



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Comrade Saroj Mukherjee

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the passing away of Com. Saroj Mukherjee, member of the Polit Bureau of CPI(M), the Secretary of its W. Bengal State Committee and Chairman of the Left Front of W. Bengal. Com. Saroj Mukherjee breathed his last at Calcutta in the early hours of February 10 at the age of 79. He was suffering from Prostate Cancer.

Com. Saroj Mukherjee was born on 14th January, 1911 in village Bahadurpur of Burdwan district in West Bengal. After his schooling at Burdwan and Serampur, he started his University education at Calcutta University. Being an inborn patriot with revolutionary spirit, he joined the Indian National Congress and the freedom struggle in 1924, alongwith Com. Benoy Chowdhury, his class mate and presently a member of the Central Committee of CPI (M). He came in contact with the Jugantar revolutionary group. He was arrested by the British Police during his graduation itself. Yet he graduated with distinction and joined the Master's course in Law. But he discontinued his studies and was attracted towards Marxism-Leninism. He came in contact with Communist revolutionaries like Com. Muzaffar Ahmed and Com. Abdul Halim, joined the Communist Party in 1931 and became a whole time communist worker from 1938 and devoted himself to the cause of the working class. He organised trade union movement and joined the East Bengal Railway Workers' Union.

He married Kanak Mukherjee (nee Das Gupta) in 1942, who is now a member of the Central Committee of CPI(M), a Member of the Parliament and a leader of the All India Democratic Women's Association.

Com. Saroj Mukherjee had to undergo jail life for about twelve years both during freedom struggle and thereafter during the British and



Congress regimes respectively. Further, for his revolutionary activities he had to remain underground for five years.

He was the Calcutta District Secretary of the Communist Party from 1939 to 1943 and became Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Committee in 1943. He continued in this post till 1948 and took charge again in 1951 and

continued till 1962.

Being a devoted Marxist-Leninist, he fought against right and left deviations. He became a front line leader of the CPI(M), when it was formed in 1964. He was a member of the W. Bengal State Secretariat of CPI(M) in 1964. He was elected to the Central Committee of the Party in 1978 and a member of its Polit Bureau in 1985.

He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1971 from the Katwa Constituency of Burdwan district. He made immense contribution to consolidating the international contacts of the Party and uphold the banner of Proletarian Internationalism. He toured several countries like Soviet Union, China, DPRK, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

Com. Saroj Mukherjee's invaluable contribution to United Front tactics and his leadership role in mobilising the working class, the peasantry and the downtrodden people in class struggle made him the natural choice to hold the reign of the Secretaryship of the W. Bengal State CPI(M) and also the Chairman of the Left Front after the death of Com. Promode Das Gupta in 1982, despite the detection of Prostate Cancer in 1980. No wonder that the reactionary and communal forces tried to take advantage of the situation to destabilise the Left Front and its Government. But Com. Saroj Mukherjee's deft steering of the Left Front after Com. Promode Das Gupta helped it to achieve victory and form the Left Government in W. Bengal led by the CPI(M) for the third term in succession and consolidate the left, democratic and secular forces in the State which has been serving as a beacon light in the country when the communal and divisive forces are plaguing the other parts of India. While the communal and divisive forces were kept at bay, while the secessionist forces sparked by

the Gorkhaland agitators were nipped in the bud and while the reactionary forces led by the Cong(I) got growingly isolated from the people, the mass movement in the State involving all the mass organisations of workers, peasants, students, youth and women surged ahead with Com. Saroj Mukherjee at the helm of the leadership of the Left Front, safeguarding the Left Front Government headed by Com. Jyoti Basu to serve the cause of the people and making West Bengal as one of the strongest citadels of the left forces and giving the direction to the working class and mass democratic movement in the country.

Being a true Marxist-Leninist, Com. Saroj Mukherjee proved his versatility in journalism also as a Communist journalist. He was the Chief Editor of Ganashakti, the daily Bengali paper published by the party. While conducting revolutionary struggles, he started his journalist career as a writer in the journal "Samya" in 1931 and then in 1934 as the editor of the monthly Ganashakti. From 1956 to 1962 he was the editor of Dainik Swadhinata. He was also the Chief Editor of "Marxbadi Path". He wrote a number of booklets, essays and pamphlets like "Freedom Struggle," "Battle in Rangpur", "ABC of Trade Unionism, etc.

In all his writings and work till he died, particularly when the principles of Marxism-Leninism and Socialism are under attack by imperialism, Com. Saroj Mukherjee upheld the principles of scientific socialism and the tenets of Marxism-Leninism to give the correct guidelines to the generations to come.

With the death of Com. Saroj Mukherjee, the working class and the Communist movement have lost a veteran leader and fighter. The CITU dips its red banner paying homage to Com. Saroj Mukherjee and send its heartfelt condolences to Com. Kanak Mukherjee and other members of his family.

Massive Funeral Procession

Com. Saroj Mukherjee's body was cremated at Keoratala crematorium at Calcutta on February 11. Lakhs of people from all walks of life paid their last homage to Com. Saroj Mukherjee on 10th and 11th of February till 10 A.M. by placing wreathes on his body which was kept at the W. Bengal Party Head Quarters at 33, Alimuddin Street. Huge queues were formed by the mourning people who came to place wreathes. Among those who placed wreathes included Com. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Com. Jyoti Basu, Com. H.K.S. Surjeet, Com. Samar Mukherjee, the PB members and other leaders of the Party, leaders, of the Left Front and other parties, the Governor of West Bengal, Nurul Hasan and M.S. Gurpadasamy, the Union Minister of Petro-Chemicals. A large number of telegrammes from different

parts of the country and from several foreign countries were received.

Com. B. T. Ranadive, the senior most P B member and President of CITU sent a message from Bombay, where he is undergoing treatment. The message was read out before the gathering leadership. Com. M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU also sent a condolence telegramme. From the CITU Centre the funeral procession was attended by Com. P.K. Ganguly, Secretary.

The funeral procession started at 10.30 A.M. on 11th February. A massive number of over two lakh people including workers, kisans, students, youth and women attended the funeral, being escorted on

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National Seminar Decides for Central Legislation for Construction Workers

P.K. Ganguly

The Ministry of Labour, Government of India convened a national seminar at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on February 12, 1990 to discuss the problems of the workers engaged in the construction industry and consider the question of a central legislation for them.

The seminar was presided over by Ram Bilas Paswan, the Union Labour Minister and attended by about 200 delegates from the central trade unions, federations, Central and State Government officials including Shri V.S. Sawhney, the Labour Secretary, management representatives from both the public and private sectors in the construction industry, the representatives of the Builders Association of India (BAI) and distinguished individuals like Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer and Justice P. Subramanian Poti. Swami Agnivesh, representing the Bonded Labour, several retired Government Officials and members of the Tripartite Study Group on Building and Construction Industry also attended the seminar on invitation. A representative from ILO, Geneva also attended the seminar. The CITU was represented by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary and Debanjan Chakrabarty, General Secretary of the Construction Workers Federation of India (CITU).

In his inaugural address, the Labour Minister pointed to the condition of the industry and the workers and emphasised the need for a legislation for them. He referred to the report of the Tripartite Study Group, as well as to the Bill which was brought by the Congress government just prior to the elections, but not pushed through because of the report of the Committee on Petitions and objections from the trade unions. He urged for discussions so as to arrive at a consensus on the question of a Central Legislation.

The theme paper published by the Labour Ministry was presented by Jagdish Joshi, Director General of Employment and Welfare. The theme paper briefed the nature of the industry, the report of the Tripartite Study Group and called for reviewing the position and recommend the frame work of law or otherwise for promoting safety, health and welfare of the workers in the Building and Construction industry.

Speaking during the inaugural session, Justice, V.R. Krishna Iyer, condemned the contractors for holding the country to ransom. He referred to the conditions of the bonded labour, women and children, who comprised a major part of the construction workers and were ruthlessly exploited by the contractors and sub-contractors, and called for a comprehensive legislation in the construction industry to give all sections of workers all round protections and guarantee of continuous work.

Swami Agnivesh urged for abolition of the system of bonded labour. Some members of the Tripartite Study Group, viz. Mr. Shankaran, K.S. Vaidya also spoke in favour of a Central legislation to protect the interests of the construction workers.

From the Central Trade Unions, P.K. Ganguly was invited to speak first as the Coordinator of the Trade Unions in the Tripartite Study Group in the Building and Construction industry. He dealt on the nature of the vast sprawling industry which was having the second largest economic activity in the country, next only to agriculture. The capital outlay in the industry ranged from 36 to 50 percent in the successive Five Year Plans. The industry occupied 50 percent of the total capital outlay in the Seventh plan. The industry covered a widespread variety of works and operations ranging from construction of dams, bridges, powerhouses, harbours, roads, railways, tracks, runways, to building of factories, offices, schools, hospitals, hostels residential buildings, etc. both in public sector and private sector and included sectors like brick-kiln, sand dredging, quarrying, forestry and so on. The industry engaged workers of permanent nature, but mostly of casual nature and included a vast section of bonded labour. The total number of workers engaged in the industry was not known. But according to a very rough Government estimate, in 1982-83 about 103.3 lakh workers were engaged in the industry. Out of these, 11.87 lakhs were regular workers in the Corporate Sector and big construction companies, 23.87 lakhs were under small contractors and other agencies like Border Road Organisation and the balance of 67.56 lakhs were casual workers. Over ten percent were women workers. There was no estimate of child labour or bonded labour which the Government did not consider for census in the construction industry.

Since the industry was dominated by the private sector and overwhelming number of workers were of casual nature, the Congress Government had always evaded the continuous demand for a central legislation for the workers in the industry. The erstwhile Government claimed that there were a host of labour laws which could be applied in the construction industry, like the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, Minimum Wages Act, Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Act, Equal Remuneration Act, EPF Act, ESI Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, etc. But in actual practice, there was a jungle rule prevailing in the industry. There was no minimum wage, no uniformity of wages, no labour laws, no social security measures, no housing scheme, no health care, no safety rules. Even the big public sector companies in the industry resorted to continuous off-loading in the permanent and perennial nature of jobs to contractors and sub-contractors

and evaded all labour laws. The minimum standards of the ILO Conventions were violated. The principal employer always evaded its legal responsibilities. Women and children were ruthlessly exploited.

P.K. Ganguly pleaded that because of the specific nature of the industry, the shifting employer-employee relationship, the seasonal and non-continuous nature of work, none of the existing labour laws could deliver the goods to the workers in this unorganised sector. What was needed, was a comprehensive law, and no piecemeal legislations, to take cognizance of the particular features of the industry and conditions of its workers and provide the succour by regulation of employment, protection of jobs and extension of all social security measures.

He said that the entire gamut of the problems were discussed in the Tripartite Study Group for several years. The CITU and other trade unions including the National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation in Construction Industry and other individuals in the Study Group unanimously recommended for a Central legislation.

The legislation should provide for (a) Constitution of Tripartite Construction Labour Board, (b) Compulsory registration of principal employers, contractors, sub-contractors and workers, (c) recruitment of workers and regulation of employment through the Board, (d) collection of Welfare Levy before the commencement of construction activity, (e) collection of wages and contribution for PF, ESI, gratuity, maternity benefit and other dues applicable will be done by the Board from the principal employer through the Board, (f) administration of social security, provision of housing, creche, educational facility, medical benefit, training schemes, as well as regulation of safety to be carried out by the Construction Labour Board.

He said that the detailed Bill in this respect was submitted by the CITU and by the National Campaign Committee, which were identical. But because of the opposition by the Builders Association of India, there was no unanimity in the Study Group. The report prepared by the Government regarding the proceedings of the Study Group were opposed by the trade unions. But most surprisingly, even before the Ministry of Labour had prepared the report of the Study Group, the erstwhile Congress Government brought a Bill for the Construction industry just prior to the Parliamentary elections. The Bill was totally retrograde in nature. Because of the Committee on Petitions, Lok Sabha, where the National Campaign Committee headed by Justice Krishna Iyer had made a petition, advised the Government not to push through the Bill, the Bill was withheld. Ganguly raised objection for circulating the same Bill in the seminar, which the trade unions had already rejected and urged for discussions on the Bill submitted by the CITU and the NCC.

A series of discussions followed :

The representatives of the Builders' Association of India, which is dominated by the private sector, although agreed in principle for a central legislation

and constitution of the Construction Labour Board, vehemently opposed the demand for recruitment and regulation of employment through the Board. They also objected to the collection of levy before commencement of the construction work.

The representatives of all the other Central Trade Unions supported the views of the CITU. Geetha Ramakrishnan of Tamilnadu Construction Workers' Union, Panicker (INTUC), P L Berry (BMS), K A Khan (HMS), Nirmala (HMKP), Subhas Bhatnagar of the National Campaign Committee and the representative of AITUC demanded recruitment and regulation of employment through the Board.

Debanjan Chakrabarty of the Construction Workers' Federation of India submitted a memorandum to the Labour Minister. He brought out several points like the question of uniform wage structure, housing, safety, halt to the entry of multinationals in the Construction industry, eight hours working, etc, apart from the recruitment and regulation of employment through the Board.

Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer and Justice P. S. Poti opined that the very purpose of any Central legislation will be defeated if the Construction Labour Board is not empowered to recruit and regulate employment. The representatives of the Builders' Association were totally isolated. The situation was exactly as it happened in the Tripartite Study Group. Unfortunately, the Labour Secretary, V. S. Sawhney raised several questions of practicability of regulation of employment through the Board, which gave some handle to the Builders' Association. His queries were however replied point by point by the representatives of the trade unions, other members of the Study Group and Justices Krishna Iyer and Poti.

The Labour Minister intervened to say that the Labour Secretary's questions were only for clarification. He categorically concluded that a comprehensive Central legislation for the Construction Industry would be brought in the Parliament in the forthcoming Budget Session. The constitution of the Construction Labour Board would be part of the legislation. The Board would be given powers including that of recruitment and regulation of employment. The details however would be finalised in another meeting to be held in the third week of March after which the Bill would be introduced. The draft Bills submitted by the CITU and the National Campaign Committee headed by Justice Krishna Iyer, which were identical and contained all details of the powers and functioning of the proposed Construction Labour Board, would be considered before drafting the Government's Bill.

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A Conference of Hope, Confidence and Determination

The 3-day 11th annual conference of All India Loco Running Staff Association which was held in Delhi from 19th to 21st February was concluded in the evening of 21st February with an unmistakable note of hope confidence and determination. This was writ large on the faces of every delegate who marked the close of the session by tumultuous shouting of slogans, once again declaring to what their organisation stood for.

For a full decade, the organisation has been carrying on its activities under extremely difficult circumstances. No amount of repression that the previous Government had let loose on the locomen in retaliation to what it considered to be an ignominious defeat—the conclusion of the 10 hrs. agreement with AILRSA during the course of the stoppage of work they had resorted to, an 'insult which the previous Govt. could neither 'forgive' nor forget—could break the morale of locomen and their organisation. They have with exemplary courage been carrying on the struggle for reinstatement of nearly a thousand locomen and workers of other categories who had been thrown out of job in connection with the locomen's agitation in 1980 and 1981 as also for day to day trade union activity during the years following, simultaneously with their fight for implementation of the 1973 agreement on which the successive Cong(I) Govts. had shamelessly tried to go back, and for other demands. At the same time the Association had been collecting hundreds of lakhs of rupees for maintenance of the families of victimised comrades. Through persistent agitation and continuous legal struggle they achieved reinstatement of a large number of their comrades while fight for the remaining number was continuing. When the general elections came the organisation, along with others like the AIREC, AIRF etc. did not hesitate to call upon the workers to ensure a crushing defeat on the Government the anti-labour vindictive attitude of which was responsible for the deprivation of the workers, for the brutal repression to which they were subjected for years.

The conference was held at a time when people had voted that Govt. out, and Railway Ministry of the new Govt. is being presided over by Shri George Fernandes, who was the leader of the historic railway strike of 1974 in which the AILRSA played an important role, giving rise to immense hope and confidence in the minds of one and half million or so railwaymen, and certainly the locomen.

On 19th, after the flag hoisting ceremony and laying of wreathes on martyrs' column, and heart warming welcome address by the chairman, Reception Committee, M.M.P. Singh, President Delhi University Teachers Association and election of the Presidium consisting of the K. Rajanna, N. Sarkar, and R.S. Satpute, President, working president and

vice president of the association, the conference was inaugurated amidst tremendous enthusiasm of 2 thousand delegates, visitors and others, by Samar Mukherjee M.P. General Secretary CITU, who gave his prudent advice as to how the trade union struggle is to be conducted in the changed situation. C.M. Singh, President of the All India Railway Employees Confederation (AIREC) addressed the inaugural session as the chief guest. Besides, N.S. Bhangoo, Secretary General AIREC, C.L. Upadhyay, General Secretary All India Guards Council, M.L. Banerjee, General Secretary Indian Railways Traction Association, Rampada Chakrabarty, General Secretary, Confederation of Mercantile Employees, Nirmal Mukherjee, General Secretary CLW Labour Union O.S. Tyagi Secretary General, All India Civil Accounts Association addressed the inaugural session. Kanai Banerjee, Secretary CITU also greeted the conference.

27 delegates out of the 1800 present in the Conference took part in the discussion on the Secretary General's report which was presented by S.K. Dhar when the delegate session commenced at the close of the inaugural session. The discussion on the Report continued on to the 3rd day of the conference when after reply by the Secretary General, the Report was adopted unanimously amidst cheers. The resolutions adopted in the conference included besides a condolence resolution, those expressing joy at the release of Nelson Mandela, welcoming the new Govt., urging early vacation of victimisation and on other important issues.

While shadow of anxiety was to be observed on the faces of the delegates and visitors when they began to arrive in the capital because of the absence as yet of any formal declaration from the Railway Ministry regarding withdrawal of victimisation, it was replaced by confidence and determination as the conference progressed.

On the second day of the conference, on 20th Feb a huge procession of locomen and their family members paraded some major streets of the city.

The delegates and the leaders of the organisation were certain that the declaration of removal of victimisation would come along with or even before the presentation of Railway Budget. But the conference decided that in case this did not turn out, the association would stage a 2-days dharna before the Parliament to draw the attention of the Railway Ministry to the anxiety of the Railwaymen on this issue.

25th Biennial Conference of AIRMSA

The 25th Biennial General Conference of the All India Railway Ministerial Staff Association was held
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in Delhi on 12-14th February with more than 500 delegates attending from all over India.

Sukomal Sen MP inaugurated the conference, after welcome address by the chairman of the reception committee S.K. Vyas, Secretary General, All India Central Govt. Employees Confederation. Among those who addressed the conference were N.S. Bhangoo, Secretary General AIREC, S.K. Dhar, Secretary General AILRSA, D.B. Roy, General Secretary IRTCSA, C.L. Upadhyay, General Secretary AIGC, S.K. Singh President, AIC & WSC. Kanai Banerjee, Secretary, CITU also greeted the conference.

The conference discussed all long pending issues confronting the entire ministerial cadre of Indian Railways. But the burning issue of victimisation of all sorts received utmost attention. The conference specially appealed to the Railway Minister for immediate steps to put back to duty those railwaymen who had been facing victimisation since as far back as 1980-81.

The conference adopted a programme of campaign week from 10th to 16th April on the last day of which a memorandum on outstanding demands would be submitted to the divisional and workshop authorities with mass demonstration. The conference instructed the units to hold, conventions at Divisional and zonal levels by 15th April with a view to ensuring success of the AIREC National Convention in April. The conference elected the executive committee for the next term with A.A. Sidiqui as President and C.M. Singh as General Secretary.

Annual Conference of AIRCCA

The annual conference of the All India Railway Commercial Clerks Association was held at Madurai on February 10-11, 1990. The conference was inaugurated by A. Nallashivan M.P. and was addressed by prominent leaders of public life. About 300 delegates attended the conference. Apart from the issues confronting the railway commercial clerks in particular, the conference discussed the question of the prolonged victimisation of hundreds of railwaymen. The leaders of the Association expressed the hope that since George Fernandes, the leader of the glorious railway strike of 1974 has become the Minister for Railways, all the basic demands for which the strike took place would now be gradually fulfilled.

The Conference reelected Amar Das Gupta and B.P. Chowdhuri as President and General Secretary respectively.

Zonal LRSA Conference

N.F. Railway : The Zonal Annual Conference of

AILRSA, N.F. Zone, was held at Alipurduar junction on 23-25 January 1990. After flag hoisting and laying wreathes on martyrs column on 23rd morning the conference was inaugurated by S.K. Dhar, Secretary General, AILRSA. H.M. Das, Secretary AIREC, N.F. Zone, addressed the session which was also greeted by the leaders of fraternal organisations. The open session was held in the afternoon on the same day at Railway Institute ground. The huge several thousand strong gathering was addressed by Manik Sanyal M.P., and S.K. Dhar. The delegate session which was resumed on 24th morning was addressed by Amal Ghosh Dastidar, General Secretary CITU Assam as also by Manik Sanyal M.P. Discussion on the Zonal Secretary's report and the Accounts by Sanjit Sarkar and S.R. Dey, Secretary Finance, respectively, in which 90 delegates participated, continued till 25th morning whereafter both were unanimously passed. After adoption of several resolutions, the conference elected a powerful zonal executive with B.C. Bardoloi as president and C.M. Das Gupta as General Secretary for the next term.

All three days, cultural shows were presented by IPTA units of Alipurduar, Siliguri, Ullarardh, Goreswar IPTA and Indrayudh, Cooch Bihar.

Eastern Railway : The Zonal Annual General Meeting of the AILRSA, Eastern Zone was held at Gomoh junction, Dhanbad Division on Feb. 1990. The conference was inaugurated by S.K. Dhar, Secretary General, AILRSA and was addressed, among others, by M.N. Prasad, joint Secretary General. The conference has elected the new office bearers for the next term with as Zonal President and N. Sarkar as Zonal Secretary.

Zonal Conference of Trains Clerks

The Biennial Zonal Conference of All India Trains Clerks Association was held on January 21-22, 1990 at Siliguri Jn. S.K. Dhar, Secretary General of LRSA inaugurated the conference and H.M. Das, Zonal Secretary of AIREC, N.F. Zone addressed the conference as chief guest. Leaders of a large number of fraternal organisations greeted the conference. 15 out of 125 delegates who attended the conference participated in the discussion on the zonal secretary's report and the resolutions, which were later passed unanimously.

The conference decided to observe Demands Day on 8th May 1990 on N.E. Rly.

The Zonal Working Committee for the next term, with Abdul Matin as President and S.B. Kanjilal as General Secretary, was elected unanimously.

The open session held on 21st afternoon, was presided over by H.P. Mohanta while S.K. Dhar and H.M. Das addressed the meeting as main speakers.

Anganwadi Workers Carry Forward Struggles

The struggle of Anganwadi women are gradually spreading over in different states of the country in the country in pursuance of the demands charter formulated in the Delhi Convention held in 1989. Following are some reports:

Udaipur : The District Committee of the Anganwadi Mahila Kamgar Union organised a dharna before the District Magistrate's office at Udaipur on December 22, 1989, in which 110 women participated from different parts of the district. The then Congress government tried to stop the participants by all means. A large number of women were dragged out from buses on the way. The authorities even threatened them with dismissals. But despite this, they made their way to Udaipur to participate in the dharna. The memorandum of demands was submitted to the District Magistrate.

From January 9 to 11, the Anganwadi women gheraoed the Regional Deputy Director of ICDS demanding immediate reinstatement of several dismissed workers. Before this a deputation met the District Magistrate on January 8 and submitted another memorandum to him. The Mahila Kamgar Union resolved to step up the struggles in pursuance of the demands.

Chittorgarh : The District Conference of the Anganwadi Kamgar Union was held at Chittorgarh on December 31, 1989. The conference was presided over by Kalpana Vyas. V. S. Chhanwal placed the report, which pointed to the problems and struggles of the Anganwadi women. Several delegates participated in the discussions. The conference elected a 21 member committee with Kalpana Vyas as President and Rajkumari as the General Secretary. Puspaa Sharma, Prdesient of the Udaipur Committee gave the concluding speech.

Saharanpur : Several hundreds of Anganwadi women held a meeting on January 3 at Saharanpur under the Presidentship of Sarala Sharma. The meeting discussed the problems and demands of Anganwadi women and decided to convene the district conference on February 10.

Convention of LIC Women

The Tanjavor Divisional Insurance Corporation Employees' Association organised a convention of women employees of the LIC at Tanjavor on January 28. The Convention was attended by 63 delegates from the three districts of Tanjavor, Pudukkotai and Trichy. The Convention was inaugurated by Hema. In her inaugural speech she criticised the policy of computerisation, due to which the women employees became victims first. L. Laxmanan, the President of the Tanjavor Divisional Insurance Employees Association called upon the male employees to take up the demands of

Contract Workers in Electricity Court Arrest in Tamilnadu

More than 7500 contract workers, working in Tamilnadu Electricity Board, courted arrest, picketing offices of the Electricity Board on 7th February. The court arrest programme was organised by the Central Organisation of Tamilnadu Electricity Employees (CITU). This union has been conducting many struggles on the various demands of the contract workers. An important aspect of the issue has been that the Board never accepted these workers, nearly 15,000 in number and many working for more than 5 to 7 years even as contract workers. There is no record of any sort for these workers who are paid through 'imprest' payment. Under the banner of CITU, dharnas, hunger strike, rallies, centralised demonstrations etc. were conducted during the last few years. Regularisation of these workers was one of the demands submitted by CITU at the time of wage revision for State Electricity workers.

On 7th February, contract workers led by leaders of CITU and the Electricity Employees Union, marched to the Electricity Board offices in 14 selected centres and courted arrest.

In Madras, more than 900 contract workers, led by W. R. Varadharajan, Secretary of CITU, P. G. K. Krishnan, District CITU Secretary, D. Janakiraman, General Secretary, S. Pancharathnam, Secretary of COTEE courted arrest.

Among others who led the picketers were M. Seerangam MLA, S. Noormohamed MLA, P. M. Kumar, S. A. Perumal, Kasturi Rangan, M. Rajangam and T. R. Purushottaman, leaders of CITU. K. Ramani, MLA, Pappa Umanath, MLA and other leaders greeted the volunteers at various centres. Thousands of workers belonging to other industries had assembled at these centres to express solidarity with the contract workers.

CITU State Committee in its meeting at Madurai from 23rd to 25th January had called upon all the CITU unions to express their solidarity and assemble at the picketing centres.

In addition to the struggle of contract workers, electricity employees are also conducting a three phased programme on some of the immediate issues.

Demonstrations were held in hundreds of centres on 9th January. On 20th February, processions will be organised in all the divisional centres. On 14th March, mass dharnas will be organised in all the system headquarters.

women employees and fight for them. The Convention decided to launch agitation in pursuance of four point demands, viz right to work as fundamental right, hostel for women, creche and separate toilets and rest rooms for women. S. R. Krishnamurthy, the General Secretary of the Association gave the concluding speech.

Pre-Budget Meeting with Finance Minister

In the pre-budget meeting with the Central Trade Unions on 7th February at New Delhi, Madhu Dandavate, the Union Minister for Finance assured the trade union representatives that the current discussions will not be a ritual. All the views of the trade unions will be taken into consideration while budget is prepared and there will be post budget discussion also.

He was replying to the general reaction of the Central Trade Unions on the ritual approach taken in the past towards the pre-budget consultations with the trade unions. All the trade union leaders, not to the exception of the INTUC President, G. Ramanujam, reposed hope that at least the present Govt will be able to come out of the legacy of the past.

All the leading trade union centres including CITU, INTUC, AITUC, BMS, HMS, UTUC, UTUC (LS), were represented in the meeting. Among those who participated were G. Ramanujam and Gopeswar from INTUC, Chaturan Mishra and Parvati Krishnan of AITUC, R. K. Bhakat of BMS, U. Purohit of HMS, Jatin Chakraborty of UTUC, Prithish Chanda of UTUC (LS). The CITU was represented by M.K. Pandhe and Jibon Roy, Secretaries. While suggesting the priorities there was almost unanimity amongst the Central Trade Unions that in view of the Government's commitment on right to work, the budget should be employment oriented. One representative suggested that fiscal or monetary concessions to private sector should be linked with the commitment to employment generation. Common concern was expressed about the inflationary trend and the price rise. All demanded fiscal and administrative measures to check the price rise and supply of essential commodities through Government agencies.

Some of the unions including INTUC demanded a national wage policy. CITU however demanded the finalisation of national minimum wage. INTUC demanded the parity of DA between the Government and Public Sector workers. CITU drew the attention of the Govt to accept the principle of 100% neutralisation at all levels of wages and to settle D.A. dispute in the Public Sector. Trade union representatives suggested that social security measures like Provident Fund and Maternity Benefit should be extended to unorganised labour. They felt that special court should be set up to deal with the misappropriation of Provident Fund. There was a suggestion for a reform in the Gratuity law so that a portion of gratuity commitment is deposited with the Govt to facilitate gratuity payment in case of closure. Almost all the trade union centres demanded waiving off of ceilings in the Bonus Act concerning entitlement and payment. They also dem-

anded the rise of the taxable ceiling of income tax payment up to Rs. 50,000.

There was a general consensus on the necessity of modernisation and upgradation of technology. But the trade unions cautioned against any redundancies in job and damage of employment potential. They further cautioned against invitation to multinationals and called for utilisation and development of indigenous technology and the process of indigenisation. They further called for better utilisation of talent to prevent the 'brain drain.'

Common concern was raised about the growing sickness of industries. The trade unions pointed out that the Sick Industrial Companies Act 1985 was being utilised by the employers as an instrument to declare the companies sick and not to pay to the creditors. The unions felt that stringent administrative and fiscal monitoring could have brought quite a good number of closed industries into operation. In this context, they suggested the formation of a Standing Joint Committee for the purpose.

M.K. Pandhe wanted the budget to be the reflection of the Government's commitment to anti-inflationary, employment-oriented and self-reliant economy ensuring relief to common people. While appreciating the difficulties of the Government, especially the inheritance of an empty coffer from the previous Government, he urged upon the Government to break the legacies of the past. In explaining the need for curtailing the non-developmental expenditures, he drew the attention of the Finance Minister to the regular feature of embezzlement of public sector funds. Criticising the import policy of the previous Government he said that the Govt had even allowed the import of pig iron under the garb of import liberalisation. Indiscriminate imports have cost the public sector heavily. Against the total requirement of 32,000 M.W. captive capacity of power the BHEL was offered only 12,000 M.W. The rest was given to multinationals. In this context he also cited the Talaja example which had been offered to be transferred to a multinational, turning down the BEL's proposal for the modernisation and expansion of the unit. Narrating how the Indian self-reliance had been surrendered during the regime of the previous Government he cited a number of instances. He pointed out that against the international norms of employment of 40% indigenous carriage in international shipping, India's capacity was kept restricted below 30%. He demanded that the Bureau of Public Enterprises be brought under the Finance Ministry. He also demanded more investment in small scale industry. While discussing the sources of resource mobilisation he mentioned that though the Govt was pumping huge amounts to the rich farmers, the area was kept totally untapped in resource mobilisation.

INDIA IS ONE

Millions who went to the recent poll exercised their right in no uncertain terms. The signal was clear. People's will is supreme. Yet long shadows lurk in the corner : shadows of communalism, divisive tendencies and narrow parochialism. Shall we fall as a divided nation ?
India is one :
Let us feel it.

GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL

ICA 529/90

BEFI Reiterates Demand for Participation in Negotiations

The following press statement was issued by Ashis Sen, M.P. General Secretary, Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) on 19th February, 1990 :

The last wage settlement in banking industry denied what were legitimately due to the employees. Ever since it was signed by AIBEA and NCBE, having close links with the bankers, the Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) has been on agitation demanding its improvements on various counts.

The protracted agitation by the employees has forced the bankers recently to concede increases in Dearness Allowance, the formula for which had already been clinched by Reserve Bank Employees in August 1989 by a settlement reached after struggles under the guidance of BEFI leadership. The increases once again nail down the hoax propagated by the bankers, which their cohorts in negotiation accepted and abetted to fool the employees that the banking industry has no capacity to bear any additional burden on wages and on that basis signed the 5th bipartite settlement earlier.

BEFI is surprised to learn that AIBEA and NCBE have also accepted the bankers' proposal of a pension scheme in substitution of contributory provident fund. A similar proposal by RBI management has not been agreed upon by All India Reserve Bank Employees Association. Such a scheme will tantamount to foregoing the demand for pension as a third superannuation benefit which is already in vogue in several banks. Such scheme unless introduced as a third benefit to cover all, will adversely affect the interests of the overwhelming majority of employees excepting a small section retiring in immediate future.

The BEFI will continue and intensify the struggle for restructuring of pay scales, the restoration of rights and amenities curtailed by the 5th Bipartite Settlement, removal of derogatory provisions in it, a halt to computerisation etc. and for its participation in the negotiations to safeguard and advance the employees' interests.

(The CITU has also made a representation to the Union Finance Minister, Madhu Dandavate to intervene in the matter so that BEFI and other organisations are represented in the wage negotiations in the banking industry as in other public sector undertakings).

CITU's Letter to Finance Minister

Dear Shree Dandavateji,

21.2.90

I am constrained to draw your attention from

your busy schedule to a major dispute in the Banking industry, which is being perpetuated since long by the Indian Banks Association and has become an area of constant friction with the employees.

The bilateral negotiations on wages, etc. are being held by the Indian Banks Association with only two organisations of employees, viz. AIBEA and NCBE. There are however, other national organisations of bank employees, like the Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI), of which the General Secretary is Shri Ashis Sen, Member of Parliament. But despite repeated representations made by the BEFI in the past to the former Finance Ministers and the Indian Banks Association, both the Indian Banks Association and the erstwhile Congress Government refused to include BEFI in the negotiations.

BEFI has got a membership strength of over one lakh bank employees all over the country. You will appreciate that by limiting the negotiations to only two organisations, the Indian Banks Association has unreasonably deprived a very large section of the employees to their rightful representation and scuttled their right to collective bargaining. No wonder, it has affected smooth industrial relations in this vital industry. In fact, the employees were forced to launch agitational activities in the past, including strike actions, which had paralysed the functioning in the banks several times.

You will agree that this type of truncated negotiations are held only in the Banking industry. In all other public sector industries all national level organisations are included in the negotiations.

The National Front Government has very rightly endeared itself to all sections of workers and employees due to its sincere efforts to break away from the legacy of the undemocratic practices perpetuated by the Congress Government and taken several democratic steps which have been hailed by the working people. We believe that initiations of democratic process should necessarily be accompanied by greater respect for trade union rights and right to be represented in collective bargaining.

I therefore earnestly request you to intervene in this matter personally so that the negotiations in the Banking industry do not remain confined to only two organisations, but be extended to include Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) and other national level organisations in the industry.

Soliciting your response,

With regards,

Yours Sincerely,
P.K. Ganguly
Secretary

Convention on Restructuring of Judicial System

The All India Lawyers' Union (AILU) organised a national convention on Restructuring of Judicial System at Himachal Bhawan on February 3. The convention was presided over by Justice P. S. Poti and inaugurated by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer. Com. Hardev Singh, General Secretary of the AILU placed a report which in depth discussed the fruitlessness of the legal system, the procedures and various laws which always pitted two unequal partners, i.e. the privileged and unprivileged sections of the society to fight for justice. The unprivileged section always became the scapegoat, as the concept of justice in the bourgeois system, under bourgeois law and in bourgeois courts always tilted towards the privileged section which perpetuated the injustice on the unprivileged section. Thus what was needed was not a mere patch up of the legal frame work, but a revamping of the judicial structure and social system to change the very concept of justice and equality so that it is imparted to the party which really needs it. So the struggle for restructuring of the judicial system has to be linked with the struggle for restructuring the socio-economic system.

Various mass organisations, institutional representatives and central trade unions were invited to participate in the convention. On behalf of CITU, P. K. Ganguly, Secretary spoke in the convention.

Resolution of the Convention

After forty two years of independence and forty years of the enforcement of the Constitution, justice for the people remains a dream, not yet turned into reality. The legacy of the colonial system with all its archaic trappings and technicalities have debarred the evolution of an indigenous judicial system designed to do justice to the teeming millions of India. The judicial system needs drastic restructuring, nay radical recasting of the over-all machinery. Laws, including procedures, need to be recast. While barbaric laws must be erased from the statute book, humane laws need to be enacted.

In the contemporary socio-economic set up unequals as adversaries seek justice. Multitude of under-privileged, workers, kisans, dalits, women, minorities and others are pitted against the privileged and the mighty state and the corporate sector, public and private. Justice will remain an illusion unless bias generating from the advantageous material position of the privileged is consciously countered by orientation of those, who are entrusted with administration of justice, in the spirit of justice and equality. Without countering the influence of wealth and power of the privileged, the state and the corporate sector, the system will remain incapable of doing justice to the people. The handicaps suffered by the underprivileged must further be mitigated by the

provision for effective and timely legal aid and innovation of participative justice.

The independence of the judiciary, not only at the higher echelons, but at the grass-roots is a sine qua non of justice. The crucial question is to rid the judiciary and the Bar from the influence of the privileged, the state and the corporate sector.

Making provisions for enabling the workers, kisans, dalits, women, minorities and other oppressed sections to get justice is no favour, but fundamental duty of the State.

The overall restructuring of the system is the immediate task. This task cannot be left to the government, the judiciary and others entrusted to operate the system. Not the people, but the system must exist for the people.

This Convention is of the considered view that a high-powered Commission comprising of representatives from different sections of the people must be forthwith constituted to go into and recommend steps to restructure the judicial system in a time bound schedule. The proposed Commission must be assured that its recommendations will substantially be implemented also in a prescribed time frame. In order to enable measures of utmost urgency to be implemented the proposed Commission be asked to recommend steps by way of interim measures as well.

Mini-Marathon for Communal Harmony at Kota

The Kota District Committee of CITU organised a week from February 18 to 24 for communal harmony at Kota, Rajasthan. The week is observed every year since 1971, when eight comrades of the new born CITU, working in J. K. Synthetics, were killed by police firing. A memorial was constructed there in front of the main gate of J.K. Synthetics.

The mini-marathon race was inaugurated on February 18 by P. K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU by releasing two doves. The race started from the Kota Stadium and culminated at the J.K. Synthetics gate, covering a distance of about 14 Km. The police however created obstacles in giving permission to the race. Although it ultimately gave the permission, yet it did not allow the race to cover about 2-3 km route through the areas where the poor people were badly affected by the recent communal riot.

The race was participated by about 700 persons including children, middle aged persons, women and athletes of repute. A mass public meeting was held at the J.K. Synthetics gate, which was presided over by R. K. Swamy, the candidate from CPI (M) for the forthcoming state elections. P. K. Ganguly addressed the rally and distributed the prizes.

'A Mad Victimisation'

(We are publishing hereunder a report of victimisation sent by Com. Subhashini Ali, M.P. on behalf of the Kanpur Unit of CITU—Ed.)

The management of Fenner (India) Limited, a company having its Registered Office at Madurai and branch offices in all major cities of the country are indulging in a ridiculous type of victimisation against one of its employees. On account of his trade union activities, an employee is being separated and kept in Kanpur where there is no work or place of work. The employer's motive is to keep him away from any contact with his colleagues. To achieve this end, they are paying him full wages and allowance for no work and this irrational practice continues for more than 28 months now.

The company had recruited one P.S. Nair in the middle of 1979 at their New Delhi Office. He tried to organise the employees to fight the employer for their common cause. The management sensed the danger and transferred him to their newly opened branch office at Ludhiana. However, the Delhi staff had by then established contact with Fenner Staff Association, Madurai who had greater strength, and on their intervention, the place of transfer was altered from Ludhiana to Madurai and in accordance with a settlement arrived at between the Association and the management, P.S. Nair had joined Madurai office of the company by mid 1981. This enabled the trade union to bring more progressive elements into its leadership.

By this time the management had twice tried to promote him in junior management cadre, to facilitate termination of his services at their sweet will. However, P.S. Nair could thwart their ugly machinations by refusing to accept their offer.

The factory workers' union had conducted successful strike actions during 1983-84 braving brutal atrocities meted out on them by the management in connivance with the local police and hired hooligans. The management's illogical apprehension was that Nair must have been instigating the workers to conduct these struggles, and on the 9th of December '85, a transfer order was served on him transferring his services to their Kanpur office, to join there on the 1st of January 1986. Prolonged discussions by the trade union failed to bring down the anger of the management.

Under these circumstances the union moved Madras High Court with the help of the eminent labour lawyer Ms R. Vaigai and the court, in an interim injunction restrained the management from implementing its transfer order. However, the employer did not allow the workman to attend the office and issued a memo advising him to stay away from the office until further orders of the court, and the wages for such period was paid to him. Within the next one month the employer somehow managed to get the interim injunction vacated and asked the employee

to proceed to Kanpur and finally he had to join Kanpur office on the 3rd February 1986.

The management at Kanpur office, on instructions from Madurai, started numerous forms of repressive measures against Nair and constantly harassed him. A number of unfounded charges were fabricated against him. Show cause notices, and warning letters for practically no reason and even threats of personal attacks were some of the regular methods of harassment. In the first week of 1987, management practically terminated the office functions at Kanpur without informing the employees. The stock was removed from the godown to an unknown destination and without giving any notice to the employees, the possession of the office premises was handed over to the landlord. The employees in the office were literally made to stand on the street—awaiting instructions from the management as to where to sit. The dilemma continued for two days. After two days they arranged a lodge room for the employees. No work was given to them except getting their attendance entered in a register. This state of affairs continued until 14th September 1987 on which date the employer closed down the office in blatant violation of all laws.

The management, in a letter to P.S. Nair, shamelessly asked him to accept an amount of Rs. 10,000/- if he opted to leave the company on Voluntary Retirement Scheme. A strange move on the part of the management was that they had asked him to let them know if he had any other proposal "to make cessation of his employment with the company smooth". He had sent a reply to the management refusing their treacherous proposals and maintained that he was not in a position to quit on Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

Thereupon started a new and interesting chapter of this story. The office ceased to exist way back in September 1987. But this particular employee is illegally 'confined' at Kanpur. His request to stay at Madurai until the management took a final decision on this matter was turned down by them and they stated that he is 'posted' at Kanpur and Kanpur is his 'headquarters'.

The original industrial dispute raised consequent to the transfer order still continues to be held up somewhere in the labour department of the Tamil Nadu government who are thoroughly examining the case for all these four years to locate any sort of victimisations in this matter.

Malafide transfer of workmen comes under Unfair Labour Practice as appended in Fifth Schedule of Industrial Disputes Act 1947. Prohibition of Unfair Labour Practice and penalty for committing unfair labour practice are also adequately explained under sections 25-T and 25-U respectively of the said Act.

Despite having no office to function at Kanpur, a stenographer, whose work is exclusively that of conducting office correspondence, is made to stay there indefinitely. The purpose is very clear to all,

(Cont'd on page 15)

ENJOY THE ENCHANTING WILDLIFE OF WEST BENGAL

If you want to taste the thrill of viewing wildlife, come to West Bengal with the world famous Sunderbans, Jaldapara and 14 other sanctuaries.

The Sunderbans of 4,263 sq. kms., the largest estuarine forests in the country. A unique landscape with half the area under water with tidal fluctuations upto 5.6 metres. Besides the magnificent Royal Bengal Tiger, the Sunderbans National Park is the home of largest Estuarine Crocodile, the giant Water Monitor, the ferocious Fishing Cat, the rare Olive Ridley Turtle, the graceful Cheetal, and a host of other animals and birds. The Sajnekhali Bird Sanctuary in the Sunderbans, the nesting ground of thousands of birds including Open Billed Stork, Egret Cormorant, Night Heron, Purple Heron and other water birds in June to September. Bhagabatpur Crocodile Breeding Centre offers a fascinating array of estuarine crocodiles. Watch towers are conveniently located for viewing wildlife. Launch cruise in the watery wilderness is a fascinating experience.

Jaldapara and Garumara in North Bengal are the homes of the rare one-horned Rhino. Gaur (Indian Bison), Elephant, Royal Bengal Tiger, Leopard, Sambar, Hog Deer, Sloth Bear are the other attractions. Viewing wildlife from elephant back is a thrilling experience. Chapramari is famous for viewing wild elephants bathing in pond.

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- Hill Cart Road, Silliguri, Phone : 21632, 24650
- West Bengal Information Bureau, A/2, State Emporia, Baba Kharak Singh
Marg, New Delhi-110 001, Phone : 35-3840.
- Karim Mansion, 787, Anna Salai, Madras - 600 002, Phone : 832 346.

March to Assembly by Tripura Handloom Weavers

The Tripura State Convention of handloom workers held at Agartala on February 7 decided to organise a march to Assembly by thousands of weavers on February 21.

The Convention was presided over by Chitta Chanda and Sarada Debnath and attended by 151 elected delegates including 57 women delegates from different parts of the State. Braving all threats by the terrorist gangs of the Cong.(I)-TUJS, the delegates came from even the worst affected areas of Belonia.

The Convention was inaugurated by Baidyanath Majumdar, the State CITU President. P.K. Ganguly, Secretary CITU was the Chief Guest.

In his inaugural address Baidyanath Majumdar gave examples how the left front government had made several programmes which improved the conditions of the handloom weavers. But the Con.(I)-TUJS government was driving them to the path of ruination. He called for heightened agitation to remove the present terror regime.

Shivdas Baidya, the State CITU Secretary placed the report. He pointed to the deplorable conditions of the nearly one lakh handloom weavers in the State which was caused by the Cong.(I)-TUJS government. The Left-Front Government had created the Handloom Development Corporation and the Apex Weavers Cooperative Society, which were purchasing the handloom products. It had also created a ten thousand rupees self employment plan for the weavers. But immediately after the Cong.(I)-TUJS government was installed, both the Corporation and Apex body had stopped all purchases from the weavers. These two bodies had even stopped payment of goods purchased earlier. Thousands of weavers were affected by these measures. The self-employment plan was also stalled. Despite various agitations in several districts the present government turned a deaf ear to all the entreaties of the weavers. The report called for stepping up of the agitation.

Addressing the Convention, P.K. Ganguly detailed the textile policy of the Congress government, which had adversely affected all the three sectors, viz., the mill, powerloom and handloom sectors and benefitted only a few mill magnets. The handloom sector was worst affected. The raw materials like hank yarn, chemicals and dyes were diverted to the powerloom controlled by the monopoly mill owners. Even the 22 reserved items for handloom were being produced in those powerlooms. The average minimum wages earned by the handloom weavers were even less than the agricultural workers. The advent of the Cong.(I)-TUJS Government in Tripura had worsened the condition of the handloom industry, which was the biggest cottage industry in the State. He said that while the Congress(I) government has been removed from the Centre, the struggles of handloom weavers in Tripura have to be linked with the struggle to

dethrone the Cong.(I)-TUJS regime from the State.

About eight comrades participated in the discussions. The Convention chalked out a programme of State and district wise conventions and a central rally and march to Assembly by thousands of weavers on February 21 in pursuance of 17 point demands, which included scrapping of the textile policy, revival of the ten thousand rupees self employment plan, purchase of all handloom products by the Corporation and the Apex body directly from the weavers, payment of all arrears, minimum wage of Rs. 45/- daily and immediate resignation of the Cong.(I)-TUJS Government.

Joint Seminar on DA

In a joint seminar held on 17th February at New Delhi, all the major Trade Union Centres, National Confederation of Officers' Association (NCOA) and the Standing Committee on Public Enterprises (SCOPE) arrived at a consensus on the principle of DA neutralisation for Public Sector Workers and Officers. The seminar was organised at Lodi Hotel under the auspices of NCOA. The Central Trade Unions represented were CITU, INTUC, AITUC and HMS.

The Seminar expressed concern at the growing erosion of the real wages of the Public Sector workers due to inflation which adversely effected the process of involving the workers and the technicians in the drive for productivity. The seminar observed that though the present neutralisation rate was slightly higher than 100% in the lowest level it tapered down gradually for the workers in the higher categories of skill and income. For the workers at the basic wage of Rs. 2000/- the rate of neutralisation was only 45% and the rates went down to 32% for the workers in the basic wage of Rs. 3000/- The seminar unanimously opined that the Government of India should agree to 100% neutralisation at all levels of wages to protect the real wages. In this context it may be mentioned that the CITU was all along fighting for this principle which was accepted unanimously in a convention organised by CPSTU in May, 1988 at Bangalore. On the contrary INTUC was opposing the idea. However, INTUC changed its view while addressing the seminar and came to unanimity with the CPSTU. M. K. Pandhe represented the CITU in the seminar. While addressing the seminar, he also spoke in favour of the right to collective bargaining for the Executives in the Public Sector, the aspect on which general consensus was also arrived at in the seminar.

(From page 13)

let the authorities continue their search for any form of victimisation in it. The management's inability to clarify their position reveals their despicable and ulterior motives to suppress trade union activities. Ironically, this is going on at a time when there exist many vacancies in their Madurai office consequent to mass retrenchment in the new name of voluntary retirement scheme. A new type of victimisation indeed—isolate and harass!

Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers

(Base 1982 = 100)

Centre	Oct. 1989	Nov. 1989	Dec. 1989								
ALL-INDIA	176	176	175	Mercara	168	167	166	Varanasi	186	183	180
Gudur	170	169	173	Alwaye	163	163	163	Asansol	173	176	172
Guntur	168	166	164	Mundakayam	169	170	171	Calcutta	183	182	179
Hyderabad	168	169	167	Quilon	173	172	172	Darjeeling	166	166	163
Visakhapatnam	183	183	185	Trivandrum	178	179	180	Durgapur	179	178	176
Warrangal	167	167	167	Bhalghat	182	182	879	Haldia	182	182	180
Doom-Dooma-				Bhilari	166	165	162	Howrah	185	184	180
Tinsukia	168	169	167	Bhopal	179	180	178	Jalpaiguri	175	174	170
Gauhati	185	184	182	Indore	182	181	179	Raniganj	166	168	164
Labac-Silchar	170	171	168	Jabalpur	195	199	194	Chandigarh	172	171	170
Mariani-Jorhat	175	176	175	Bombay	180	180	181	Delhi	185	184	182
Rangapara-Texpur	174	176	175	Nagpur	181	180	179	Pondicherry	189	182	184
Jamshedpur	168	168	165	Nasik	183	183	182				
Jharia	170	171	166	Pune	181	181	180	Additional Series of Labour Bureau			
Kodarma	164	165	162	Sholapur	184	183	181	Kothagudem	192	191	191
Monghyr-Jamalpur	175	176	172	Barbil	172	172	170	Himachal Pradesh	170	171	168
Noamundi	170	171	170	Rourkela	164	165	163	Bhilwara	173	173	174
Ranchi-Hatia	177	177	176	Amritsar	176	176	175	Chindwara	187	188	186
Ahmedabad	175	174	172	Ludhiana	173	173	173	Tripura	190	191	189
Baroda	178	176	173	Ajmer	175	178	174	Goa	187	187	186
Bhavnagar	181	180	178	Jaipur	174	174	173				
Rajkot	179	176	176	Coimbatore	168	167	168	Other Series of Labour Bureau			
Surat	186	188	185	Coonoor	185	185	188	Digboi	1960	865	869
Faridabad	170	167	167	Madras	175	175	175	Ammathi	1960	851	851
Yamunanagar	167	166	165	Maduri	176	176	175	Chikmagalure	1960	867	867
Srinagar	175	175	175	Salem	170	172	169	K.G.F.	1960	877	876
Bangalore	169	168	169	Tiruchirapall	184	189	186	Gwalior	1960	928	924
Belgaum	177	176	176	Agra	172	168	167	Sambalpur	1960	929	904
Hubli-Dharwar	182	181	180	Ghaziabad	178	177	176	Berhampur	1949	1124	1122
				Kanpur	183	182	179	Cuttack	1949	1060	1048
				Saharanpur	177	174	173				

Kisan Sabha To Initiate Joint Action

A delegation consisting of All India Kisan Sabha President Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary Ram Narayan Goswami M. P., and Joint Secretary P. K. Tandon met the Dy. Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture on January 28 and presented him with an 18 point memorandum suggesting measures to give relief to different sections of the peasantry. These suggestions related to the question of land reforms, a Central Legislation for Agricultural Workers, end to social atrocities on S.C. & S.T., measures to provide jobs for rural unemployed, relief from indebtedness, measures to check price rise of essential commodities and agricultural inputs, remunerative prices for agricultural produce, extension of irrigation and adequate supply of electric power for agriculture, relief from heavy burden of taxes, restoration of democratic rights of people, stern measure against those inciting communal, caste or ethnic riots and a new Panchayati Raj enactment to give real power to the people at the grass root

level. The memorandum also dealt with problems of growers of cash crops like sugar cane, cotton, jute, tobacco, rubber, coconut and coffee.

The Minister of Agriculture gave a patient hearing to the deputationists and promised to give a serious consideration to all the suggestions.

The All India Kisan Sabha has directed its units to take immediate steps to mobilise the peasantry in support of these demands as well as other suggestions relating to urgent state or local level problems faced by peasantry in their respective states. A meeting of the Coordination Committee of the Seven Left-led Peasant and Agricultural Labourer Organisations is going to take place shortly to develop joint actions. The State Units of A. I. K. S. have been directed to take initiative to convene similar meetings and conventions of Kisan workers at state and lower levels.

Right to Work Convention at Durgapur

The Preparatory Committee consisting of national federations, confederations and some office bearers of CITU, with Com. Dilip Majumdar as the Convenor is making full preparations to hold the Right to Work Convention at Durgapur in the first week of April under the guidance of the CITU. The convention has been tentatively fixed to be held on April 3 and 4. The exact dates will be fixed shortly and circulated to all State Committees of CITU, national federations and confederations. The Preparatory Committee held several meetings at Durgapur during the period and formed several sub-committees to deal with the Convention. A Reception Committee has been formed with Com. Haradhan Roy as its President. The Convention is expected to be inaugurated by Com. Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary of CITU. Com. Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal and Vice President of CITU will also address the convention and a public rally.

It is to be noted that the Steel Workers' Federation of India took the initiative to organise the convention in 1989 after successfully observing a day against unemployment in all the steel plants in the country in June, 1989 in pursuance of the call of the CITU to wage struggles against unemployment. The struggle was directed against the economic policy of the erstwhile Congress (I) Government and the capitalist path of development that generated unemployment, which rose by leaps and bounds with each Five Year Plans.

The Convention was originally planned to be held during the Congress (I) regime itself to focus the adverse effects of capitalist planning and the Congress (I) policies which aggravated the unemployment situation and as a part of the campaign to remove the Rajiv Government. However, due to announcement of the Parliamentary elections, the plan was changed.

In the mean time the new National Front Government has been installed and it has committed itself to give right to work as a fundamental right. A delegation of the CITU led by Com. Samar Mukherjee met the Prime Minister, V.P. Singh on January 10 and submitted a memorandum to him and discussed some aspects of the right to work and emphasised on an employment generation programme. The delegation informed him about the plan to hold this convention. The Prime Minister invited proposals and a national debate on the subject.

Thus the Convention will be held in a new situation, when the enshrinement of the Right to Work as a fundamental right in the Constitution and the proposals on concurrent reorientation of the economic policy of the new Government alongwith the industrial and agrarian policies will be the main issues slated for discussions. A document will be prepared by the Convention to be submitted to the Prime Minister.

The Convention is expected to be attended by about 1000 delegates from various federations, confederations and the Central and State leaders of the CITU. An initial quota of minimum delegates has already been circulated to the national federations, confederations and the CITU State Committees. The lodging and fooding arrangements will be made by the Reception Committee. The delegate fee has been kept as Rs. 15/- per delegate. For the documents and other preparatory expenses, the national and state federations will have to make a contribution to the Preparatory Committee an amount ranging between Rs. 250/- and Rs. 1000/- according to their strength.

P.K. Ganguly Wins Case

The Supreme Court of India gave its final verdict on 30th January on the case of P.K. Ganguly, Secretary CITU, indicating that the termination of his services by M/s Suhrid Geigy Ltd., a Swiss multinational drug company collaborating with the Sarabhai Group in India was bad in law.

Earlier, the Labour Court at Patna had ordered for reinstatement with full back wages, which was upheld by the High Court also. The Supreme Court however did not uphold the order for reinstatement as P.K. Ganguly was to acquire superannuation age in July, 1990. The Supreme Court verdict said that P.K. Ganguly is deemed to have resigned from 21.12.74 (the date on which his services were terminated), and in lieu of reinstatement the management will pay a lumpsum compensation amount of Rs. 2 lakhs in addition to the Provident Fund, Gratuity and other retirement benefits. Rs. 2 lakhs will be equivalent to the wages during the period. The entire amount will also be free of Income Tax as per the verdict of the Supreme Court. The 15 year old legal battle to establish in principle the right to trade union activities by workers thus came to a successful end.

CITU PUBLICATION

“WAGE AGREEMENTS IN PUBLIC SECTOR (1988-89)”

(With recommendations of Mishra Commission report and other materials : Foreword by B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU and introduction by M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU)

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Forward to Dismantling of Apartheid

The unconditional release of Nelson Mandela, the legendary leader of the South African people was marked as one of the biggest international events in the recent past.

It was the result of the indefatigable struggle of the South African people led by the African National Congress and the international support that forced the-apartheid regime of Pretoria to release Nelson Mandela and also lift the ban on the ANC, the South African Communist Party, the United Democratic Front, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and other anti-apartheid organisations.

Nelson Mandela's 27 years of prison life along-with other political prisoners and the period preceding his imprisonment saw the life and death struggle of the South African people against apartheid. The savage repression unleashed by the barbarous white minority regime on the freedom loving people of South Africa and the third degree tortures perpetuated by it on the black majority following up the foot prints of Nazi fascism, beggar all descriptions.

The struggle of ANC was non-violent initially. But the escalating inhuman violence perpetrated by the racist regime resulting in mass massacres of the people leading to the Sharpeville massacre on 21st, March, 1960 forced the ANC to take to arms and fight to finish. Mandela declared, "If the government reaction is to crush by naked force our non-violent struggle, we will have to reconsider our tactics. In my mind we are closing a chapter on this question of a non-violent policy."

The world knows the history of the struggle thereafter. The resistance grew by leaps and bounds. The savage nature of the apartheid regime and the shameless support given to it by the imperialist countries like Britain and America were exposed day by day, but the slogans for release of Nelson Mandela and dismantling of apartheid reverberated throughout the world. Getting isolated from the world community, serious contradictions developed within the apartheid ruling clique and amongst their imperialist cohorts. P.W. Botha had to go and USA and Britain were isolated due to their repeated Vetoes against the demand for mandatory sanctions against the regime.

F.W. De Klerk, the successor of Botha started making superficial changes to "reform" apartheid and was left with no other alternative but to withdraw the ban on the anti-apartheid organisations and release Mandela unconditionally. But the objective of his cosmetic changes has been to reshape apartheid with fraudulent reforms. The emergency has not been lifted. Thousands of prisoners are still in jails. The apartheid structure remains. They failed to convince the world community. Britain was totally isolated in the European Community for withdrawing even the most nominal sanctions unilaterally.



The demand remains and the struggle would continue for the total dismantling of apartheid. The release of Nelson Mandela and the lifting of ban on the ANC and other organisations have opened a new chapter in South Africa for the furtherance of the struggles for the dismantling of apartheid in its entirety and establishment of a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa as per the "Freedom Charter". As Nelson Mandela announced after his release.

"Our resort to the armed struggle in 1960, with the formation of the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonoto We Sizwe, was a purely defensive action against the violence of apartheid. The factors which necessitated the armed struggle still exist today. We have no option but to continue. We express the hope that a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement will be created soon so that there may no longer be the need for the armed struggle".

Indian Trade Union Committee against Apartheid Greet African National Congress

The Indian Trade Union Committee against Apartheid consisting of all the Central Trade Unions held a meeting at Kerala House, New Delhi on February 24 to greet the African National Congress on the release of Nelson Mandela. Com. Mphele, the Chief Representative of the African National Congress in India was the Chief Guest. S. N. Rao of INTUC presided over the meeting. Among those who greeted the ANC were Y. D. Sharma (AITUC), P. Ghate (BMS), P. K. Ganguly (CITU), B. M.

Toofan (HMS), O. P. Verma (NFITU), A. Basu (TUCC), S. Bhattacharya (UTUC) and A. Banerjee (UTUC-LS). Com. Mphela in his speech briefed the valiant struggle of the South African people against apartheid and the indefatigable leadership of Nelson Mandela despite spending 27 years in jail. He said that their struggle against apartheid was a part of their struggle against imperialism and it would continue till apartheid was dismantled totally. The meeting adopted a declaration extending full support of the Indian trade union movement in the struggle against apartheid. Earlier, the CITU and the NCC had issued statements hailing the release of Nelson Mandela.

DECLARATION

This meeting convened by the Indian Trade Union Committee Against Apartheid at Delhi on February 24, 1990 hails the release of Nelson Mandela, the legendary leader of the South African people after 27 years of imprisonment by the apartheid regime. The release of Nelson Mandela and the lifting of ban on the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, the United Democratic Front and the Congress of South African Trade Unions were the results of undeterred struggle of the South African people against apartheid regime and its imperialist cohorts.

The meeting warmly greets and congratulates the African National Congress and the people of South Africa for their valiant struggle which attracted international support and forced the racist regime to release Nelson Mandela and lift the ban on the anti-apartheid organisations.

With the zeal of struggle for the South African people, Nelson Mandela joined the African National Congress at the age of 25 and alongwith Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, Antor Lembede and others was the driving force in transforming the ANC into a mass people's movement taking militant actions against apartheid. Despite being subjected to repeated banning orders, Nelson Mandela played the leading role in convening the Congress of Peoples in June, 1955, where the famous Freedom Charter was adopted. Nelson Mandela was arrested alongwith others and charged with high treason. After a marathon treason trial he was acquitted alongwith others, but the acquittal was followed by barbaric repression by the racist regime leading to the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. The violent and savage repression compelled the ANC to review its non-violent means of struggle and form the armed wing—Umkhonto—We—Sizwe, to wage the life or death struggle to dismantle apartheid. Nelson Mandela became the Commander-in-Chief of the Umkhonto-We-Sizwe. He had to go underground, but ultimately was arrested in 1962 and was sentenced to life imprisonment on June 12, 1964.

Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison and was subjected to hard labour. But his stature as the symbol of resistance continued to grow all these years, drawing international support to the grim struggle of the South African people and the demand

for comprehensive sanctions against the racist regime and dismantling of apartheid. The racist regime got sustenance only from a few imperialist countries like Britain and America and the multinational corporations.

While hailing the release of Nelson Mandela, the meeting emphasises that it is only a step forward and opened a new chapter towards the goal of the ANC for the total dismantling of the apartheid structure and establishment of a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa in pursuance of the Freedom Charter.

The meeting asserts that the apartheid structure remains down to its roots. The emergency has not been fully lifted. Over 3,000 patriots are still serving sentences in the jails. Barbarous repression still continues as was unleashed on the people rejoicing over Nelson Mandela's release.

The meeting condemns the Government of Margaret Thatcher for unilaterally withdrawing even the most nominal sanctions that were there, totally isolating itself from the European Community.

The meeting is confident that with its rich experience of struggles the ANC and the South African people under the renewed leadership of Nelson Mandela will carry forward the struggle to its successful end by dismantling apartheid in its totality and establish a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa. The Indian Trade Union Committee Against Apartheid resolves to keep up the glorious tradition of India in the struggle against apartheid and extend full support to the African National Congress in its continuing struggle.

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I, M.K. Pandhe, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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M.K. Pandhe, Publisher

Dated February 28, 1990

tion to continue helping to finance the expenditures of the territorial troops militia. All the workers have received military training." The CTC and the trade unions should strengthen their support for the measures adopted by the civil defence". On the first and the last day of the Congress all the delegates participated by wearing uniforms of the Territorial Troops Militia. Women formed an important segment of the Cuban army and militia. We were informed that women are manning two squadrons of the Cuban Airforce.

The Report deals at length with the improvement in the standard of living of the working people. Improvement in Canteen and living quarters, occupational safety and hygiene, payment of the wage, adequate attention to the cultural, sports and recreational activities, attention to young people who join the ranks of working class, ensuring that working women would occupy their rightful place are some of the aspects emphasised in the Report.

The Central Report further discusses the work related issues faced in the new situation. It considered improvement in wage policy and seniority system, working out proper job description and work standardisation, evaluation of technicians and new approach towards collective labour agreements, the organisation of work in brigades and development of permanent and comprehensive brigades.

Women constitute 38.1 percent of the Cuban workers, 56 percent of the technicians are women. Yet the Report notes:

"Discrimination still subsists in some places where women are not given employment where they are precluded from retraining courses and from occupying non-traditional jobs. We are also concerned about some reactions from agencies which, when examining their requirements of skilled workers, refuse to train women for given professions, alleging that it will be difficult to find jobs for them in the future". It calls for an end to all discrimination against the women workers.

The Report gives special emphasis on evolving a proper cadre policy so that their talents can be effectively used to socialist system, noting down certain defects in the earlier policies which gave emphasis on only reporting done by the workers at grassroot levels. "The cadres' inadequate training is another short-coming". It has called for improvement in the methods and contents of training programmes so that cadres can be effectively trained to meet the challenging tasks.

In conclusion the Report notes, "The process for the rectification of errors and negative trends has been a radical watershed in the confrontation against the evils that held us back; it has also served to charter and implement various approaches and programmes to step up the economic and social development of the socialist homeland."

And further it states, "The Revolution is our reason for living. There is nothing we would not do, nor sacrifice, we would not make to develop it

and defend it at whatever price may be necessary."

There was no general debate as such but debate was conducted on one subject after another during which delegates were narrating their experiences. Whenever spectacular achievements were reported all delegates and presidium members including Comrade Fidel Castro would applaud or even give a standing ovation. If some short-comings were noticed criticism was made and comrades were asked to improve the situation. From Com. Fidel Castro's intervention it appeared that he knew almost details about each and every plant or undertakings.

In general the speeches of the delegates were brief and pointed. From time to time even the President of the meeting was asking questions to the speaker seeking clarification of the points. About 100 delegates from all the regions and industrial units participated in the discussion. For detail discussion on specific issues the Congress held special meetings of 5 commissions which drafted unanimous conclusions. There was voting for all the elective bodies. The results of the election was announced in the plenary session. It elected a 175 member committee with Pedro Ross as the General Secretary.

The representatives from countries who did not speak in the Congress were asked to speak in Solidarity meetings organised in different industrial establishments.

On behalf of CITU Com. M. K. Pandhe spoke in a meeting at Guido Perez.

The most important event in the Congress was the concluding speech by Com. Fidel Castro who spoke for about 2 hours. Delegates frequently responded by prolonged applause and standing ovations.

Com. Castro began with a statement that it was the most decisive period in the history of Cuban revolution. The Congress was being held in exceptional circumstances. It reflected growing consciousness of the working class of Cuba. The speeches of the delegates showed that they had come through a successful rectification campaign.

He noted that there was a universal confusion particularly in the progressive and democratic world. Socialist ideas and revolutionary ideas are under great attack. When the international working class movement is under confusion, the capitalist world is not confused. Imperialists are not confused.

What is at stake in the history of mankind is that our achievements in the world over are being threatened. It would considerably affect the situation in Cuba. The CTC conference was most democratically organised and workers expressed their views frankly without any fear. Presence of foreign delegates has not restrained our delegates from frankly critically examining our past.

The Congress had guests from socialist countries, from capitalist countries as well as from under developed capitalist countries which were plundered for centuries by the colonial powers. The presence of

such a large number of delegates indicates the support enjoyed in our struggle against arrogance of US imperialism.

In the Congress the leadership of the Party and the Government sat with the representatives of workers to discuss the national issues. What is most sad is that it does not happen like this always in socialist countries.

The deliberations of the Congress showed that the experience of the working class of Cuba has confirmed the correctness of the line of the party and the Government.

It is not a Congress of capitalist proprietors. The representatives participating here will ensure self-imposed discipline in production and services sectors of economy. We must note the proletarian character of the Congress. No one has spoken about the virtues of capitalism. Not one of the delegates in the Congress uttered a word about reverting back to capitalist society.

All delegates are convinced that only socialism can save us. We do not have any owners of factories here in Cuba. We do not have any capitalist though in our country. Ownership of the means of production will remain in the hands of the working class at any cost.

If we take the capitalist road, contradictions in society would emerge in Cuba. On the pleas of differences in interpretation of socialism another form of capitalism is sought to be brought in the world. We totally disapprove this path. Therefore our congress is a congress of revolutionary spirit of internationalism and patriotism.

Today in the world there is urgent need for unity of revolutionary forces when western capitalism philosophy is influencing those who talk of socialism and communism. Working class parties are now getting fractured but imperialism has only one party. Donkey and elephant (symbols of Republican and Democratic Party in USA) all represent monopolists. Those who want to form multiparty system want to form a party which advocates capitalist and imperialist ideology.

Warsaw pact represented unity of the people against imperialism. It was opposing the aggressive designs of imperialism. Multiparty system in these countries will divide the unity of the people and weaken the struggle against imperialism.

In some countries it has almost become a crime to talk of socialism and communism. However, we are confident of the triumph of socialism and communism.

All delegates in the Congress are communists though they are not members of the Communist party. Some of the delegates may be members of young communist league. What can a Communist Party do without faith among workers about Communism. What can a Communist party do without faith among the people about communism?

Though we are passing through a period of uncertainty we are rectifying the situation in a planned manner and not in a chaotic manner. We are keeping the fundamentals of socialism intact while amending our mistakes. We are interpreting revolutionary ideas in our own way.

Cuba has close economic ties with socialist countries. Soviet Union and other socialist countries are markets for our products. We import equipment from these countries. However the socialist block does not exist politically in view of new political stances by some countries. We will strive for the continuation of the CMEA.

The Socialist terminology is being changed today to suit building of capitalism. Pro-capitalist trends are growing in some socialist countries. Private property, market economy etc are indicators of process of capitalist restoration.

US advisers are going to socialist countries to develop capitalism. Excluding USSR strong growing anti-communist constitutional provisions are being brought to remove the vanguard role of the party.

Constitutional provision is of course not a must for the vanguard role of the party. In Cuba the Communist Party is a part of the revolution and it cannot be obliterated. Our constitution is the direct result of our history. In our country the constitution did not create our party. Our party has created our constitution.

It is socialist revolution in Cuba which created our constitution and we are not going to give up socialism—Cuban people have seen through their bitter experience how imperialists exterminated population to continue their rule of exploitation. Our people are aware that imperialism is not a part of the civilized world.

In some socialist countries Communist parties are being dissolved while some others have promised to dissolve the party. How can we talk of socialism when we allow blatant anti-communism in the country. We totally disapprove the talking of socialism and working for capitalism. We strongly uphold the banner of communism and proletarian internationalism. Though the system of private property and profit is growing we would continue to be a member of CMEA since our economic relations with them are important to us.

Trading in international market price may create some problems for us. However, world market prices of sugar are dumping prices.

The year 1990 will be full of uncertainty. We have no idea of the prospects for the next 5 years. We have been assured by the Soviet Union to continue the economic relations on the principles of economic exchange. However Soviet Union is facing difficulties which may have some impact on Cuba. Stability of the Soviet Union is extremely important for us and we express profound concern for the conflict within Soviet Union. There are currents in Soviet

Union that oppose good economic relations with Cuba. If Soviet Union would not be in a position to fulfil its commitment it may add to our domestic difficulties. It may have negative impact on supplies from Soviet Union and CMEA countries.

Recently US aggressive nature in Latin America has become more severe. US intervention in Panama is a blatant violation of International Law. US imperialists hope that we would not be able to overcome our difficulties. Many of our friends are sincerely concerned about our future. Some even feel that Cuba may crumble. In 7th December speech we have made our position clear.

US imperialism is trying to impose its hegemony in Latin America and other parts of the world. Philipines, El Salvadore, Panama, air craft carrier blockade of Columbia are some of the examples—Cuba is the first trench of independence of Latin American countries who now feel that liquidation of Cuban revolution will make US imperialism more arrogant. Jose Marti has warned us 100 years ago against the aggressive nature of US imperialism.

Several countries did not react strongly against US aggression in Panama because of their dependence on US loans. Blockade by US imperialists has become a regular feature to harass Cuba. However, the entire Cuban population is organised for defence of the country come what may. We have worked seriously for it. If the situation in Soviet Union becomes further critical the supply of materials to us may be halved or even become nil. However, we cannot stop our food programme. We have to be prepared to face extreme consequences. I am sure the people of Cuba will be prepared to make any sacrifices to defend their independence and socialism. Imperialism must know that Cuban revolution cannot be defeated. Cuban revolution will not collapse. Socialism will not collapse.

Now we have to face huge responsibility. Provocation by US imperialism will regularly increase in our region. Despite extremely difficult conditions we have preserved our independence. We have learnt lessons from our past.

We successfully resisted US blockade—we have triumphed in Angola. The present situation of confusion will ultimately be clear. The third world countries will still rise in revolutionary struggle against imperialist machinations.

Though statues of Marx and Lenin are being removed in some countries we will continue to erect them. We are confident that the banner of Marxism-Leninism will ultimately triumph.

Today is the birth day of Jose Marti which gives

us great inspiration. Despite difficulties revolutionary ideas will continue to spread. Marxist ideas are still valid today. They teach us even today in our struggle. Those who say that Marxism is outdated are talking nonsense. We emphatically declare that we will not bring capitalism. We will not allow bourgeois reforms, we will not deviate from Marxism and we will not compromise with imperialism.

How can we defend socialism by losing the heart or mind? We are for revolutionary changes and not for counter revolutionary changes. If there are fifth columnists in Cuba beware of them. They will have to face the masses. Imperialism can never succeed in its dream of wiping out socialism from the soil of Cuba.

We cannot be killed like cockroaches. We can also crush imperialist forces. We will continue to fight till the last drop of blood. We have to continue our struggle relentlessly against plunderers of the world. The tasks given by the Congress will strengthen defence of the country and work for the bright future of our fatherland. We have to work very hard to strengthen our achievements. This is the spirit that should guide us and inspire us on this anniversary day of our national hero Jose Marti.

Socialism or death !

We shall win.

There was extreme jubilation among the delegates when he concluded his speech.

(From page 2)

both sides by large number of volunteers who formed chains throughout the 10 k.m. route from Alimuddin Street to Keoratala crematorium. Thousands of people thronged on both sides of the entire route to have a last glimpse of Com. Saroj Mukherjee, whose body was placed in a well decorated open van. The leaders of the Party viz. Com. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Com. Jyoti Basu, Com. H.K.S. Surjeet, Com. Samar Mukherjee, Com. E.K. Nayanar, etc. and leaders of the Left Front were in other open and well decorated vans. After three hours the procession reached the Keoratala crematorium, where still thousands of people and leaders came to place wreathes.

The Union Labour Minister Ram Bilas Paswan came from Delhi to the crematorium on behalf of the Prime Minister to place wreathes on Com. Saroj Mukherjee. The cremation took place at about 2.30 P.M. amidst deafening slogans, "Com. Saroj Mukherjee Lal Salam", "Com. Saroj Mukherjee Amar Rahe."