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THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU



P. K. Gaughy

**Defend
Left-Led
Governments**

**May
Special**



WE BELIEVE

- ★ Agitators of one single state cannot decide who is a foreigner. It can only be decided by the Government at the national level with the consensus of all parties.
- ★ Minorities everywhere in every state have a fundamental right to security. There can be no reason for any body to threaten it. As citizens of India we can reside in any state we choose.
- ★ No single state can claim to be the sole beneficiary of its natural resources. Every Indian has a right to them.

Government of West Bengal

Defend The Left-Led Governments

04

—**B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU**

ON the 3rd of April the working class of West Bengal, led by the CITU, the CPI (M) in cooperation with other trade union organisations and political parties, administered a severe rebuff to the Congress (I) plan to paralyse economic life and express want of confidence in the Left Front Government.

All industries, mines and concerns worked to full capacity giving full confidence to the Left Front Government. The working class of West Bengal showed maturity of political consciousness and loyalty to the cause of democracy when it frustrated the evil designs of the Congress (I).

The meaning of this success of West Bengal's Working Class has to be fully understood by the working class of India.

Ever since the return of Indira Gandhi to power a grim struggle is going on between the forces of democracy and forces of dictatorship in India. The dictatorial forces got a big defeat in the Parliamentary elections in 1980 in the three States of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and they were also defeated in the Assembly elections in Kerala in that year. The defeat of Congress (I) in the Parliamentary elections in West Bengal and Tripura stabilised the Assemblies which had left majorities and with them the left front ministries in these States.

Since January 1980 therefore the Congress (I) efforts have been directed towards undermining the three left ministries the advanced outposts of democratic forces of India. The Congress (I) realises that without destabilising them the road to dictatorship is not cleared.

The working class of India which suffered most under the emergency rule, which was reduced to the status of a slave without rights, cannot ignore this challenge of dictatorship, must do everything to defeat it and save and protect the three left front governments.

A Big Obstacle

What is the urgency of this attack against the left front governments? It lies in the fact that under the impact of economic crisis the bourgeois-landlord government of Indira Gandhi plans to

launch widespread attacks against the working class, the peasantry, the employees and repress their struggles. It wants to impose the burdens of the crisis on these sections to protect the profits and gains of the big capitalists and landlords.

To fleece the people, to forcibly transfer their purchasing power to the vested interests the Government has imposed a regime of uncontrolled prices sowing widespread sufferings.

This leads to repressing the spreading discontent and suppression of the democratic rights of the people and the working class and makes it necessary to instal a dictatorial regime. Under these circumstances the existence of left front governments which guarantee democratic rights to the people, refuses to help the capitalists and landlords to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the common man and generates more support among the people proves a big obstacle to the plans of the authoritarian regime.

The Congress (I) Party and its government therefore concentrate their fire on the left front governments slander them and organise disorder in these States in order to destabilise them.

The contrast between the functioning of the Congress (I) government and the left front ministry is there for all to see. The former wants to protect the interests of the landlords and the capitalists, the later wants to protect the common man—the worker, peasant, agricultural worker, employees, teachers etc.

Anti-Labour Policies

The vengeful and barbarous attitude of the Indira Government towards labour is seen in its treatment of the striking loco railway men. For seven long years the Government refused to implement the agreement signed with the loco workers in 1973. The Janata Government also ignored it. The workers forced to go on strike were repressed. More than 1,000 locomen have been dismissed, suspended or prematurely retired.

The Government also repudiated its agreement with the Public Sector workers and took repressive measures against the strikers. They repudiated the agreement with the LIC employees and refused till

now to give bonus according to the agreement, despite the directive of the Supreme Court. They passed a new Act virtually abolishing all trade union rights.

Immediately the attack on the working class manifests itself through determined efforts of the employers and the Government to erode and eliminate the concept of bonus as deferred wage. This is a big vantage point won by the workers which is now directly or indirectly being assailed. It is being eroded by making new contingents agree to bonus linked with productivity. The first breach was made when the leaders of All India Railwaymen Federation and Indian National Federation of Railway Workers agreed to link bonus with productivity. This was followed by a number of Central Government Employees' organisations falling in the trap.

The second prong of attack is an attempt to put a ceiling on income for those entitled to bonus. The third prong is attack on D.A.—standardisation at an arbitrary rate and ceiling on the amount, or instalment and denial of D.A. to those above a certain wage or earnings. The fourth is a general opposition to any wage increase. To achieve these aims one agreement after another is broken by the Government.

These attacks on workers' wages are enshrined in the wages and incomes policy of the Sixth Five Year Plan. The Planners do not want to reduce the disparity of incomes between the capitalists and the workers, between the big landlords and the peasants. They want to leave the incomes of the monopolists and millionaires in tact.

But they want to reduce the disparity in wages between worker and worker by reducing the wages of those who earn better. Besides they demand that no rise in wages should be sanctioned unless a worker produces more—rise in wages should be linked with productivity. Everyone knows that our present wage is low in proportion to our productivity and far below our needs. But the planners demand unless you accept more exploitation you should not get a higher wage. Besides even if a worker produces more he will not be entitled to a rise for a long time and also till the entire economy shows a higher productivity. This is a policy of wage-freeze while demanding greater production.

Pursuing this policy the Congress(I) State Governments attack the workers' struggles and especially the CITU unions. The U.P. Government specialises in illegalising one strike after another. It brings pressures on employers to derecognise CITU unions which have full mass backing in Kanpur and

demand that the employers negotiate and settle with Congress(I) unions with no following.

In Rampur the employers have refused to accept Government directive to give the legal wage to the textile workers; the government in collusion with the employers are determined to starve out the workers who have staged a prolonged strike for nearly four months. Now again the government directs that a fake settlement be reached with INTUC union which has been helping the employers by organising strike breaking. The Congress (I) State Governments, in some places used the hated NSA against the striking locomen.

Such is the face of the anti-working class policy of the Congress (I).

Attacks on other Sections

Like the working class, other sections of the people, students, engineers, doctors have been victims of Congress (I) repression. There have been lathi-charges, jailings, firings and killings of students and others. And now the Congress (I) State Governments have started training its guns on the peasant masses. The peasants fought in Karnataka and got bullets. More than 12 were killed. The Karnataka Government first to begin the shooting down of peasants has not yet stopped its killing spree. Last week it again shot down a few peasants in Nipani.

The peasants fought in Maharashtra and got jail and bullets. They fought in Panjab and Andhra and were again repressed. Side by side police atrocities on women and other section continue unabated. Harijan and adivasis woman are raped in police stations. Homeguards and police failing to get free feed loot hotels. There are instances of villages being raided by policemen out for lust and loot. Atrocities on Harijans continue as before with no police protection to the Harijan. In Gujarat during the anti-reservation agitation the police has been accused of repressing Harijans but the Congress (I) ministry has not moved its little finger to help them. The Muslim minority is hunted down in communal riots. This is the march of the forces of dictatorship.

In contrast to this see the picture in the three States ruled by left front ministries.

Free Air of Democracy

These Governments have loyally served the common man, protected democratic rights, and thrown the weight of their administration on the side of the exploited in economic struggles. Working under inhibiting financial restrictions arbitrarily imposed by the Central Government, the three Governments

have endeavoured to do justice to the common man and protect democracy. They have refused to use the National Security Act or any other measure for preventive detention.

Under the left-front ministries both Muslim minority and harijans are well protected; there are no communal riots which are replaced by amity for common struggle. Atrocities on Harijans do not take place. The workers' right to strike is fully protected and it is ensured for the State Government employees also. There are no police firings against striking workers, there is no police intervention against the workers and the people to support the capitalists; the share croppers, the agricultural workers, peasants, all are having a new deal with their interests fully protected. The employees and the entire people feel the free air of democracy.

Relief to the People in West Bengal

The concrete measures taken by these governments to give relief to the people have angered the capitalist-landlord classes and their representative the Congress (I) and the Central Government. They are angry because instead of passing on the burdens of the crisis to the people, the three Governments give them relief at the expense of the capitalist-landlord classes.

Take West Bengal. What is the crime of the left front ministry—the worst crime in the eyes of the Congress (I)? The fact that it is giving relief to the people, defending their livelihood and getting more and more popular baring the Congress(I) way to power in the State.

The Left ministry saw to it that the jute barons gave proper bonus to the jute workers; the ministry enabled textile and engineering workers to win their demands without a strike; it ensured democratic rights for the State Government employees including the right to strike and accepted the Pay Commission's recommendations to increase the salaries of State Government employees, municipal employees, teachers etc. It gave a sense of new life to sharecroppers through operation Barga and now has adopted a comprehensive Land Act in the interest of the peasantry. It wrote off government loans given to small farmers and exempted wet and dry lands up to four and six acres respectively from payment of rent. It introduced unemployment relief to the unemployed, executed with a maximum efficiency the food for work programme and provided old age pensions for peasants. It raised the wage of agricultural worker and ensured the legal minimum wage enforced.

The latest budget of the West Bengal Government shows its earnest consideration for the peasants and the common man. Relief of Rs. 40 crores through cancellation of debts of the peasant. The acceptance of the Pay Commission recommendations for low-wage employees, lowering of sales tax on medicines, and a number of new facilities for teachers, employees and workers, these are the features of this year's budgets of Congress(I) Governments.

This is the long list of crimes in the eyes of the capitalists and landlords. And the Congress(I) gave expression to their chagrin and desperation by organising hooligans to throw bombs at running trams and buses on 3rd April.

The anger is all the more because these measures have immensely increased the strength of mass resistance and organisation. The strength of the CITU has reached 6.2 lakhs, the membership of Kisan Sabha, SFI, DYF and Mahila Samiti has increased to 31.8, 2.4, 5.1 and 5 lakhs respectively. Thus over 50 lakhs of people are now organised in various mass organisations.

Unholy Purpose

This means growing resistance to plans for putting increased burdens on the shoulders of the people. How can the exploiting classes like it? Similar are the achievements and situation in Kerala. Here also incenced by the progress of the coalition ministry, Indira Gandhi opens her broadside against it, joining hands with the RSS for this unholy purpose. In the election to the Assembly the Congress(I) formed a virtual front with the RSS to defeat the united front of several left and other parties. Today when the RSS is on a murderous rampage in Kerala-recently a bomb was thrown at the CPI(M) MLA.-Indira attacks the CPI(M) and throws all blame on it. She is also trying to exploit the vacillations of certain elements in the coalitions for her own purpose of undermining the ministry.

A New Mass Upsurge in Kerala

In its latest budget the Kerala Ministry has made a total provision of Rs. 46.25 crores for measures like agricultural workers' pension, unemployment relief, pension to journalists, film and cinema artists.

Over 20 lakh workers in factories, plantations and farms received total wage-increases amounting to Rs. 71 crores. The rectification in the cost of living index calculated in accordance with the recommendations of the Index Committee brought permanent gain in real wages to lakhs of workers.

The D.A. of State Government employees has been increased for times during the year to keep

parity with the Central D.A. and of pensioners twice this year.

Upto now 37 lakhs tenants have been granted ownership of the land they have been tilling.

Four and half lakh hutment dwellers have been made owners of their small plots on which they have built their tiny homes. Compensation for small landowners whose lands have been assigned to tenants has been increased from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 10,000.

During the past one year one lakh title deeds have been issued benefitting 20,000 Harijan and other scheduled caste families. Price support for paddy was raised to Rs. 140 per quintal and sugarcane to Rs. 180 per quintal.

Once again these measures have unleashed a new mass upsurge increasing the strength of the CITU, SFI, DYF and agricultural workers and kisan organisations. The membership of CITU unions in Kerala is now 2,47,900; of Kisan Sabha 3,36,000; of agricultural workers' organisation 3,47,000; of women organisation 2,67,000; of Democratic Youth Federation of India 5,17,000; of Students Federation of India 1,72,000; bringing the total organised force to 18.86 lakhs.

Massive Relief Measures in Tripura

The left front Government in Tripura took massive steps for soil conservation and creating work in the villages. On an average a million man-days per year have been created under "Food for Work" programme. The burden of revenues, taxes and debts have been removed and education made free so that the weaker sections get relief. Through popular gaon sabhas, the Government extended the banks and co-operatives to the remotest corner of the state so that the rural people, the weavers, the fisherman, the milk men and those in various cottage industries could be free from usurious exploitation by the money lenders, dishonest traders, contractors etc. A begining has been made towards industrialisation by setting up Jute Mill, Paper plant and introducing rubber plantation for the first time. A massive scheme for upliftment of the tribal people by aids like bullocks, seeds, scholarships, distribution of land and other facilities amounting to Rs. 5.5 crores has been implemented. The Government recognised the right of the Tripura people by recognising their language "Kokborok" as state language and formation of an autonomous district council for them. A separate co-operative Development corporation for the Tripuri people has been set-up. Despite lack of resources the government employees have been benefitted by certain interim

measures while a pay commission has been set up. In this state also, the State Government Employees organisation has been recognised by the Government. Thus along with economic help and relief, the democratic rights of the people are being strengthened.

Advanced Outposts

The West Bengal Ministry led by Com. Jyoti Basu, Vice-President of CITU and Polit Bureau member of the CPI(M), the Kerala Ministry headed by Com. E.K. Nayanar, member of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) and Tripura Ministry headed by Com. Nripen Chakravorty, member of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) have shown these remarkable achievements in defending people's livelihood and steeling their determination to defend democracy.

That is why they deserve to be called the advanced outposts of democracy in our country. That is why the Congress (I) part aided by the Central Government is concentrating its fire against them

Common Battle

It is not a battle between these ministries and the ruling party at the Centre. It is a battle between forces of democracy and forces of dictatorship.

The working class of India if it wants to protect its trade union rights and its earlier gains, in wages, D. A., and bonus, must accept this challenge frustrate the efforts of the Congress(I) to bring down these ministries.

As a vanguard fighter in the cause of democracy the entire strength of the working class must be mobilised to defend these ministries and defeat the challenge of dictatorial authoritarian forces.

The CITU calls on all its unions to rouse their own following to this danger, to mobilise the workers following sister organisations and unite the entire working class in this common battle of India's democratic forces. □

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May Day Manifesto of the CITU-1981

ON the occasion of MAY DAY, the great International Day of Solidarity of the Working Class, the CITU pays its homage to the hallowed memory of all those martyrs who have laid down their lives in the struggle for Socialism and world peace and conveys its warm greetings to the working class and the working people all over the world for their long drawn and bitter struggle against imperialism, apartheid, zionism and for world peace.

The CITU conveys its fraternal greetings to the working class and the people of Socialist countries. The CITU congratulates them for their spectacular advance in Socialist construction for better living standards and end to unemployment. Their support to the developing countries has helped them to fight against imperialist and neo-colonialist exploitation and for national freedom and self-reliance. Firmly upholding the banner of proletarian internationalism on this May Day, the CITU denounces the imperialist conspiracy to undermine Socialism in Poland and firmly supports all efforts to defeat this conspiracy.

The CITU congratulates the working class of the capitalist countries who have fought bitter battles in defence of their living standards and against unemployment. Despite plunder of the developing countries, the monopolists and multinationals in these countries have attacked the workers. Real wages in the USA have fallen by more than ten per cent during the past two years. Unemployment in the U.K., USA and almost all countries have reached an all-time high. The CITU pledges full support to their struggle against unemployment and for better living standards.

The CITU warmly greets the working class of India and the central trade unions and national federations who led them in their determined united struggle in defence of their working and living conditions and right to collective bargaining. The CITU specially greets the working class and the toiling people of West Bengal, Kerala, Haryana and other States who are heroically facing the heinous attacks unleashed by Congress (I), RSS, Naxalite hoodlums and the goonda-hirelings of the management as well as the draconian measures of the Congress (I) Government at the Centre led by Smt. Gandhi.

The CITU conveys its warm fraternal greetings to the masses of the peasantry and the agricultural labourers throughout the country and the kisan

organisations that have led them in their struggle for remunerative prices of their produce and against price-rise. The CITU warmly greets those who participated in the historic kisan rally on March 26, 1981, and overwhelmed the capital facing difficulties, attacks and obstructions, laying bare the falsity of the claim of the Congress (I) rulers that they are doing everything for the kisans and only a handful of landlords and kulaks are creating trouble. The working class of Delhi, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Sonapat, Bangalore and elsewhere in the country, who expressed solidarity with the peasant struggles through strikes, deserve special congratulation for beginning an era of worker-peasant alliance in the country.

Imperialist Designs

This May Day is coming to us in a worsening international situation and growth of danger of war. The U. S. imperialists have taken an aggressive stance and are feverishly arming themselves threatening world peace. They are creating war hysteria against the USSR and the Socialist camp and doing everything within their means to suppress the growing revolutionary and national freedom movement in Africa and Latin America and undermine the freedom and independence of countries like India. War dangers are looming large in our sub-continent because the U.S. navy is dominating the Indian Ocean and the dictatorial regime in Pakistan is being armed by the U.S. imperialists. Having been defeated in their plot in Iran, they are hatching new plans in West Asia and has turned the Gulf States into hotbeds of war.

The CITU conveys its warm fraternal greetings to the working class and people of Pakistan. The working class of India is watching with admiration their courageous fight against the dictatorial regime for re-establishing democracy and full trade union rights. The military rulers of Pakistan, who are growingly getting isolated from the people are relying more on military aid from the USA for unleashing war in the sub-continent. The CITU is confident that the working class of India and Pakistan together will defeat the imperialist game of "Asians fight Asians."

On this May Day, the CITU calls upon the working class of India to raise its powerful voice against the machinations of war-mongers and fight stoutly for peace and detente.

Threat to Integration

On this May Day, the working class must realise

that imperialist designs are threatening the unity of the country and express its firm resolve to defend the unity of the working people and national integration. The continued agitation in Assam, the carnages in Tripura, unrest in the North-Eastern region and other chauvinist slogans—all should be viewed with concern, as the imperialist designs behind all these are clearly seen. The continued influx of foreign nationals a matter of concern for everybody. But the secessionist slogans raised during these struggles and the gruesome happenings during the agitation must be viewed with seriousness. The CITU congratulates the working class and the democratic masses in this region who, despite severe attacks, had held high the banner of national integration and unity of the working class and the democratic masses. The CITU demands that the genuine problems of the people arising out of continued neglect about development of this region and foreign influx should be solved through negotiation and not by indiscriminate use of the repressive machinery of the State.

Deepening Economic Crisis

Despite tall claims of the economy turning the corner towards betterment, the crisis of the economy is deepening further. The slogans of "a Government that works" "curb on price-rise" etc., have been proved to be wrong. The prices have been sky rocketing with the index of wholesale prices rising from 230 points in march 1980 to 269.6 points in March 1981 (base 1970-71=100).

The Sixth Five-Year Plan is bringing new imposts on the people, as the subsidies on food is being withdrawn, and all public sector units have been directed to increase prices in the name of resource mobilisation while the Government plans to continue the policy of deficit financing. Already price-hikes on several items have been imposed. Further increases in electricity charges, irrigation levy, etc., are on the cards.

Even when unemployment has reached a new high with 1.62 crores in the live registers of the employment exchanges in December 1980, of whom nearly 50 per cent are educated unemployed, the Government of India under the pressure of the World Bank and the imperialists, has given a thrust to mechanisation and computerisation which will throw thousands upon thousands to the streets. Women and children have become the first victims in the tobacco and match industries. The tempo of mechanisation and automation is all-pervading and the ruling classes are trying to pass on the burden

of the crisis to the working class by saving labour costs and imposing wage-cuts and wage freeze.

The CITU draws special attention of the working class that while these miseries of unemployment, price-rise, etc., are being heaped on the people, the monopolies and multinationals have been thriving. The topmost 20 monopoly houses in our country have increased their assets almost ten per cent between 1972 and 1978. The pro-monopoly bias of the Government is manifest from the observation of the planners that "possibilities of raising additional resources through income-tax, corporation tax and wealth-tax are somewhat limited." The Government, instead of curbing all tax evasions, have come out with special concessions to the black-marketeers and profiteers through the scheme of "Special Bearer Bonds." The most dangerous part of the situation is that the Sixth Plan depends on foreign loans of nearly *ten thousand crores of rupees*. For this the Government is inviting foreign multinationals with open arms and more concessions, knowing full well that their stranglehold over our economy would be growing. These multinationals, the drug multinationals being the most notorious amongst them, have been defying the laws of our country, exploiting our country, exploiting our people and looting our resources while scuttling all efforts in research, development and self reliance and trying to destroy the trade union movement through victimisation and closure while the Government stands transfixed before them.

On this May Day, the CITU calls upon the working class to unite in a mighty struggle for a change in the fiscal policies of the Government and demand nationalisation of the monopoly houses including the multinationals as their grip over our economy stands in the way of our development and may, in the long run, endanger the independence of the country.

The CITU also calls upon the working class to realise that the mass of the peasantry has been defrauded for past three decades with the sole aim of controlling the cost of living in the cities so that the capitalists could garner super-profits. Today the peasant masses are on the move for remunerative prices and fighting bitter battles braving all oppression. The working class should refuse to accept barbarous exploitation of the peasants, befriend them in their struggle for remunerative prices and express solidarity through action and thus build up worker-peasant unity.

Growing Resistance

The CITU, on this May Day, draws the pointed attention of the working class that new attacks on

their wages are on. The first is on the concept of bonus as deferred wage. With the railway federations having accepted bonus linked with productivity, an attack on the big vantage point won by the working class through years of struggle is being mounted. The second one is an attempt to put a ceiling on the incomes of those who are entitled to bonus. Third prong of the attack is on the question of D.A. neutralisation at an arbitrary rate with a ceiling to it and its denial to those above a certain wage. Lastly, there is a general opposition to any wage-increase. To achieve this aim the Government is breaking past agreements cutting at the roots of collective bargaining. The Government has refused to honour the Supreme Court judgement in respect of LIC employees and have brought in an Act assuming arbitrary powers to change the service conditions, wages, bonus, etc. Similar is the story about GIC employees.

The CITU congratulates the public sector employees for their determined struggle for over 77 days to secure implementation of the earlier agreement and also for one day solidarity strike all over the country on March 11, 1981. The barbarous and vindictive attitude of the Government is seen from the ruthless repression of locomen who have been fighting against this policy of going back on agreements on wage and ten hours' duty and the goonda attacks on their women. The LIC employees are engaged in a grim battle to preserve their wages, bonus and right to collective bargaining. They are not only struggling for themselves. In fact, they are struggling for trade union rights for the entire working class. The CITU calls upon the working class to continue the battle in defence of their wages, bonus as deferred wage till a living wage is secured as minimum-wage.

Ruthless Repression

To stem the tide of the growing struggles, the Government has started ruthless suppression of the struggles. The National Security Act—a new variation of MISA of the emergency period—is on the statute book. Arrest of struggling locomen under this lawless law has debunked the loud proclamation that it would not be used against the democratic and trade union movement. Strong-arm methods to foist on the workers the agreements signed with INTUC unions are being adopted. Indiscriminate beating, arrests and shooting down of workers and raping their womenfolk, have become the order of the day.

Coupled with this, various methods are being adopted to divide the ranks of the working class. The posters against Tamil and Malayalee workers

during the struggle of the public sector employees is the newest method to divide and terrorise the workers. Communal riots in which the Muslim minority suffers most are being unleashed. Similarly caste feelings against the Harijans and Girijans are being roused and desperate efforts are made to disrupt the growth of the common movement of the exploited classes. It is unfortunate that a section of the Opposition parties and their mass organisations support these divisive methods from narrow partisan ends, thus undermining the need for developing a powerful united movement against the policies of the Government which is making the rich richer and the poor poorer, which is established from the fact that the share of national wealth of the bottom 50 per cent has fallen from 19 per cent in 1968 to seven per cent in 1975-76.

Unity—Need of the Hour

People's resistance despite repression and attempts to divide the ranks is growing. The CITU calls upon the working class to note and prepare themselves for big battles that are ahead with full knowledge that they have to face the full impact of authoritarian repression during these battles. Already new contingents are being drawn in the arena of battle for a change in the policies of the Government. A new sense of oneness is being reforged. The CITU congratulates leaders of various trade union centres and national federations for having come together and calling for a national convention against the anti labour policies of the Government and price-rise. The CITU while welcoming this move, once again reiterates, in all earnestness the call for formation of a Confederation of all Central Organisations of workers and employees as the graveness of the situation demands constant review and agreed decisions for action to defend the living standards, trade union rights and, above all, democracy. On this May Day, the CITU pledges to carry forward the task of uniting the working class which is the crying need of the hour to defeat the machinations of imposing an authoritarian regime on the people.

Defend Left-Led Governments

The conspiracy to impose once again the authoritarian regime is seen from the talk of committed judiciary, talk of Presidential form of Government to scuttle Parliamentary democracy and rob the people of their civil liberties. The Left-led Governments stand as the bastion of democratic rights as they have refused to utilise the repressive State machinery and apply the National Security Act against the democratic and trade union movement. Their constant championing of the cause of

the downtrodden people, giving them relief within the means of their State Governments and stout defence of civil liberties and democratic rights have already created an impact on the people of the country. Hence, the bid to topple these Left-led Governments has, of late, been intensified. The level to which the ruling party will stoop to, is clearly seen in the dastardly attacks on the people during the so-called bandh in West Bengal on April 3 last. The CITU calls upon the working class of India to raise its powerful voice in defence of these Left-led Governments in their own class interest

Worker-Peasant Unity

The CITU calls upon the working class to realise that after decades of ruthless exploitation, our brethren in the rural areas have come forward with their just demands symbolised in the charter of demands placed at the historic Kisan Rally on March 26, 1981. Let the working class, while continuing a running battle in defence of their wages, living standards and trade union rights, also

take up the just cause of the peasantry. Let the working class take up the cause of the unemployed youth, both rural and urban, for the right to work being included as a justiciable Fundamental Right in our Constitution. Let the working class take up the cause of working women who are a part of their class against all types of oppression, social and occupational, including sex harassment, which are being wielded as a class weapon against them. Let the working class champion the cause of the Harijans and Girijans and their fight against social oppression and for economic upliftment. Let the clarion call for a mighty unity of all sections of the exploited classes of India for a better social order and peace reverberate the whole country.

LONG LIVE MAY DAY! LONG LIVE THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY OF THE WORKING CLASS OF THE WORLD!

LONG LIVE THE CITU!

Prepare for the Struggles Ahead

On the Occasion of the May Day, Nripen Chakraborty, Chief Minister, Tripura, has sent the following Message :

MAY Day is a day of dedication for the strengthening of our international and national solidarity. On this historic occasion, the toiling masses all over the world, assess the developments that are taking place in each country, in the working conditions of the working people, study the political, economic and social problems that throw challenges before them. On this memorable day, the working class chalks out new militant programmes to play its leading role in shaping the history of the world.

What is new in the present day situation? Imperialism, though on the retreat, is hatching up new conspiracies to draw the world into new conflicts. American Imperialism, under Mr. Reagan, the war monger, has taken a number of dangerous steps to build up war-bases in Pakistan, Deogo Garcia and other neighbouring countries of

the sub-continent, and to create tension through massive sale of arms. From the recent happenings of Afganishtan, it is crystal clear that danger to national sovereignty and democracy is real, due to multifarious diabolical machinations and interferences of American Imperialism.

The working class in India must note that the situation in India offers a fertile soil for Imperialism to weaken and destroy the main fabric of democracy. In the background of growing economic crisis, the toiling people from all walks of life have been drawn in the arena of fierce struggles. And to prevent such struggles to be directed against Governments of the Bourgeois-landlord parties, the secessionist, chauvinist and communal forces are being encouraged to disrupt the fight-unity of the democratic masses in fields, factories, schools, colleges and offices.

Faced with the growing resistance from the working people, and, from the agriculturists of all categories in particular, the Government of Smt. Gandhi has openly come out with a number of anti-democratic measures and people have already tested in Congress(I) ruled States what more awaits from them in near future.

It is here that the working class, on this ever-inspiring May Day has a programme for widest possible mobilisation to be chalked out, has a view to be taken. May Day 1981, is not the May Day of 1975. The working class has matured and steeled in in-numerable class-battles and democratic struggles, and, has given birth to three Left and left-democratic Governments in three states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. These Governments have taken away the sleep of Smt. Gandhi. The

[On Page 20]

May Day : Origin and Significance

—Vijender Sharma

THE First of May, as Lenin characterised it, is the day “when the workers of all lands celebrate their awakening to a class conscious life, their solidarity in the struggle against all coercion and oppression of man by man, the struggle to free the toiling millions from hunger, poverty and humiliation.” Highlighting the political importance, Lenin said that May Day was a rallying point for “the class development of the proletariat and its open struggle for socialism.”

On this historic day, all those who work, who by their labour create all wealth but have to struggle hard with back-breaking toil through out their lives for a piece of bread, starve in hovels in the villages or in the cellars and garrets of the big cities,—all raise their powerful hands to fight for the emancipation and happiness of the workers and against all exploitation.

The well-knit and powerful organisations of the toiling and the oppressed masses are the only guarantee of their well-being and happiness. On this memorable day, these organisations of the workers all over the world review their forces and gather their strength. They take stock of the prevailing international and national situation. They study the working and living conditions of the working people, and the political, economic and social problems faced by them. They analyse critically the struggles that they carried out in the preceding year in the interests of the common mass of the people, their failures and successes, and their role in

building united struggles of the workers.

Towards Complete Victory

They chalk out militant and revolutionary programmes on this day for a further unremitting struggle for freedom, equality, fraternity and international solidarity of the working class, the political battle for socialism and peace, against imperialist war designs and colonial oppression and for political and economic rights of the working class.

The May Day demonstrations and meetings all over the world depict international solidarity of the workers of the whole world in their fight for a system of society where the wealth created by the common labour will go to benefit, not a handful of rich men, but all those who work. Ever increasing participation of the workers in the May Day actions all over the world clearly show that the workers are uniting more and more closely and are advancing steadily, step by step, towards complete victory over the class of capitalist exploiters.

Eight Hour Movement

The birth of May Day is inseparably connected with the struggles of the workers of the United States for 8-hour working day, a demand having a major political significance for the working class of the whole world. In the beginning of the 19th century, with the intensification of exploitation, more and more workers started feeling the pinch of longer working hours, as long as fourteen, sixteen and even twenty hours a day; and the demand for

reduction in number of working hours became ever stronger. First half of the century marked the intensive struggles for ten hours working day and was conceded in a number of organised trades and for all government employees in the middle of the century. Acceptance of this demand, though in limited sphere, generated a new enthusiasm and the workers started getting organised in a much bigger way. This demand gave an impetus to the workers of other countries who had also come into the arena of struggles for shorter working day.

International Character

In August 1866, in the United States, the National Labour Union, in its founding convention, decided to launch an intensive movement for 8-hour day. The Union had connections with the First International in London. In September 1866, the Geneva Congress of the First International proposed “8-hour as the legal limit of the working day.” The Congress further said that “As this limitation represents the general demand of the workers of the North-American United States, the Congress transforms this demand into the general platform of the workers of the whole world.” Thus it gave an international character to the movement already launched in a number of countries and became stronger subsequently.

On 7 October, 1884, the Federation of Organised Trades and Labour Union of the United States in its forth convention resolved that “8-hour shall constitute a legal day’s labour from May First, 1886,” and called upon the labour organisations

to implement the resolution through strikes and demonstrations.

Massive Strike Struggles

With the American workers baptised in the fire of massive strike struggles and repression in seventies and particularly in 1877 actions which were the result of the attempt to destroy the coal miners' union by the coal barons who sent 10 militant workers to the gallows in 1875, the 1885 convention of the Federation, which reiterated its 1884 resolution, witnessed enthusiastic response from the workers in support of May Day actions for 8-hours which became rallying point for all labour organisations. The movement grew in strength and participation. The strikes and lockouts in 1886 were more than three times the average in 1881-84, while the workers participation increased six folds.

The strongest strike centre was Chicago followed by New York, Baltimore, Washington, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Detroit and many others. As a result of this movement, a large number of unskilled and unorganised workers were drawn into the struggles and sympathetic strikes were frequent during that period.

The left-wing Central Labour Union mobilised all its forces in support of the movement. Its 25,000 strong demonstration in Chicago on Sunday before May First was a symbol of the massive action to take place on the May Day. Massive demonstrations on May 1, 1886 made the 8-hour struggle still more politically significant and opened a new chapter in the history of the working class movement of the whole world.

Unprecedented Repression

The enemies of the workers,

the bourgeoisie, the landlords, the reactionaries, the capitalist government did not keep quiet and decided to crush the movement and its leadership by brute force. The massacre of May 3 and 4 known as Haymarket Affair were the acts of the reprisal of May First strike. The police of the capitalist government brutally attacked the peaceful meeting of the workers at McCormick Reaper on May 3 and shot down six workers while injuring many more. It should be recalled here that a woman worker tore her blouse and dipped in the pool of blood of the six martyrs and exhorted their compatriots to continue the struggles. Since then the red flag has become the symbol of the revolutionary trade union movement of the working class of the whole world.

The workers, seething with anger, organised a still bigger protest demonstration on May 4 at Haymarket square which culminated in a huge rally. This peaceful rally of the workers was about to be adjourned when the police attacked with bomb killing, once again, four workers. This pre-planned attack was so severe that it also killed seven policemen. Thus given a plea, the government came down heavily on the workers. With the aim to strike terror in the hearts of the workers, four militant activists were sent to the gallows and many Chicago leaders were put in jail. Massive unprecedented repression on the workers was let loose in an attempt to enable the employers to regain their position lost in 1885-86.

More May Day Actions

The Federation, now known as American Federation of Labour, in its 1888 and 1889

conventions reiterated May First as their day of action in support of 8-hour day and decided to organise nationwide strikes, demonstrations and rallies on May First 1889.

The Paris Congress of the Second International in July 1889, taking into account the fighting spirit and determination of the American workers, rose to the occasion. Firmly upholding the banner of proletarian internationalism, the International decided the May First as the day of action for the workers of the whole world organised in political parties and trade unions to fight for this important political demand of 8-hour day. A clarion call that the "workers of various countries must organise this demonstration according to conditions prevailing in each country," heralded the new era of proletarian solidarity through out the world.

On May First, 1890, in the United States and European and other countries, millions of workers participated in strike actions, demonstrations and rallies despite police repression and government bans on such actions at some places.

Class Character

The Brussels Congress of the International in 1891 stressed on the importance of the "class character of the May First demonstrations" for 8-hour day and other demands which led to the "deepening of the class struggles." The International reiterated May First as an action day and began to spread its activities to make it a successful international event of the working class.

Reviewing the history of the international proletarian organisations Engels noted on May
[On Page 42]

AGRICULTURE IS THE KING-PIN OF DEVELOPMENT OF TRIPURA

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* Jute-Mista	:	1,50,000 Bales
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Tripura Left Front Govt. Marches Ahead

—Nripen Chakravarty

We are printing below an article by Nripen Chakravarty, Chief Minister, Tripura written on the occasion of completion of three years of the Left Front Government of Tripura on 5 January.

THE Left Front Government completes three years of its rule in Tripura this week. On this historic occasion, I express my deepest sense of gratitude to our well-wishers who are millions throughout the country. I particularly thank all those who rushed moral and material support to the distressed people of Tripura during the disturbances last June. Thanks to the active intervention of democratic forces in the State, the disturbances could be contained, and, gradually, near-normal conditions could be restored.

Many of our friends may ask, how could the Left Front Government survive during those dark June days when a simultaneous assault was mounted on it by the imperialist circles and local reactionary forces.

Left Front Victory

The answer is not far to seek, when in 1978, the Left Front in Tripura defeated all the major national bourgeois-landlord parties and kept them out of the State Assembly scene, many thought that it was just a result of the "anti-Indira Gandhi wave." But soon after, during the panchayat elections, more than 80 per cent of the seats were won by the Left parties. In the municipal elections, not a single opposition candidate could secure a seat. And, just over a year ago, during the Lok Sabha elec-

tion which swept Indira Gandhi to power, both the seats in the State were won by the Left Front CPI (M) candidates, the Indira Congress candidate losing his deposit in one of the constituencies.

How could this happen? Tripura, a tribal State, was literally swamped by non-tribal Bengalee refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The Central Government did nothing to save the backward tribal minorities from gradual extinction in all fields—economic, social and cultural. While in most of the other States, national integration was the first casualty, each caste and community and ethnic group fighting the other, in Tripura, a completely new picture was emerging the tribal minority and the toiling non-tribal Bengalees belonging to the majority were rallying under the same banner of democracy, which recognised equal status for all the national groups and supported the four point charter of demands of the tribal minorities. The Left Front in Tripura threw a challenge to the secessionists, chauvinists and communal forces, who were so active not only in the North Eastern region but almost throughout the country to bring about disintegration and destabilisation and disunity wherever they could do so.

The integration aimed at by the Left Front Government through the setting up of an Autonomous District Council for the tribal compact area of Tripura, created panic in the reactionary circles who wanted to divert the masses by raising

slogans of 'Independent Tripura' or "Bangalistan". That is why, even today, all these forces of disruption continue their efforts to keep the tribal-non-tribal tension alive, to prevent the Autonomous District Council from coming into existence.

None of these reactionary political parties could even think that out of 17 reserved seats for tribals, 15 would go to the CPI (M), that, in an Assembly of 60 members, of whom 40 are Bengalees, such an Act as the Autonomous District Council Act could be adopted unanimously in the interest of tribal-non-tribal amity. That is why the experiment, taken up by the Left Front Government in Tripura, is of great interest not only for that border State but for the whole of the North-Eastern Region as well as the country as a whole.

Restoration Of Normalcy

It was not an easy task to restore tribal-non-tribal amity in a State which only last June saw mass killings of more than 1,200 tribals and non-tribals, when more than three lakh people had to take shelter in relief camps, when more than 35 thousand houses were burnt to ashes and another 30 thousand houses were looted. Who could imagine then that in such a short time, schools and colleges, markets and offices—all would start functioning, where tribals and non-tribals both would participate, where all but 15 thousand refugees would trek back to their respective villages to reconstruct their homes and engage in their respective pursuits.

That miracle could happen because thousands rallied in all parts of the State to pledge for peace and amity. That happened in spite of the fact that the Assam agitation on the border of the State has continued for the last one year, one hundred kilometres of Mizo border remains hot with Mizo rebels making occasional raids, and 900 kms. of the Bangladesh border remains uneasy over the border dispute in regard to the "Belonia char land".

Our friends and well-wishers have a right to know what economic development has taken place in Tripura during these three years of Left Front rule. Nobody expects any basic changes to take place so long as bourgeois-landlord parties rule in New Delhi. But the people of Tripura could see the Left Front Government was different from all other regimes of the past.

It took about a year for this Government to remove the scars of the Emergency regime and to restore the fullest democracy. With the setting up of elected Gaon Sabhas, power was decentralised part of the budget money was divided Panchayat-wise. The weaker sections could see that relief had gone to them. The burden of revenue and taxes and debts has been removed, education for the children has been made free at all stages, the wage rates of daily-labourers and agricultural workers have gone up and they have sufficient work under the food-for-work programme for the whole of the year (no less than 90 lakhs mandays were created in one year for creating rural assets).

The Left Front Government had taken banking to the remotest inaccessible villages, and has drawn in the rural poor into the cooperative societies. The bank and the

cooperative working together are trying to eliminate the unscrupulous money lenders, the dishonest traders and farias and the contractors from the rural scene. Thus the weaver, the fisherman, the milkman—all are happy to get liberated from the clutches of the rural exploiters who have many friends in the bureaucracy and in the Opposition political parties as well.

Plan for the Rural Poor

The Left Front Government has a plan for Tripura which, in many respects is unlike that of other small States. We are in the remotest corner of the country, with Bangladesh bordering on three sides and inaccessible Mizoram on the other side, having only a small corridor to link us with Assam. We have only 12 kms of railways linked to the border.

In a State where 82 per cent of the landholders have land measuring two acres or less, and, of that land only ten per cent has assured irrigation, and where agriculturists form 90 per cent of the population, it is no wonder that 90 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, perhaps the highest in India.

In such a State, while a big paper mill, more than one jute mill, or a spinning mill may provide work for the seventy thousand registered educated unemployed youth, while the State Government would very much press for the extension of the railway, improvement of roads, for more hydel projects, etc., the main feature of the plan for last three years has been to make the small and marginal farmer viable.

A massive programme has been taken up for soil conservation, for better use of high and dry tilla land, for its multiple cropping, and for development of

rubber plantations, tea gardens, horticulture, seciculture, etc., for which Tripura's land is ideal. With development of animal husbandry, fishery, poultry, goat farms, etc., we may meet our requirements for meat, egg, milk and fish which come mostly from Bangaladesh.

We have more than a lakh of handlooms, we have excellent skill in handicrafts, we have the raw materials to go in a massive way to give employment to our rural artisans, particularly to women in the tribal villages, if only we are helped to do so. That is how the small and marginal farmer can have some additional income to improve his living conditions.

However good a plan may be, it may not attain its objective if it is not understood by the masses and if the people are not involved in implementing it. It is here that the Left Front Government is different. The Panchayat and the cooperative, the mass organisations and the popular bodies at different levels, have powers and functions regarding the implementation of the Plan. The Scheduled tribes, Scheduled Castes and religious or ethnic minorities, all have seen that that their interests are safe and better looked after, whether in matters of rehabilitation or distribution of jobs.

Grim Battle

Our friends and well-wishers may reasonably ask, are you fools? Do you not see that the Congress (I) AICC discussed the question of your immediate dismissal, and, that a campaign for changes in the Constitution to set up a Presidential form Government in India are on? Do you forget that another Emergency is being talked about and a new MISA, though different in name, is already in the Statute Book?

[On Page 20]

"People Source of Strength of Tripura Government"

—**Dasarath Deb**

THE Left Front Government of Tripura came into being through struggles and it will have to implement its programmes through struggles. The people are the source of strength of the Government." Thus says Dasarath Deb, Education and Tribal Welfare Minister of Tripura, in an article written to mark the completion of three years of Left Front Government of Tripura in January this year.

While assessing what has been done by the Government in the interests of the general mass of the people and for the development of the Society as a whole, Dasarath Deb says, "The main objective of the Left Front Government is to bring the administration nearer to the people and to expand their democratic rights."

Democratisation of Administration

"The first and foremost step taken by the Left Front Government is democratisation of administration and extension of democracy," the Minister points out. He continues, "Even after independence, the bureaucratic and administrative machinery inherited from British imperialism which they had constituted to protect their colonial interests, is being utilised not only to build capitalism in the country but also to protect the interest of the exploiters and vested interests."

Dasarath Deb makes it clear that "The Left Front Government was not unaware that

without reconstituting the administrative setup and without conducting ceaseless struggles against bureaucratic outlook it is very difficult to democratise the administration. The Left Front Government is fully conscious of it. But it is also not completely correct to say that none in the administration can be persuaded to serve the people. Here it is worth mentioning that in order to serve the people, the Left Front Government got the cooperation of a considerable number of employees. Majority of the people of Tripura live in villages. Unless these people have their active participation in developmental activities, the question of democratisation of administration will remain an empty phrase."

Having taken into consideration this reality, the Left Front Government of Tripura has paved the way for the people's participation in development work in the town and in the village by reorganising the Gaon Sabhas, the Agartala Municipality and by Notified Area Committees. The Gaon Sabhas have been delegated with sufficient funds and substantial powers for development of the villages. The Block Development Committees with the MLAs and Gram Pradhans have been constituted. The food for work and the soil conservation programmes, in particular, have gained popularity in rural areas. Says Dasarath Deb, "All these steps can undoubtedly be said to be significant in bringing the administration nearer to the people."

A New Outlook

Highlighting the new steps and a new outlook for the amelioration of the conditions of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who are the most deprived, undeveloped and neglected in the society, and referring to the steps taken by the Left Front Government to safeguard the interests of the tribals and enactment of the Legislation for the Tripura Tribal Autonomous District Council, Dasarath Deb observes, "This good step aiming at the total upliftment of the tribals has been impeded by those sections of the population who are against the development of the backward tribal people. But the Left Front Government is going ahead with the decision to constitute the Autonomous Council."

The majority of the tribals of this State speak Kokborok, which has been recognised by the Government as one of the State Languages. Medium of instruction in Kokborok upto the primary level has been introduced for which teachers have been appointed and the text books have been published.

Complete reform of the educational system is not possible as it is not State's prerogative. But Dasarath Dev points out, "The Left Front Government has done something remarkable in the sphere of education within the prevalent system during this period. All students have been exempted from tuition fees upto Class XII, the girl students have been exempted from the tuition fees upto the college level. Besides, mid-day meals are to be distributed to students of primary schools excepting schools located within municipal and

[On Page 20]

Progress For The Poor,

- D.D. Deb Roy

THE Left Front Government of Tripura came to power on 5 January, 1978 with a massive support. The Front had given definite pledges to the people, like strengthening of democratic forces, involvement of the people in all developmental works, providing of need based food, clothing, dwellings to all, special upliftment programmes for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, linguistic and ethnic minorities, weaker section of the people, establishment of an administration free of corruption, improvement of communication system including extension of railway line upto Sabream, devolution of more financial and other powers to the States, etc.

A Sense of Responsibility

The main constraint for the State is very large number of people living below the poverty line. The percentage of people living below the poverty line in this State is second largest in number in the country (next to Orissa). In a State where more than 80 per cent of the people live in villages, and more than 76 per cent of people depend on agriculture, the vagaries of nature have so far been determining their lot. Therefore, the Government have correctly and rigidly diverted the emphasis on development in rural areas.

All the developmental works of the Government in agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries, forests, communication, etc. are undertaken with rural-bias. Similarly all socio-economic

activities like education, medical & health care, nutrition are equally tuned to the villages. As a result there is not only a new consciousness amongst the rural people but also a sense of responsibility and involvement.

Developing Communication System

The State has its own difficulties not only due to topographical position, but also because of long boundary with Bangladesh. The State is a land-locked one connected with rest of the country only through Assam, Meghalaya and North-Bengal. The only other communication for the State is air-service between Calcutta and Agartala which is of little help to the poorer people due to high rate of fare-structure. The communication difficulties create a great problem for the State not only in regard to materials for developmental works (cement, steel, etc.) but also in regard to all essential commodities (like salt, mustard oil, kerosene oil, etc.) imported to the State. Therefore the Government have given emphasis in developing the communication system with rest of the country as also with in State linking up rural areas.

Road being only communication within the State, the Government have not only been strengthening the Tripura Road-Transport Corporation, but have also been issuing road permits to Motor Transport Workers themselves, which has the effect of diffusing monopolistic ownership.

In spite of all bottlenecks and in spite of the fact that there had been total dislocation in the communication system due to

disturbances initially in Meghalaya and later continuously in Assam, the State Government could implement much large plan outlay during its regime. As a matter of fact, the Annual plan outlay was only around Rs. 13.00 crores upto 1977-78, while the present Government started the first year with execution of plan outlay of Rs. 23.67 crores for 1978-79, followed by Rs. 29.21 crores in 1979-80 and Rs. 39.81 crores in 1980-81. The size of Annual plan for 1981-82 is Rs. 45.00 crores. This signified per capita investment of more than Rs. 250 for 1981-82 as against Rs. 89 for 1977-78. But still it is the lowest per capita investment in this zone.

A Great Mark

The successive meetings of the National Development Council and of the Planning Commission, the State Chief Minister has been pressing hard for more fiscal and other powers to the State so that the States, standing directly responsible to the people, could discharge their responsibilities more effectively.

Substantial efforts have been made to impress upon the need for reducing, over a given period, the regional imbalances in development but in reducing the gap between the rich and the poor. The State have been striving hard for maintaining harmony and peace between linguistic and ethnic groups as also for national integration, security and solidarity. The State arranged a seminar on National Integration in September 1980 with participation from all over the country which left a great mark in the matter within and beyond the region.

Peoples' Aspirations Fulfilled

During the last three years, the Government had conducted

The Author is Finance Secretary, Tripura.

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elections to Gaon Panchayats through secret ballot on adult franchise and 689 Gaon sabhas are now functioning all over the State. The elected panchayats are associated in all developmental works including all works connected with the 'Food For Work Programmes'. More and more responsibilities are being given to the panchayats.

The Agratala Municipality having no election for about twenty-five years, got elected representatives through secret ballot on adult franchise, for the first time during the regime of the Left Front Government.

The Government have decided to form Autonomous District Council for the tribal compact areas so that they may themselves decide on their future in selected spheres.

The aspirations of twenty lakhs of people for involving their representations in the civic as well as in rural administration of Tripura was thus fulfilled for the first time in the history of the State.

Industrial Development

Due to persistent efforts of the State Government it has been possible for them to bring the Tripura Jute Mill, only medium sized industry in the State so far, under trial production, with expectations of commercial production shortly.

Due to similar efforts, the State Government has been able to get the commitment of the Government of India for early establishment of a Paper Mill in the State.

The Handicrafts and Handloom sectors, almost under withering condition when Left Front Government took over, have been revitalised leading to improved economic condition for the large number of weaker

section engaged in these sectors.

The Government have revitalised the State Industrial Development Corporation into a Financial Corporation with ideas to boost up industrial development in the State.

The Tripura Small Industries Corporation, the Tripura Handicrafts Development Corporation have been re-organised and re-vitalised.

The extension of Railway line from Dharmanagar to Kumarghat has been started during the time of this Government. It is again for the persistent efforts of this Government that the Government of India have included the survey work relating to the Kumarghat-Agartala section for extension of railway line upto Agartala as a prelude to railway extension upto Sabroom.

Public Distribution System

The Government have been able to keep the average price of rice and other essential commodities at reasonable level and within reach of the poorer people, on occasions by providing subsidy for salt, etc. The Co-operatives and the fair-price shops have been activated to render more effective services in this regard. The idea of the Government is to involve more and more co-operative societies in the Public-Distribution system.

Eliminating the Middlemen

The development outlay from the Government side alone can hardly improve upon the living condition of the people. Therefore, this Government have given all emphasis on the flow of institutional finance with the ideas not only to help the weaker section of people, but also for

eliminating the middlemen and money-lenders from the field, As a result of persistent efforts, the number of branches in rural areas have increased considerably, there being now one Bank Branch for about 16,000 people even on increased population basis as against one Branch for 23,000 people when the present Government took over power. Similarly, the credit deposit ratio which was 34.1 per cent in December 1977, has arisen to 57 per cent by now.

Massive Welfare Measures

The Government proposes to make the State self-sufficient in rice and paddy by the Sixth Plan period. Already 87 per cent of the need are met from the State production, Similarly, there has been substantial boost up in wheat production and in production of cash crops. Extensive Rubber production had been taken up on hand. A number of such plantation scheme have been taken up for the tribal jhumias as part of their rehabilitation. The Tripura Forest Plantation and Development Corporation has been strengthened to play a great role in this regard.

Revision survey and extensive Land Reforms have been taken up by the Government on a time-bound programme.

Soil-Conservation work has, for the first time, been given due importance and taken up throughout the State in a big manner. Similarly, flood protection schemes, particularly keeping in view the embankments constructed by the-Bangladesh Government in their side of the border over rivers flowing from Tripura to Bangladesh have been taken up. The tribals who had been given settlement earlier are

being given additional assistances for gainful economic root. Land earlier alienated from the tribals are being restored to them with rehabilitation for the persons affected by such restoration.

The Landless and Homeless people are being provided with home-sites and houses.

The Government introduced mid-day meal upto the Junior Basic stage throughout the State except municipal and notified areas with effect from March 1980. A quick survey indicates that this has improved upon the attendance by about 17 per cent. Free education has been ensured upto Class XII and rates of scholarships for all sections of students increased. New hostels have been and are being opened for tribal students as also for Muslim students. For those students outside the State, continuing technical and medical courses. State Government is providing substantial financial assistance for prosecution of their studies.

The Scheduled Castes Development Corporation and the Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation have been formed to accelerate the programmes of development for these communities.

By formation of new Co-operative societies in different sectors helpful hand has been extended to Fishermen, weavers, Motor Transport Workers, Tea Garden labourers Co-operative Tea Gardens have been started with active participation of the workers.

Wages of all categories of workers have been raised. Service conditions of working classes have been bettered, and all Acts and Laws benefiting the workers rigidly enforced. The Government rescinded all punishments inflicted upon the employees and

working class people over the years for trade union activities. The employees have also been given the trade union rights.

The Government have formed Tea Trading and Development Corporation to look after the welfare of fifty four tea gardens of the State many of which were gradually becoming sick.

To Go A Long Way

Even after whatever has been done till now, the State has still to go a long way in achieving the objectives forming part of the pledges given. □

Dasarath Deb...

[From Page 16]

notified areas. Tiffin worth fifty paise is being given to each student upto Class V."

Whole-hearted Cooperation of the People

Both these steps benefit particularly students belonging to the poor sections. These steps cost the Government Rs. one crore per year. The quantum of stipend for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes students residing in hostels has been raised from Rs. 60 to Rs. 90 per month. The Government has decided to give old age pension. Revenue on land upto seven and a half kanis has been abolished. Referring to such measures taken by the Government, Dasarath Deb asserts, "The vested interests and the reactionary forces are resorting to multifarious tactics to put impediments in the way of the implementation of the welfare programmes of the Left Front Government. The massacre of June last was the worst of its kind. But with the whole-hearted cooperation of the democratic people, the Government has been able to tackle the situation and bring back normalcy everywhere in the State." □

Tripura Left Front Govt. Marches Ahead

[From Page 15]

The people of Tripura are not fools. The leaders of the Left Front were the first casualty of the MISA, long before the Emergency was imposed. While the Prime Minister assures democratic norms, State leaders of the Congress(I) resort to individual political killings. They started shouting for President's rule in Tripura from the day Indira Gandhi assumed power in New Delhi. The Left Front Government can see how this North-East region is still neglected, how the food-for-work programme has been put under the threat of drastic curtailment, how the autonomy of the State has to be defended at every moment.

The people of Tripura can also see the polarisation that is taking place. In one camp are to be seen the vested interests, the secessionists, the chauvinists, and the communal riot-mongers, and, in the other camp are to be seen all those who oppose the conspiracies of these evil forces and defend democracy. The implementation of the plan and programme of the Left Front Government would largely depend on the outcome of this grim battle for democracy and peace. □

Struggles Ahead ...

(From Page 10)

Working Class today must remember that they are fighting a battle which is not only their own, but for the future of the entire people who love freedom and democracy. The ultimate liberation of the working people from exploitation would depend upon how best it could defend national sovereignty, national integration, democracy and fight back the attacks launched on their living conditions by Government at the centre.

One Year of Left Democratic Front Government of Kerala

—E.K. Nayanar

AS I look back at the working of the Left-Democratic Front Government during the past one year, I would say that, on the whole I am happy with the progress that we have been able to make during this year. Not that we have been able to rise to the full expectations of the people. In fact, on our own part there were shortcomings and mistakes. The point is that during a period of deepening economic and political crisis, when we find that the one-party Governments enjoying considerable majorities in the Legislature are steeped in an unprecedented type of crisis, the Left-Democratic Front Government has been able to function as a team, and implement its declared policies. In fact, we have implemented all the 33-point relief and reform measures announced in the Budget and have proved to be a Government that works.

One of the most significant outcome of the formation and working of this Government is that the politics of Left-Democratic United Front and the policies pursued by this Government and other left Governments are having their own impact on all-India developments. The consistent stand against all forms of extra-coercive power and the upholding of the Parliamentary system and the entire democratic fabric of our society is the corner-stone of our policies. Programmes like agricultural workers pension, wages to the unemployed, decentralization of power at the district and lower levels, the upgrading and

strengthening of the Planning Board, the constitution of Subject Committees to aid Legislative work, Health-card for school children, the Public distribution system embracing the entire people of the State, the implementation of land reforms, and a better deal to the agriculturists, healthier and better labour-management relations, a new approach regarding industrialisation and Centre-State relations are some of the issues on which this Government has broken new grounds. And I would say, despite all the attempts at mudslinging by the leaders of the reactionary forces, the achievements of the past one year stand out in all their brilliance.

A New Beginning

The implementation of our programme during the past months has made its own impact on other States. Take for instance the Agricultural Workers Pension which has benefitted nearly two lakhs of people in Kerala. After Kerala started implementing this programme, the Tamil Nadu Government has also started implementing a more or less similar programme. In West Bengal too there is a similar scheme for Agricultural workers. The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh T. Anjiah has declared that he would be introducing pension to the Agricultural Workers in his State. A number of Chief Ministers have had consultations with me regarding the scheme. Besides, we have introduced eight other Pension schemes which includes journa-

lists, film and Circus artists, etc.

Our scheme of Unemployment wage to over two lakhs of our youth has made similar impact on other States. The Tamilnadu Government has introduced a similar scheme but limited to the University graduates. The Governments of West Bengal and the Punjab are also implementing more or less similar schemes.

Kerala Leads

This year we distributed over Rs. 140 crores to the peasants and other weaker sections through Co-operative societies. In this matter, comparatively speaking, Kerala tops all other States in India. Besides, we have given relief to the extent of nearly Rs. 5 crores to the lower sections of the peasantry with regard to the payment of their loan dues. We gave additional aid and price to paddy and sugarcane cultivators. When the price of cocoa crashed subsequent to the Central Government giving an import licence to the Cadburys, we came to the aid of the peasants by organising a scheme of total procurement at a price 50% higher than what the Cadburys offered. We stood by the rubber and coconut cultivators against undue imports, thus protecting the price of these commodities. With the result, the repeated attempts by Congress(I) and other parties to whip up peasant struggles did not win people's support. At the same time, these steps had their repercussions in other States.

Land Reforms

On the land-reform front,



KERALA MARCHES AHEAD

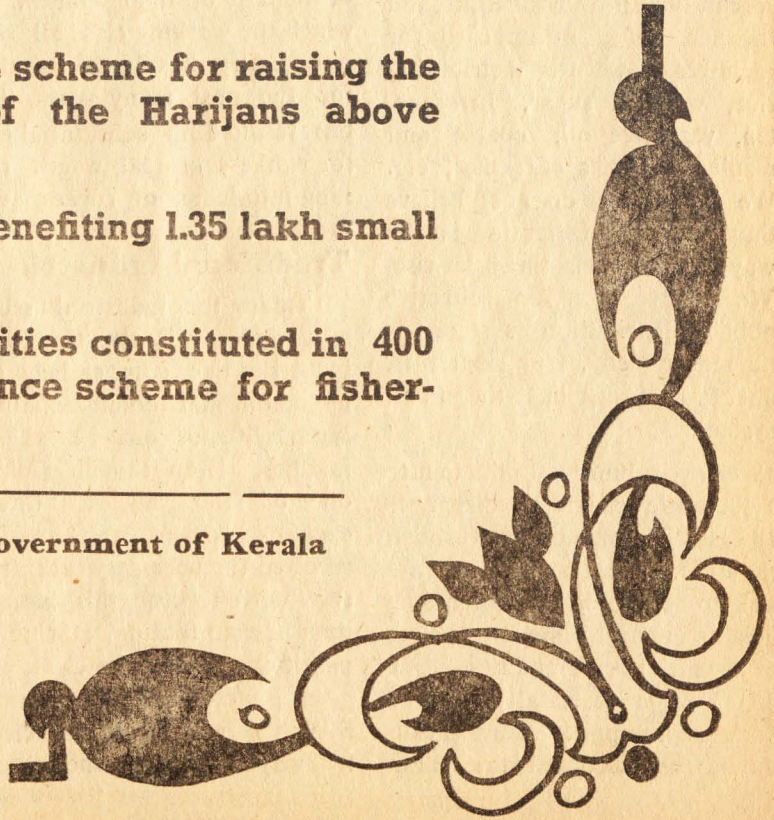
- * Pension granted to 1.25 lakh Agricultural workers above the age of 60.
- * Relief granted to 1.84 lakh unemployed youth.
- * Health card scheme benefiting 55 lakh school students launched.
- * Rs. Ten Crore seven point programme for rural reconstruction launched.

**Kerala's Left Democratic Front Government
open on alternate path of Progress**



- * **Rs. Three hundred crore scheme for raising the economic conditions of the Harijans above poverty line launched.**
- * **Interest relief scheme benefiting 1.35 lakh small farmers introduced.**
- * **Fishermen welfare activities constituted in 400 fishing villages. Insurance scheme for fishermen introduced,**

Public Relations Department, Government of Kerala



we have been able to carry forward the task which we began in 1957-59 at the time of the first Communist-led Ministry headed by E. M. S. Namboodiripad. Upto now 37 lakhs of tenants have been made owners of the land which they tilled. Besides, nearly 4.5 lakhs of hut dwellers have been made owners of the small plots on which they they had built their tiny homes. We are committed to completing the entire process of land reform during the course of the coming year, provided the Centre clears the bills in this connection.

Not P.D. Act, But P.D. System

The public distribution system has won the unanimous acclaim of the Press and has been commended by the Planning authorities and the Centre. The statutory rationing introduced at the time of the first Communist Ministry has been strengthened and expanded. Today, through 14,350 retail outlets spread out all over the State, on the basis of a ration card for each family, we are distributing rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene, tea, vegetable oil, coarse and medium varieties of textiles, etc. We in Kerala do not believe that Preventive Detention is the way to beat back the price-rise. We believe that an effective public distribution system is the real remedy. Our slogan is, not P. D. Act, but the P. D. system.

We have submitted to the Centre a 400-crore scheme to distribute 18 essential commodities through the P. D. system so that we are able to acquire the commanding heights in controlling the prices of essential commodities. For this, it is essential that the State Civil Supplies Corporation should be accorded the same

status as that of the Food Corporation of India and that it should be provided with identical facilities. We are yet to hear from the Centre on this scheme.

Gains For The Working Class

During this period, the working classes have been able to register new gains. The working classes as a whole, whether in the fields or plantations, in the shops or factories, have been able to win higher wages and fair bonus. This was achieved on the basis of their organised strength, in the main, through negotiations. Labour-management relations have considerably improved than what it was a year ago. The number of man-days lost has come down by about half, compared to the previous year.

Cost of Living Index Corrected

Besides, we have removed all the anomalies in the calculation of the cost of living index, for which the working class all over our country has been agitating for the past many years. This has resulted in substantial gain for workers in real wages running into lakhs of rupees every month.

Traditional Industries

Taking the industrial sector as a whole, it is the traditional industries like coir, cashew and handloom that dominate, affecting the lives of some 12 lakhs of families. Even though Coir is one of the biggest foreign exchange earner, we have not received the necessary aid from the Centre to keep this industry on a normal footing. During the past twelve years, the Centre has given a mere one crore of rupees by way of grant and three crores by way of loan, whereas the

foreign exchange earnings of last year alone was about 45 crores. Even this year, Kerala had to finance Rs. 3.5 crores for the distress purchase of coir. The attitude of the Centre has not been helpful even in the matter of procuring raw husks for the coir industry. The 60-crore Coir Development scheme submitted to the Centre is still pending without a decision. As for cashew, the crucial problem is the import of raw nuts. Here too the Centre has not cared to come to the aid of the State, but has given import licence to the private sector.

Attempt at Industrialisation

During the past so many years, not much has been done in the matter of industrialisation of this State. During the last 30 years of planning a mere Rs. 381 crores have been invested in our State in the public sector by the Centre. We have repeatedly placed this issue before the Centre.

At the same time, we have taken a new initiative to attract the whole-hearted co-operation of enterpreneurial talent and capital from both within and outside the State. In this connection, the discussions with industrialists held at Trivandrum, Madras and Bombay have paved the way for a healthy dialogue and mutual understanding between enterpreneures and this Government on the principles of fair wages and fair profit, as well as mutual co-operation and mutual benefit. Here, I may point out that certain agreements have already been entered into for the establishment of certain industries in Kerala and a number of industrialists including Shri Guzdar, Chairman of the

[On Page 26]

Main Features of Kerala Budget

THE second budget of the Kerala Left Democratic Front Government offers a wide range of concessions and incentives to raise the productivity both in the agricultural and industrial sectors. The budget can rightly be termed 'productivity-oriented', as the main thrust is on increasing production both in the farming and industrial sectors. Together with the massive rural reconstruction programme, the year 1981-82 will guarantee employment opportunities to lakhs of Kerala's unemployed youth.

The Government will continue all the nine Pension schemes including that of Agricultural workers and all the relief measures including the unemployment wage. These schemes will benefit over five lakhs of persons. The new Budget will bring the coir, handloom and cashew workers within the fold of three separate welfare schemes, the beedi workers and fishermen will be organised into co-operatives and welfare schemes for construction and quarry workers will be launched. These new schemes will benefit nearly a million persons.

Electricity will be free to all those who use only ten units or less. Employment Tax has been abolished. Fishermen's daughters will be given a marriage aid of Rs. 1,000.

A six-crore interest subsidy on agricultural loans, cancellation of rent arrears for holdings upto one hectare, free purchase-right for house-sites of kudikidappukars and a subsidy of Rs. 1,000/- for construction of house, abolition of agricultural income-tax on food crops; abolition of Sales tax on fertilisers for food crops, the

launching of a 2 lakh hectare minor irrigation scheme based on tube-bore wells, 40% subsidy for soil erosion prevention work, cashew-planting in 3,000 hectares etc. are some of the new steps to encourage agricultural production.

The Civil Supplies Corporation will open one thousand new retail outlets, one in each Panchayat, besides the already existing 15,000 outlets, as a new step to beat back the price-rise.

As much as 87 per cent of the 28 million holdings in the State are below one hectare in extent. To improve credit facilities, a credit book system has been proposed. Under this, each cultivator would have a credit book indicating his seasonal requirements. The concession on stamp duty and registration free now available to the cooperative sector, would be extended to the borrowings of agriculturists from commercial banks also. This would be available in respect of loans upto Rs. 5,000. An autonomous soil conservation authority has been proposed to elicit institutional finance and to take up the first phase of soil conservation programmes. It has been proposed to take up the first phase of soil conservation works in the worst affected 10,000 hectares, during the next financial year. The existing subsidy of 40 per cent will be given to the peasants for soil conservation calculated at the rate of Rs. 5,500 per hectare.

An autonomous ground water authority would be set up to tap the ground water resources to the maximum extent possible. The target for 1981-82 would be 500 bore wells, each with an irrigation potential of 15 hectares of cash crops, 1000 tube wells,

(with a depth range of 150 to 200 metre) each irrigating 20 to 50 hectares, 1,000 filter point wells with irrigation capacity of five hectares of each crops and 1.5 lakh open wells each with a capacity of upto 8 hectares.

A five per cent subsidy for short-term agricultural loans would be given so that the cultivators need pay only six per cent interest. It is proposed that in respect of all agriculturists holding less than five acres of land, 75 per cent of the interest outstanding up to April 1, 1981 on short-term agricultural loans obtained from Government or Co-operative societies upto April 1, 1978 be waived in respect of cases where the loans were repaid in full before July 1, 1981. The loss suffered by co-operative on this account would be made good in full by the Government.

The training and visit programme in the agricultural sector presently in operation in Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey districts would be extended to all districts and agricultural development centres set up in all Panchayats. A new Scheme for rehabilitation and revitalisation of pepper cultivation and a scheme for promotion of vegetable cultivation in and around urban centres would be introduced. Under this, subsidy would be given at Rs. 1,250 per hectare for newly planting pepper and @ Rs. 1,375 for rehabilitating the existing vines. A separate agency would be set up to improve the cashew plantations in the public sector and extend cashew cultivation to more areas.

The income from paddy, tapioca, plantains, ginger and all cash crops would be exempt from the purview of agricultural income-tax. The two per cent sales tax on raw tapioca and the

[On Page 26]

E K Nayanar...

[From Page 24]

Indian Merchants Chamber of Commerce, has assured us that they would be investing in Kerala.

New Approach to Planning

Thus, during the past one year, we have been taking a series of progressive steps in the various fields of our economy. But in the matter of putting everything in the proper perspective, planning plays a crucial role. With this understanding, we have re-organised, upgraded and strengthened the Planning Board with wide powers of planning, monitoring, and reviewing.

Together with this should be seen the decision to decentralise power at the district and lower levels. This would guarantee better people's participation in all aspects of administration and thus prepare the grounds for a better democratic way of life. Simultaneously, it would help release the administration from the clutches of bureaucracy.

Along with this, we should also take into consideration the formation of Subject Committees to aid legislative work.

Increasing People's Support

In the foregoing, I have explained in brief some of the steps that we have taken during the past one year to show how we have been working to chalk out a new path of development and democratic way of life. This has influenced the thinking of the people in our state and the popular base of our support has got widened and strengthened. This is reflected in our thumping victory in the Nilambur bye-election, and in the elections to 50 Panchayats and 6 Municipali-

ties. Out of these the Congress(I) could secure majority only in one Panchayat.

The Harbinger of the New times

The increasing isolation of the undemocratic forces in the State, has forced them to resort to tactics of violence and murder and at the same time make wild allegations regarding law and order problems. The pattern is the same, whether it is Kerala or West Bengal or some other State. These forces also dream of organising defections in the Left Democratic Front. But I am sure that these dreams will only end up as mere dreams. This Government did not come to power at the mercy of some or other petty groups or vested interests. This Government rests on the strong foundations of the powerful support of the large majority of the people of Kerala as well as the left and democratic forces all over India. And as the base of the Left Democratic Front in Kerala has got widened and strengthened during the past few months, I find that the left and democratic forces all over India has also gained new grounds. The emergence of the six party Left Democratic platform at the all-India level and the formation of Left Democratic Fronts in a number of States is the harbinger of the new times. And I am sure that the Left Democratic Front Government of Kerala would be able to present a still more better picture of work in the coming year. It shall be our endeavour to put the entire development of our State on firm democratic rails and at the same time, take a path of reconstruction which would be welcomed by more and more sections of people.

Our policies are an open

book. We do neither encourage defections nor organise defections. We are against all types of political horse-trading. At the same time, I would like all parties and forces which are opposed to communal and authoritarian forces to come and rally together with us to further broaden and strengthen the Left-Democratic forces. □

[This article was written by E.K. Nayanar, Chief Minister, on the occasion of completion of one year of the Left Democratic Front Government of Kerala in January.—Ed.]

Kerala Budget...

[From Page 25]

four per cent purchase tax on raw ginger would be waived.

The spraying and replanting programme of coconut trees affected by root-wilt disease, now in operation in 62 panchayats, will be extended to other panchayats as well. The Kerala Agriculture Development Project and the Multi-state cashew project will be continued and an additional area of 3,000 hectares in the southern districts brought under cashew. The existing facilities and assistance for cocoa will be improved.

Plantations upto four hectares have been exempted from the purview of plantation tax. Presently this is only two hectares. The exemption limit for sales tax has been raised from Rs. 35,000 to Rs. 50,000 thereby excluding small traders from the levy of sales tax. All traders with annual turn-over of Rs. 1.5 lakhs as against Rs. one lakh, have been brought under the simplified procedure for assessment. Under this system, tax liability is fixed on the basis of returns filed, the detailed accounts being scrutinised only once in three years.

[On Page 42]

Public Distribution System : Kerala Experience

AT a recent Conference of the Chief Ministers, explaining the strategy of the Left and Democratic Front Government of Kerala in tackling the problem of the rising prices, especially of essential commodities, E.K. Nayanar, the State Chief Minister, said that the problem can be solved "Not through the P.D. Act, but by the P.D. (Public Distribution) System." As a matter of fact, the Government of Kerala has been able to supply some essential commodities at a fair price through its public distribution system.

There were 8,000 ration shops at the time the State of Kerala was formed in 1956. The Government of Kerala led by the then C.P.I. under the Chief Ministership of E.M.S. Namboodiripad in 1957 which was committed to providing the essential needs of the people at reasonable prices, built up a reasonably dependable and fairly efficient system of public distribution. The system was not only preserved but was also expanded during all these years. From 8,000 ration shops in 1956, the State now has 12,000 such shops, 9,000 retail outlets run by the co-operative institutions and 350 'Kerala Stores' which are run by the unemployed youth of the State with some assistance. Thus over 14,000 outlets are located in 1,000 panchayats, 45 Municipalities and Corporations in the State.

Unlike many other States, the Left and Democratic Front Government of Kerala with its fairly satisfactory public distribution system spanning every nook and corner of the State, widened its activities so that the people could be assured of the supplies of essential commodities of good

quality at reasonable prices. Ever since Central Budget in June last year, the price increase had received an alarming spurt. Sugar soared to Rs. 12 to Rs. 18 per kilogram. There was a scramble for edible oil at any price. Sympathetic price increase became order of the day. Kerala Civil Supply Department in association of Civil Supply Corporation opened new centres and special bazars during the festival season of Onam, Dassehara and Diwali. The Corporation took up the challenge of centralised procurement. Men and women came forward enthusiastically to lend a helping hand in working the scheme.

After the festivals the people realised that each family had benefitted to the tune of Rs. 50 by making their 'Onam Purchases' in the 'Onam Bazars'. The open market prices decreased by at least 15 per cent below the pre-Onam levels.

More than 20,000 tonnes of levy and free sale sugar was distributed through the public distribution system due to which the price of sugar did not rise beyond Rs. 8 per kilogram even in the private shops, while in Maharashtra which is a sugar producing state, the price of sugar reached Rs. 12 to Rs. 18 per kilogram. In the Onam month of August, distributed 92,000 tonnes of ration rice in addition to huge quantity of other items.

The Civil Supplies Department supervises the procurement and allocation of the consumer articles for distribution. Civil Supply Corporation issues supply orders. All party vigilance committees in every area ensure that the distribution through the

outlets is fair and above board.

Eighteen essential commodities which are supplied through the Kerala public distribution system include rice, wheat and wheat products, pulses, greengram, bengalgram, turdhal, blackgram, spices, chillies, coriander, vegetables, sugar, tea, coffee, cement, petroleum products, soaps and certain other commodities.

The people including the initial critics of the scheme have demanded the scheme to be made permanent, and expanded upto village level and that more articles should be sold through them. The people of Kerala now realise that the Left Democratic Front Government through the public distribution system have forged a very powerful instrument to control to some extent the capitalist market mechanism and the price rise which had assumed the proportion of a national scourge.

It all depends upon the policies of the Government whether to serve the masses of down trodden people like the working class, the peasantry, and the landless labourers; or to serve the interests of the exploiters by reducing the real wages of the people through price rise, inflation, etc. In States where P.D. Act has been used the price rise could not be curbed and a number of trade union leaders have been arrested under this Act. On the other hand, the left and democratic front Government of Kerala, throwing away the P.D. Act in the Indian Ocean, strengthened the P.D. System (Public Distribution System) and has been able to give some relief to the people. The Kerala experience of the public distribution system could be useful in the wider national context. □

Labour and Employment Policy of Left Front Govt. of West Bengal

-Krishnapada Ghosh, Minister for Labour

“IN a society where there is inequality in the distribution of wealth, justice simply means the interest of the stronger.”

Though the quotation is as old as Plato's Republic, it has not lost its credibility even in India of 1981. The largest democracy still denies justice to millions, shelter to children and security to women.

Quite aware of its limitations, the Left Front Government of West Bengal wants to paint the picture quite reverse. It simply wants that a man must live like a man. Keeping this in mind the Left Front Government with all its strength and determination is trying very hard to do justice to the suffering millions. In the field of Industrial relations, the Left Front Government has all along tried to uphold the interest of the working class. The previous Congress Govt. during the emergency period took away all trade union rights, including the rights to strike and form unions. Taking advantage of the Congress Government's anti-working class attitudes, the employers started large scale attack upon the workers. Thousands of workers were laid off or retrenched or thrown out of employment. There was virtual wage freeze and real earnings of the factory workers substantially eroded. Payment of statutory bonus was reduced by half. Immediately after assuming power, the Left Front Government fully restored all the trade union rights including the rights to strike and form union. In the matter of industrial disputes, the police and the

administration were directed to keep themselves strictly neutral. Their duty is to see that the industrial disputes are settled peacefully in favour of the workers. Thus the practice in force for the last 30 years, when in the matter of disputes between the workers and the employers, the police and the administration invariably sided with the employers against the workers, was reversed.

The existence of a friendly government sympathetic to the cause of the workers, resulted in tremendous advance of trade union movement in the State during the last four years. Still there was in general complete peace on the working class front. In this period there were some major struggles and the workers, through the intervention of the State Government, were able to realise significant concessions from the employers.

In 1976 only 22 percent of the workers received bonus in West Bengal. But during the last four years proportion of workers receiving statutory minimum bonus of 8.33 percent substantially increased to 90-100 percent. Employees of public sector undertakings do not come under the purview of the Bonus Act. Still then the L. F. Government has been giving these employees, ex-gratia of 8.33 percent in place of bonus. In the year 1978-79 more than two lakhs of Jute Mill workers had to go on for a long drawn strike and at official intervention Jute workers were able to realise some important demands. Per capita monthly earnings of each worker have gone up to

more than Rs. 470.10. About 54,000 workers engaged in textile industries were benefited by a tripartite agreement in the year 1979. Three lakh engineering workers were preparing for an indefinite strike. But with the intervention of the Left Front Government, the textile workers were able to secure some benefits. Their monthly basic salary has increased by Rs. 52 to Rs 56. After prolonged strike by the workers of the printing presses and allied industries, there was an amicable settlement through the intervention of the State Government. The Left Front Government has amicably settled various disputes between the workers and authorities of Calcutta Dock and Port. Number of cases of strikes, lock outs and Lay-offs have steadily declined.

Work-Stoppage due to Strike-and Lock-out. 1977-80

Year	Total No. of work Stoppage	No. of Strike	No. of Lock-out
1977	397	206	191
1978	371	172	191
1979	290	146	144
1980	213	78	355

Lay-off and Retrenchment in West Bengal

Year	Retrenchment	Lay-Off
1977	2117	1,22,044
1978	2109	91,797
1979	1120	65,551
1980	1045	14,848

The figures for work-stoppage in 1980 in relation to number of cases and number of men involved were the lowest in the recent years. The number of cases of

closure and men affected thereof was the lowest in the last eleven years. The number of persons retrenched was the lowest in the last nine years. The number of cases of Lay-off as well as number of persons laid off was the lowest in the last eleven years. The Left Front Government has given full recognition to the right to strike by the workers and employees. But it is the considered view of the Government that the strike should be resorted to as the last weapon when all other methods fail to achieve the desired result. Role of conciliation in the amicable settlement of industrial disputes is on the increase. Total number of men involved in strikes, lock-outs increased from 2,23,000 in 1977 to 4,36,026 in 1979. During this period number of men involved in cases of termination settled through conciliation increased from 45.5 per cent to 87.7 per cent of the total. This is a notable success of the Left Front Government's labour policy. The Left Front Govt. whole heartedly supports the demand of the Central Trade Union Organisations to introduce Comprehensive Bonus Bill which should cover, besides the factory workers, other categories of workers and employees who continue to remain outside the purview of Bonus Act. The Left Front Govt. also supports the demand that bonus should be considered as "deferred wage."

The Left Front Government has suggested amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act as applied to West Bengal. The amendments proposed by the West Bengal Government include rising of the salary limit of the unionised workers from the present Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,600 the latter being the ceiling considered by the Payment of Bonus Act.

The proposed amendments also include the procedure to be

adopted in connection with arrival at a decision on the majority union.

There was a significant rise in the real annual earnings of the factory workers in West Bengal between 1976 and 1978 from Rs. 1,933 in 1976 to Rs.2,070 in 1978. In the industrial sector, there has been an increase in the average daily employment in the registered working factories from 826 thousands in 1977 to 839 thousands in 1978. And in 1979 the figure was 857 thousands. This increase, to a significant extent, is in response to the steps taken by the Left Front Government to retain the sick and closed units—a fact also reflected in the increase in number of working factories. It is evident that along with an increase in employment, there was also an increase in the earnings of factory workers, and at a faster rate than the price relevant for the industrial workers, so that the real earnings of workers after a long time showed improvement. This improvement in real earnings is related mostly to an increase in the organisational strength of the workers and also to policies taken by the State Government in the sphere of labour relations.

The generation of employment in the State economy is primarily a resultant of the forces of production at work in the major sectors, such as agriculture and industry, of the economy, and the analysis on employment, will therefore, be related to the production undertaken in these sectors. In agriculture, numerous schemes have been implemented such as Food for work programme, including for the drought prone areas, for the provision of employment in the rural areas as well as creation of infra-structures in roads, minor irrigation facilities and soil conservation.

Expenditure of cash and foodgrains under the programmes of Rural Work and Food for Work in West Bengal in 1979-80

Programme Expenditure Utilisation of
of cash Foodgrains
(Rs. in lakhs) (in M.T.)

Rural works		
Programme	— 675.11	85,164
Food for Work	— 234.92	32,421
Special Food		
for Work	— 558.53	75,941

While implementing these programmes there has been a direct involvement of the common people in the selection as well as in the execution of the schemes. The total number of additional mandays generated through these programmes has been of a significant order, reaching the figure of 540.5 lakh mandays in 1979-80 as against the figure of 533.44 lakh mandays in 1978-79. Due to satisfactory implementation of these programmes there has been a marked increase in the agricultural wage rate for nearly all the districts in 1979-80, with the average wage rate for the State increasing by about 20 per cent from Rs. 5.65 in 1976-77 to Rs. 6.75 in 1979-80. Agricultural wage rate at present is Rs. 9.03. This improvement in wage rate has been as much a result of additional production programmes undertaken in agriculture as of an increase in the bargaining power of the agricultural labourers. Since these labourers along with land-poor peasants and bargadars belong to the same group of the rural poor this increase in the bargaining power is closely linked with the land reforms measures successfully undertaken in the distribution of ceiling-surplus land among the land-poor farmers and the recording of bargadars. It is also related to the active role played by the panchayats, along with

the administrative machinery, in protecting the justified interests of agricultural labourers.

Employment Number and Employment in registered working factories in West Bengal

	1977	1978	1979
Registered working factories (number)	5,837	5,967	6,144
Average daily employment (number in thousand)	826	839	857

From the above table it is seen that the number of registered working factories and the average daily employment are rising in recent years.

For the benefit of the workers the Left Front Government has taken over quite a good number of units.

Year	Total number of units takenover	Number of employees involved
1977	8	4,502
1978	13	11,500
1979	24	18,083
1980	30	19,796

It is assuring to note that along with this provision of employment, most of the units, have started showing encouraging trends in both production and social objectivity.

Employment Through Employment Exchange

The process of providing jobs was regulated compulsorily through employment exchange, and it is to be noted that about 55,000 unemployed persons were provided with jobs through Employment Exchange to different Governments and private organisations during the last four years. The State

Government has been making efforts to increase the scope of employment directly in its own organisations as well as quasi-Government and local bodies. This is reflected in the table given below :-

Vacancies Filled by Employment Exchange Nominees in West Bengal

	1978	1979	1980
Central Government	2,051	1,698	1,386
State Government	2,782	5,105	5,227
Quasi Govt. & local bodies	2,800	3,344	3,843

The table shows that the performance of the State Government is remarkable in the employment sector also.

Unemployment Assistance Scheme

In this connection special mention should be made of the unemployment allowance. Time and again, we have noted that without basic changes in the economic structure of the country it is impossible to solve permanently the question of unemployment in the States also. Considering its various aspects, the Left Front Government adopted an epoch-making decision to introduce unemployment allowance from April, 1978 which till now, has covered about 3 lakhs of the unemployed providing them Rs. 600 per year per head. The recipient is required to work 100 days in a year for which an additional amount of Rs. 200 will be paid as remuneration. The Left Front Government has started payment of dearness allowance to State Government employees at Central rates. Further, even the Quasi, Government, Local-self-Government employees and employees of State aided non-Government organisations inclu-

ding teachers and others are also getting dearness allowance at Central rates.

Despite so many odds and imponderables, the Left Front Government has successfully met its ordeal during the last four years when economic crisis all over the country in various sectors reached an all-time high. Looking at its performance from an over-all angle, being fully conscious of its failures in a few areas, the Left Front Government stands out as a pace-setter when the Centre takes a rather recalcitrant attitude that impedes all the welfare activities. People see the sea-change in this short span in contrast with their unchecked pauperisation under the Congress rule for nearly three decades. □

State Govt. Employees' March to Parliament

THE National Executive of the All India State Government Employees Federation met at New Delhi on 17 March and decided to submit a mass petition to the Lok Sabha on 4 May. Several thousand state government employees from all over the country will join the march to the Parliament.

The Federation is conducting the mass signature campaign on the petition which highlights demands of controlling price rise national formulae for D.A., grant of full trade union rights and scrapping of Government Conduct Servants Rules as has been done in West Bengal, etc. □

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For An Alternative Policy

—Chittabrata Majumdar, Minister for Small Scale Industries

SOLVING unemployment by spread of small industries has been a whisper in the air of late. Everybody from the unemployed youth to the planners of the country's future has been keener to see growth of small industries. Annual plans are being detailed to fulfil target for job creation and man absorption. Alluring prospects are being plotted on graphs. But obstacles to the growth of small industries persist. Planners do not take notice of the basic problems of small industries and give themselves over to wishful thinking. This is as much the same as cutting the roots under soil and watering a plant's crown of foliage.

Opinions differ as to the development of small industries in our country. Some plead for setting up small industries by outright discarding of technological sophistication and by total annihilation of large industries. They shout 'Small is Beautiful'. Some hail progress of science and technology to the advantage of industries. Only modern technology, they believe, is capable of serving man's increased demand of goods to the maximum.

For the Happy Growth

In a populous country like India vast man power remains unutilised. If this infinite human energy goes untapped how can we expect to deliver majority of people from poverty? With purchasing power utterly sapped because of increasing poverisation of the people at large, how can large scale units expect to find

expanding market at home? Introduction of sophisticated technology in every sphere of production will rather shorten their market by throwing more people out of employment and curtailing their purchasing power. With poverty intensified, market shrunk, the industries will tend to be sick. This is the inexorable logic of economics. You cannot break the circuit here.

On the other hand, by total exclusion of modern technology we cannot develop small and cottage industries to such an extent as to meet the total market demand of India.

Our industrial policy ought to have been formulated in view of these features. Against this prospective separate areas for large scale production and small scale production should be demarcated. In that case small industries would have been insulated from attacks of large scale sector and they would get free scope to thrive. In its reserved area large scale too would enjoy the benefits of an uncurtailed market. This should have been the wise step to the creation of a climate for the happy growth of industry in our country. But the planners have disposed otherwise.

Brute Fact

The Government of India have apparently realised this need and prima facie it appears that they have taken some half-hearted steps to offer some protection to the small scale sector. It should be made clear at the outset that in this matter the State Governments are completely helpless as large scale units are governed by the Industries (Development and

Regulation) Act which is administered by the Central Government and the States have very little say in the matter. In exercise of the powers conferred by that Act the Central Government have decided to reserve further production of 807 specified items in the small scale sector. This protection, however, has proved to be an illusory one as large units who were already producing these items have been allowed to continue to do so and also to expand their production when their licensed capacity permitted it.

As a result the large scale units have taken full advantage of the gap between their licensed capacity and their actual production and manipulated their own production in such a manner that small scale units who entered the market on the expectation that their operations will be protected by the decision of the Government of India have found that the promised protection is totally illusory and, exposed to the full onslaught of unequal competition, they have gradually closed down one by one. This is a brute fact of life which cannot be overlooked by anyone who is interested in planning for the development of small scale industries.

Severe Distress

I am afraid the statements made above appears somewhat theoretical and abstract in nature. A concrete example will make it perhaps clearer. In the year 1970 Government of India decided that production of Cycle tyres would be reserved for small scale units. During that year 20,989,000 Cycle tyres were manufactured in the DGTD sector. The licensed capacity in

the DGTD sector, however, at that time was 38,210,900 pieces per annum. It will be seen that the existing licensed capacity was not utilised fully and the capacity utilisation was in the neighbourhood of approximately 55%. In the small scale sector the installed capacity was 32,340,000 pieces out of which 17,040,000 was the installed capacity in the Eastern Region only.

The task force on Rubber products estimated the capacity requirement for bicycle tyres as 60,000,000 pieces relative to a demand of 50,000,000 pieces by the end of the Fifth Plan. From this it is clear that there is no scope for further increase in capacity as already, the licensed capacity in the hands of the DGTD units and the installed capacity in the S.S.I. sector is more than the requirement as assessed by the task force on Rubber products.

With the decision of the Government of India to reserve further production of this item in the small scale sector in the year 1970, the small scale sector could have reasonably expected that any further increase in demand would be met by them and they would be in a position to have a reasonably assured market. This expectation, however, did not materialise as would be seen from the production figures in the DGTD sectors given below yearwise:-

1970	—	20,989,000
1971	—	20,664,000
1972	—	21,650,000
1973	—	21,766,000
1974	—	25,236,000
1975	—	24,525,000
1976	—	23,607,000
1977	—	27,003,000
1978	—	30,402,000

It will appear, therefore, that without violating in any way the licensed capacity allowed to them

the large scale units were able to increase their production by about 10 million pieces and this portion of the market, which should reasonably have gone to the small scale sector, was appropriated by the large scale sector. We may now examine the result of such expansion of production in the DGTD sector on the small scale units. As has been stated before, the installed capacity for manufacture of Cycles tyres in the small scale sector in the Eastern Region is 17,040,000 pieces per annum and against this in the year 1975 actual production was to the tune of 8,550,000 pieces. With the increasing competition from the DGTD sector these units were in severe distress and naturally most of them fell sick. In fact, in the year 1980-81 the production stands at only 900,000 pieces. In 1980 only 3 units in the eastern region are reported to be in production of cycle tyres whereas in 1975 production was continued in 25 units in the same region.

Acute Demoralisation

The example cited above clearly shows the value of the protection allegedly extended by the Government of India to the small scale sector. It will be seen that the DGTD sector have, while increasing the production, always remained within their licensed capacity and even then they have been able to match their production with the market trend in such a manner as to maximise their profits. There are reasons also to believe that the DGTD units might be in a position to accept even marginal losses on this item of production in order to eliminate potential competitors in the small scale sector. Such an arrangement on their part would not be very difficult as their product

mix contains many other items which are highly profitable. Whether this allegation is true or not is a matter into which we need not go now, but unless it is decided that production of large scale units in reserved items is to be pegged at a level which is considered reasonable, taking into account their actual performance on the date of reservation, the protection seemingly offered by such reservations is more illusory than real. In fact the apparent protection is in effect harmful for the growth of the small scale sector because it results in entrepreneurs entering the field on false hopes. Their failure is bound to result in acute demoralisation amongst the prospective entrepreneurs in future.

We, therefore, feel that Government of India should take steps to peg the capacity of the DGTD units at a reasonable level as suggested above. For this purpose, if it is necessary, the I.D.R. Act itself may have to be amended. This point has been agitated by the Government of West Bengal before the Government of India for a long time now but unfortunately it has not been possible to persuade the Government of India to take any remedial measures in the matter.

Inimical to the Growth

Capitalist mode of production is now in the grip of crisis all over the world. Big industries in India too will not escape that plight. Their philosophy teaches them to be always in competition. In order to survive and to bulk larger they must compete with and knock out the rivals. Each must be red in tooth and claw. But when this competition is with the smaller firms the fight becomes unequal and in a strife with the

[On Page 35]

Progressive Education Policy of the Left Front Govt. of West Bengal

—Partha De, Minister for Secondary & Primary Education

FOR quite a number of years in the recent past education in West Bengal was virtually in a jeopardy from every respect. Indiscipline was rampant at schools and colleges. Examinations were not held in time, nor were the results brought out within the stipulated time. Mass copying at the examination was the order of the day. The respect of education in this State seemed to be bleak. It cannot be denied that the Left Front Government of West Bengal on assuming power in June 1977 took up the matter seriously and now had been able to completely reverse this trend. Now one can hardly hear about any serious disturbance at any school or college. Very recently the Madhyamik (Secondary) Final Examinations were held throughout the State smoothly and peacefully. In the last two years results of these examinations were brought out without any delay, and this helped the students immensely. In fact this had set education on its track again in this State. Mass copying is now a memory of the past.

Upto 1977 education was free for boys upto Class IV and for girls upto Class VIII. On assuming power the Left Front Government of West Bengal made education free for both boys and girls upto Class VIII from 1979. And in the next year, that is, 1980 education was made free for Class IX and X. From January 1981 education was free also at the Higher Secondary level, that is, for class XI and XII. Thus a definite policy and a concerted effort for

gradual but programmatic and steady expansion of education step by step is discernible. The Government has to incur expenditure for meeting the expenses of teaching in the Schools through payment of salaries of the teachers. As a result of this introduction of free education, it becomes easy for the weaker sections and low and middle income group people to maintain the education of their sons and daughters. This would certainly go a long way in spreading education, and all well meaning people would surely see in it the Left Front Government's interest in education. The Left Front Government however has not remained content with just making education free. It has taken up a programme of establishing more schools, particularly in villages. As a result more and more villages are being covered by schools the aim being at least one school for each village. In other words there would be no village without school. Besides, quite a number of text books and some stationeries are being given free to the students of lower classes. The Government has also arranged to give free tiffin to the primary students. These are part of the incentive schemes and would provide encouragement to students in this poor and mostly illiterate country and would help spread education amongst the masses.

To give concrete examples, the State Education Department proposes to enrol an additional 16.77 lakhs of children of the age group of 6-11 years in primary schools during the period upto

1984-85, thereby raising the percentage of coverage of children of that age group from 84% in 1977-78 to 100% by the end of 1984-85. Out of this 16.77 lakhs of additional children to be enrolled, 11.77 lakhs of children will be in formal schools and 5 lakhs in non-formal (part time) centres. Total enrolment of children of the aforesaid age group at the end of 1984-85 will be 81.64 lakhs.

During the financial year 1980-81 the West Bengal Government accorded approval to the opening of 1,200 new primary schools with 3,800 additional teachers from January 1981. This has the effect of facilitating admission of 2.02 lakhs of new students in the year 1981. A similar number of schools with the same number of teachers were sanctioned every year. The total number of schools sanctioned upto this year comes to 4,600. Through all these measures the Left Front Government of West Bengal has actually sought to implement the aim of universalisation of education.

Mass Education

For spread of mass education the traditional way of setting up of schools and managing them solely by individuals should not continue. Private enterprise in 'schooling business' as it has been working in the State so long stands in the way of educating the entire population. It is the State that should assume the entire responsibility for education, at least upto to the higher secondary stage. The Left Front Government has taken up the matter seriously and discouraged

the traditional system. The Government has recently brought all the secondary schools of the State under the 'full salary deficit scheme'. It is only in this way that mass education may be achieved. This was never attempted by the previous Governments of the State. This testifies the Left Front Government's commitment to the social responsibility of spreading education among the masses.

Non-Formal Education

In order to make the scheme of mass education complete, the Left Front Government of West Bengal has also paid attention to non-formal education, the main objective of which is to ensure life-oriented basic literacy and skills for the age group 11-14 who are either unschooled or drop-outs. The most important purpose of imparting such education is to help the learners improve their work, earnings, health, family life and understanding of the neighbourhood so that their participation in the development work may be more effective in their socio-economic life. The total number of nonformal education centres set up is 5,700.

Programme for Adult Education

As a measure of strengthening the programme of Adult Education fourteen centrally sponsored Rural Functional Literacy Projects for the districts, each comprising 300 centres into two contiguous Blocks in each district have been sanctioned. Fifteen state sponsored projects of similar type have also been sanctioned for 15 districts.

400 Non-formal Education Centres, for age group 15-35 and 480 Farmers' Functional Literacy Centres which were under centrally sponsored schemes upto

1978-79 have been now taken over under the state programme.

Library Services

The number of libraries of different categories has also increased, specially the number of Rural Sponsored Libraries which now stands at 1,775 as compared to 700 only in 1977. The rates of annual grant to different categories of libraries have been substantially enhanced.

With all this it can be said that it is the present Left Front Government of West Bengal that has for the first time since independence sought to transform the traditional colonial system of education into a system of mass-education.

New Primer

But the politically motivated critics speak in a way as if all this is not at all to be reckoned with. Instead of appreciating the sincere efforts of the Left Front Government to bring about basic improvement in the field of education in West Bengal, some critics have attacked it for just introducing a new primer in Bengali and for making the mother tongue the only language to be taught at the primary level. They have charged that the Government is trying to discontinue Rabindranath Tagore's book 'Sahaj Path' for the primary students. On this issue they have launched propaganda, misguided the public and tried to tarnish the image of the Left Front Government. They have even gone to the extent of charging that this government is prejudiced against Tagore. But the fact is that Tagore's 'Sahaj Path' has not been discontinued. It is very much there at the primary level of education. Only in addition to 'Sahaj Path' another book for learning the Bengali language at the initial

stage has been written and prescribed for the primary students. How this can be equated with abolishing 'Sahaj Path' is not understood. But the political opponents with the help of some intellectuals are still campaigning against the Left Front Government on this issue.

It would be relevant here to narrate the background of the introduction of the new primer. Since independence the various Education Commissions and Committees both at the centre and at the State level laid emphasis on modernisation and reorientation of curriculum and syllabus for primary education. In 1974 the Primary Education Syllabus Committee was formed in West Bengal by the then State Government. But the Committee could not function during the tenure of that Government. After assuming office in 1977 the present Left Front Government took up mass oriented programmes and tasks in the sphere of education and rejuvenated the Committee, and in order to let it work in a more democratic way, expanded it by including educationists, officials of the Education Directorate and the representatives of the Primary Teachers' Associations. After thorough and careful consideration of various aspects, the syllabus committee recommended, among other things, the writing of a new language primer for beginners and abolition of English at the primary level. It recommended the composition of such a text book as would be consistent with the natural hopes and aspirations of the child and his natural and social environment in order to make learning and teaching lively and meaningful. The new book might be revised every five years. The whole syllabus should be correlative. New primers should be written on all subjects.

The Committee also laid down a definite procedure for writing these books. As regards writing a primer for language the modern idea is to include graded materials of listening, talking, conversation, identification and writing of alphabets, words, sentences, use of elementary grammatical forms in concrete and real situations with cues to rhythm and imagination with the help of adequate, interesting self-learning exercises. The primer should also help the child to establish link between the changing environment (natural and social) and expression. It is in this light that the new primer in Bengali has been written. It is true that Tagore's 'Sahaj Path' has high literary flavour in which its real value lies. In fact 'Sahaj Path' is the child's first introduction to literary taste. But in the matter of learning the language in the manner explained above, 'Sahaj Path' is not quite adequate. This has been admitted by almost every intellectual. Even Tagore was also of the same opinion. Therefore, in order to make the process of learning the language adequate and scientific, the Left Front Government even retaining 'Sahaj Path' as a text book for the primary students has prescribed this additional new primer. This is the simple thing. But what a furore! It has been misinterpreted as abolishing 'Sahaj Path', prejudice against Tagore, etc. etc.

Language Policy

Another issue over which some of the opponents have raised a hue and cry is the Left Front Government's emphasis on mother tongue as the only language to be taught at the primary stage. They have been unduly alarmed at the abolition of compulsory teaching of English at the primary level.

This is surprising indeed in 1981—after 33 years of our independence—that there are Indians who can oppose the principle of emphasis on mother tongue as against English at the primary level of education. It is now universally accepted by educationists that children should be taught only the mother tongue at the primary level, which should also be the medium of instruction. This is the practice followed all over the world, barring a very few exceptions. Once a child has acquired some knowledge of the mother tongue, he can start learning a second language—English or whatever it may be with ease and competence. Even Tagore whom the opponents of the education policy very often referred said on

one occasion that 'the mother tongue alone can suckle education'. Moreover experience from other countries of the world indicates that in the matter of spreading education among the masses and also raising the standard of national education, study of only the mother tongue by the children at the primary stage becomes fruitful. Therefore the Left Front Government of West Bengal has abolished the compulsory teaching of English at the primary stage and has prescribed that only the mother tongue should be taught at the primary level. English, however, is not totally abolished; it would be taught compulsorily as a second language in classes VI to XII. □

Alternation Policy

[From Page 32]

large scale the small scale always wither away.

We may sum up that the very socio-economic conditions of our country is inimical to the growth of small industries. The small industrial units are born with the germs of marasmus in their body. The strain and stress of competition bring out the disease. Infant mortality is still very rife in India. With enormous potential for growth and scope for providing employment small industries have been handicapped by lack of Government policy. Under the circumstances, they must combine among themselves to withstand extinction. They must air their grievances in every public and private forum to put forward a powerful rationale for changes in Government policy.

Only Guarantee

It must also be appreciated that although the entrepreneurs in the small scale sector are suffering as a section from such a discriminatory practices

there are inherent a contradictions among themselves because they also are actuated by individual profit motives. It may not be possible for them at the present stage to organise themselves for protecting their own interests. But this results in a situation in which the employment potential in the small scale sector is adversely affected and the danger of unemployment looms ever larger in our country.

In the interest of development of our country all democratic people in general and the working class in particular should consider this problem seriously and take up the issue as their own. Once such a movement is launched by the working class, small scale sector entrepreneurs will ultimately realise that such a movement is not only in their interest but is the only guarantee for their survival. We could then confidently expect that the small scale entrepreneurs will also join the struggle along with the working class for changes in Government policy. □

Land Reforms Measures in West Bengal

THE Left Front Government of West Bengal is going to complete four years of its regime within a few months. So an objective evaluation of its performance in the field of land reform will be of much help for correctly understanding the significance of the measures taken by the Left Front Government.

At the outset, it should be made quite clear that the objective of the Left Front Government, is not to complete the tasks of the agrarian revolution or for that matter, to eliminate completely feudal and semi-feudal production relations in agriculture. Because that is not at all possible within the frame work of present constitution and with the very limited power that the State Government enjoys. That objective can only be achieved through a thorough going revolution.

Under the circumstances, taking a pragmatic view, the Left Front Government is taking such measures which will help in enthusing and organising the agricultural workers, bargadars (share croppers) and small peasants—who constitute nearly 75 percent of the peasantry and who are the real force which can bring about radical change in the countryside in favour of real land reform. Along with this key task, the Left Front Government is endeavouring to build up a firm alliance with the middle peasantry and is trying to win over a good chunk of the rich peasants so that class enemies in the countryside can be effectively isolated and contained.

With the above objectives, the Left Front Government has

selected target groups for which appropriate measures are to be taken.

Identity of Interest Growing

The first target group is agricultural workers. Two urgent problems of this section have been taken up for immediate solution; (I) minimum wage for the agricultural workers, (II) to provide work during the lean months through the 'Food for work' scheme. The Government has fixed Rs. 8.10 P. as minimum wage. Administrative measures have been taken for the implementation of the minimum wage and the agricultural workers are also conducting movement and struggles for getting their dues. As a result wages increased by Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 every where and in many places the agricultural workers could get Rs. 8.10 P. as wage. Recently the minimum wage has been increased to Rs. 9.58 P. The 'Food for work' scheme, implemented through the elected Panchayats, created over 15 crores of mandays in a year and went a long way to free them from age old bondage and to ameliorate the condition of the agricultural workers. These measures created enthusiasm amongst them and helped to organise them in large numbers. They are increasingly realising that the Left Front Government is their own Government and an identity of interest is growing.

The second target group is bargadars (share-cropper). Their main problem is (i) eviction (ii) protection of rights (iii) institutional finance to free them from age-old bondage of usuary. The Left Front Government has

taken measures to tackle all these three problems.

To stop illegal eviction suitable amendments have been made in the Land Reforms Act. From experience, we know that eviction is done mainly by invoking the clause on resumption for self cultivation. So in the definition of 'self cultivation' three conditions have introduced: (i) if one intends to resume land for self cultivation, he will have to prove that his main source of livelihood is from that land (ii) he will have to live within 8 kilometres for the greater part of the year where the land is situated (iii) after resuming he will have to cultivate the land himself or by the labour of his family members. These conditions will go a long way to stop eviction.

Salutary Effect

So that the bargadars can enjoy the rights conferred by the law, their names should be legally recorded in the record of rights. For this, a time bound programme in the name of "Operation Barga" has been taken up by the Left Front Government. The main features of this "Operation Barga" are to identify the areas, where bargadars are concentrated then to hold evening meetings to encourage and convince them about the necessity and usefulness of recording their names and then to legally record their names by sending a team of officers, who will finish the job of recording within 3 or 4 days by concentrated activities with the help of the local Panchayats. This method proved to be most effective. Where during the last 30 years only 2,75,000 bargadars could

be recorded, by adopting this method it has been possible to record upto now over 10 lakhs of bargadars during last three years even though the operation could not be held for several months due to the devastating flood in 1978, the Panchayat election, and the Lok Sabha election.

Previously, bargadars were subjected to severe exploitation due to consumption and in-put loans by the jotdars. To free them from this bondage, the Left Front Government has introduced institutional finance for the bargadars. The interest of the loan is only 4 per cent where as previously they had to pay interest at the rate of 100 per cent to 150 per cent. If the bargadars pay up their loan within 31st March next year, the interest will be reimbursed by the Left Front Government and the bargadars loan will be interest free. All these measures have a salutary effect on the bargadars and they have become firm supporters of the Left Front Government.

Rightful Claim

The third target group is the small and middle peasantry. For this group the Left Front Government has introduced schemes to give relief in the matter of rent and debt burden. The Left Front Government, soon after its installation, exempted rent for holdings up to 4 acres in irrigated area and up to 6 acres in non-irrigated area and rent of others were reduced to half of what they were paying. This measure went a long way to win over all sections of peasantry, even the rich. Subsequently in the last year an Act was passed abolishing the rent system and introducing land holding

levy above landed property worth Rs. 50,000/-. The concept of rent is not compatible with the concept of peasant proprietorship, because rent is a tribute paid by the tiller of the land to the lord of the land. By this scheme 80 per cent of the land holding is free from any levy. Imposition of levy being on progressive basis—less on lower slab and more on higher slab—it is more equitable in principle. This scheme is based on the Raj Committee report though it has been adopted in modified form. The Left Front Government can rightfully claim to be pioneer in this matter in whole of India.

To win over rich peasants, the Left Front Government is trying to see that the peasants get remunerative price for their produce specially commercial crops such as jute, potato etc. whenever, there is precipitate fall in prices of these produce. The Left Front Government comes forward to buy such produce at a price announced by the Government. This prompt measures step up prices.

Boosting Rural Production

Besides the measures mentioned above, the Left Front Government has been able to vest additional 2 lakh acres of agricultural land and currently distributing 3,33,000 acres of vested land amongst the landless agricultural workers and land-poor peasants, so adding up the previous distribution 6,14,000 acres, the total land distributed in the State will be 9,47,000 acres, nearly half of what has been distributed in the whole of India.

The Left Front Government is also recording house sites up

to 8 decimals for landless agricultural workers, artisans and fishermen who lived there on and from 26 June, 1975. This measure will give security about their house sites. They will also be provided with house building loan.

The Left Front Government is also trying to organise service co-operatives for the allottees of vested land and bargadars. This can go a long way to boost up rural production.

Real Force on the Move

A comprehensive amendment of the Land Reforms Act has just been passed in the W. B. Assembly. This will go a long way to plug all the main loopholes in the Act in the matter of detecting and taking possession of the ceiling surplus land. Upto now we could take possession of over 12 lakh acres of agricultural land, nearly half of what has been taken possession in the whole of India. The amended Bill will help us to take possession of at least another 10 lakh acres.

Those, who are serious in socio-economic study, they feel the Left Front Government is doing something worthwhile. ILO observer, Shri Bhola Paswan Shastry and many others—who saw for themselves what transformation is going on in the rural economy and social set up in West Bengal, are eloquent with praise for the measures taken. Though not spectacular, the measures have an abiding effect on the country side and the real force of social transformation are on the move. □

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Orgy of Murder and Arson: Latest Weapon in the Toppling Game

THE people of West Bengal saw the hideous face of authoritarianism once again on April 3, when the Congress(I) hoodlums went into an orgy of murder and arson. This was no ordinary "bundh"—it was, at least as reported in the press and not denied by Smt. Gandhi, blessed by the Centre and duly assisted by a section of the police and bureaucracy. The *savage* attack on all those who dared to come out on the "bundh" day—including women and children travelling in buses and trams—with incendiary bombs has shocked the entire democratic opinion of the country. But the organisers had no qualms. They were busy in forging photographs to prove that the Left Front was responsible for the gruesome happenings. But this only helped the people to realise the danger of authoritarianism.

For sometime past hectic efforts were being made to show that law and order has broken down in West Bengal. Never before the prestige of the legislature was marred by such vandalism as done in West Bengal recently. When false allegations did not stand the test of enquiry, law and order problem was created by breaking the law, attacking the police on 30 March only with the aim of collecting some dead-bodies to justify the call of a bundh. The organisers knew that the authorities under the Central Government would come out with a helping hand as they did by closing many offices and suspending railway traffic on flimsy pretexts. So far several

precious lives have been lost in this desperate attempt for toppling the Left Front Government, while many more are fighting death in various hospitals.

The exemplary courage with which the people, particularly the class conscious working class the ignored the bundh call and faced the hoodlums, the silent protest which was louder than a thousand thunders denounce the criminals, and highlight the determination with which the people are preparing themselves to face the challenge.

The modus operandi of the "bundh" was to kill, burn and loot and to create a reign of terror so that people including workers and employees will not dare to oppose the "bundh". Their main target was the public transport started the previous evening when a tram was burnt to cinders. During the "bundh", anti-socials kept up a continuous barrage of bombson trams and buses in Calcutta from several vantage points. Even crowded buses and trams were not spared. The same modus operandi was adopted against private buses in Calcutta and the districts and State buses in Durgapur and North Bengal.

The ghastliest attack, which shocked the minds of every civilized and peace-loving individual, was the hurling of incendiary bombs on a crowded double-docker bus near Charu Market in Tollygunge. The bombs hit the front lower deck and immediately started a conflagration. There women passengers were charred to death and many others were seen

screaming in agony with severe born injuries. Some of them later succumbed in the hospital.

Bombs, brickbats, pipe guns and other lethal weapons were freely used on workers and employees going to work, shop, keepers who dared to open their shops, students and housewives, working women going to work. A college lecturer, himself a victim of incendiary bomb attack on a tram, saw Cong(I) anti-socials threatening lady teachers and girl students with acid-bulb attack if they dared to go to school. A teenage school student was killed in bomb attack. At factory gates, INTUC men and anti-socials attacked workers with bombs and iron rods to prevent them from reporting for duty. A jute worker belonging to CITU was killed at Sankrail in Howrah district. Scores of others were injured.

Heroic Resistance by the Working Class

The politically conscious working class and people of the State,—red salute to them—responded magnificently to the call of the Left Front, CPI and Left Trade Unions for opposing the "bundh". Defying the barbarous attacks, braving risks of injury and death, transport and factory workers, employees of State Government and private offices, students and ordinary reported for work in thousands and frustrated the Bundh call.

The transport workers were the heros of the day. Under the inspiring leadership of their CITU Unions, drivers and con-

[On Page 40]

Punishment Without Reason

—Arun Prokas Chatterjee

RULE 1716 of the Discipline and Appeal Rules for Railway servants speaks of procedure for imposition of minor penalties on Railway servants. According to that Rule no order imposing any of the penalties in clause (i) to (iii) of Sub-Rule (1) and clause (1) and (ii) of Sub Rule 2 of Rule 1707 shall be imposed except after informing the Railway servant of the allegations against him, and giving him an opportunity to make representation and further consulting the Union Public Service Commission in cases where such consultation is necessary. Sub-Rule (2) of Rule 1716 also sets out that the Disciplinary Authority shall maintain record of proceedings which shall include, inter alia, the order on the case together with the reasons therefor.

Shri Dhirendra Nath Mukherjee was an Assistant Commercial Superintendent at Varanasi and a charge-sheet was served upon him that he had violated the Railway Servants Conduct Rules. Shri Mukherjee asked for inspection of some documents and he was informed that some of the documents mentioned by him might be inspected by him at Delhi. In the same letter it was also mentioned that Shri Mukherjee would be given a date in future when he could go to Delhi and take the inspection. On January 4, 1969 an order was made against Shri Mukherjee imposing on him the minor punishment of temporary stoppage of increment for two years.

Shri Mukherjee then filed a Suit against the Union of India. The case of the plaintiff Shri

Mukherjee was that the future date of inspection was never communicated to him and therefore, he could not make a representation which could be made only after inspecting the documents.

The case of the defendant was that the plaintiff was by a communication dated August 28, 1968 informed of the date on which he could take inspection and that date was fixed as September 5, 1968. According to the defendant, as the plaintiff did not take any inspection nor did he file any reply to the charge-sheet, the Disciplinary Authority passed the aforesaid order of punishment ex-parte stopping two increments.

The main contention of the plaintiff was that the order of punishment did not record any reasons.

It may be mentioned in this connection that the plaintiff took an appeal under Rule 1731 but the Appellate Authority dismissed the appeal by writing two sentences, namely, "I have gone through his appeal. The Appeal is rejected".

The plaintiff lost both in the Trial Court and the Appellate Court. He then took a second appeal to the Allahabad High Court (1). The High Court found that the Appellate Authority had failed to consider:—

- (a) Whether the prescribed procedure had been complied with and, if not, whether such non-compliance has resulted in violations of any provisions of the Constitution or in failure of justice,
- (b) Whether the findings were justified, and
- (c) Whether the penalty imposed was excessive,

adequate or inadequate.

As the aforesaid questions were obviously not considered by the Appellate Authority the Court held that the petition must succeed even on that score. The High Court at Allahabad further held that, as the Appellate Authority was required to come to a finding as to whether the findings of the disciplinary authority were justified, he was required to appraise the evidence for himself and should have given reasons. According to the Court, there was no sufficient compliance with Rule 1731 (2) where reasons were not given.

In handing down the aforesaid decisions in *Debidin V. Divisional Operating Superintendent (2)*. In that case, the Court had further held that even the order of punishment must contain reasons.

In the instant case, too, the order of punishment passed against Shri Mukherjee did not contain any reason. The Court pointed out that, as orders of even minor punishment were appealable, the Disciplinary Authority was all the more required to state reasons, in as much as without such reasons the Appellate Authority would have no material on which it might determine whether the facts were properly ascertained, the relevant law was correctly applied and the decision was just. The Court relied in this respect upon the two decisions of the Supreme Court in *Mohabir Prosad v. State of U.P. & Ors. (3)* and *Union of India v. M.L. Capoor (4)*. In the latter case the Supreme Court held that reasons were the link between the materials on which certain conclusions are based and the actual conclusions and only in that way opinion

[On Page 40]

Orgy of Murder and Arson

[From Page 38]

ductors of Calcutta State Transport and Calcutta Tramways kept public transport moving throughout the day in the face of incessant and savage bomb attacks. Many of them carried on even after suffering serious injuries. Transport workers of Durgapur and North Bengal State Transport, buses, mini buses and taxis also showed exemplary courage and kept many vehicles on the road despite attacks. The virulence of the attacks and the heroic resistance of the transport workers will be evident from the number of vehicles brought out and damaged during the Bundh.

Of the normal daily contingent of 650 CSTC buses, 440 buses were out of which 150 buses were damaged in bomb attacks, 112 of them seriously 148 trams derailed on the day of which 60 were damaged, 23 of them seriously. 152 Private buses in 14 routes in and around Calcutta were out of which 31 were seriously damaged. Besides, 15 taxis and 5 mini buses were also damaged in bomb and stone throwing.

To give the people an idea of the Congress(I) vandalism, the damaged State buses and trams were exhibited in Esplanade East, Calcutta from 4 to 8 April. Thousands of people who saw the damaged vehicles and the injured drivers had nothing but condemnation for the Congress(I) barbarities. The heroic transport workers were accorded a rousing public reception on 8 April for their heroism and exemplary courage.

The Bundh failed to make any impact in the industrial areas of Barrackpore, Durgapur, Asansol-Raniganj, Howrah and Hooghly. Despite attacks by INTUC-goondas, work was almost normal in Jute Mills, Engineering factories, coal mines and the tea gardens of North Bengal. Some factories recorded 100 per cent attendance. In some factories and mills, however, the managements indirectly worked for the Bundh by closing their gates to the workers. 60 to 80

per cent attendance were recorded in many State Government and private offices. Had the railways operated normally, attendance would have been almost normal.

Tragic Toll of Human Lives

The barbarous attacks by Congress(I) anti-socials have so far claimed 25 lives and some more are still lying in hospital in precarious condition. Those who died in the Bundh violence-four State Govt. employees including 3 women, hospital nurses, one Panchayet employee killed inside his office in Kalyoni, one student worker of the SFI, one driver of Calcutta State Transport, one Jute Mill worker of CITU, one Ordinance Depot employee at Siliguri, one Forward Bloc Workers of Coochbehar, one shop-keeper and supporter of CPI(M) in Kasba, one police constable and five ordinary commuters of whom two were women.

In all 285 people were injured in the Congress(I) attacks, 178 in Calcutta and the rest in the districts. The injured in Calcutta

include 50 State bus and Tram workers and 29 private bus workers. Of those injured in Calcutta, 38 were seriously injured and hospitalised of whom 29 were transport workers and State Government employees.

The Historic Silent Procession

At the call of the Left Front and the CPI, more than one lakh people from all walks of life-workers, employees, lawyers, teachers, students, youth, women-joined the historic silent procession in Calcutta on 6 April to condemn the Congress(I) violence and to mourn the tragic deaths. The procession was unprecedented even for Calcutta-the city of processions. Covering a distance of over 10 miles, from Deshapriya Park in the South to Deshbandhu Park in the North, the huge procession took nearly two hours to cross any point. Lakhs of people lined the route to watch the silent procession. It was an eloquent expression of the wrath and condemnation of the people against the barbarous violence unleashed by the Congress(I). □

Punishment Without Reason

[From Page 39]

or decision recorded could be shown to be manifestly just and reasonable.

In the instant case no reasons were given and the order of punishment, inter alia, stated that the authority had carefully considered the case and had decided to impose upon Mr. Mukherjee the penalty of withholding of increments temporarily for a period of two years.

Thus, there being no reason recorded, the High Court at Allahabad set aside the judgement and decree of the two Courts below and allowed the appeal and decreed the plaintiff's Suit for a declaration that the order of punishment dated January 4, 1969 was illegal and inoperative.

The case decided by the

Allahabad High Court is thus a very important decision on the question that the Disciplinary Authority must record reasons for the punishment that it may award. According to the Court the words, "I have carefully considered the case" do not constitute any reason.

The decision does not depend upon whether the Rule is itself contains a provision that the order of punishment must give reasons. The rationale of the decision appears to be that when an order of punishment is appealable, it must give reasons because, if the order does not contain reasons, the Appellate Authority would be prevented from scrutinizing whether the decision of the Disciplinary Authority was just.

1. D N. Mukherjee V. Union of India, (1981) 42 FLR 166
2. AIR 1968 Allah.355
3. AIR 1970 SC 1320
4. AIR 1974 SC 87 □

Working Class Solidarity with the Peasants

Several lakhs of peasants, landless poor, agricultural workers and industrial workers poured in the capital of Delhi to demonstrate their wrath against the anti-peasant policies of the Congress (I) rulers, to join their voice to press the just demands for remunerative prices, for debt-relief, for land, fair wages and better deal to the agricultural workers, for essential commodities at prices within reach and so on.

Over a lakh workers participated in the rally and which depicted unprecedented solidarity of the working class with the peasantry in the post independence period of the country. This large scale participation was an effective rebuff to the proponents of the 'rural vs. urban' thesis and those who argued that increasing procurement prices will add to inflation and thus affect the urban poor. Their efforts to draw a wedge between the urban industrial workers and the peasantry were brought to nought by the overwhelming participation of the workers.

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, while addressing the historic rally welcomed the peasants, the working class and the toiling people attending the rally and extended his full support to the charter of demands of the kisan movement. BTR declared that any Government that confronted the peasants could not stay for long. He underlined the growing unity of the working class and the peasantry. He said that no Government could keep itself in saddle for long when the united struggles of the working class and peasants grew.

The Delhi State Committee of the CITU called upon the workers of Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Delhi and nearby places to join the rally in large numbers. The workers struck work and joined the rally to demonstrate their solidarity with the kisans foregoing one day's wages. Over

a thousand CITU volunteers took leave from work and worked round the clock for five days to make the rally a grand success.

Among those who addressed rally are Harkishan Singh Surjit, Sharad Pawar, Prakash Singh Badal, Rajeshwar Rao, Indrajit Gupta. □

Contract Workers' Struggle Continues : Numerous Workers Arrested

THE struggle of contract workers of TISCO, Jamshedpur, is continuing since 11 February despite severe repression by the management and local administration.

With the backing of Central and State Government, the TISCO management deployed outside workers to the job of striking workers. In protest against this action of the management the workers resorted to dharna on the railway line which is used to take the raw material in the factory. The Deputy Labour Commissioner wrote to the local administration that it is an unfair labour practice to deploy outside workers to do the job of striking workers during the period of strike. Despite this no action was taken. The S.D.O. was also gheraoed which brought no result. On 7 April, a dharna was organised again on the railway line but was withdrawn on the request of the local administration that on the occasion of Ram Navami any untoward incident should be avoided. On this occasion, there is always an attempt by some vested interests to create a communal tension in the area.

On 15 April, dharna was started again on the railway line. The hirelings of the management

tried to provoke the peaceful workers but in vain. The local administration in connivance with the management attacked the workers sitting on dharna with the help of mounted police and the CRP. The police arrested 41 workers including 9 woman workers and Manas Mukherjee, Vice-President, Industrial Mazdoor Union.

In support of striking contractor workers, a massive protest demonstration was organised on 20 April in Chhotanagpur which was participated by workers, peasants, youth and students. This torch light procession under the leadership of the CITU and AITUC marched to the office of the S.D.O., Jamshedpur. A delegation of the workers met the S.D.O. and submitted a memorandum demanding an immediate settlement on the demands of the striking workers and implementation of the decisions of the Labour Advisory Board meeting of 27 February; an end to the unfair labour practices; and withdrawal of suspension orders served on 18 permanent employees of TISCO and all cases of strike period.

The procession turned into a rally outside the S.D.O. Office which was addressed by Chandni Prasad, K.K. Tripathi, S.K. Bakshi and others. □

May Day Significance

[From Page 12]

1, 1890 about the May Day demonstrations as "The spectacle we are now witnessing will make the capitalists and the land owners of all lands realise that today the proletarians of all lands, in very truth, united". The 1893 Congress of the International at Zurich at which Engels was present noted the demonstration on May First for 8-hour day as a "demonstration of the determined will of the working class to destroy class distinctions through social change and thus enter on road, the only road leading to peace for all people, to international peace." The Paris Congress of the International in 1900 again adopted May First as the action day of the workers of the whole world.

May Day In India

In India, the struggle for 8-hour day started at a low key. It is reported that the workers of Howrah Railway Station struck work in April-May, 1862 on the demand of 8-hour working day but the details are not available. There have been a number of strike struggles against longer working hours. The Factory Act, 1891 fixed daily 9 hours work for child labourers, 11 hours for female workers, but it did not fix the working hours for male workers. The Factory Act of 1911 fixed the working hours to 12 for male workers. In 1922, the working day was fixed at 10 hours.

The workers of Tata Iron and Steel Works, Jamshedpur struck work in September 1922 in an organised fashion in support of 8-hour work and other demands. The first ever rally of workers on May Day in 1923 at the sea-beach of

Madras demanded 8-hour day and May Day to be declared as holiday. This demand was reiterated by the Bombay workers in May Day rally in 1926.

The May Day was observed in an organised manner only in 1927 in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and other places, at the call given by the AITUC and the workers raised their powerful voice for 8-hour work. Even today there are some sections of the Indian working class who have yet to get this demand conceded. One of the demands of historic May 1974 strike of the railway workers was 8-hour working day. The struggle is still continuing.

Handloom Workers' Conference

THE second conference of Tamilnadu Handloom Workers' Federation (CITU) was held in Salem on 20 and 21 March. 121 delegates representing 8,400 members participated in it. 29 delegates participated in the discussion on Secretary's report. The conference adopted 28 resolutions on Handloom Bill, fair wage, drought relief, etc. Jyotirmoy Bosu attended it.

Tanneries Workers Win Wage Rise : As a result of a settlement arrived at on 6 April, nearly 15,000 tanneries workers in Tamilnadu will get a wage rise of Rs. 1.75 per day. The casual leaves have also been increased.

Neyveli Ceramic Worker's Struggle Continues : The struggle of the workers of Neyveli Ceramic Factory at Vadalur is continuing for over six months. The workers had gone on strike from 16 October, 1980 on the demand of bonus but the management declared lockout from the next day.

Against The Yoke Of Capital

Writing on May Day in 1904, Lenin said, "Only the class conscious and organised proletariat can win real, not sham, freedom of the people. Only the class conscious and organised proletariat can thwart every attempt to deceive the people, to curtail their rights, to make them a mere tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie." And continued Lenin, "Let campaigning for the workers demands be carried on ever more boldly! Let the celebrations of the May Day win thousands of new fighters to our cause and swell our forces in the great struggle for the freedom of all the people, for liberation of all who toil from the yoke of capital!" □

Kerala Budget...

[From Page 26]

To ensure that rubber produced in the State is converted into value added products within the State itself, the concessional rate of three per cent sales tax has been extended to raw rubber purchased by large and medium industries. Thus, as long as the manufacture of finished product takes place within the State, the concessional rate of three per cent will be available to all manufacturers whether they be in large, medium or small sector. The small and medium newspapers are exempted from the levy of sales tax upto the first Rs. one lakh and two lakhs respectively on the annual purchase of newsprint. The system of exemption granted to small scale industrial units set up since April 1, 1979 is to be continued and unit started earlier will be given interest-free loans equal to the sales tax assessed and collected during the preceding year. □

Revolutionary greetings to the working class on May Day - 1981

“There is no force on earth that could break the millions of workers, who are growing more and more class-conscious, more and more united and organised. Every defeat the workers sustain brings new fighters into the ranks, it awakens broader masses to new life and makes them prepare for fresh struggles.”

—Lenin

**West Bengal Commercial
Representatives Union
(Formerly CTA)**

All India Convention Against Multinationals in Drug Industry

All India Convention on Drug Industry was held at New Delhi on 9 April. The convention was organised by the Federation of Medical Representatives' Association of India (FMRAI) and All India Chemical & Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation (AICAPEF). A presidium consisting of B.S. Chitre, President, AICAPEF, I.B. Periera, President, Maharashtra Branch AICAPEF and Sachin Sen (MLA, CPIM), working committee Member, AICAPEF and P.K. Ganguly Secretary, FMRAI was elected and on its behalf Sachin Sen conducted the proceedings of the convention. More than 1,000 delegates, representing workers' unions in pharmaceutical industry from various parts of the country a number of Members of the Parliament, leaders of Central Trade Unions and National Federations, women's organisation, scientists and other attended the convention.

Inaugurating the convention B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU greeted the AICAPEF and FMRAI for drawing the attention of the people towards the problems affecting our nation and its security due to the increasing dominance of multinationals with particular reference to drug industry. He explained about the various aspects of the domination of trans national corporations in the economic, social and political life of the country. The increasing dependence of the Central Government on the loans from World Bank and other international monetary funds has also increased the danger of political subjugation

to World imperialism. He pointed out the anti-people policies pursued by the Congress (I) Government at Centre, its attack on democracy, attack on Loco Workers, its defiance of Supreme Court verdict in relation to LIC Employees and repression on the employees of public sector undertakings, etc. He called upon the workers to resist the attacks on the Left Front Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura by the Congress (I) party and Central Government.

J.S. Majumdar, General Secretary of AICAPEF and FMRAI moved the main resolution.

Addressing the convention, Samar Mukherjee, M.P., (CPIM), called upon the workers to defeat the Central Governments anti-people policies. Amongst other speakers were Tridip Chaudhury, M.P., (RSP), Chitta Basu, M.P., (Forward Block), Niren Ghosh, M.P., (CPIM), Ram Avtar Shastri, M.P., (CPI) and S.W. Dhabe, M.P., (Congress-U).

The meeting was also addressed by leaders of Central Trade Unions including Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary, CITU; Y.D. Sharma, Secretary, AITUC, J.S. Dara, President, INTUC and Om Prakash Aghi, Secretary, BMS. Prof. B.V. Ranga Rao of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and a member of Hathi Committee, also addressed the convention. Kitty Menon spoke on behalf of Women's Co-ordination Committee. Many leaders of Pharmaceutical Unions apart from the General Secretary of Railway Traction Workers Association and Joint Secretary

of AIIEA contributed in the convention.

The Convention unanimously adopted the main resolution, the full text of which is being printed below. It adopted another resolution supporting the struggle of LIC employees.

Resolution

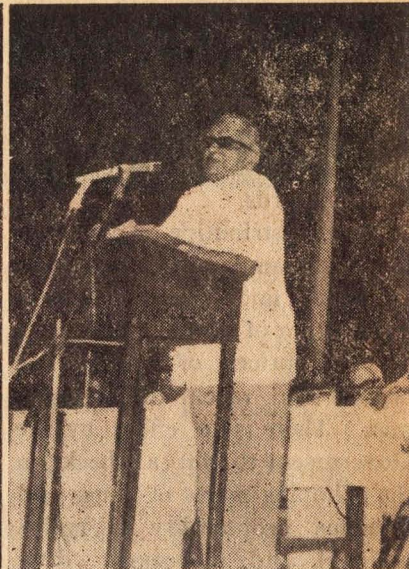
"This All India Convention of the representatives of the workers of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry, Central Trade Unions, All India Federations and Unions and other mass democratic organisations, Members of the Parliament, Scientists and others held at Mavlankar Hall, New Delhi on 9 April 1981 unanimously resolves that :

Even after 33 years of independence, 78p.c. of the medicines, sold in India, are in the hands of the multinational drug firms; 16p.c. in Indian private sector and 6p.c. in public sector. No serious effort was made for research and development of drugs in our country as per suitability and requirements of our people. India possesses sufficient technical and technological know-how to make the country self-reliant in the production of drugs.

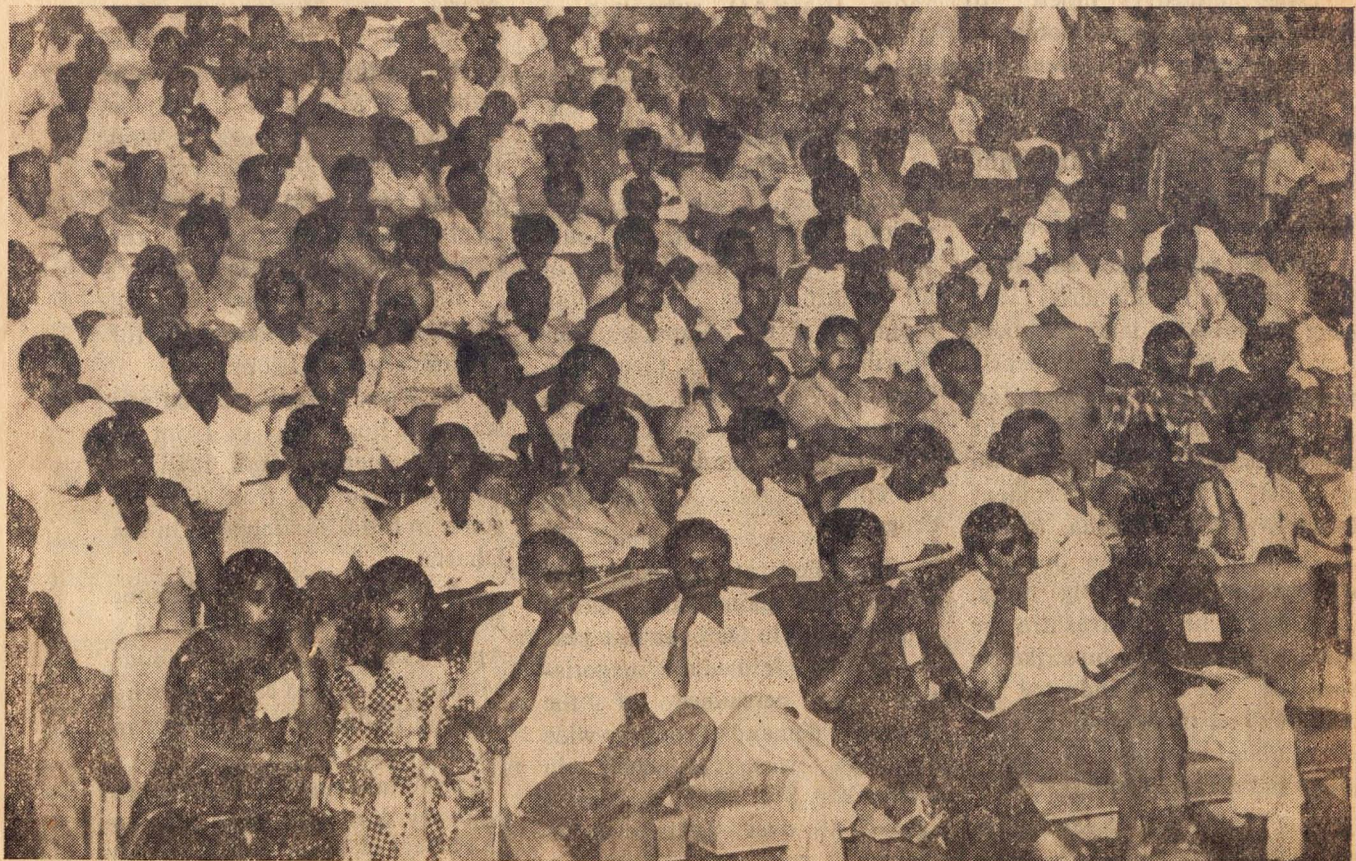
According to the report of WHO 80 p.c. medicines, sold in India, are not essential. Essential and life-saving drugs are in short-supply while tonics and vitamins are flooding the market. There is no relation between the total sales of medicines and the prevalent diseases. The drugs, which are banned in their country of origin, are freely sold in India by the multinational drug firms. Sub-standard and spurious drugs



J.S. Majumdar moving the main resolution



B.T. Ranadive addressing the Convention



A view of the Convention

are being sold in large quantity. Dangerous drugs are being promoted indiscriminately. Corrupt practices are being indulged by the drug firms in promoting the sales of medicines. Irrational drug formulations are creating health hazards.

Drug distribution depends on the drug manufacturers and there are many middle-men for such distribution of drugs.

High prices of drugs are beyond the reach of common man. There is no effort by the Government to put a check on the galloping prices of drugs and fabulous profitability of multinational and monopoly drug firms.

Recommendations in Hathi Committee Report have been ignored by the Government. Government's drug policy is contrary to main recommendations of Hathi Committee.

Drug industry failed to generate employment potential. On the contrary, work force complement is being reduced systematically through computerisation and mechanisation. A large number of workers are employed by the contractors.

To curb trade union activities, trade union functionaries are being victimised in large numbers, lock-outs, closures are frequently being resorted to. The manufacturers frequently disrupt the production of vital medicines on some plea or other. Government do not intervene on such issues. On the contrary, at the instance of multinational drug firms, Government of Maharashtra are trying to impose ban on strike by workmen of the industry by declaring pharmaceutical industry as "Public Utility Services" under Industrial Disputes Act.

It is, therefore, essential to mobilise broadest possible opinion of the people on such vital

issues concerning drug industry.

This convention calls upon the scientists, economists and others to organise seminars in important centres of the country to expose the anti-people drug policy of the Government of India and the modus operandi of exploitation of the people and workers by the drug firms.

This convention welcomes the decision of the Central Trade Unions and National Federations of workers to convene All India Convention of working people in Bombay in June 1981 against attack on Trade Union Rights and against price rise. This convention requests the Central Trade Unions to incorporate the main contents of this resolution

in the resolution of the proposed All India Convention.

This convention demands of the Government of India to immediately nationalise all multinational and Indian monopoly drug companies. The Convention further demands of the Government to accede to the justified demands of the workers of the drug industry and take effective steps to stop victimisation of trade union functionaries in the industry.

This convention calls upon the working people of India to launch united struggles against the anti-people drug policy of the Government and against the exploitation of the ailing people and workers by the drug cartels.

Agitation of Medical and sales Representatives

Federation of Medical Representatives' Associations of India (FMRAI) submitted a 27 point common charter of demands to the Central Government in November 1978. The demands include re-instatement of all victimised trade union functionaries, job security, rational wage structure, 40 hours work a week, nationalisation of all multinational and Indian monopoly drug companies, fair distribution of drugs through a National Corporation, reduction of drug prices, effective check on the production and distribution of spurious and sub standard drugs, etc.

The Federation submitted memoranda again to the Central Government in October last year demanding immediate negotiation. In pursuance of the justified demands country-wide agitation was launched in November 80. The movement spread all over India even in district towns. Demonstrations, rallies and dharnas were staged

in district towns and state-capitals during November to March last. Memoranda were submitted to district Government authorities and State Labour Ministers. Labour Ministers of Tripura, West Bengal and Kerala supported the demands fully and requested the Central Government to call the Federation for negotiation.

Labour Ministry called FMRAI on 30 December for preliminary discussions.

On 7 and 8 April, dharna was staged at Boat Club in front of the Parliament. More than 500 members coming from different states in India participated in the Dharna.

A deputation met Labour Minister Shri N. D. Tiwari on 8 April, 1981. Ultimately Labour Ministry agreed to call tripartite meeting to discuss the charter in second week of May.

Simultaneously, the Health Ministry has sent their opinion in respect of the demands which are also under discussion with the concerned ministry. □

Central Govt's Anti-People Drug Policy

- J.S. Majumdar

AT the time of independence the annual market for pharmaceutical formulations, the final form in which the medicines are available to the common man, was of Rs. 10 crores. During 33 years after independence this market has grown rapidly. The Sales turnover of medicines in 1980 was to the tune of Rs. 1200 crores. According to the statement of Union Petrochemical Minister last year on the floor of the Parliament, 78% of this medicine formulation market is controlled by a few multi-national drug firms, 16% in the Indian private sector and 6% in the public sector. This proves that the multinational drug firms have captured market and expanded enormously after independence. This further proves that the Government's drug policy continuously helped the multinational drug firms. Repeated statements were made by the Central Government that the public sector would take a leading role in drug industry. But in practice the multinational drug firms, who were given concessions one after another by the Government, are in the leading role.

Naturally, "Profits before the people's health" is the main guiding factor in the production of drugs in India. The public sector undertakings, like IDPL, Hindustan Antibiotics Ltd. and those companies which have been nationalised like Smith Statnisset & Co. Ltd., Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical works Ltd.

The author is the General Secretary, All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation.

etc.; also follow the same approach in the production of drugs.

According to the statement of World Health Organisation, 80% drugs, which are sold in India, are not essential. Only 20% of these are essential. It is a paradoxical statement, because people purchase medicines only as an essential commodity.

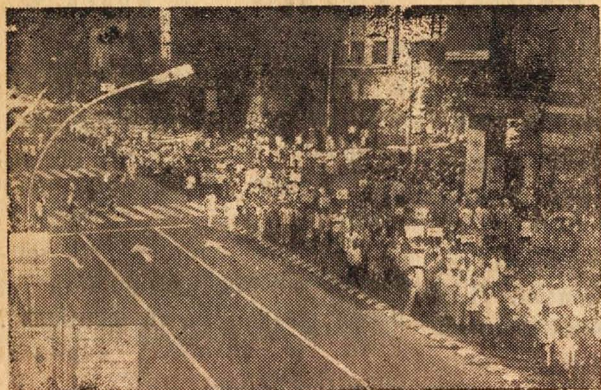
Ordinary man does not understand what is essential and what is non-essential medicine. To him each medicine has got life saving and essential value. Through a systematic campaign, the multinational drug firms have created an artificial market of drugs and pharmaceuticals through powerful and corrupt sales promotion activities. A vicious cycle of corrupt practices is existing in medicines market. The Central Government is well aware of these facts. Government's drug policy statement does not touch on these basic issues. When crores of our people are living below the poverty line, when undernourished children are gradually pushed down to the road of early death, when the people do not have pure drinking water; huge quantity of vitamins and tonics are being dumped on them. The poor ailing masses are allowed to be fleeced by these multinational drug cartels. Though many committees and reports were submitted including Hathi Committee report, no attempt was made to study the basic issues involved. The disease pattern has no relation with the sales pattern of drugs. The basic economic issues are linked with the drug policy of the Government without taking over of all multinational and Indian monopoly drug companies; without channelisation of

a fair distribution of drugs; without having a basic approach of people's health before profits; the present situation shall continue.

Can our country be self-reliant on the production of drugs and pharmaceuticals? Even in advanced capitalist countries about 10% of the sales turnover is invested for research and developments. In our country it is only 1% and that too mainly spent for the development in production system to reduce the cost input and to increase the profitability. It can be confidently stated that our country do possess technical and technological know-how and scientists to make the country self-reliant in the production of drugs and pharmaceuticals. But this question is also closely connected with the total drug policy.

When millions of our people are waiting for jobs, the multinational drug firms refused to increase the workers complement inspite of manifold rise in the production turnover. During last ten years, two giant multinational drug firms, Glaxo and Pfizer, did not increase the number of employees at all. On the contrary, through mechanisation and automation, the drug industry continuously displaced the existing employees. This issue precipitated a prolonged strike by the workmen in Pfizer recently.

Serious complaints were lodged against some of the drug companies for misuse of funds of the nationalised banks and public financial institutions. This is the root cause of closure of many factories in this industry. The Government of



Procession of Pharmaceutical workers at Bombay



Women workers participated in large numbers



Rally of Pharmaceutical workers at Nariman Point in Bombay

India, inspite of repeated requests, did not make any attempt to institute enquiries into the fraudulent activities of the drug firms. On the contrary, the Government of Maharashtra has issued notice to the Unions of the workers informing them about the intention of Government to declare pharmaceutical industry as "Public Utility Services" under Industrial Disputes Act with an aim to ban the industrial actions of the workmen.

On 9 December, 1980 the workers of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry in Bombay and Thane region resorted to one-day strike in support of striking employees of Pfizer and demanded reopening of Gufic

Labs, Bombay. A huge demonstration of 10,000 strong was held in front of OPPI Office, the organisation of all multinational drug companies operating in India. To curb such protest actions of the workmen in future the Government of Maharashtra intends to declare pharmaceutical industry as "Public Utility Services" under I. D. Act.

In this background it is necessary for the scientists, economists and all sections of organised people including trade unions to come forward and defeat the Government's anti-people drug policy. □

Biha CITU Secretariat Meets

A meeting of the office-bearers of Bihar CITU Committee was held on 13 April at Patna. K.K. Tripathi presided over.

The secretariat mourned the death of Comrade Jaglal Paswan General Secretary of Textile Mazdoor Union, Fulwari Sharif and demanded a CBI enquiry into the incident which led to his death.

It condemned the attitude of the TISCO management towards the struggle of 12 thousand contractor workers. The meeting also decided to call a meeting of the coal workers in the State in June at Dhanbad to chalkout the programme of action against contract work and increasing mechanisation in the coal mines.

World Conference Against Transnationals in Pharmaceutical Industry

AN International Trade Union Conference will be held in Moscow from 11 to 13 November, 1981 against transnational pharmaceutical companies and for a health policy in the service of man. This decision was taken in an international preparatory committee meeting in Athens (Greece) on 14 and 15 April, 1981. Representatives from 14 countries and 8 regional, continental and international organisations participated in this meeting. J.S. Majumdar, General Secretary of All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation represented India and other developing countries of Asia in the preparatory committee meeting. About 300 delegates from all over the world are expected to attend the proposed conference. The conference will discuss on two subjects :

1. The consequences of the action of transnational pharmaceutical companies on the health of populations and the health policies of different countries, particularly in the developing countries; action by workers and trade unions for a democratic health policy satisfying the needs of the populations and the aspirations of the health workers.
2. The situation of workers in the pharmaceutical industry, their struggles and actions against the transnational companies and for relations corresponding to a new international economic order between industrialized countries and developing countries.

What kind of pharmaceutical industry do we need ?

The proposed international conference will help immensely the struggle of the workers in

India and other countries against transnational companies in pharmaceutical industry and for a health policy for the benefit of the people. □

CITU Condemns Police Firing on Tobacco Growers

B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU has issued the following statement on 7 April :

The CITU strongly condemns the wanton police firing on the tobacco growers of Belgaum and

killing ten people while they have been agitating for remunerative prices for their produce. The usual plea of mob violence does not hold good as the situation worsened due to refusal by the Govt to settle the demand for the past three weeks and attempts to suppress the struggle by arresting more than two thousand people.

The CITU demands that the Govt. should give up the policy of repression, release all those who are arrested, and settle the demand of remunerative prices to the agitating tobacco growers.

Successful General Strike in Delhi : CITU Congratulates Workers

ON 21 April, 5 lakh workers in Delhi observed a days General Strike.

B.T. Ranadive, President CITU issued the following statement on 22 April :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions congratulates the workers in Delhi for their united strike on 21st April in support of the demand of Rs. 500/- as minimum wages, regularisation of casual and contract workers, LIC employees struggle and other pressing issues. The workers remained firm and united despite the disruptive and gangster tactics adopted by a section of INTUC leadership.

The CITU is particularly happy to note that the newspaper employees joined the strike and expressed their support to the demands of lakhs of workers in Delhi.

The CITU conveys its greetings to the T.U. activists belonging to various organisations who relentlessly worked to make the strike a grand success.

The CITU hopes the Delhi administration will take into account the strong feelings of Delhi workers and take immediate steps so that the longstanding demands of the

workers are settled without any further delay.

The CITU appeals to the working class of Delhi to preserve the remarkable unity achieved in this strike so that a sustained struggle is continued to force the authorities to accept the just demands raised by them.

NGOs Conference at Port Blair

THE two-day annual conference of the Non-Gazetted Government Officers' Association, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, was held at Port Blair on 10 and 11 April. E.K. Imbichi Bava. M. P., inaugurated it. He spoke on the socio-economic and political situation.

Ramanna Rai, M.P., explained the anti-working class policies of the Government. N. Vasudevan, General Secretary of the Association presented his report. The conference chalked out its programme of action. P.K.S. Prasad highlighted the achievements of the unity and struggle slogan adopted by them.

On the occasion a massive Kisan Rally was organised by the A&N Kisan Sabha at Wimberlygunj which was addressed by Bava and Rai and others. On 13 April a massive rally was organised at Port Blair. □

Uphold the banner of International Solidarity of the working class

“The unity of the workers of all countries is a necessity arising out of the fact that the capitalist class, which rules over the workers, does not limit its rule to one country...Capitalist domination is international. That is why the workers’ struggle in all countries for their emancipation is only successful if the workers fight jointly against international capital.”

—*Lenin*

**West Bengal Commercial
Representatives Union
(Formerly CTA)**

All India Coal Workers Federation Formed

TWO hundred and seven delegates from all the major coal fields who attended the All India Coal Workers Convention held at Raniganj on 4 and 5 April 1981 took the pledge to strengthen the organisation of coal workers and decided to form the All India Coal Workers Federation.

The Burns Club Hall which was named after Com. Sukumar Banerjee, the martyr who died facing bullets of police during Bengal Paper Mills strike in 1938. B.T. Ranadive hoisted the red flag and placed flowers on the martyrs column.

The Convention elected a Presidium of Comrades Bijoy Paul (West Bengal), Parsa Satyanarayana (Andhra), S.R. Baksi (Bihar), S. Sudevan (M.P) and B.P. Kashyap (Maharashtra) to conduct its deliberations.

K.D. Gupta Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates.

B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, while inaugurating the Convention dwelt at length on the new political situation developing in the country and explained how the capitalist class was launching ferocious attacks on the working class. He also elaborated the implications of these class policies for the coal mine workers and the manner in which they were hit by the anti-working class policies. Referring to the working of the coal mines Ranadive said,

"It is quite clear that a bureaucratic and corrupt administration can no longer be allowed to manage the affairs of the vital industry. Its affairs can improve

only if the workers and their organisations are allowed full participation in running the industry on equal terms."

Giving detailed facts about the harrowing conditions of the coal miners Ranadive noted, "The authorities must bear full responsibility for the ill-health of the workers and the subsequent loss to national production. All plans of substantial increase in coal production will founder to the ground unless the workers health is protected and he and his family are provided with proper medical treatment. Our unions must insist on it and see that the entire people support us and defeat the callousness of the authorities which has become a menace to the progress of the vital industry."

He emphasised the need for special efforts by the trade unions to protect the job of women workers whose employment has been declining after the Report of the Baweja Committees recommendations. "Our unions must unitedly resist this offensive" he asserted.

He pointed out achievements of the Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and called upon the working class to defend these Governments from the sinister conspiracy to topple them by Smt. Gandhi's Government. He continued.

"Comrades, our present struggle, and sufferings are part of our peoples' struggle to maintain democracy and defeat the authoritarian party which is preparing for another emergency. The working class and the democratic forces are

locked in a grim battle against the forces of dictatorship. We have to frustrate their plans to impose a Presidential dictatorship on the nation."

He warned the working class about the forces of disintegration which are dividing the working class. "The Congress (I) Government cannot defend the integrity of the country. If unity of the country is not maintained, freedom will also be lost. It is the privilege and duty of the working class to defend this integrity and unity in cooperation with other democratic forces."

In the end he called upon the working class to frustrate all imperialist attempts against our country and warn the people against the U.S. Plot.

Bamapada Mukherjee read the messages received from Central Committee of Soviet Coal Miners Union, All China Federation of Trade Unions, Committee of Mining of Geology and Electrical Power Workers Union of Socialist Republic of Romania, Cyprus Civil Servants Trade Unions, All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions, Trade Union Congress, U.K. and Director General I.L.O. All delegates applauded the messages.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU then presented a General Report to the Convention. In his report he referred to the acute shortage in coal industry and pointed out how the management is solely responsible for it. The huge dose of mechanisation has led to reduction in employment potential in the industry. The number of workers employed has already declined by 47,000 during the last 5 years.

He observed how the Coal India is resorting to longwall mining and giant open cast mining with the help of imported machines. Large quantity of machines are already lying idle with Coal India and utilisation of some of the machines is as low as 28 per cent. Due to mismanagement and inefficiency despite the investments in Coal India have nearly trebled during the last 5 years production rose only by about 0.8 per cent per year.

Large quantity of Coal is transported by road and several thefts of national resources have been taking place. He charged that the hire-ups were involved in these thefts.

Reviewing the conditions of coal miners the General Report observed that despite rise in wages the quality of life of coal mines did not show much improvement. The conditions relating to safety in mines have been shocking with the management not taking much interest in improvement of working conditions. "Unless the trade unions insist on adequate safety precautions and compel the managements to introduce all safety measures the conditions are not likely to improve". The Report noted.

The General Report emphasised the need to build stronger unions by enrolling more and more members in them so that a powerful struggle could be launched all over the coal mines to improve radically the working and living conditions. Referring to the proposal to form an All India Federation the Report said, "With the cooperation of all unions and comrades we can make the new federation a real functioning organisation of colliery workers—a need which is strongly felt by our active workers all over the country."

Seventeen comrades who participated in the discussion on the General Report narrated their experience and observed how the CIL management had been bolstering the INTUC Unions in coal mines. They also noted how several clauses of the agreements have not been implemented so far by the managements. They suggested that the new federation should take steps to bring together all the coal mine workers so that a country wide united movement could be launched to get these clauses of agreements implemented.

After reply to the debate by Pandhe the General Report was unanimously adopted by the Convention

Robin Sen moved a resolution on the formation of the All India Coal Workers Federation which was adopted unanimously.

The Convention adopted resolution on several issues facing the coal mine workers and on general T.U. problems facing the entire working class.

The Convention elected the new Working Committee and the office-bearers with M.K. Pandhe as the President and Sunil Basu Roy as the General Secretary.

Several processions of coal miners came from different collieries on 5 April and assembled in Searsole Colliery Maidan where a big rally was held. Robin Sen presided over the meeting which was addressed by B.T. Ranadive and Jyoti Basu.

The speakers referred to the "Bandh" on 3rd April organised by the Congress(I) in West Bengal and noted that despite most of CITU leadership of coal mine workers was in the Conference of Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India on 2 and 3 April

the coal miners in Raniganj belt successfully opposed the "Bandh" and most of the mines worked normally.

They also referred to the conspiracy to topple the Government of West Bengal and called upon the working class to resist the conspiracy. □

CITU Participates in May Day Celebrations in Moscow and Havana

On the invitation of the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions, USSR, Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary, CITU, has gone to Moscow to participate in the May Day celebrations.

On the invitation of the Workers' Central Union of Cuba, Jogendra Sharma, Secretary, Delhi State Committee of the CITU, has gone to Havana to participate in the May Day Celebrations.

CITU Nominations

Central Advisory Committee under Limestone and Dolomite Mines Labour Fund Act-1972 : Ajeya Raut, (Orissa).

Advisory Committee on Iron Ore Welfare Committee : Prabhakar Donde (Goa).

Tea Board : Dhani Ram Khosla (Assam).

Advisory Committee under the Minimum Wage for Mine Workers : Chandi Prasad (Bihar)

International Seminars

Moscow : "The Working Class and Problems of the Anti-Monopolist Struggle", 4-5 May; Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary, CITU.

Prague : "All Round Activities of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement in Building Socialism for Trade Union Functionaries for Asian Countries 8-15 June; Biren Roy (Calcutta), Member Working Committee, CITU and P.R. Krishanan (Bombay) Member General Council, CITU.

All India TU Convention Against-Price Rise and Anti-Labour Policies

THE all India Convention against price rise and Anti-Labour policies will be held in Bombay on 4 June, 1981. About 4,000 delegates are likely to participate in the Convention.

The Convention will review the growing attacks on the working class by the Congress(I) Government. The sky-rocketting prices are making the life of the working class and the poor people miserable. The wage freeze policies pursued by the Government is resulting in their standard of living. The trade union rights are being curtailed every day and a notorious Industrial Relations Bill is being introduced through the backdoor on the plea of amendments to Industrial Disputes Act. The reckless use of National Security Act during workers struggle is causing grave concern among the working class.

The policy of confrontation adopted by the Government of India against 1,25,000 workers in 80 days strike Bangalore-based workers, LIC and GIC employees struggles and the agitation of loco running staff are just fore runners of future offensives. The Convention will therefore chalk-out programme of united movement to resist these policies and fight for trade union and democratic rights of the working class.

The Convention will be held at 10.A.M. at Shanmukhanand Hall near Maheshwari Udyan (King's Circle), Matunga, Bombay. A reception Committee of the local constituents of the participants in the Convention has been formed to make preparations for the Convention. □

Energy Minister Blows His Own Trumpet

WHEN a serious coal crisis is prevalent all over the country and the Coal India Ltd. is incurring heavy losses surpassing all records, the Energy Minister is indulging in extravagant expenditure for self publicity.

The CIL recorded extremely slow rate of growth and it had to drastically reduce its target. Now that reduced target has been fulfilled despite decline in production of Singareni Collieries. This was a good occasion for the Energy Minister A.B.A. Gani Khan Chowdhury to celebrate the occasion. Over 100 CIL officials were asked to go to Calcutta to listen to the speech of the Minister, which was of course followed by a sumptuous lunch and a cultural programme. As per instructions from the Energy Ministry maximum number of cars were mobilised for the comforts of the participants.

Several lakhs of rupees were spent on the function just for a speech by the Minister who indulged in self glorification.

The workers who were actually responsible for the increase in the production are yet awaiting drinking water facilities as per agreement signed nearly two years ago. Their lives are still in danger due to non-observance of safety regulations. However the Energy Minister had no time to attend the National Safety Conference.

The representatives of the CITU refused to participate in the Gala-function since it amounted to a wasteful expenditure when coal mines are denied even the elementary facilities to ensure existence fit for human beings. □

BHEL Unions Demand Reconstitution of Joint Forum

ALL the Central trade unions and unions in the BHEL units except the leaderships of the INTUC demanded reconstitution of the joint Bipartite forum on the basis of secret ballot. They criticised that though new elections were long overdue the management was resorting to the dilatory tactics to suit the interests of the INTUC.

The representatives of the Bhopal INTUC union did not participate in the meeting on the plea that it was the sole bargaining agency according to the M.P. Industrial Relations Act. This attitude was strongly criticised by other unions who asked the INTUC leadership and the management to persuade the Bhopal union to join the national forum.

The INTUC affiliated union at Hyderabad opposed the check off system proposed by Shri R. Ramanujan General Secretary, INTUC and advocated secret ballot as the only democratic method of determining the strength of the union. The INTUC unions in Hardwar and Trichy issued leaflets demanding secret ballot.

The representatives of the CITU criticised the unilateral circular issued by the BHEL management providing for less wages than in the recent agreement and demanded its withdrawal. They also raised the question of increase in HRA and CCA to the BHEL workers.

The meeting decided to increase the washing allowance from Rs. 5 to Rs. 12 to those workers who were provided uniforms. It was also agreed to study the question of hazard

allowance to foundry workers so that uniformity would be introduced. The meeting agreed to bring the date of retrospective effect to the artisan at par with other workers. The quantum of festival advance for workers had been raised from Rs. 300 to Rs. 500. The management did not give any commitment on CCA and HRA but agreed to discuss the issue in the next meeting to be held on 20th May 1981 at New Delhi. □

INTUC Sticks to Check Off and Opposes Ballot

Meetings of the Central trade unions convened by the Union Labour Ministry failed to achieve any results due to adamant attitude of the INTUC on the question of recognition to Trade Unions. INTUC leadership insisted that it could be done only through check off while all the other central trade unions supported secret ballot.

The INTUC favours check-off system because it is confident of using the company officials to force the workers to sign letters to the management authorising to deduct subscription from their wages and pay it to the INTUC unions. The check-off system virtually gives up the voluntary character of the trade union and created a basis of compulsory collection of union subscription. Whenever this system has been introduced it is greatly abused by the management to bolster company unions.

The Government of India is also not keen to evolve a democratic solution to the problem. It wants to continue the advantage enjoyed by the INTUC unions in order to blunt the edge of workers struggles.

Regarding the nomination of delegation to the forthcoming ILO Conference to

Consumer Price Index Numbers							
Base 1960							
State/Centre	1980			State/Centre	1981		
	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.		Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
Andhra Pradesh				Orissa			
Gudur	418	416	422	Barbil	390	391	386
Guntur	431	432	438	Sambalpur	422	414	420
Hyderabad	414	424	428	Punjab			
Assam				Amritsar	425	425	426
Digboi	416	416	420	Rajasthan			
Doom Dooma	357	349	346	Ajmer	433	437	450
Labac	325	338	336	Jaipur	443	452	464
Mariani	356	357	354	Tamil Nadu			
Rangapara	362	351	358	Coimbatore	435	431	445
Bihar				Coonoor	422	420	433
Jamshedpur	379	378	387	Madras	404	403	409
Jharia	382	386	391	Madurai	435	439	452
Kodarma	426	425	421	U.P.			
Monghyr	426	430	452	Kanpur	405	404	404
Noamundi	377	381	408	Saharanpur	414	422	424
Gujarat				Varanasi	475	480	483
Ahmedabad	377	385	389	West Bengal			
Bhavnagar	408	412	414	Asansol	423	422	432
Haryana				Calcutta	379	379	384
Yamunanagar	432	439	449	Darjeeling	343	341	334
J. & K.				Howrah	375	370	377
Srinagar	421	426	420	Jalpaiguri	332	331	337
Karnataka				Raniganj	410	406	406
Ammathi	419	428	445	Delhi	430	434	434
Bangalore	449	457	468	Other Centres*			
Chikamagalur	422	421	422	Berhampur ('49)	579	561	564
Kolar G.F.	425	425	438	Cuttack ('49)	525	523	531
Kerala				Jabalpur ('49)	539	549	558
Alleppey	414	421	432	Beawar ('51-52)	514	518	530
Alwaye	419	424	433	Tripura (1961)	364	374	380
Mundakayam	428	437	445	H.P. (1965)	308	310	312
Madhya Pradesh				Goa (1966)	301	305	359
Balaghat	424	432	433	Bhilai (1966)	282	284	287
Bhopal	413	420	430	Bhilwara ('66)	264	267	275
Gwalior	423	428	443	Chhindwara ('66)	228	229	236
Indore	428	442	454	Kothagudem ('66)	273	272	278
Maharashtra				Rourkela ('66)	293	291	292
Bombay	408	409	420	All India ('49)	496	500	508
Nagpur	404	411	421	-do- ('60)	408	411	418
Sholapur	422	435	440				

Figures in bracket

indicate base year.

be held at Geneva in June. The representations of the CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS have expressed their view that the delegate should be on the basis of principle of rotation while the INTUC representative insisted that it alone should have the prerogative of sending the delegate. The Government is doing every thing to help the

INTUC on the plea that there is no unanimity among the central trade unions, totally ignoring the fact that overwhelming majority of Indian trade union membership has advocated the concept of rotation.

The stalemate continues because of the recalcitrant position of the INTUC. □

CITU Supports the United Struggle of LIC Employees

THE LIC employees all over the country had gone on indefinite strike from 2 April against LIC Act and in support of their demand of bonus. Supporting the struggle of LIC employees, B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, issued the following statement on 9 April :

"The CITU warmly congratulates the LIC employees for their united struggle against the LIC Act through which the Government has disowned the previous agreement as well as the Supreme Court judgements. The strike which has paralysed the entire operation of the Life Insurance Corporation through the magnificent unity forged by the employees has entered the eighth day and support to their struggle is growing.

The CITU demands that the Government should give up their policy of wage freeze and honour the recent judgement of the Supreme Court directing that the bonus for 1978-79 and 1979-80 should be paid in accordance with the previous agreement.

The LIC employees in their struggle against the LIC Act which scuttles away all trade union rights including right to collective bargaining are actually leading the struggle of the entire working class of the country. The CITU, therefore, appeals to all organisations of workers and salaried employees to do everything possible for the success of the struggle."

Meanwhile on 8 April, Nrisingha Chakrabarty, CITU Secretary, Indrajit Gupta (AITUC), D.D. Vashisht (HMS) and O.P. Aghi (BMS) in a joint Statement called upon the entire working class and salaried employees to observe 15 April as 'Solidarity Day' throughout the

country and the day was observed through mass demonstrations.

The strike was withdrawn on 15 April following the Supreme Court judgement directing the LIC authorities to pay bonus within a week.

CITU Protests Against Non-Payment of Bonus

B.T. Ranadive issued the following statement on 21 April:

The CITU strongly protests against the attempts of Government of India to circumvent the implementation of the order of the Supreme Court directing the LIC authorities to pay bonus to their employees within a week on the plea of appealing to the full bench. It is shameful that in order to deny the LIC employees their due bonus in terms of an agreement arrived at as far back as in 1974 with the approval of the Government, the authorities have gone back on

their own commitment, and judgement of the Supreme Court. The reported decision of the Cabinet removes all vestige of doubt that Government is not intending to pay the rightful bonus to the LIC employees by resorting to legal quibblings intentionally.

The CITU demands that the Government should give up the dilatory tactics as well as the attempt to mockery of judicial procedure and arrange immediate payment of bonus to the LIC employees, honouring the verdict of the Supreme Court.

The CITU appeals to all trade union centres and democratic masses to extend their fullest support to the struggling LIC employees and raise their powerful voice to force the Government to desist from the path of confrontation with the employees. □

CITU Demands U.P. Chief Minister's Intervention in Raza Textile Strike

P. Ramamurti, M. P. General Secretary CITU has issued the following statement on 19 April:

The CITU condemns the attitude of Government of Uttar Pradesh by refusing to effectively intervene in the strike of 3000 workers of Raza Textiles Ramapur which has been going on for last nearly five months. The workers who are paid the lowest wages among the textile mills in U. P. and in India only demand that the wages notified by the Government of Uttar Pradesh itself be paid by the management.

Finding that the strike could not be broken the Government

of Uttar Pradesh has resorted to a despicable device of getting a stooge union (INTUC) of the management which floated on the eve of the strike had not raised any demand agreed to an arbitration by a partner in the mill.

The CITU demands that the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh effectively intervene and compel the management to honour the Government's own orders notified earlier. He should realise that the credibility and the honour of the Government are involved in this. □

Repression on Railwaymen Continues

THE policy of suppressing all agitations of railwaymen is continuing. The All India Loco Running Staff Association, in its extended Working Committee meeting held at Burdwan on the 29 & 30 March 1981 took stock of the situation when it was seen that more than 7372 workers have been penalised in various forms. 3 of their leaders were still in detention under NSA. The position of victimisation was as under :

1. Summary dismissal	—	642
2. Termination of service	—	58
3. Compulsory retirement	—	586
4. Reduction in rank	—	1035
5. Penal transfers	—	301
6. Suspensions	—	69
7. Arrests and Court Cases	—	631
8. Charge Sheets	—	1050
9. Breaks-in-service	—	3000
		7372

The meeting noted that the High Courts at Ahmedabad and Calcutta had granted stay orders in 364 cases of summary dismissals and compulsory retirement. The legal opinion being that all types of victimisation are arbitrary and could be challenged in the courts of law, the meeting decided to take legal steps every where. It also decided to strengthen organisational position in all railways. With this end in view a programme of tour was finalised. The meeting decided to appeal to the Railway Minister to normalise the situation by withdrawing penal measures and restoring the function of Loco Running Staff Grievance Committee. The Association thanked all Trade Union Centres and leading members of Parliament for the

support lent by them and appealed to them to intervene in the matter.

P. Ramamurti, M.P., General Secretary and Samar Mukherjee M. P., Treasurer CITU have requested the Minister of Railways to withdraw these arbitrary orders in view of the past judgements of various High Courts and the Supreme Court. They said that while the workers are required to pay money from their meagre earnings, the bureaucrats pursue the court cases from public funds and hence the national exchequer should not be wasted in this fashion.

The same policy of repression has been let loose on various other sections of railwaymen. The Signal & Telecom Staff who protested against penal transfer and victimisation of N.S. Bhangoo, President of their Association and others and submitted a charter of demands through a rally on March 30, the authorities took recourse to further penal transfers against the Office-bearers of Delhi Division. In the meanwhile the Supreme Court has accepted a writ petition and granted stay against transfer of Bhangoo.

It was repeated once again when the Station Masters, who submitted a petition to Lok Sabha in February last, recorded their protest by boycotting control phone on April 16. From a telegram sent by the Secretary General of the Association it is seen that arrests, suspensions, charge-sheets removals etc. have been made on a mass scale. Samar Mukherjee M.P., in a letter to the Railway Minister once again requested him to settle the grievances of

the railway workers belonging to operational categories who are smarting extra burden placed on them.

Calcutta High Court Orders Reinstatement

The High Court at Calcutta in a judgement delivered on March 6, has set aside the removal order under Rule 14(ii) imposed on S.C. Ghose, Divisional Secretary, Traction Workers Association in 1979, Shri Samir Ghose, Advocate argued the case for S.C. Ghose.

Meetings, Conference, Dharna

Ministerial Staff under the leadership of the Association held a Dharna, at the residence of the Chairman, Petition Committee, Lok Sabha on April 6. Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary addressed the staff on behalf of CITU pledging support to their struggle

A conference of ministerial staff was held at Secunderabad under the auspices of AIRF on April 7 and 8. Before this another conference of workshop and artisan staff was also held at Ajmer in the last week of March. The question of restructuring of pay scales is agitating railway workers. □

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by

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President, CITU

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Kanpur CITU Activists Meet

A Meeting of the CITU activists was held on 28 March in Kanpur. Shyam Sunder presided over.

While addressing the meeting, P. Ramamurti, M.P., General Secretary, CITU, strongly criticised the LIC ordinance and supported public sector and loco employees' struggles. He pointed out that to suppress the trade union and democratic movement, there would be more and more stronger attacks on the right of the collective bargaining. He called upon the workers to fight unitedly against these policies of the Government.

The meeting decided its action programme. The meeting was addressed by Daulat Ram, Laxmi Sehgal and others.

Meanwhile, the CITU, Janawadi Mahila Samiti and DYFI organised a demonstration on 4 April outside the residence of the Magistrate in Kanpur protesting against the suppression of the trade union and democratic rights, gangster attacks, closures, victimisation of trade union activists, murderous attacks on the CITU activists and submitted a memorandum which warned that that if the Government continues its anti-worker policies, the the workers will be forced to give a call for Kanpur Bandh. □

Lockout in Amritsar Factories

THE workers of the Knitting Factories, Amritsar, under the leadership of Tana Bharti Union (CITU) are agitating since first February to press for their demands of 15 per cent rise in wages and piece rates. But the management declared lockout in the first week of February throwing 600 workers out of job and they have not been paid wages

since January. They were attacked by gangsters having allegiance to Congress (I) when they were on dharna. □

Kudremukh Workers Arrested

FIFTY retrenched construction workers of Kudremukh Unit of HSCL were illegally arrested on 24 March at Supa work-site in Karnataka while they were on continuous struggle for reinstatement. The police have, in connivance with the HSCL management, arrested them without giving any reason. The HSCL Workers Union has demanded release of the arrested workers and reinstatement of 239 retrenched workers. □

Textile Workers' Conf. in Fulwari Sharif

THE 11th Annual Conference of Textile Mazdoor Union, Fulwari Sharif, was held on 12 March at Patna. Chandi Prasad presided over.

Jaglal Paswan, the General Secretary of the union, submitted the work report. The Conference adopted several resolutions supporting the struggle of contractor workers of Jamshedpur, demanding release of arrested workers, against LIC ordinance, etc.

The Conference elected Chandi Prasad as the President and Jaglal Paswan as the General Secretary of the Union. □

Bihar Electricity Workers' Convention Held

THE annual convention of the Bihar State Vidyut Parishad Field Kamgar Union was held on 8-10 March at Patna. 300 delegates participated in it. Anand Pathak, M.P., inaugurated it and S.P. Lepcha, M.P., was the Chief Guest.

Julfikar Khan, General Secretary of the Union, while submitting the work report highlighted the present national and international political situation.

It adopted several resolutions against LIC ordinance, repression on the contractors in Jamshedpur, price rise and in support of peasants movement.

It elected Ram Prasad Singh as the President and Julfikar Khan as the General Secretary. On 10 March, an open session was also organised. □

TUI Seminar on Plantation Workers Held

THE Trade Union International of Agricultural, Forestry and Plantation Workers (TUIAFPW) organised its Asian, Regional seminar on 6 and 7 April at Madras. The subject of the Seminar was the struggles of agricultural and plantation workers in Asian countries for the satisfaction of their social and economic demands against the policies of employers and transnational corporations.

The seminar was participated by representatives from TUI, USSR, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India. The TUI General Secretary Gerald Longier explained the economic condition of plantation and agricultural workers and how the grip of foreign multinational companies is keeping them in dire poverty.

Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, All India Plantation Workers' Federation, presented a paper and emphasised the need of mobilising women workers. She highlighted the struggles carried out by the CITU and the demands conceded as a result thereof. □

Increasing Repression on Workers in Haryana

Firing on the Workers of Gopichand Textile Mills in Sirsa

THE Haryana Police resorted to unprovoked firing on peaceful striking workers of Gopichand Textile Mills at Sirsa on 27 April injuring 11 workers. The police are openly siding with the management of the mills and doing everything to terrorise the workers. Earlier on 19 March, the hirelings of the management had resorted to firing on the workers who are on indefinite strike since then.

The workers of this mill have no statutory facilities though the mill is working for last 18 years. With no rests and weekly holidays, the workers are forced to work on single rate over-time. There are about 1,400 workers in the mill but they are denied medical facilities. ESI Scheme has not been implemented although it was sanctioned in 1968-70 period. Whenever the workers have tried to raise their voice against this injustice, they have been subjected to harassment by the hired goondas of the management in collusion with district administration and Labour Department. Moreover, the workers get only Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 as wages while the Haryana Government has fixed the minimum wage to of Rs. 295 per month.

When the workers of the mills were trying to organise a CITU union for ventilation of their grievances and were demonstrating peacefully in front of the mills gate on 19 March the hirelings of the management opened fire on the workers injuring 15 workers seriously who were hospitalised. Police registered a case against the goondas but they were later released on bail. The

released gangsters were allowed to openly intimidate the workers who went on spontaneous strike on the same day in protest against the highhandedness of the management.

Though the struggle was being conducted peacefully, the management with the help of police, planned to recruit black-legs to suppress the strike. When the women workers staged a dharna on 27 April in protest against these strike breaking activities the police abused them in filthy language. When the male workers objected the use of such language the police resorted to lathi charge injuring several workers. On the plea that two policemen received injuries the police opened fire injuring about 11 workers. The injured workers were arrested and again beaten up in police lock-up

On 28 April, the President of Sirsa Employees Coordination Committee J.P. Pandey was arrested while leading a protest demonstration and was mercilessly beaten up publically and in the police lock-up. He was hospitalised by his friends.

On 26 April, the Haryana Government declared the strike illegal. On the other hand the Government has raised a little finger against the employer who is illegally continuing giving a lower wage than the minimum wage. From this one can see that Haryana Government is unashamedly siding with the exploiter.

On 29 April, M.M. Lawrence, M.P. and Satya Gopal Mishra, M.P. visited Sirsa for on the spot study. They found that no officer

of the Haryana Labour Department had visited Sirsa though a dispute is going on for such a long time. They requested the S.P. and D.C. to stop the reign of terror and help in settling the grievances of the workers through direct negotiations. While condemning strongly the police firing and other repressive measures against the workers they demanded enquiry into the incident and urged upon the State Chief Minister to intervene in the dispute.

If no action is taken by the concerned authorities and the management the CITU shall be forced to launch a peaceful agitation against the persons responsible for this act.

While in the press, we were informed that the hired goondas with police help attacked the workers colony on the night of 30 April and looted the belongings of the workers, To put the workers to more hardship the electricity and the water supply have been disconnected. □

Dharna by J.K. Rayon Workers : The workers of J.K. Rayon, Kanpur, organised a peaceful dharna on 27 April at Kamlatower in protest against the proposed closure from 28 April, attacks on the trade union activists and in support of their just demands. The speakers warned that if the mill is closed as proposed, the workers will be forced to organise a strike in all units of J.K. Group.

Dehradun : The workers of the bulb factory under CITU leadership are on dharna in front of local labour office since 15 April in support of their demand of minimum wages and dearness allowance. □

REVOLUTIONARY GREETINGS TO THE BLOOD-SOAKED MAY-DAY FLAG



1 May 1886. In America, at Chicago on the demand of an eight-hour-day, the Organised Workers' Movement saw a lot of blood spilt and a great many deaths occur at the ruthless charge of rulers.

Since then, the glorious 1 May has turned the International Workers' Day, a day of great determination to end all class distinctions by social revolution.

The vested interests in this Country, today, will try to pull down the glorious Flag, which is an unending source of revolutionary inspiration. The communal forces are bent upon to crush the solidarity of the toiling people with their designs of disintegration, shamelessly sharpen their weapons against the indomitable forces of the toilers. The Left Front Government is determined to make West Bengal an unconquerable citadel of the organised workers, establish all their economic rights; and, join in their fight for democracy and democratic rights.

Our revolutionary greetings to the blood-soaked May Day flag.

Left Front Government's Service to the Cause of Education

The achievements in the field of education between 1977 and 1981 are :

Restoration of normal condition in educational institutions, timely publication of the results of examinations and regular payment of salaries to teachers and non-teaching staff;

Opening of primary schools in 3,400 school-less villages, construction of 4,000 new primary school buildings, free supply of food to 31,00,000 school children,—free distribution of books in all languages, exercise books and slates among all school children—, free supply of dresses to girl students, introduction of games and sports in primary schools and new appointment of 13,800 primary teachers;

Opening of 900 new secondary schools, grants-in-aid for all institutions, construction of buildings of 2,500 secondary schools, free supply of text books at the secondary level, promotion of games and sports, development of laboratories, introduction of life-centric curricula in 10,000 new primary and secondary schools,—such democratic legislation as Primary Education Act, Secondary Education Act, University Act and Public Libraries Act—, and constitution of State Educational Research and Training Board;

Opening of 1,575 new village libraries as against the previous total of only 701, ten-fold increase in grants to libraries, introduction of grants to private libraries and establishment of Calcutta Metropolitan Library.

Government of West Bengal