

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS,

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PRESS STATEMENT

172, Lenin Sarani,
CALCUTTA -13
20th Oct., 1971

ON TAKING OVER OF COKING COAL MINES

Com. B.T. Ranadive, President CITU has issued the following statement to the press:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions since its foundation demanded nationalisation of coal mining industry without compensation. The measure taken recently by the Government however concerns only the coking coal mines and huge compensation is being paid to the mineowners for the takeover.

The Government has further exempted mines owned by the iron and steel producers in the private sector while the non-metallurgical coal mines remained untouched. Since 81 per cent of the mines taken over are small mines producing less than 1,000 tons of coking coal per day the action of the Government is mainly to facilitate the amalgamation of the management of the mines and introduce mechanisation in them.

The Government deliberately leaked out the news of the proposed Ordinance beforehand just to enable the mineowners to remove valuable machinery etc. from the mines. Though the vigilance of the workers prevented it in some mines, a large number of mine owners have been able to remove machinery and equipment sufficiently in advance of the take over bid.

During the last general elections Smt. Indira Gandhi was clamouring for two third majority in Parliament to amend the Constitution to take stringent action against big business. However, despite passing of six months the Government had not brought any amendment to the Constitution to nationalise industries without compensation which clearly shows that the Congress Government is in no way serious to take any such measure.

The taking over of the 214 mines raised hopes among a section of workers that they would atleast get a fair deal under the Government management. However the hopes are being belied. The anti-social elements used by the former mineowners are being given jobs by manipulating the muster-rolls. The workers whose cases were in dispute in the court are however being arbitrarily removed and thrown on the streets. Over and above that the Government has given wide powers to the custodians to dismiss any worker by just giving one months notice. This has created apprehensions among the workers that a new offensive of retrenchment is in the offing.

The CITU warns that if the Government continues such policies in these mines and go ahead with the bureaucratic management the sorrowful experience of other public sector is likely to be repeated in this case also.

The CITU therefore urges upon the Government to remove all the anti-social elements formerly employed by the mineowners to intimidate the workers, to reinstate all the victimised workers, stop the practice of underpayment and fully implement the coal wage report and to abolish contract labour in coal mines immediately.

The CITU further demands nationalisation of all coal mines without compensation and calls upon the workers to raise their voice in support of this demand.

FOR FAVOUR OF PUBLICATION

To

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