



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

MAGNIFICENT ALL INDIA STRIKE BY COAL WORKERS

Six Workers Killed During All India Coal Worker Strike

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU and President, all India Coal Workers Federation issued the following statement to the press:

The CITU and All India coal Workers Federation congratulated the Coal Workers all over India for their massive response to one day strike on 21st August in protest against inadequate wage rise to the Coal Workers in comparison with other public sector workers and non-implementation of pension scheme as per agreement with the central trade unions in Joint Bipartite Committee for Coal Industry.

According to message received from Raniganj out of 123 mines in Eastern Coalfields Ltd., in 111 mines the strike was complete while it was partial in 12 mines. The management of ECL deployed CISF in Patmohana Colliery B.C. Incline under Sitarampur area, and other mines to break the strike. The workers and staff of 11 area offices and 6 workshops also participated in the strike.

In Bharat Coking coal Corporation area 75 per cent of the workers went on strike in Dugdha Coal washery. The workers resorted to Dharna after the strike. When they were squatting one truck of the management overrun them killing 6 workers.

In Central coalfields Ltd majority of the Coal miners joined the strike. The strike in Kuju,

North Karunpura, Piparwar, Hazaribagh areas was complete while in Barkakhana it was 80 per cent. The strike in CCL and CMPDIL Headquarters was also complete.

A report from Western Coalfields states that the over all strike in the company was about 40 per cent. Majority of the workers in Chandrapur and Ballarpur and Ballarpur area joined the strike.

In South Eastern Coalfields majority of the workers have joined the strike.

In signareni collieries except in one area the strike in all the areas was successful.

According to Reports strike in Northern Coalfields Ltd. was partial.

Most of the workers in Coal India Headquarters in Calcutta

observed the strike.

The CITU and AICWF is happy to note that several workers cutting across barriers of affiliation have joined the strike in good strength. On the basis of rough calculation about 4.5 lakhs out of 7.5 lakh coal workers participated in the strike.

The CITU appeals to all the Central Trade Unions in coal industry to jointly prepare programme of movement so that conditions of workers can be improved through united struggles.

CITU CONDEMNS BLATANT MURDER OF SIX STRIKING COALMINERS

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement to the press:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns the murder of six coal workers in Dugdha Coal Washery under Bharat Cooking Coal Corporation (BCCL) on 21st August when they were observing dharna at the coal washery.

A BCCL dumper over-ran the workers killing on the spot the following six workers: Kishore Majhi, Ramdev Mahato, Pramod Mahato, Bhupen Majhi, Kokil Mahato, and Ramavatar Prajapati. Ten more workers have been seriously injured and have been hospitalised. The BCCL management is trying to create an impression that it was an accident but is unable to explain how the accident took place exactly where Dharna was going on.

The CITU demands judicial probe into this murderous attack on the striking workers by the BCCL management so that the culprits are brought to book. The CITU further demands stringent action against the guilty persons involved in this gruesome murder.

The CITU pays its homage to the memory of the workers killed in this murderous attack.

The CITU calls upon all the unions to condemn this murder all over India so that anti-working class

policies of BCCL management are brought to light forcefully.

The CITU appeals to all the central trade unions to condemn this murder and demand strong action against the culprits.

The CITU Secretariat congratulates the coal miners for their successful strike all over India on 21st August in protest against less benefit being given to the 7.5 lakh coal miners compared to other public sector undertakings and against non-implementation of the Pension Scheme with management's contribution as agreed by the JBCCI.

Massive Protest Action against the Killing:

Workers in the colliery belt in Dhanbad went on a massive protest action on August 23 against the brutal killing of six coal workers of the CITU on August 21. Cutting across all affiliations workers demonstrated and gheraoed the main administrative office of the Dugdha colliery and forced the management to agree to give full compensation to the next of the kin of the dead and also to give employment to at least one member of the families of the deceased.

The All India Coal Workers' Federation has called for observance of a countrywide protest action on August 28 against the killing.

Meeting of State Govt. Employees Federation

The National Executive of the All India State Government Employees' Federation which met at Madras on 31st July and 1st August '95 called upon the State employees to widen and intensify the struggle against the Government's new Economic and Industrial Policies which are adversely affecting all sections of the working people including the State Government employees.

The National Executive urged upon the 80 Lakhs State employees and Teachers of the country to befittingly observe "Anti-Multinational Day" on 13th September '95 by holding rallies at all levels as per decision of the SAARC Trade Union seminar held at Dhaka (Bangladesh) from 9-11 June '95. The SAARC Trade Union Seminar at Dhaka was organized by the World Federation of Trade Unions in collaboration with International Labour Organisation. All India

State Govt. Employees Federation was a participant in that seminar which discussed about the negative effects of the structural changes of Economy followed at the dictates of I.M.F. and World Bank.

The national Executive also called upon the employees to organise rallies and demonstrations all district levels on 15th September '95 against the new economic and Industrial policies of the Government. This was decided by the National convention held at Delhi on 15th July '95 at the auspices of National platform of Mass Organisations. That convention also decided to organise a March to Parliament at Delhi sometime in November '95. The National Executive of the A.I.S.G.E.F. also decided that the state employees should massively participate in that programme at Delhi.

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Report of full Secretariat meeting held on August 12, 13, 1995

The full Secretariat meeting was held at the Central Office of CITU on August 12 and 13, 1995. Following is the brief report of the meeting.

The following comrades attended the meeting:

E Balañandan, Samar Mukherjee, M K Pandhe, K N Ravindranath, Kanai Banerjee, Vimal Ranadive, Md Amin, R Umanath, T K Rangarajan, Jibon Roy, Ranjit Basu, S Dev Roye, S B Bharadwaj, Chandi Prasad, N Prasadarao, Saroj Chowdhury, P Satyanarayana, P K Ganguly, Tapan Sen, Chittabrata Majumdar, Balwant Singh and S Suryanarayan Rao.

The meeting was presided over by Com.E Balañandan, President CITU.

Following agenda was placed before the meeting for discussion.

1. Review of the implementation of the decisions of the CITU General Council meeting held at Howrah on 31st May-2nd June, 1995.

2. Finalisation of the documents on privatisation and sickness in industrial units in the light of discussions in the General Council meeting.

3. Preparation for the next meeting of the working committee proposed to be held at Bhilai (Madhya Pradesh) on 2-4 November, 1995.

4. Review of the campaign for 30 lakh membership of the CITU as decided by the Eighth

5. Report on steps taken to strengthen the activities of CITU in Hindi speaking region.

6. Consideration of the follow-up action on confederation of trade unions.

7. Provisional statement of Accounts till July, 1995.

8. Campaign of the National Platform of Mass Organisations Against Economic Policies of the Govt of India.

9. Report on functioning of Industrial Federations.

10. Any other subject with the permission of the chair.

Following are the additional issues suggested to be taken up as agenda for discussion:

1. A note on plantation

2. A Note on Working Women

3. Invitation by CGT, France

4. Report on verification of membership

5. Indian Oceanic Centre

6. Coal strike

7. BTR Memorial Fund

1. Review of Implementation of the decisions of the Howrah General Council meeting.

2. Finalisation of the documents on privatisation and sickness in the light of suggestions made at the Howrah General Council.

3. Next Working Committee meeting.

4. Provisional Statement of account

5. Confederation — follow up actions.

6. Verification of Membership of Central TUs

7. Shifting of HQ of All India Plantation Workers' Federation

8. DA, Bonus

Although some other agendas were circulated in the notice, they could not be discussed due to lack of time.

The following comrades requested for leave of absence from the meeting:

Shyamal Chakrabarty, A K Padmanabhan, Santi Ghatak, Amal Ghosh Dastidar, Niren Ghosh, M M Lawrence, K L Bajaj and Kali Ghosh.

The meeting granted the leave of absence.

1. Review of Howrah GC decisions

Com.Pandhe reported about implementation of the decisions.

Statewise receipt of the Cuban Solidarity Fund was reported. About Rs 5.25 lakhs have been received in total out of the target of Rs 8.5 lakhs. The quota is likely to be achieved as assured by the States.

The revised reports on privatisation and sickness were prepared and circulated to the office bearers for discussion in this meeting.

The syllabus for TU schools would be prepared by the end of September and finalised in the forthcoming Working Committee meeting.

The observance of Hiroshima/Nagasaki days at Calcutta (6th August), Madras (7th August), Bombay (8th August) and Delhi (9th August) were reported.

The Zenroren delegates attended these meetings. N Prasadarao reported about its observance in Andhra Pradesh, K N Ravindranath reported about Kerala, T K Rangarajan at Tamilnadu, Balwant Singh at Punjab, Chandi Prasad at Bihar, S B Bharadwaj at Delhi, Chittabrata at Bengal, Suryanarayan Rao at Karnataka. P K Ganguly reported about its observance at Bhubaneswar on August 9.

Regarding the history of CITU for observation of the 25th Anniversary of the CITU, Com.Pandhe reported that it was almost ready. Regarding review of functioning of industrywise federations he reported that he has received reports only from a few federations.

Regarding the proposed Convention on Sickness of Industries, he reported that INTUC's suggestion was to hold a seminar first and then a convention. The seminar however cannot be held by first week of September as was proposed earlier.

He reported about the Contract Workers' Convention held at Durgapur on June 10, 11. Our participation was poor. The convention decided to observe 21st August as all India Demands Day.

The meeting of the Hindi speaking areas was held on August 1 Com.Pandhe also reported about the dharna against privatisation of the Bailadila mines. Our participation was very poor.

Andhra Pradesh and Assam had sent written reports, which were circulated. The AP report was published in the Working Class also. Other office bearers also gave brief reports about the various struggle programmes launched in their respective states including implementation of the national programmes made by the CITU and the National Platform. Regarding the proposed 15th September district level rallies against the NEP as decided by the 15th July convention of the National Platform, some states reported that this will be observed on some other days as there were other pre-decided programmes on 15th September in their states. They further reported about the observance of the CITU's 25th Anniversary programme in the States. Com.Balanandan further briefed about the 25th anniversary programme at Coimbatore, which was observed in a massive way continuously for the whole night, attended by about 10-15 thousand workers. Com.Rangarajan suggested to extend the observation period upto December. Com.Chittabrata Majumdar also reported about the SAARC programme. 13th September is to be observed as a day for TU rights, etc, which has been circulated.

Com.Kanai Banerjee supplemented it.

2. On Sickness and Privatisation

Initiating the discussions, Com.Chittabrata said that he had earlier also pointed out that on the issue of privatisation we should oppose it in core sector in particular. However, the revised note does not differ with the original document discussed in the GC in this respect. The opinion of the W Bengal Secretariat was that during elections this document may create problems. So it was the opinion of the W Bengal Secretariat that this document should not be published before the elections.

A debate started on the issue in which all the office bearers participated. In the light of the suggestions made in the General Council, Com.Pandhe suggested some amendments in the document. The opinion of the office bearers was that the document should not be withheld. It would rather be a handle for the working class during elections, as privatisation was one of our most important issues against which we have been developing struggles successfully since the last four years and the adverse effects of privatisation were being gradually experienced by the people. We should launch our campaign vigorously against privatisation of both the core sector and non-core sector, and give concrete examples in the document.

Com. Chittabrata wanted deletion of paras 7 and 8 of the note circulated in the meeting on points raised in General Council meeting.

Com.Balanandan concluding the debate said that as directed by the General Council, the document should be adopted after making the necessary amendments including paras 7 and 8 of the revised notes. If necessary some central office bearers may go to Calcutta to discuss with the W Bengal Secretariat. But the document should be published without any delay, so that it can be in the hands of the workers at an early date to be utilised before the elections as a campaign material.

3. On Confederation

Com.Pandhe circulated a note on his discussions with AITUC on the issue of Confederation. The note contained some points raised by the AITUC. One of these points was that AITUC was opposed to the name Confederation. According to AITUC, HMS had also objections, because they are afraid that by

formation of a Confederation, CITU will dominate. AITUC's another proposal was to limit the Confederatin (any other name) to only CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC and TUCC.

There was a debate on the issue, in which all the office bearers participated and concluded by the Com.Balanandan. It was decided that we should pursue the concept of Confederatin without any change in the name. The Confederatin also must include all Central TUs including INTUC and BMS and the national federations, instead of limiting it to some left TUs only. The meeting further decided that we should further approach AITUC and HMS with our concept of Confederatin and if they agree to our concept, then jointly with them we can discuss with INTUC and BMS. Further, we have to carry forward our concept of Confederation down to our rank and file members. For this a note has to be prepared with some common issues and the policies of the Central Government that affect all sections of the working class and all the trade unions, as the goal of the Confederatin and place the note in the forthcoming Working Committee meeting.

4. Working Committee meeting

It was decided that the next Working Committee meeting will be held at Bhilai, MP, on 2-4 November.

5. A statement of accounts from January and June, 1955 was circulated by Com.Saroj Chaudhury, Treasurer, for information.

6. Verification

Com.Pandhe reported that the provisional results were being opposed by INTUC, AITUC and HMS, who wanted that it should be scrapped and a new verification should start on the basis of membership of 1994. This would take another long years. Till a verification process is final, the government was nominating representatives on the basis of 1980 verification, which we had boycotted. Our standing demand was secret ballot by all workers, but BMS's stand was secret ballot by unionised members only. In this situation what should be our stand, whether as a stop gap arrangement we can ask for equal representation to all the trade unions or not? All office bearers participated in the discussion. Some office bearers suggested to accept secret ballot by unionised members as a stepping stone to voting by all workers. However, after the debate it was decided that we must stress for secret ballot by all workers and

not by the unionised members only. We should also demand inclusion of 1.8 lakh membership of CITU in the provisional results, which have been deducted by the CLC unjustifiably.

7. Plantation Federation

Com.Vimal Ranadive reported that the federation is not functioning after the central office was shifted to Siliguri. She proposed that the office should be shifted back to Delhi and she should be given a helping hand. She mentioned that Com.Lalaji Babu was willing to come down to Delhi from Kerala for this purpose. After discussion it was decided that the office should continue at Siliguri till the next Conference of the federation. In the meantime Kerala State Committee will have talks with Com.Lalaji Babu also.

8. BTR Memorial Trust

Com.Pandhe reported that due to the efforts made by Com.Jibon Roy, MP, the government has now allotted the land to CITU for BTR Trust. Another Rs 2 crore will be required for construction of the building. Call for funds should be expedited in the forthcoming days. The meeting also decided that in place of the late Com.Manoranjan Roy, Com.Chiitabrata Majumdar should be taken in the Trust. Com.Pandhe also reported that the CITU has advanced money for purchase of four two-room flats at Ghaziabad-Delhi border for accommodation of whole timers. Each flat would cost around Rs 2.75 lakhs. This was approved by the Secretariat.

9. The meeting nominated Com.T K Rangarajan to attend the Conference of CGT France, who had invited the CITU to send one delegate at our cost.

10. Com.Chiitabrata Majumdar reported that the Australian TU Council, which is affiliated to ACFTU, and having relations with us, wanted to have a coordination committee comprising the ACTU, COSATU and CITU to develop anti-imperialist struggle in the Asia and Pacific region. It was approved

Com.Pandhe reported on the letter received from Australia regarding formation of Indian Ocean Centre at Perth. The meeting agreed to cooperate with the Centre.

11. Com.Pandhe reported about the DA and Bonus announcements made by the Government, on which the CITU has got certain objections, although other TUs had hailed them. It was decided that the CITU should adopt a resolution on these issues explaining its stand on both and circulate it.

CITU-ILO Workshop on Child Labour

ORISSA:

The CITU-ILO Orissa State level workshop on Child Labour was held at Bhubaneswar on Aug 10 and 11. The workshop was attended by 50 comrades. 25 observers also joined the workshop. The participants represented the industries of Beedi, Hotel and Restaurants, Quarries, Construction, handloom, etc.

The workshop was inaugurated by M P Joseph, National Coordinator of International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour, ILO. Among other distinguished persons who addressed the inaugural session were Prof Dayanidhi Mahapatra, who is a renowned economist in the state, and Dr Prafull Chandra Das, the State Labour Institute Chief Statistician.

Shivaji Patnaik, the State CITU president, presided over the workshop. P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU briefed the Child Labour Project and explained the objective of the CITU to raise the awareness of the workers against the scourge of child labour and the necessity of intensifying the struggle to eliminate the cause of child labour i.e. poverty, unemployment, abysmal low wages of the workers in the unorganised

sector, lack of land reforms etc.

Lambodar Naik, the state CITU general secretary, placed the theme paper which elaborated the prevalence of child labour in the unorganised sector in the state and its causes. There was a general discussion on the theme paper.

The next day the workshop was divided into four groups. The groups were led by Banomali Bhupal, Amiyo Das, Dhiren Ray, Kumudini Behra. The groups discussed details of the child labour in various industries in the unorganised sector in Orissa concerning the approximate numbers, the average ages of the working children, the percentage of girl child, status of the parents, status of the employers, causes of child labour, wages of the children and their parents and other service and working conditions. They also suggested the modus operandi and the struggle programme to create awareness and also campaign struggle for progressive elimination of child labour.

Action programmes demanding land reforms, need based wages, employment generations, free compulsory education of children, opening of special schools for them, etc were suggested.

CHILD LABOUR IN BRICK KILN INDUSTRY

The national CITU-ILO workshop on Child Labour in Brick Kiln Industry was held at Chandigarh, Punjab, on August 22 and 23. About 25 comrades from Punjab, UP and Haryana attended the workshop. Comrades from Bengal and Kerala could not attend due to cancellation of trains.

The workshop was preceded by a massive meeting of about 1,000 brick kiln workers which was attended by large number of women and over 100 working children including girl child. The meeting was presided over Satpal Bharati, the State CITU Vice President and addressed among others by Chandra Shekhar, the State CITU General Secretary, P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU, M P Joseph (ILO) and some economists and other mass organisation leaders.

The meeting in a resolution condemned the

practice of child labour and pledged to wage struggles against the government's policies which had pauperised the workers in the unorganised sector forcing them to send their children to work so as to make the both ends meet.

In the afternoon the workshop was inaugurated by M P Joseph. It was presided over by Satpal Bharati. P K Ganguly explained the objective of the workshop so as to create awareness amongst the workers and the people against child labour and also to strengthen the organisational struggle to improve the economic conditions of the workers in the unorganised sector which could contribute to progressive elimination of child labour.

Chandra Shekhar placed the theme paper. All comrades participated in a general discussion. The

next day the workshop was divided into three groups. The group discussions were led by Rajkumar, Balveer Singh and Vinod Kumar. The groups discussed the details of the conditions of child labour in brick kiln industry in the three states concerning their various working and service conditions, number of girl children, on occupational hazards, status of parents, education of children, economic conditions of the parents, status of employers and their attitude, the implementation of the Child Labour Act and Brick Kiln

Welfare Fund and the campaign and the struggle programme. The workshop concluded after adopting an action programme in the Brick Kiln industry to ameliorate the conditions of the Brick Kiln workers concerning their wages, applications of labour laws and social security measures including the welfare fund and a campaign programme alongwith other mass organisations to raise the consciousness of the workers and people against child labour.

MP CITU TO TAKE OUT TEXTILE WORKERS JATHA

The Madhya Pradesh State CITU organised a trade union convention of textile workers at Indoor on Aug 16. The convention was organised to mobilise the textile workers from the private sector mills, NTC mills, powerlooms, and handloom in the state for launching a statewide agitation against the policies of the Central and State govts and save the textile industry in the State and workers.

The convention was inaugurated by P K Ganguly, CITU Secretary. He briefed the condition of the textile industry as a whole and the policy of the govt which made the condition of the industry deplorable. He further dealt on the agreement on modernisation of the NTC mills and briefed the programme of the All India Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers which included conventions, gate meetings, and rallies, culminating in a massive Jail Bharo at Delhi on December 12.

The convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of Bansidhar Azad (Ujjain), Bal Krishna Vyas (Rathlam), Arun Pandey (Gwalior) and Pritham Singh Thakur (Indore). The main resolution of the convention was placed by Kailash Limbodia. He dealt in details of the condition of the textile mills and powerloom and handloom workers in the state holding the policies of the State government and the Central Government directly responsible for their sickness and closure. He said how the state was trying to privatise the Rajkumar Mill (Indore), Sajjan Mill (Rathlam), Vinod Vimal Mill (Indore) and others. Several mills like the JC Mills, (Gwalior), Hukumchand, Hope Mill, (Indore,) and Nimad Textat Mill, (Khandwa) were lying closed since the last several years. Because of the mill closures more than 50 workers had committed suicide and 150 workers died because of deplorable economic conditions. The same deplor-

able conditions were prevailing in the powerloom and handloom sectors also, where no minimum wages, labour laws or social security measures were applied.

Among those who participated in the discussions were Ramlal Thyagi, Nizakat Naaz, Arun Pandey, Narain Dutt Tiwari, Ram Dass Choksey, Sadadiv Patil, Desarath Vargushar, Madan Singh Mama, Mahesh Surya Vamshi, Shriram, etc.

The convention chalked out a programme of textile workers jatha to cover a distance of 2,500 km to start from 3rd September covering all the textile centres of the state from Gwalior, Ujjain, Rathlam, Nagda, Indore, etc culminating at Bhopal on 20th September, where a rally will be held before the Assembly.

The convention took another resolution calling for mobilisation of all textile workers from all the three sectors in the state to proceed to Delhi in thousands for the Jail Bharo on the December 12. The convention also reconstituted the State textile coordination committee.

Editorial Bord

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Save IDPL Convention

The IDPL Kamgar Union (CITU) organised a democratic convention to save the Indian Drugs and Pharmaceutical Ltd (IDPL) at its Rishikesh plant on Aug 20.

The convention was inaugurated by P K Ganguly, Secretary CITU. The convention was attended by about 200 delegates working in various sections of the IDPL plant. The convention was also attended by A Srinivas Reddy, the general secretary of IDPL Hyderabad Kamgar Union (CITU), Y V Rao, Organising secretary and K Venkaiah, vice president of the Hyderabad union. It was also attended by leaders of various mass organisations and Janata Dal and other secular opposition parties.

Inaugurating the convention P K Ganguly explained the policy of the government under pressure from IMF, World Bank and GATT now WTO, to destabilise the public sector and embark upon the path of privatisation with the philosophy of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. He explained how through liberalisation and structural adjustment programmes the IDPL, which is the biggest manufacturer of all life saving and essential bulk drugs in the country from the basic stage to the finish products, was deliberately made sick with the threat of closure. He called for broad united struggle by making a morcha of all trade unions, mass organisations and other secular and opposition forces in the area to save the IDPL which served the people of the entire Uttarkhand area and the country.

The convention was presided over by Virendra Bhandari, the district CITU President. Among those who addressed the convention were Bhagawan Das Multani and Shreelal Thaplial (Freedom fighters), Smt Kishori Uniyal (Janawadi Mahila Samiti), Smt Usha Rawat, (State President Janata Dal) V K Singh, vice president, BHEL Kamgar Union, Haridwar, Shriram Chamoli (BHEL), Srinivas Reddy (Hyderabad), Chandan Singh (IDPL Karmachari Union), Bhola Singh Khalola, (convenor, Uttarkhand Sangarsh Samithi), S L Rathuri, S S Rawat (Ex-general secretaries), Surendra Singh, vice president, IDPL Union, Om Singh, president, BDCL, etc.

M L Thaplial, general secretary IDPL, Kamgar Union, Rishikesh placed the main resolution. More than 20 delegates participated in the discussion. The

convention chalked out an action programme for agitation involving all trade unions demanding revocation of the undertaking signed by some leaders of other trade unions and discussion by the government and the management with the joint committee of all trade unions for revival of IDPL without any reduction in workforce and stalling the wage negotiation. The convention was followed by a joint gate meeting on 21st Aug. A similar convention has been planned at Hyderabad also.

MADHYA PRADESH FORMS REGIONAL COMMITTEES

To carry forward the movements and strengthen the organisational activities the MP State Committee of CITU formed four Regional Committees in the state—at Gwalior, Indore, Rewa and Chhattisgarh regions.

Alongwith workers meetings, trade union classes were organised with the formation of the Regional Committees in these places. P K Ganguly, CITU Secretary attended the two regional committee meetings at Rewa and Indore and addressed the TU class at Rewa and the unorganised sector workers meeting at Indore on Aug 20.

The Chhattisgarh Regional Committee was formed on Aug 12 and 13 with a TU class of the public sector workers. The regional committee meetings and the classes were addressed by Sailendra Shaily, Yamuna Prasad Shastri, Badal Saroj, S Kumar, Sudhir Mukherjee, Ram Bilas Goswami, P K Mukherjee, Gajendra Jha, S S Nar, Rajkumar Gupta, etc.

The State CITU also took an action programme to observe Save Bailadila Week from 9th to 15th Aug. In Gwalior 2 days hunger strike was observed in this respect alongwith mass meetings. Those who participated in the hunger strike included Ramvilas Goswamy, Arun Pandey, Narain Prasad, Kanti Prasad Rathore, and Harvilas Baba. In Bhilai, a cycle rally was taken out in this respect. Leaflets were distributed at Ujjain to the workers. A jeep jatha has also been planned to culminated at Bhopal on Sept 20.

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Regional Jathas Against Economic Policies of the Govt.

The Kerala State Committee of CITU organised four Regional Jathas covering all the districts in the state against the anti-people and anti-working class policies of the Government of India. The demands also includes to protect traditional industries, implement PF pension scheme, arrest the price rise and raise the minimum bonus by 10%, etc.

The jatha, which covered districts of Trivandrum, Kollam and Pathanamthitta was inaugurated on 8th August by K N Ravindranath, State General Secretary of CITU. The jatha was led by N Pamalochanan.

The second jatha, which was led by K O Habib, covered the northern districts of the state—Kasargode, Kannur and Vayanad. This was inaugurated on 7th August by C Kannan, State CITU president at Kasargode.

The third jatha led by V B Cherian, Secretary CITU, was inaugurated by M M Lawrence. This jatha covered the districts of Ernakulam, Idukki and Kottayam.

The fourth jatha, which covered the districts of Palghat, Thrissur and Malappuram, was inaugurated by M Chandran, CPI(M) Palghat district secretary. This procession was led by K Padmanabhan.

The jathas received massive welcome from all over the state. Large number of women and workers were participated in the programme. The jathas were concluded on 14th August.

The southern jathas led by V B Cherian and N Padmalochanan were ended at Aleppy and Northern jatha led by K Padmanabhan and K O Habib were ended at Kozhikode with a massive rally and public meeting. Speaking on the occasion leaders of the CITU lambasted the economic policies of the Government of India.

Ware Housing Workers stage dharna

The Kerala State Ware Housing Corporation Employees Union (CITU) organised a day-long dharna

infront of the head office of the corporation at Kochi, on 6th August 1995. The dharna was inaugurated by V B Cherian, Secretary CITU.

The demands of the employees include immediate implementation of the payscale which was due since March 1992 and for pension scheme. The dharna was greeted by different mass organisations.

Khadi workers stage dharna

Khadi workers staged a massive procession and dharna infront of the State Secretariat under the leadership of Khadi Workers Federation. The demands of the workers were: implement minimum wage in Khadi industry, effect the Bonus law and other labour laws to the Khadi industry and welfare scheme for the Khadi workers.

The dharna was inaugurated by Opposition leader in the State Assembly V S Achuthanandan. Speaking on the occasion he demanded that there should be a minimum wage at the all India level in the Khadi industry.

Peerless Field Employees' Convention

A convention of the Peerless Field Employees' Union of India was held at Thrissur on 18th August 1995. The convention was inaugurated by M C Josephine, State leader of the AIDWA, and presided by P V Ashokan.

Through a resolution the convention demanded immediate intervention of the Central Government in the management's action of curtailing the commission received by the field employees. The convention pointed out that the curtailment will affect about 46 lakhs field employees of the company. The resolution demanded to the Central Government and Reserve Bank of India that while bringing new laws the service of the employees must be ensured.



Report of Standing Committee on Energy

(We are publishing hereunder a part of the Report of Standing Committee on Energy(1995-96) on the subject, "New Policy Initiatives in Power Sector— Status of Implementation and their Impact on the Economy." This part deals with the Impact on public Sector. We are publishing one portion of this part in this issue. The remaining portions will be published in the subsequent issues.—Ed.)

IMPACT ON PUBLIC SECTOR

Domestic Manufacturing Capability

The Committee desired to know the impact of new power policy on domestic power plant equipment industry. The Ministry of Power stated in a written reply that domestic manufacturing capability would be affected to the extent the private entrepreneurs choose to import the generating and other equipment. The Ministry of Power stated further:

"In case of public sector projects, indigenous manufacturers have full opportunity to complete and get the orders if the prices are competitive. As regard private sector projects, most of the projects cleared by CEA envisage import of equipment mainly for the main plant. The balance mechanical equipment such as coal handling plant, ash handling system, plant water system and balance electrical equipment are generally supplied by indigenous manufacturers. It may be mentioned that the source of equipment will depend upon the financing of the project. It may, however, be mentioned they indigenous boiler manufacturers have participated in two projects in supplying major part of the boiler plant. They would need to pursue with the turnkey contractors and developers and quote competitive price, meeting the stringent requirement of turnkey contractors. If they could come up with equipment with suppliers' credit at a competitive price there will be more opportunities for them to participate in two projects in supplying major part of the boiler plant. They would need to pursue with the turnkey contractors and developers and quote competitive price, meeting the stringent requirement of turnkey contractors. If they could come up with equipment with suppliers' credit at a competitive price there will be more opportunities for them to participate in private sector projects."

Pointing out that multinational manufacturers of equipment are facing acute recession and the global market for equipment is hardly 10 to 20% of

the manufacturing capability, Shri Ashok Rao, President, the National Confederation of Officers Association of Central Public Sector Undertakings stated during evidence:

"All the foreign equipment manufacturers desperately need the Indian market, India can dictate any terms, and they will have to come because they have no future in their own countries and they are dependent on export intensity,"

The Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd., a Central Public Undertaking pleaded units memorandum submitted to the sub-committee that "in other countries, the policy ensures that substantial part of equipment is purchased by IPPs from local sources. It needs to be ensured that at least 50% of the main generating equipment are sourced by IPPs from BHEL."

Asked to specify the countries which follow this practice, BHEL stated in a written reply that in the case of World Bank/African Development Bank/Asian Development Bank aided projects countries like Egypt and Indonesia insist for procurement of substantial part of equipment within the country. Malaysia also gives preference to "Bhumiputra" Companies.

BHEL stated in a memorandum, that no regular tendering procedures are followed by Independent Power Producers (IPP) and they directly tie up the suppliers. BHEL pleaded that IPPs should follow international competitive bidding procedures as stipulated by World Bank/ADB which encompasses the methodology of calling for tenders, specifying evaluation criteria and opening of tenders in public.

Enquired as to why it should not be ensured that private investors procure plant and equipments from indigenous manufacturers, the Ministry of Power stated as follows:

"It would be difficult to compel the private sector investors about the modality to be adopted by them in sourcing their equipment. The onus for raising the entire financing for the project is on the developer. Equipment comprises the major portion of the capital cost and the commonly prevalent commercial practice is that this is funded by suppliers' credit. Therefore, it is not practicable to dictate the developer the source from which the equipment should be purchased. It is, however open to the State Electricity Boards to insist on tendering procedures for procurement of equipment etc. before finalising the power

purchase agreement. In the liberalised economy, it is upto BHEL to contact the investors with attractive offers for supply of equipment at competitive price. There is no reason why BHEL should not be able to take advantage from this emerging market if their prices are competitive and backed by standard commercial practice like suppliers credit."

Enquired whether it is not desirable to stipulate international competitive bidding for procurement of equipments by private promoters the West Bengal State Government stated in a written reply:

The Govt is of the firm view that international competitive bidding should be made mandatory for all projects in the matter of procurement of equipment etc. should be made transparent enough so that India industries of repute may bid tender evaluation is to be made by a committee, which will include a representative of Central Electricity Authority and also one from the State govt."

In this connection, Tamil Nadu Electricity Board stated as follows:

"International competitive bidding procedure is insisted for procurement of generating equipments. Copies of Equipment procurement construction contracts entered by private promoters are obtained from them for scrutiny by Tamil Nadu Electricity Board."

To a query whether project cost will come down if competitive bidding procedure is adopted for procurement of individual equipment instead of bidding for turnkey project implementation, Ministry of Power stated in post evidence reply:

If competitive bidding procedure is adopted for the procurement of individual equipment instead of bidding for turnkey project implementation, the project cost could come down provided there is timely flow of funds and the implementing agency is capable of effectively coordinating the various contract packages so as to complete the project in time. However, for the private sector projects in India, the financing institution are insisting on firm EPC contract and finalisation of the financial package before the commencement of the project so that the project is completed within the time and cost."

According to experts under foreign investor promoted power projects in India—all promoted by or with the help of international power equipment manufacturers—the cost of power equipment has been jacked up. The lack of competitive bidding has led to significant "padding" in the investment costs.

Asked how the plant cost of private projects with imported equipment compared with that of proj-

ects with indigenous equipments, the Ministry of Power, stated in a written reply as follows:

"In the case of private sector projects cleared by CEA there has been limited bidding by the developers (except in the case of Dabhol project). It may be mentioned that the main plant cost of the recently CEA cleared private sector project cost is the firm completed cost as against present day cost offered by BHEL which will be on the lower side. Further, there is higher percentage of liquidated damage stipulations for various factors such as output, efficiency, time delay and emission standard which are not there for the State sector projects. Taking the above factors into account, it may be stated that the private sector plant cost compares favourable with the cost of BHEL plant cost. CEA has been scrutinising the schemes of private sector more closely realising that cost of private sector scheme cleared by CEA would have a direct bearing on the tariff."

BHEL has a production capacity of 6000 MW per annum. It was expected that with the installed capacity additions of 30,000 MW in Plan period BHEL should be in a position to meet the full demand within the country. However, orders available for BHEL at present is significantly low in comparison to its capacity. According to BHEL considering its production capacity and delivery cycle for power generating equipment, BHEL should, at any given time, have orders available for execution for about two to three years' production, i.e. around 12000 to 15000 MW. Against this, actual orders available as on 1.4.94 was only 5034 MW, which is even less than its annual production capacity.

Regarding underutilisation of capacity the CMD, BHEL stated during oral evidence:

"The capacity of Haridwar (unit) is around 3500 MW Thermal (4 x 500 MW + 6 x 210 MW). We have at present orders for 1500 MW approx. For execution in thermal areas."

Explaining the reasons for poor order book position of BHEL, the Finance Secretary stated during evidence:-

"The main reason is that the public sector power programme is not being adequately funded because the State Electricity Boards do not have money. I do not know how the BHEL problems can be solved. The real solution to the problem is that you have five times the present capacity to be set up in public sector and we must make sure that the State Electricity Boards can pay for it. BHEL problem is purely a consequence of the financial collapse of the State Electricity Boards."

Emphasizing the need for standardisation of

equipments. Dr. Arun Ghosh stated in a Memorandum that if power equipment is not standardised-which is possible only with standard BHEL thermal plants of 200 and 500 MW capacity for each turbo-generator (and similar capacity boilers)-the result

... efficiency and higher costs of maintenance; ... problems of break-down where imported plant is used and required spares are not readily available in the country; and ... inventory costs of spares, with all new power stations having their own special equipment, for which each plant will have a different suppliers.

On the question of sales aid financing, BHEL stated in a Memorandum as follows:-

"Present policy on investment in power sector envisages a minimum of 20% by way of equity, not more than 40% to be brought in from external sources attracts sales aid financing which implies import of main equipment. While IPPs are generally convinced about BHEL's capability to supply the main equipment on a competitive basis both in regard to cost and quality of equipment and delivery terms, they are insisting that if BHEL were to arrange financing, it should be done in such a manner as not to interfere with the capacity of IPPs to raise 40% financing from Indian public financial institutions for meeting the cost of auxiliary equipment, taxes, duties etc."

The CMD, BHEL stated during evidence:-

"Primarily the difficulty is of financial capability. That overseas suppliers who are wanting to sell the equipments are able to arrange. They are also able to arrange export credit, commercial guarantee etc. because the interest rates abroad are cheaper. We are unable to raise the same from the overseas market. As I said very clearly, the capacity and the capability of the Indian FIs sector itself is limited. They have 40 percent limit which they provide for a project. We are unable to utilise this."

BHEL informed in a post evidence reply that it was discussing some proposals in regard to sales aid financing and no final outcome had been reached. BHEL stated that it was doubtful that large commercial loans, for longer periods required for power projects would be forthcoming without counter guarantee from Central Government. The Ministry of Finance has reportedly clarified that Government Guarantee would not be available for much commercial borrowings. Asked about the position in this regard, the Finance Secretary stated during evidence:-

"As regards, suppliers' credit, we would be will-

ing to allow BHEL to have access to the borrowing markets, if it wishes, We have no difficulty on that. The point is we cannot give the money. Sir, within the policy that we are handling, if BHEL can find borrowing resources, we are not holding them back. Now if they are viable and they can find borrowers, they should not do it on a Government Guarantee. They have to risk on their own."

For Jegurupadi Project, M/s GVK Industries had invited bids from prospective turnkey contractors for Combined Cycle Gas Turbines including BHEL for a total capacity of about 200 MW. Pointing out that BHEL's offer was higher in this case, the Chairman, CEA stated during evidence:-

"They had received three offers from M/s. ABB, M/s Thomassen and from BHEL. BHEL also quoted. First of all, there was a very heavy foreign exchange outflow in the BHEL offer. Surprisingly, 78 percent was the foreign exchange outgo even in the case of BHEL. BHEL's offer was higher by Rs.48.60 crores. Therefore, they did not get the order in this case."

BHEL, however, stated in this connection as follows:-

"In case of Jegurupadu project, there was no competitive bidding. Neither open tenders were called nor evaluation criteria specified. In the absence of read out prices in an open tender, it is not possible to know whether BHEL prices are lower or higher. Further offer obtained from BHEL by the IPA was on the basis of certain configuration of gas turbines and steam turbines while it is understood that the other offer referred to by Chairman, CEA, has different configuration. Comparison should be made on like-to-like basis after calling for open tenders with proper evaluation criteria. BHEL is confident that if proper competitive bids were called as per ICB practice, order would have been secured by BHEL for this project. For a project like Jegurupadu, BHEL's foreign exchange outgo would have been only 20-25%."

CEA in a written reply stated that "M/s GVK wanted to go in for more than one GT to facilitate flexibility in operation. The bidders had the option to quote their own configuration ensuring the requirements of M/s GVK. Based on these, quotations from various companies, including BHEL were received and the lowest bid was accepted".

BHEL pointed out in its Memorandum that in the international competitive bidding including those to be called by IPPs, the present duty structure puts indigenous manufactures like BHEL at a relative disadvantage. Power generating equipment attracts nil counter-vailing duty when imported complete, whereas customer has to pay excise duty and sales

[Cont'd On Page 16]

India Observes 50th Anniversary of Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

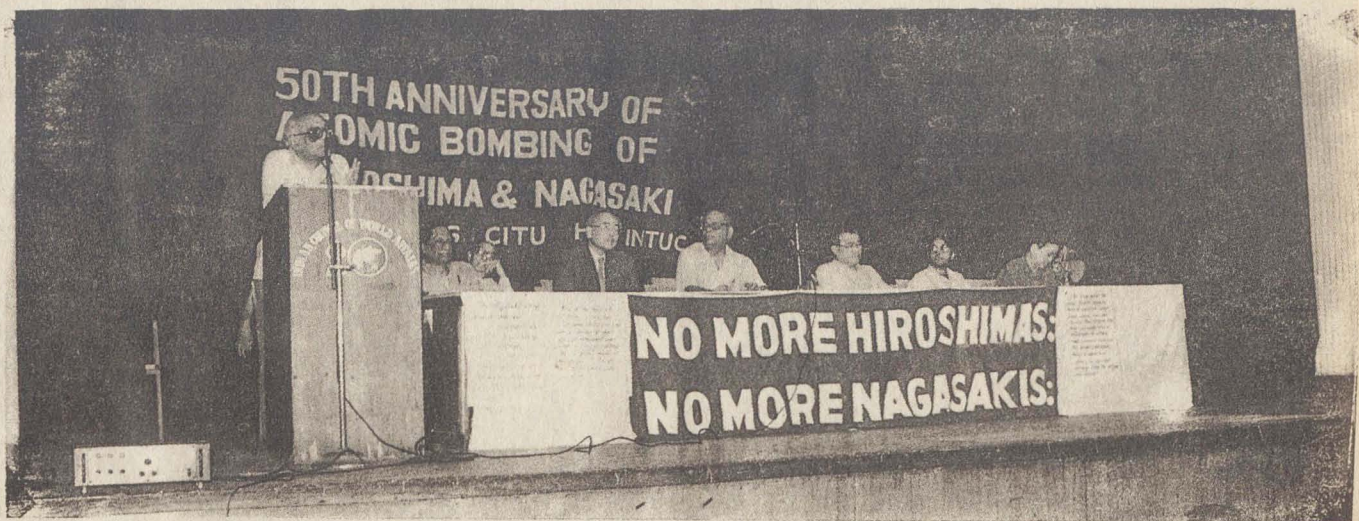
Together with the rest of the world, India observed with due solemnity the 50th anniversary of atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Throughout the country, there were meetings and rallies to condemn the wanton use of the most devastatingly demonic weapon so far known, to reiterate the need of immediate destruction of all nuclear weapons and to demand a comprehensive international treaty to ban all nuclear tests.

The highlights of the observance of the occasion were the meetings in the four metropolitan cities of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Delhi. Another important aspect was the initiative by the 5 major central trade unions—AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS and INTUC—who issued a joint appeal to all workers and citizens to observe the occasion. Of added importance was the presence of a 2-member delegation on behalf of National Confederation of Trade Unions (Zenroren), Japan, which attended all the 4 meetings.

The Netaji Indoor Stadium was packed to capacity while many thronged the open space outside on Aug 6 with workers, students and teachers, women, youth, members of numerous mass organisations and citizens. Presided over by Niren Ghosh, president of the State CITU, the gathering was addressed by several TU leaders each one of whom condemned the dropping of atom bomb on the two cities of Japan causing a horrendous trail of death

and destruction when surrender of Japan was imminent. Bitterly attacking the US, West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu said, the Hiroshima-Nagasaki atomic bombing was a ghastly experiment of the effectiveness of atom bomb. By this the US had forfeited all rights to talk about human rights. He strongly supported the call of universal test ban and destruction of all nuclear weapons and urged the working class to play its legitimate role. The whole gathering burst into deafening clappings when the Zenroren representative, Shiota Naohiko, rose to speak. He said, he had never addressed such a big gathering and thanked the people of West Bengal for their solidarity. He remarked, the struggle against nuclear blackmail must continue. President Clinton, despite universal condemnation of use of atom bomb, still justifies the US action. Naohiko announced that Japanese trade unions will organise a demonstration before the United Nations and would continue to do everything to secure a world free from nuclear weapons.

The next in the chain was the well-attended hall meeting at Madras on Aug 7. Participated by most of the major trade unions and activists of several mass organisations. The meeting heard the speakers narrate the horrors unleashed by the two atom bombs that killed 3,40,000 men, women and children in a few minutes, razed to the ground 92 per cent of the buildings in Hiroshima and 40 per cent of build-



CITU General Secretary M K Pandhe addressing the meeting

ings in Nagasaki while effects of radiation exposure still continue to afflict people.

The Zenroren representative, Naohiko, who had been given a warm welcome at the airport in the morning, deplored the present role of Japanese ruling elite and wanted the campaign against use of atomic weapons to continue with still greater vigour. The foreign guests were given some gifts and mementos: Tamilnadu CITU Deputy General Secretary Sundararajan presided.

The third meeting was held on August 8 at Vanmali Hall, Dadar, Bombay which was filled with a packed crowd. The foreign guests received numerous garlands in welcome. Maharashtra CITU president Com. P.P. Sanzgiri presided over the joint trade union meeting which was also addressed by leaders of other central and state trade unions. The gathering observed 2 minutes silence at the end of the meeting in memory of the victims of the atomic bombing.

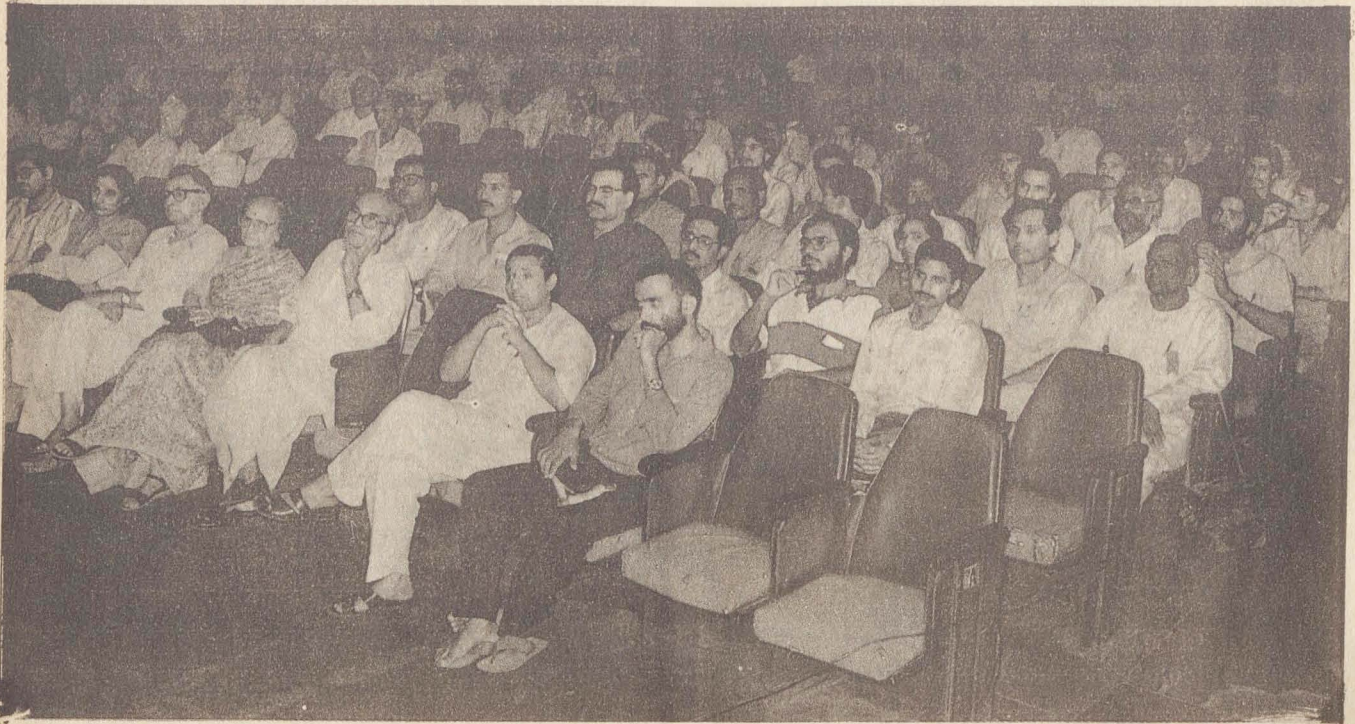
The final meeting coinciding with date of atomic bombing of Nagasaki way back on Aug 9, 1945. It was held at Sapru House, New Delhi. Presided over by S N Rao of INTUC, it heard in hushed silence the Ambassador of Japan who was a boy of 14 years at Nagasaki on the fateful day. A B Bardhan of AITUC, M K Pandhe of CITU and Amar Nath Dogra of BMS underscored the supreme need to expand and deepen the struggle against nuclear weapons. India's For-

eign Minister, Pranab Mukherjee in a prepared speech, narrated the hollowness of the unlimited extension of non-nuclear countries by the advanced West and India's national consensus for destruction of all nuclear weapons and an unbiased comprehensive test ban treaty.

Reading a prepared speech Zenroren vice-president, Naohiko thanked the people of India for the solidarity with people of Japan and the role being played by them in the anti-nuclear weapon struggle. He deplored the attempts of some countries with nuclear arsenal to legalise such weapons under a pretentious NPT which was blatantly against the wishes of mankind for a nuclear-free world. The working class needs peace more than any other class and must, therefore, intensify the struggle for banishing nuclear weapons.

The meeting ended with the adoption of a Declaration reiterating India's commitment to lasting peace. The Declaration said:

"We demand that this madness must stop. Along with all peace-loving people we stand for a world without wars, a world of Nunbroken peace for all. We demand that resources spent on armaments must be diverted to the balanced development of the world. Peace, Disarmament and Development go together."



A View of the audience

CITU Commemorates Comrade Kim Il Sung

Rich tributes were paid to Comrade Kim Il Sung in a commemoration meeting organised on July 8 by the CITU on the occasion of the first death anniversary of the great leader of the Korean people and an outstanding fighter for the cause of working class emancipation.

The meeting was attended by the activists of CITU and a number of mass organisations. It was presided over by Vimal Ranadive, CITU Secretary.

Ambassador Cha Bang Ju of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and members of DPRK diplomatic mission in New Delhi also attended the meeting.

A floral basket was placed before the portrait of Com.Kim Il Sung on behalf of CITU by its General Secretary M K Pandhe.

Recalling the unforgettable contribution of



DPRK Ambassador Cha Bang Ju Addressing the Gathering

Com.Kim Il Sung in leading the Korean revolution to victory and building socialism in the northern part of Korea, Pandhe said, "Comrade Kim Il Sung laid a firm organisational and ideological foundation of the Workers Party of Korea during the anti-Japanese revolutionary war and mobilised the toiling masses to win victory in their struggle for national liberation.

"Comrade Kim Il Sung was a great Marxist brilliant thinker and theoretician, who enriched Marxism-Leninism by his people-centred Juche idea. His passing away last year was, indeed, a great loss not only to the Korean people but also to the toiling masses of the whole world. He left us at a time when progressive mankind in the world needed his guidance most."

The DPRK Ambassador Cha Bang Ju also addressed the gathering. Highlighting the great contribution of Comrade Kim Il Sung to the cause of Korean people's emancipation, he said, "Comrade Kim Il Sung was the greatest leader of the Korean people in the course of their 5000-year old history. He led our revolution to victory at every stage and established a socialist system centred on the common man. His wise leadership turned DPRK into a powerful, independent and self-reliant socialist country. Under his able guidance the Korean people, who suffered many twists and turns in their revolutionary struggles, have become a powerful, dignified and independent nation capable of resolutely defending the banner of socialism.

D K Ganguly, secretary, WFTU Asia-Pacific Regional Office, also spoke on the occasion.

The meeting observed two minutes silence in honour of the departed leader Com.Kim Il Sung.

Report . .

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tax on equipment supplied indigenously by BHEL.

Reacting to this point, the Finance Secretary stated during evidence:-

"That is an arguable position whether the duty on imported equipment is too low or not. We have two different views here. The Ministry of power is strongly in favour of this whereas the Industry Ministry has represented against it. I know BHEL is not very happy with this set up but I do not think they really have a problem."

(To be continued)

Contract Labour System In Air Transport In India

HEMANT KUMAR

(1) INTRODUCTION

The system of engaging "Contract Labour" in the air transport industry in India is prevalent since last 15/20 years. The number of workers employed through Labour Contractors by off loading jobs of regular and perennial nature is on the increase every year. Indian Airlines, Air India and the Airport Authorities under the administrative control of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Govt. of India have been involved in this practice as a matter of Govt. Policy. Air India employs approximately 1500 workers in different categories (skilled & Unskilled) as against a regular workforce of 15,000 employees. For the present the ratio for India Airlines is comparatively less while the Airport Authorities at certain Airports have as many contact workers as permanent workers employed directly by the establishment. Most of these workers engaged as contract Labour are now unionised into different Unions of Contact Workers exclusively. At Bombay Airport itself there are approximately 3000 such workers divided into three unions.

(2) FORMS OF CONTRACT LABOUR

There are basically three different types of contract system prevalent in this industry. They can be classified as under;

THE CLASSICAL TYPE: Jobs of perennial nature like dusting/sweeping/cleaning, Watch & Ward functions (chowkidari), Gardening etc. offloaded to an individual contractor who very often is a slum lord or a labour supplier. He is paid a contract sum of money for a fixed period say one or two years and he in turn is free to engage any number of persons at any terms and conditions provided the job is done as per the requirements of the establishment. Such Labour Contractors pay very low salaries often below the minimum wage prescribed by the statute. In the International Airports Authority of India (IAAI) it was observed prior to their unionisation, no salary was paid to one category of such workers for eight hours work and the workers were expected to be satisfied only through the tips earned from passengers each day.

THE SPECIALISED AGENCY: In this type a specialised agency is awarded the contract for skilled jobs like maintenance of water coolers, air condition-

ers, air conditioning plants, affluent treatment plants electrical maintenance etc. Some of these Agencies are of repute like Blue-Star, Tata-Unisystem, CMC etc. These agencies in turn depute their employees who in fact are recruited specifically to execute the contract earned by them. Such employees are generally temporary and earn symbolic payments. During October, 1994 Air India handed over its latest Installation of Computers at Bombay to TATA-UNISYS LTD. for maintenance and operation at an annual fees of Rs.2.12 Crores. Every function in this Computer Centre right from cleaning, security upto software and hardware functions will be looked after by the agency notwithstanding the fact that more than 800 regular employees of Air India are qualified and experience to work on the system. There are at present 35 such agencies carrying on various functions in Air India alone. A large number of such agencies perform myriad functions in Airport authorities and Indian Airlines too.

INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS : Under this system, individuals are directly engaged by entering into individual contracts with them which are far inferior to the emoluments and service conditions enjoyed by regular-direct employees doing similar work and governed by collective bargaining Agreements. Air India employees on full-time and part time basis such workers. Similarly airport Authorities and Indian Airlines also employ such workers.

(3) LIBERALISATION & CONTRACT SYSTEM

The new economic policies pursued by the Govt. of India encourage applying the system and standards prevalent in industrialised Western countries into our own, disregarding the needs and requirements specific to our country.

The present ratio of workmen employed to aircrafts in India is around 850 per aircraft for the airlines while this ratio varies from 175 to 300 in foreign countries. The reason for this high employment in India can be attributed to the fact that all employees are directly employed by the enterprise, including indirect services like canteen, printing press, medical services, surface transport and host of other incidental and welfare activities which in Western

countries are offloaded to contractual agencies. Despite high employment ratio the labour cost in Indian enterprises ranged between 12 to 20% of the operating cost in the Air transport industry which correspondingly for the industrially advanced countries ranged between 25-30%. What started two decades ago by the enterprises as an unscrupulous means of saving labour cost, has today become a policy for restructuring the Industry.

Given the planning parameters and trends under the New Economic Policies, the industry is all set to restructuring very shortly. On one side the airport Authorities and the airlines are being merged on the otherside they are being split into smaller companies. Units have already been registered under the companies Act 1956 on speciality and function basis. The following companies have been registered so far.

1. Engineering Maintenance
2. Airport, Ground Services
3. Accounts & Allied Services
4. Reservations & Sales promotion
5. Security functions.
6. Catering/Inflight Services.

All these companies are going to work on the principle of obtaining contract for their speciality in the industry, thus replacing regular employment in the airlines. The restructuring process is going to drastically lower the wages and service conditions existing in the industry considering the fact that the contract agencies have advantage of high unemployment from where they will choose their workforce and no-unionisation as against the present workforce of the airlines which has collective bargaining agreements and strong unions. Most of the Labour Welfare Laws do not apply to contract workers.

Contract Labour system is thus being encouraged in all respects in the name of concentrating on "CORE CORPORATE FUNCTIONS".

WET-LEASING is another phenomenon which is emerging in the industry. Under this system a whole route is handed over to an agency or another airline for operation on a fixed contract and it is the responsibility of this agency to operate the flight with its own aircraft and associated service like Crew, inflight, Operations etc. Air India has offered its India/Mauritius, India/West Africa, India/Gulf routes on such contracts. This system again cuts into regular employment.

The third system of Individual Contracts is also being encouraged by the Gov, and likely to be patron-

ized more in the future. A committee formed recently with the M.D. of Indian Airlines leading it, prepossess to induct Air-Hostesses on contract basis in the Airlines. These contracts are likely to be for a period of 5 years on a consolidated salary. Efforts are on to recruit Pilots too in this manner.

(4) PERPETUATING EXPLOITATION THROUGH CONTRACT SYSTEM

The chief motivation for the govt. enterprises to indulge and unceasingly resort to contract labour system is to exploit the workforce by means of (a) Exceptionally low wages. (b) No welfare activities whatsoever. (c) No Unionisation. (d) Nexus between Contractors & Enterprise officials indulging into corruption.

Surveys have revealed lack of facilities to contract workers in AIR INDIA, INDIA AIRLINES, & AIRPORT AUTHORITIES as under:

1. No P.F.
2. No Gratuity
3. No Bonus
4. No Leave of any type (Casual, Sick or Privilege)
5. No E.S.I. (Insurance)
6. No Uniforms/Protective clothings
7. No Safety Equipment/Protective gear.
8. No Canteen facilities.
9. No transport facilities.
10. No Medical facilities.
11. No Wage revision/statutory minimum.
12. No Overtime/Shift compensation.
13. No standard force/working hours,

The depression in remuneration of some directly employed Contract Workers can be seen from the following table:

AIR INDIA	REGULAR	CONTRACT
Medical Officer	Rs.10,000/-	3,500/-
Dietitian/Other Specialists	Rs.—	1,750/-
Technician	Rs.6,000/-	1,600/-
Sweeper	Rs.3,500/-	2,800/-
INDIAN AIRLINES		
R/T Operators (ssb)	Rs.8,000/-	2,500/-
AIRPORTS AUTHORITIES		
Telephone Operators	Rs.4,500/-	1,500/-

An in-house study by Air India's surface transport system revealed that cost of operating Air India's fleet of Buses and Cars was Rs.26/- per Km. which if

contracted out would be available for rs.6 to 8 per Km.

One affidavit by AIR INDIA claimed that for a particular contract involving 38 workers, AIR INDIA spent 12.26 lakh of rupees only as against Rs.56.44 lakhs it would have to spend annually had the workers been engaged directly by it. Thus pleading to allow the system to continue in "PUBLIC INTEREST". In another instance this exploitation was justified in "National Interest".

(5) INADEQUACY OF LEGISLATION ON CONTRACT LABOUR IN INDIA

The Contract Labour (Regulation and abolition) Act, 1970, the legislation dealing with contract labour is a toothless law. It does not provide for the total abolition of the contract labour system but only for the abolition in circumstances and the regulation of the employment of the contract labour in certain establishments. This law does not provide for regularisation of services of the employees of the contractors. Moreover, the two conditions necessary for attracting this law are:

(a) Perennial nature of work. (b) Quantum of work should be sufficient to employ wholtime workmen.

Since both the issues are matter of fact, they get easily obscured by bureaucratic interpretations and maneuverings. The facts are rarely examined in the right perspective.

(6) LEGAL STRUGGLES OF CONTRACT WORKERS IN AIR INDIA & AIRPORT AUTHORITIES .

Despite limitations existing in the statute, the contract workers have been struggling to organise themselves and have been waging legal battles in order to improve their conditions of service and eventually seek abolition of this system. there are at present 18 Writ Petitions ending before the Bombay High Court on these issues by the contract workers engaged in and at the Airport. One petition is ending before Supreme Court and reserved for judgement. During the course of these litigations the workers have been granted protection by the Court, in as much when the contractor changes the workers will be absorbed by the new contractor and not removed from their jobs, thus affording them continuity of service. Minimum wages and other statutory rights were awarded and the Gov. directed to take a decision within a specified time, on the demand of the workers for abolition of contract system. these reliefs granted by the court has further helped in erasing

some of the corrupt practices indulged in by the officials of these establishments besides affording an opportunity to the contract workers for consolidating and carrying on their trade union activities.

(7) ROLE OF CENTRAL ADVISORY CONTRACT LABOUR BOARD AND THE GOVT. OF INDIA.

Procedures required investigation by the Central Advisory Contract Labour Board (CACLB) on the demand of the workers on abolition of Contract System. Prior to 1986 the state govt. was the appropriate govt. for this purpose and the Air Corporation employees' Union (ACEU) at Bombay organized the contract workers engaged in sweeping/dusting in Indian airlines and succeeded in abolishing the same. thereafter, the ACEU negotiated with the management of Indian airlines in a gradual and phased manner some of them being employed as part time workers in the beginning. this is the only instance of a trade-union of regular employees espousing the cause of contract workers in the airlines. Thereafter, even ACEU has not pursued as the problem grew manifold and contract workers got organised into different unions in Airport Authorities and Air India.

In 1986, after the amendment of the contract labour Act, the CACLB constituted a committee to go into questions of employment of Contract Labour engaged in sweeping, cleaning, dusting and guarding go buildings etc. owned or occupied by the establishment for which the Central Govt. became the appropriate government. Among many other public sector this committee studied in detail IAAI, Indian Airlines and Air India contract system and finally recommended abolition of contract system in Watchward functions which was followed by litigation and the matter is pending before the Supreme Court.

In 1991, the Bombay High Court, on petitions filed by contract workers of IAAI & Air India, ordered the CACLB to investigate the demand of the workers for abolition of the system in Air India/IAAI and report to the govt., within a specified period for taking appropriate action in the matter. The govt. was further directed to take a decision within a specific date. Accordingly a tripartite committee was constituted by the govt. on advise the CACLB which included one representative each from INTUC & UTUC from workers side.

Eventhough different members of the committee had different views, they were unanimous that Contract Labour should be prohibited in the EIGHT

category of jobs form Eighteen utilities studied by this committee in the three establishments of AIR INDIA/INDIA AIRLINES, & IAAI all over India.

Despite the unanimous recommendations of the committee, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Govt. of India, held the wrong view that "...any steps to abolish contract labour in these establishments will be a retrograde step for which the Nation will have to suffer and future of these establishments will be compromised."

ONLY one item of work i.e. Telephone Operators (IAAI) was recommended to be prohibited.

(8) CHALLENGES BEFORE THE T.U. MOVEMENT IN AIRLINES

While on the one side the economic policies of the govt. of India is creating a situation where the contract labour system is increasing rapidly allowing the employer to convert more and more jobs of regular nature into contract labour, the Law as it exists today is absolutely inadequate to protect the interest of the contract workers, thereby posing a serious challenge to the trade union movement in the industry to liquidate this exploitation through UNITY & STRUGGLES. However, the weakness of the movement is that the industry is full of craft unions and even the general unions have shown only an occasional interest on the issue of contract labour even though it is eating up the very fabric of regular employment.

With contract workers organizing their own unions independent of the unions of employees in the Industry, the potential of their isolated struggle is limited to waging legal fight while the leadership of such unions developing a "slow" approach. Abolition of contract system under such circumstances deprives such unions the opportunity to negotiate with the employer absorption of such workers and deprivation of its membership. Experience has been

that the unions of contract workers also lack co-ordination among themselves thus preventing the development of a united struggle.

An all india approach between various unions at National level will help breaking the barriers developed in the industry in forging a united movement to advance the struggle of contract workers. The program adopted at National Convention of CPSTU held at Durgam in June '95 on this issue is thus a welcome step.

CGT CONDOLES DEATH OF RAILWAY ACCIDENT VICTIMS

The following message was received by CITU Centre from CGT, France on the Railway accident at Ferozabad, UP.

"Dear Brothers,

The French CGT wants to convey through your organisation its deep sympathy to the families of the victims, after the terrible railway crash killing more than 350 people and wounding seriously many others among which certainly workers affiliated to your union.

The CGT, in this tragic circumstances assures the CITU of its full solidarity and brotherly support.

Faternally yours,

Sd/- Jean Pierre Page
Member of the Executive
Head of the International Department
CGT, France

Meeting of State Govt. . .

[From Page 2]

The New Economic Policy is being implemented by various state Governments also. State Public Sector units are being closed down or privatised. Thousands of employees are thus on the point of losing their jobs. Even some activities of the Govt. department are also threatened with privatisation. If that is done, thousands of employees will lose their jobs. This is being done by many state governments side by side with the Central Govt.'s decision to privatise Telecom, Banks and Insurance and other Public Sector and simultaneously inviting the Multinationals indiscriminately. This policy is against

National Interest and this must stop.

The National Executive also requested all State Governments to grant the Interim relief and other concessions to the State employees as per the recent announcement of the Central Govt. in regard to the Central Govt. Employees.

The All India State Government employees Federation has decided to host the Executive Bureau of the Trade Union International of Public & Allied Employees in Calcutta on 7th & 8th November '95. That International meeting will take decision to co-ordinate the struggle of the Public Employees all over the World against the harmful effects of structural adjustment.

China played an important role in defeating fascism in World War-II

At the time when Japanese militarism was ravaging China and threatening world peace, the Communist Party of China (CPC) came out boldly to push for firm combat against the invaders.

China played an important role in the world's anti-fascism war in the 1930s and 1940s, contributing to its success with its firm fight against the invasion of the Japanese army.

Japan's invasion of Northeast China in September 1931 was the first action adopted by the world fascists as a prelude to World War II (1939-45).

The leadership of the Kuomintang Party adopted a "no resistance" policy that led to a quick occupation of Northeast China by the Japanese army.

The big nations in Europe did nothing to help China resist the Japanese invaders because they also wanted to turn China into a colony. All that they cared for was how to retain their vested interests in China. They did not recognise that Japan's invasion of China was a prologue to a world war that might harm their interests, instead waiting to share in Japan's plunder.

Protest

It published a protest on September 22, 1931, the fourth day after the "September 18 Accident," the formal beginning of Japan's invasion, to state the Chinese people's determination to fight.

Starting in 1932, the CPC organised armed forces in Northeast China to combat the Japanese army. Later it called on all social classes in China to form a united, national battlefront for greater strength. Under the leadership of the CPC, Chinese people were actively fighting the invaders and pleading with the Kuomintang authorities to change its "no resistance" policy.

After a December 9, 1935 student movement appealing for the authorities to fight against the fascists broke out, and after two senior Kuomintang generals remonstrated with the party's highest authority to fight the Japanese invaders in December 1936, the Kuomintang authorities finally decided to assume an active attitude in resisting the Japanese invaders.

At the beginning of 1937, a united battlefront against Japanese fascists was formed under the co-leadership of the Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang Party.

The Japanese militarists, not realising the Chinese people's determination and strength to fight, launched an all-out invasion against China in July 1937.

They planned to conquer China within three months, never anticipating that they would confront bitter resistance.

Japan lost more than 400,000 soldiers on the Chinese battlefield in the first year of its overall invasion. Yet it failed in its attempt to conquer China though the victimised country also lost nearly 800,000 soldiers and large areas of land.

Nor had the Japanese invaders achieved their goals when the German fascists started the war in Europe in 1939.

After war broke out worldwide in 1939, the world's biggest

nations such as Britain and the United States finally stepped forward to stand beside China in the anti-fascism effort.

Although the Japanese militarists hoped to further invade the Soviet Union and the Southeast Asian nations, echoing the German and Italian fascists' war in Europe, its ability fell short of its desires because it could not win against the Chinese, even by focusing all its forces here.

Thanks to the Chinese people's firm resistance, Japan lost initiative in China after 1939 to 35 divisions at the end, but no progress was achieved in battle.

When 14 European countries were overrun by fascist Germany in 1940, the Chinese army launched dynamic attacks against Japanese forces.

From August to December 1940, China launched the famous "one-hundred regiments" battle which punctured the arrogance of the Japanese invaders.

In January 1942, 26 countries including Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and China signed a declaration in Washington, earmarking the formation of a worldwide anti-fascist alignment.

To put up a last-ditch struggle, the Japanese militarists adopted even more cruel policies in China. The Japanese army created widespread damage in occupied areas and massacred the people there.

From 1941 to 1942, at least 80,000 Chinese soldiers were killed or wounded in battles against the Japanese. Every day there was an average of 33 battles between the Chinese and Japanese armies.

Despite the hardships in fighting the furious enemy, the Chinese Army successfully prevented the Japanese from enlarging the war.

Efforts

The nations of the world commonly recognised the importance of China's efforts in bringing about the final failure of the world fascists.

In 1943, the Chinese army started counterattacking the Japanese invaders in an all-round way. This action echoed the British and American army's attack on the European battlefield and was a severe strike against world fascists.

In 1945, when Italian and German fascists surrendered in the European battlefield, Chinese people still had to fight because the stubborn Japanese militarists did not want to admit failure.

When the United States and the Soviet Union started attacking Japan in August 1945, the Chinese army also began an all-out attack. The co-operation between the western and Chinese armies finally led to the failure of Japan.

During the whole process of the anti-fascist war, China was the backbone of the resistant force and contributed much to its success.



Israel Epstein

(Born in 1915 in Poland and presently settled in China, Israel Epstein grew up in China and worked there as a journalist and writer before, during and after World War II. In 1951 he joined "China Reconstructs" (now "China Today", a monthly initiated by the late Soong Ching Ling (Mme. Sun Yat Sen). He served as the Editor-in-Chief of the magazine for long years later became its Editor-in-Chief Emeritis.

Epstein is a profile writer. He has authored a number of articles and books on China which include "The People's War" (1939) "The Unfinished Revolution in China" (1947), "Opium War to Liberation" (1956), "Tibet Transformed" (1983) and "Women in World History" (1993). The last one is a voluminous biography of late Song Ching Ling.

(Editor)

The Victory over militarist Japan 50 years ago this month also marked the triumph of the international alliance against all the belligerent fascist states in World War II. It was a fitting finale for, as now recognized by most historians; the fuse that burned on into that global conflagration was first lit precisely by Japan when she launched here armed seizure of Northeast China. The time, too little recalled elsewhere but engraved on Chinese minds, was September 18, 1931. That was years before the usual Western dating of the start of the World War - either at 1939, when Nazi Germany stirred up the war in Europe, or at December 1941, when the United States was attacked by Japan.

In fact it was because Japan's earlier aggression was left unpunished internationally that other fascist powers were emboldened to follow suit. In the 1930s fascist Italy seized Ethiopia and later Albania; Germany and Italy helped destroy the Spanish Republic and install their co-fascist, Franco; Japan expanded her war to all China in 1937; Germany invaded Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938, and in 1939 attacked Poland, which brought Britain and France into the fray. In 1941 Germany assaulted the Soviet Union - and Japan surprise-bombed American warships in Pearl Harbor, propelling the U.S. into the general war. And in 1945 came the defeat, followed by unconditional surrender of Germany, and after some months of Japan, ending the while cycle.

Concerning this round of fateful struggles for all humankind, several facts were undeniable. The Chinese people fought the longest - for 14 years from 1931 to 1945 - beginning with local counterthrusts and ending with the nationwide spread of armed resistance in the eight years after 1937. In their struggles, the most central and heaviest for Asia, they suffered the greatest human loss directly or indirectly caused by the war - some 35 million lives. The Soviet Union, which decided the contest in Europe lost some 27 million in its four and half years of hostilities.

Britain fought for six years with losses of several hundred thousand in her armed forces, and—with the exception of the small channel islands—was not invaded or occupied, though she was heavily bombed. The US, the last to enter the war, had no bombs fall on its continental cities; and in three and half years of hostilities it lost hundreds of thousands of military lives—but virtually none of civilians. These, of course, are quantitative comparisons and do not minimise the courage or devotion of combatants of those countries, but they do show the varied extents of sacrifice made for victory.

Having lived in and reported on China through all those years, I would like to add some contemporary observations and emotions.

To begin with, there was the cruelty of the fascist invasion, anticipating and sometimes out-matching that in Europe and elsewhere. In Northeast China from 1931 on, resisters were mercilessly killed, whole villages burned in retaliation, peasants and workers press-ganged as slave labour in Japanese enterprises, where they were slaughtered when exhausted or to preserve some "military secret." I myself in 1937 saw the bloated and decaying corpses of strong young peasants floating down the Haihe River in Tianjin—men who had been forced to build fortifications for the Japanese army and had then been gunned down or roped up and thrown in to drown. Near Japanese-operated mines, charnel pits have been found filled with the skeletons of many thousands of their used-up workers (deported for labour in Japan among others, many were worked to death: there.)

In Nanjing in 1937, as amply described by Chinese survivors and foreign eyewitnesses, Japan's

Imperial Army indiscriminately massacred—shooting, bayoneting, burying alive or decapitating by sword—some 300,000 surrendered and disarmed soldiers and ordinary townspeople, the women generally after repeated rape. Chemical warfare was used: I saw hospitalised Chinese soldier-victims, their flesh agonisingly pitted like cheese by Japanese mustard gas.

Biological warfare was prepared at a notorious site in Harbin, with fatal experiments on prisoners-of-war, at first Chinese, but at the end also others, including Americans. This was a fact testified to by Japanese records (material evidence there was no time to destroy), and notably by some Japanese participants in these crimes, who now realise how evil they were. In the Liberated Areas, where the Japanese occupiers were often expelled from huge tracts by Chinese resistance forces under Communist leadership, the policy of “kill all, loot all, burn all” was routinely applied by the invaders as vengeance. In a dispatch I sent to Time Magazine on December 20, 1943, from Changde in Western Hunan Province (one of the few towns wrested back from the Japanese by Kuomintang forces), I asked the following questions:

When the history of this war comes to be written, much investigation will be devoted to why the Axis armies (of Japan, Germany and Italy) did the unbelievable things they did. Some histories engaging their attention will come from this devastated city. They will ask why Japanese peasants, who at home revere rice as the fruit of their own back-breaking labour and the staff of life, not only stole grain from Chinese peasants, but also used stores of grain they could not remove as a favourite latrine spot. They will ask what made Japanese soldiers who entered the Spanish Catholic orphanage here not only steal the children's bedding, but also go to the trouble of bringing up great stones from the courtyard below to smash the wooden spinning and weaving machines in the institutions vocational school, and what pleasure the Japanese soldiers derived from breaking into class rooms and smashing inkbottles against the walls; why the Japanese, who didn't want to cooking oil with which war refugees prepared their food, broke every vessel containing it instead of leaving it alone; why in conscripting labour they gave the old and weak the heavy burdens for a start and the young men the light ones, then bayoneted any man who fell under the load.

All of these things I either saw, or heard from the

mouths of hundreds of returning townsfolk who had had direct experience of them.

The answer is not that all the nationals of the aggressor states were born evil, but that they had been deliberately molded to the needs of fascist invasion—to paralyse the desire of captive populations to resist by displaying the utter ruthlessness of the new masters. Brutalities inflicted on others required the brutalisation of their own conscripted youth. With this aim, Japanese recruits were ordered to carry out bayonet practice on living victims, while sword-bearing officers demonstrated their skill at beheading. All combat is fierce, but armies truly defending their own soil or fighting for a popular cause do not produce such perversities. Invaders fear the people and must terrorise them. Defenders require popular support and participation—secured and maintained only by service to the people.

The all-human attraction of a truly moral cause can be seen from the fact that a few Japanese, taken prisoner by China's Communist-led armies, became convinced by people-to-people treatment to serve China's cause as just—against their own militarist rulers as bearers of calamity to both peoples. In 1944 I came into contact with the heroic and convinced work of members of the Japanese People's Emancipation League on the guerrilla fronts, where, with megaphones at close quarters within rifle range, they risked their lives to explain the issues to their former fellow-soldiers.

In Europe, of course, there were similar examples. German anti-Nazis fought German Nazi aggressors in Spain and on other fronts for patriotically progressive reasons. Anti-fascists from Italy fought against Mussolini's fascism, both in Spain and in the ranks of the Yugoslav partisans. Similar were the actions of true patriots from other fascist-ruled lands. And anti-fascist ex-members of the International Brigades in Spain, particularly medical personnel, came later to help China—among them the revered Dr Norman Bethune, who gave his life here, Dr Mohanlal Atal, who headed a group of doctors from India sent by her National Congress Party, and a score of doctors of other nationalities who had also served in Spain. On their part, a hundred or so Chinese, mostly residents in Europe, battled for the Spanish Republic and others in Europe's wartime anti-fascist resistance—some dying in the battlefields or concentration camps.

Chinese fighters for their national freedom in their own country, particularly in the Communist-led

areas, were highly conscious of being part of a worldwide anti-fascist struggle. While the Spanish war against Axis intervention still raged, one could see in Yan'an the proud republican slogan, "No Pasaran!" (They Shall Not Pass!) "Defend Madrid," a song of solidarity, was popular with China's progressive patriots there and elsewhere. In village command-posts in enclaves of resistance behind the Japanese lines, I saw, pasted as wall newspapers, maps showing the shifting battlelines in the Soviet Union, western Europe and the Pacific. Whether many anti-fascist fighters abroad, in uniform or out, were similarly aware of the dimensions of progress of their Chinese guerrilla comrades gnawing deep into the rear of the enemy I very much doubt. The Kuomintang did its utmost to block such news getting to the rest of China much less abroad.

It was in Yan'an at the time of the Anglo-American Normandy landing, which opened the second front against Nazim in Europe, that I attend China's most impressive mass demonstration to welcome that event. The Kuomintang, on the other hand, was unenthusiastic about it. It asked in and out of season that the Western allied put "Asia first" in their strategic plans - in effect, do all or most of the fighting against Japan, while the Kuomintang kept its own forces for future civil war against the Communists. The Communist Party, by contrast, regarded the defeat of Nazi Germany as a necessary prelude to a joint Chinese and allied offensive in which China would play the main role in land fighting to free her own soil.

"We have a common aim - to overthrow the Japanese militarists and on a world scale all the Fascists," Mao Zedong in 1994 said in Yan'an to a group of foreign correspondents, of whom I was one. "Here you will see a will for the Communist Party and the Kuomintang to fight Japan shoulder to shoulder..(and) that we are engaged in anti-Japanese resistance...The SEcond Front has created a better situation for China. But we must rely on our own efforts to take advantage of it. If we rely only on external factors, we can't solve China's problems."

Chairman Mao meant what he said. Of the 80 percent of Japan's total land forces deployed in China, the Communist-led armies were by 1944 directly engaging 60 percent.

Was World War II anti-fascist specifically in terms of the aims of all participants against the Axis? In part it was actuated by the conflicting material interests of the belligerents. But its overall anti-fascist character was determined by its being waged against the aggression of the fascist powers. This

gave rise to a united front involving both governments and popular movements, which had unfolded broad anti-fascist struggles prior to the war. In China this took the form of an ultimately irresistible patriotic demand that Chiang Kai-shek's civil war come to an end, and that "Chinese must not fight Chinese," but unite to fight Jpan's encroachments.

And everywhere the anti-aggression and anti fascist movement were geared not only to national concerns but to international mutual support. China was backed by many people long before any alliance of governments. British and Australian dockers refused to load war materials for Japan - tough such sales were permitted, or even encouraged, by their own authorities. In the U.S.A. as elsewhere consumers' boycotts of imports from Japan were an effective form of protest against her misdeeds in China. And the Soviet Union worked hard for united fronts, both popular and governmental, against fascism, bore the main burden for victory in Europe, and helped that against japan.

In China, not only by advocacy but by vigorous and effective action, her Communist Party quickly assumed the main role in her war of Resistance. The survival and Long March of the Chinese Red Army (in the war with Japan reorganized as the Eighth Route and New Furth armies) had shown how a force inferior in armaments could frustrate a superior one - capturing its weapons as well. This, and the experience of regaining ground from the enemy, gave the clue for successful tactics against Japan within a "protracted war" strategy formulated by Mao Sedong. Of course, Kuomintang soldiers also fought harvely and well, and at items effectively, as in August-November 1937 in Shnanghai, and during their first victorious battle at Tai'erzhuang the following spring, which I covered. But due to poor leadership, short-sighted strategy and frequent corruption and alienation from the people, their effectiveness declined in the following years.

Some of my experience illustrated this. On the Kuomintang front, the reported nearness of a Japanese force often led to premature, some times panicky, withdrawal. In the resistance bases, which the Eight Route Army had carved out in the japanese rear, I was surprised to find that a mobile combat unit I and other foreign correspondents were accompanying liked to night- march through villages close to, rather than further from, the japanese blockhouses. The reason was that the enemy feared to venture ut of them at night, when the adjacent villages were the most effectively controlled by the guerilla forces.

(Most of these villages also had the most patriotic and aware inhabitants and were the most thoroughly cleansed of spies and traitors, who could still lurk with their radios in remoter places.) Our non-Chinese appearance required more than usual security - which was achieved. In other words, the Japanese in their areas of claimed control were, in fact, blind.

China's effort against, and major contribution to, defeating Japan were marked by the growth of her popular forces to a point where, strengthened by the combination of national and social revolutionary aims, they could go on to an every greater victory - that of the whole protracted struggle, a struggle like to think of as China's century-old war for independence and equal status in the world. More, the triumph of the Chinese revolution not only took one fifth of mankind on a new path, it also inspired the overthrow or collapse of colonial rule that swept over Asia and Africa. All this was a further demonstration of the great historical role of China through her revolutionary development, not only in the Second World War but in its aftermath in large parts of the world.

The growing outcry of certain echoers of Japanese militarism today - to the effect that its war was liberating for land formerly dominated by Western colonialism - is historically absurd and morally base. Actually that war was to transfer those land from one master to another - and into even deeper enslavement and indeed decimation. Notably, this "thesis" (of liberation from Western colonialism) was argued at the International War Crimes Tribunal by the defendant Iwane Matsui, who had commanded the butcheries by the Japanese army in Nanjing - and for this was sentenced and hanged. And ask the peoples of Southeast Asia, who experience the process and who in such numbers quickly took up arms against their Japanese militarist "liberators," What presaged the end of the colonial system was victory over Japan and other fascist states in World War II. After that came popular upsurges - largely influenced by the example of the Chinese people's self-liberation - against the re-imposition of any colonial rule whatsoever.

Celebrating the victory today, I believe that one of the key tasks of the present period, and of preparing ourselves for the next century, is to see that fascist-like, warlike reactionary forces do not make a comeback and that the lessons of history are not forgotten or reversed. The embellishment of fascism,

or denial of its evils and its aggression, which resulted in such towering crimes and threatened the world with enslavement in the past, should be exposed and challenged wherever it reappears today - as it is doing in various places, including Japan.

The lessons to be remembered were wellput by China's President Jiang Zemin at the unveiling Ceremony of the patriotic War Memorial in Moscow in May:

"The victory in the anti-fascist war is an eternal monument in the history of world civilization, for it laid down the foundation for world peace, blazed the trail for colonial liberation and promoted human progress...

"History has demonstrated that peace has not come about easily. The tragedy of a world war should never be allowed to repeat itself. One must always maintain sharp vigilance, strengthen the forces for peace and check and eliminate all factors leading to war.

"—Today with ever increasing interdependence in the world economy and among states, it is all the more imperative to conduct international cooperation based on equality and mutual development.."

To achieve this is the task of all peoples, and not a whit less of those of the citizens of former fascist states, because they, too, suffered as victims of deception and payers of the price their wartime misrulers imposed on them. Common realization and cooperation are necessary. For the sake of children and grandchildren - and for the coming century - the aim to strive for, not just in words but in actions, should be common peace and common advance.

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