationals. These powerful multinationals sell harmful drugs to the Indian people—preparations of which are prohibited in their countries as dangerous to the health of people. And now the Govt. of India has succumbed to the power of Union Carbide company and it is reported that it is accepting a shameful deal betraying the interests of thousands of Bhopal sufferers. The Government had submitted a claim of total 3 billion dollars for damages due to the Bhopal Gas disaster. Hundreds of people have died, thousands have been crippled, nearly two lakhs have suffered. It was expected that the claim for compensation will be properly pursued, besides those whose criminal negligence led to disaster will be punished. But now for reasons best known to it the Government

has come down and is prepared to accept compensation in the range of 500 to 600 million dollars payable in 20 years. And of course no one is going to be punished. This is a shameful climb down before a powerful multinational company and it should be denounced by all people. It however shows how the machinations of a multinational company can prevail against a sovereign Government.

Comrades, the challenge of the secessionist forces is very acute in Punjab and the democratic forces in the state are putting a courageous fight to defend our country's unity. The problem is complicated by the criminal opportunism of Rajiv Gandhi Government which dismissed the Barnala Ministry when it was taking a firmer stand against Khalistani terrorists and religious bigotry. With this Barnala and his ministry could have played a political role and isolating the secessionists from the Sikh masses. But due to opportunist consideration of winning Haryana elections the Government was dismissed and the problem was further complicated. The CITU must congratulate our CITU cadres here and our trade unions in maintaining the unity of working class and fighting the onslaught of the secessionists. I have already referred the sacrifices made by the CITU and other organisations. There is no doubt that because of the activities of the CITU, the working class of Punjab is more and more emerging as a unifying force. In fact without such a role of the working class no newly liberated country can save its unity. The working class of the CITU is learning to discharge its responsibility in this connection. In West Bengal it not only acts as a deterrent against communal poison but also defends the country's unity against the secessionists Gorkha Land agitation. In Assam it has played a heroic role in fighting the secessionist movement and has sacrificed many lives. In Tamilnadu in fights the anti-national Tamil chauvinists who seek to rouse Tamil chauvinism in connection with Sri Lankan developments and safeguarded the unity of the country and its class. In Kerala it is known that last election was fought on the basis of fighting communalism and exposing congress opportunist compromises with the communal forces. This is a good beginning for the working class because the growing challenge of communal secessionists, and regional forces can be met only by the growing unity of the working class and its fight for uniting the democratic forces against the forces of disruption.

Comrades, in this struggle for unity against imperialist machinations, against the anti-democratic and anti-people policies of the Cong(I) Govt the three left front govts of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura stand as advanced outposts and the entire working class must recognise their role and lend full support to them. The Congress(I) Party and the Prime Minister himself indulges in all kinds of slanders against these govts and seek to create a difficult situation for them utilising their hold over resources. The Cong(I) party and the Central govt are looking upon drought and flood relief measures as their election propaganda and therefore refuse to give substantial help to these states. In Tripura they are organising loan mela which is nothing but an attempt to purchase electoral votes and not to give help to the needy. In Tripura besides they are trying to influence election by creating a law and order situation and joining hands with the notorious TNV which indulges in murder and arson and perpetually create a law and order problem. And the Congress(I) Party knows that it cannot win the Tripura elections by fair means. Therefore it is resorting to these illegal means.

Comrades, our country is passing through a severe period of drought and flood. Millions of our people are in distress and they are helplessly dependent for relief on administration and Central Govt which is notorious for corruption. It is obvious that those who are tard with corruption in defence deals cannot be trusted with the administration of relief to the drought stricken. Political parties and mass organisations must demand that the relief agencies should be handled by representatives of political parties and mass organisation, so that its distribution is free from partisanship, mismanagement and corruption. This alone will ensure that the intended relief actually reaches the people.

Comrades,

In this connection we must all welcome the decision of mass organisations of the Left Parties to organise a march to Delhi proclaiming the demands of the peasantry, sponsoring the demands of right to work and other demands. It is an unprecedented effort to unite all mass organisations. It will bring together masses of students, youth, women, agricultural workers and workers—all for settlement of immediate urgent demands and above all for securing the resignation of Rajiv Gandhi Government. The de-

mand of Rajiv's resignation is now acquiring general mass support because of the reactionary economic policies, the corruption scandals and Rajiv's opportunist compromises with communal reactionary forces to advance the interests of his party.

The low level of some Congress (I) leaders was seen in Rajasthan where neither the Congress(I) Government nor the Congress(I) leaders took a firm stand against Sati burning. To hide their surrender before orthodox pressure they passed an ordinance prescribing execution for Sati burning. This was a device to cover their impotence in the implementation of the ordinary law. In passing it, it should be noted that the leaders of the almost all bourgeois parties—the Lok Dal, Janata, BJP, bowed down before this murderous practice justifying it as a part of religion and warning against government's intervention. After forty years of independence India preserves all old evils except that of cannibalism. The working class must see how all bourgeois parties have failed on this occasion notwithstanding their protestations that they fight for liberties of people and freedom of women.

The opportunist compromising policy of Rajiv Gandhi does not end here. Of late there have been repeated negotiations with the US imperialists on matters of defence equipment, light combat aircraft, when that country is pouring sophisticated arms into Pakistan. Rajiv Gandhi's recent visit to USA has strengthened this policy of securing US help in defence matters. This is a very dangerous trend because it will make India vulnerable to American pressure and also enable the CIA agencies to penetrate our defence secrets. Besides there is now another project of sending Indian officials to get themselves trained in American expertise in administration and transfer this expertise to our officers. We know what American expertise consists of. The CIA shows that expertise consists of cheating the elected authorities and treating of people with suspicion and as enemies of the Government of the existing order. These developments naturally follow from the pressures exercised by the World Bank because of the new economic policy. They threaten to undermine the well-tested policies of non-alignment. The USA in particular directs its pressure against this policy of non-alignment especially India's policy of friendly relations with the USSR and other socialist countries. It knows that India's friendship with socialist countries and the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation strengthen Indian security and Indian

independence and enables India to meet the threat and blackmail practice by Pakistan with the help of USA.

The demands for Rajiv's resignation follows from all these opportunistic and anti-national manoeuvres which threaten to disintegrate the country.

But the forces of national disintegration are also active to take advantage of the discontent of the people against the Rajiv Gandhi government. The communal forces BJP and the other Hindu revivalist organisations and Muslim communalists, Muslim League and other organisations, all are trying to divert the common democratic movement into fratricidal channels. The reactionary agents of imperialism are doing their best to disrupt national unity by exploiting discontent against the Rajiv Gandhi and diverting into communal and caste channels. The fight of the democratic forces against Rajiv Gandhi must isolate these communal reactionary forces who plays the role of destabilising the country facilitating the imperialist game of disruption and enslavement. Some bourgeois opposition parties who think simply in terms of electoral games are quite willing to associate with communal parties. They play the game of communal parties to alienate the minorities and divide the people. The Janata party, the Lok Dal and certain elements in TDP also think in terms of joint political activity with such parties which will definitely harm the democratic and common movement.

The working class must therefore demand an understanding between the Left forces, the opposition secular parties and mass organisation to carry on this fight against Rajiv Gandhi. Only on the basis of this understanding and isolation of all communal forces will the result be in favour of people and the nation. The working class and its trade unions also have to play a role in their own sphere in fighting the communal forces and forging unity irrespective of religion and caste. The trade unions must make special endeavour to see that the workers from minority communities and workers from oppressed castes are specially enrolled in the trade unions and their specific problems are taken by these organisations so that they feel the trade union to be common organisation not only fighting for the economic demands against the management but also fighting against feudal and communal evils. Communalism is splitting the class unity of the working class and unless the working class is able to protect its unity it will not be able to protect

national unity.

The trade union movement has grown in a big measure and aided by other mass organisations, above all supported by the three Left Front Governments and the Left Democratic forces it will be in a position to lead the agitation against Rajiv Gandhi and foil the destabilising game of imperialism and defeat the communal reactionaries game to divide the people. With the three Left Front Governments as the advanced outposts of the democratic struggle the united strength of the working class will be able to discharge its responsibilities of saving the country's democracy and defeating all anti-democratic forces. The working class must realise that in the three Left Front Governments they have got an advance guard which helps them to build their unity, to build their strength of the trade union movement and to fight all enemies of the nation. The achievements of these three Governments must be fully popularised among the workers and all sections of the people so that their policies and activities begin to rally democratic forces more and more isolating other reactionary agencies.

17.11.1987

The Working Class, Vol. 17, No. 4, December 1987