

# Proletarian Era

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## Wage Movement to Defeat Divisive Design of Sangh Parivar — Nihar Mukherjee

*Expressing deep concern over the growing incidents of attacks on the minorities, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI issued the following statement on 26th January, 1999 :*

“The fascist nature of the brutal, barbaric and systematic attacks that are being perpetrated against the minorities, more particularly against the Christian minorities and their religious institutions in recent times, latest manifestation of which was the brutal killing of an Australian Christian missionary Graham Stewart Steins and his two minor sons in Orissa, have shocked the whole nation. What is more important to note is the fact that BJP’s assumption of power at the Centre has further emboldened these dark fascist forces mostly belonging to the Sangh Parivar to indulge in such premeditated inhuman acts which apart from causing heavy injuries and humiliation to the minorities, are bringing further divisions among the toiling people on religious lines. What is more shocking is to find that the BJP government instead of quelling these barbaric acts with a strong hand, is, in one hand shielding the perpetrators of

these heinous crimes by all means and on the other spreading totally baseless and motivated stories not only to cover up these barbarities but also to justify them. Clearly all these are being done to foster religious fanaticism and fundamentalism with the evil design to bring about cultural fascism throughout the country, secondly, to destroy people’s united movement against the onslaughts of the ruling capitalist class and thirdly, to bolster up BJP’s electoral prospects. Situation therefore demands all out resistance against these treacherous policy of the BJP government so as to force it to give up this heinous policy of dividing Indian people on communal and religious lines.

“We, therefore call upon our countrymen to come forward to wage a powerful movement throughout the country demanding immediate halt to this sinister design. We also call upon all our state committees and our party units to do everything possible to mobilise masses everywhere for developing such a sustained movement wherever possible in association with all other like-minded parties and forces.”

## Pre-Budget Interaction with FM UTUC-LS’ Presentation

*[ In the pre-budget discussion with the Finance Minister, Comrade Ashutosh Banerjee, President and Comrade Sanat Dutta, member, Working Committee, UTUC-LS submitted the following presentation to him on 13th January, 1999. — Ed. P.Era ]*

### Introduction :

Since 1990-91, Government of India, led consecutively by Congress, United Front and BJP-led coalition has been restructuring the previous planned mixed Indian economy on the model of market law governed entrepreneur friendly economy. Central budgets are being drawn year after year on the basis of this basic approach. Basically these budgets have never been workmen friendly.

The thrust in every budget since then has been on reduction of work strength in every branch of industry both in public and private sectors. Circumvention of the existing labour laws by resorting to voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) has become the epitome of anti-employment policy of every market oriented central budget.

The Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has been implementing, nonchalantly, this very anti-employment policy. To quote a Labour

Ministry document which declares, “Loss of jobs is an essential part of the restructuring process.” (Agenda Notes, Meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee, 13th May, 1998)

In such a context, it becomes self-evident that the pre-budget discussions between the Finance Minister and the Central Trade Unions could not make any impact on the basic anti-employment approach of the Central budgets.

If the Finance Minister really means that employment generation, as often expressed by him, is one of the objects of restructuring process, then stoppage of unbridled operation of market-laws, and amendment of profitability as the sole motive of production are called for. Disinvestment of PSUs must be given a go bye.

This entails schemes where the existing and new public sector undertakings can play a positive role in the economy.

(Contd. on page 2)

## Against Gang Rape of Anjana Mishra, Mafia Raj Total Orissa Bandh SUCI Activists Brutally Lathicharged

While awaiting justice from the Orissa High Court in the case of attempt of molestation by ex-Advocate General, Indrajeet Roy, torture and harassment by her IFS husband, Anjana Mishra who was going to Cuttack from Bhubaneswar city was barbarously gang raped on 9th January. The Orissa State Committee of our party, the SUCI has condemned this heinous crime and at the same time expressed deep sympathy with Mrs. Mishra. Based on the reports from different sources the party strongly believes that this was the outcome of a well-planned conspiracy involving persons at the helm of power, state police, mafia and criminals. It is a naked indication of criminalisation of politics at the top level of the ruling party, the Congress in Orissa. It might also be an outcome of the ruling party’s group politics of power hankering and to replace one group by another at the ruling roost. The State Committee has called for an organised and sustained mass movement against such barbaric incidents. The party has also demanded a CBI enquiry into the incident to reveal the truth.

The party along with its mass fronts, the AIMSS, DYU and AIDSOS had on its own organised Rasta Roko movement on 11th January at Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and various places of the State in reaction to the despicable incident. While this protest movement was continuing in a peaceful democratic manner for hours together enjoying the support of the people, the armed police came and lathicharged the volunteers brutally. As a result, many a worker was injured grievously and some of them had to be admitted to the hospital. Even the AIMSS State Unit President Comrade Binapani Das was not spared from police excesses.

In further pursuance of this movement against such crime as also against the mafia raj, growing atrocity, torture and oppression on women in general and increasing anti-social activities in the State, SUCI and other opposition parties gave a state-wide Bandh call on 13th January. The spontaneous bandh was successful throughout the state in spite of the persistent propaganda against it by the ruling Congress using the media. A large number of political workers including Comrades Bishnu Das, R.N. Das, Devendra Sahoo and Binapani Das – all State Committee members of our party along with workers of other parties were arrested and victimised by the police during the bandh. The State Committee has called upon the people from all walks of life to come forward and develop sustained mass movement against the rising crime, break down of law and order situation and atrocity on women in the State.

# Pro-Capitalist Budgets Decried

(Contd. from page 1)

Secondly, in a country like India, with vast human resources, domestic market cannot be expanded without raising the purchasing power of the people, outside the span of a very limited upper middle class strata which is now being wrongly conceived as the main market.

Third, this makes necessary the planned development of labour intensive technology, and deployment of the same in well defined reserved sectors of industries.

Examination in detail of the problems emanating from the New Economic and Industrial Policy (NEIP), affecting adversely the working masses, will prove the necessity of in-depth amendment of the NEIP of the Government of India.

## Current Employment Scenario

To quote a Labour Ministry document which admits, "There has been a marked deceleration in the average annual rate of growth of organised sector employment from 1.68 per cent during the eighties (1980-90) to merely 0.82 per cent during the nineties(1990-97)." (Agenda Notes)

Again to quote Approach Paper to the Ninth Five Year Plan(1997-2002) which says, "Casualisation increased with a corresponding decline in self-employment, both in rural and urban areas. Casual wage employment increased from 31.2 per cent in 1987-88 to 33.5 per cent in 1993-94, while self-employment declined from 53.6 per cent to 51.9 per cent. Regular salaried employment also declined from 15.2 per cent to 14.7 per cent."

Regarding employment in public sector the Labour Ministry document of 13th May '98, took note of the fact that "from a net provider of 3.7 million new jobs in the eighties, additional jobs in the public sector reduced to only 0.6 million during the nineties (upto March, 1997). As a result, average rate of employment in the public sector which was 2.12 per cent per annum during eighties came down to 0.36 per cent per annum during the nineties. In fact, during 1995-96 and 1996-97 there was an absolute decline of 2,00,000 jobs in the public sector." ... While employment in public sector got reduced, the private sector, enjoying varieties of incentives in the form of tax holidays, tax reduction, cut in customs duties etc., could not achieve the level of average rate of employment in the public sector which was 2.12 per cent per annum in the eighties. Private sector employment increased to only 1.93 per cent per annum during 1990-97.

While there was an absolute decline of 2 lakh jobs in the public sector, private sector employment in the manufacturing sector could create only a meager fifty-nine thousand jobs. It means that in private manufacturing sector the employment level is stagnant.

According to the Director General of Employment, as of March 31, '96, employment fell by 5.1 per cent in transport, storage and communication sectors compared to March 31, 1995. ...

In electricity, gas and water, a major category employment fell by 2 per cent in the period. In construction industry, there was a negative growth of 1 per cent. ...

According to a study by a former member of the Indian Statistical Service, in industrial units

having capital size of over 100 crores and having 61.76 per cent of the share in total capital of the industrial sector, there has been a fall of about 36 per cent in average employment per unit during the post-'91 period. In other capital investment units ranging from Rs.50 crore to Rs.100 crore as well as Rs.1 to 2 crore, the same phenomenon of falling employment level has been observed.

It has also been observed by economists that increasing number of workmen have no alternative but to get employed in informal sector. The informal sector comprises smaller units with low capital base, very low wages, total absence of job security, difficult and hazardous working condition. For a supposedly growing economy growing number of workmen compelled by economic adversities to take employment in informal sector does not indicate positive growth of the economy.

In economics it is an accepted truth that informal sector workmen, that is, casual labour are in reality underemployed. Underemployment is concealed unemployment where exploitation knows no bounds.

The Labour Ministry document has admitted the fact that "...the entire growth in employment in the post-1990 period is accounted for growth of casual and self-employed workers - precisely the types of employment which conceal under employment and where the incidence of exploitation is significant."

This is happening in spite of the existence of the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970, and when Supreme Court had concretely defined the nature of work in factories, where contract labour should not be employed.

## Specific causes behind such an effect on employment scenario

This has become an axiom among the propounders of restructuring of the economy that the organised industry must go in for restructuring which entails downsizing, and retrenchment of workmen is one of the essential means of accomplishing it.

Shedding of labour is being done in various ways in various sectors of the economy.

### Public Sector

#### - Disinvestment and Outright Sale

The policy of disinvestment and outright sale of PSUs, have become two major causes among others behind the emaciation of employment in organised industries.

In order to make disinvestment and outright sale more attractive, the government in the name of streamlining is reducing work strength. VRS, in reality compulsory VRS, "voluntary" becoming a misnomer, is being increasingly thrust upon the employees. Not only workers and clerks, but even officers upto the level of managers are becoming prey to this policy.

Not to fill up vacancies due to retirement has become common practice. Thus the way to employment of the new job seekers has been blocked, leading to increase of casual labour and informal sector employment. The practice of taking in limited number of skilled personnel on contract for limited period is becoming common.

Consequently, job insecurity is prevailing as a menace upon the job market.

Lastly, "Efforts at containing the fiscal deficit of the Government have fallen disproportionately

on public investment, particularly in those sectors which are more dependent on budgetary support. The share of capital expenditure in the total expenditure of the Government has declined sharply from around 30 per cent at the beginning of the eighth plan to 24 per cent." [Approach Paper in the Ninth Five Year Plan(1997 to 2002)].

## Emaciation of jobs in Banks

The same tenor of restructuring is an ongoing process in banking sector. The first and second reports of Narasimham Committee, is thoroughly anti-employment. While private banks are opening new branches in both urban and rural areas, the nationalised banks, according to the recommendation of this infamous Committee, are on the verge of closing down nearly ten thousand branches. Without entering into the economic fall-out of this contemplated measure, suffice it to say that a mindboggling number of employees will be declared surplus. Thus artificially creating a surplus, the employees will be shown the door after a compulsory golden handshake.

The whole burden of reforming the banking sector, which entailed dilution of all the previous safety norms, and encouragement by the Government to go for risk investment as a normal practice, resulting in huge NPA in the lap of all the banks, is being now thrust on the bank employees.

Even non-banking financial investment firms are also loaded with rising non-performance advances due to the same risk investment policy. And the Democlis' sword of compulsory VRS is hanging over the head of the employees.

The Government's efforts to open up insurance sector to both native and foreign firms will result in the same danger for the employees.

It goes without saying that domination of the financial sector by joint ventures of domestic and foreign multinational capital will definitely compromise the economic sovereignty of our country. It is an experimented truth that the financial sector is most important component of the economy in any country.

## Closing down of mines

The Central Government is about to close down ECL coal mines. This is endangering the jobs of nearly a lakh of employees. This thoughtless policy is being pursued in the face of the fact that ECL is a very rich belt. It produces about ten to eleven per cent of Coal India Ltd.'s total coal production. And within seven to eight years, as calculated by even reform friendly economists, there will be a demand and supply gap of one hundred fifteen million to one hundred thirty five million tonnes....

Such instances are in plenty.

## Non-payment of statutory dues

Besides, workmen are also suffering from the problem of non-payment of statutory dues by the central public sector undertakings. One of the main reasons among others is the inadequate budgetary support for sick industries. As a matter of policy, the Government generally is not allocating money for the revival of sick industries.

It cannot be gainsaid that the twin policy of the Government to withdraw from all business activities, even from basic and capital goods industries and huge cut in import duties, is directly responsible for the sickness of many public sector

(Contd. on page 4)

## Give Defeat to Fascist Forces

# Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's Letter to Left and Democratic Parties and Other Democratic Organisations

[ Below is Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's letter to Left and democratic parties and democratic organisations urging to develop united movement against communalism throughout the country.]

Dear Friend,

The mounting attacks on the minorities, starting from attacks on the churches, burning of religious books, raping of nuns and finally the ghastly burning alive of an Australian Christian missionary – treating leprosy patients in Orissa for the last 34 years – along with his two minor sons by the Bajrang Dal and other members of the Sangh Parivar cannot but remind one of the dark days of the mediaval age. Though these most barbaric acts of the Sangh Parivar have rudely shocked all sections of the saner people of the country, but these were nothing unexpected of these organisations which for long had been fed with extreme communal fanaticism and extreme national zingoism.

It is also nothing astonishing that instead of resorting to stern action against those who made such criminal attacks on churches and the

minorities the Prime Minister indirectly supports them by asking for a national debate on conversion while the Home-Minister gives a clean chit to the Bajrang Dal which is responsible for the ghastly killing of Mr Steins and his two minor sons by saying that it has 'no criminality in it' even when the whole world knows that the heinous crime was the act of the Bajrang Dal. And it is also notable that while the Prime Minister assures that no mercy will be shown to the killers the Home minister rules out any central probe into the murder. The fact is that because of this attitude of the central Government communal frenzy and criminal activities are growing faster than ever before.

The most premeditated and systematic campaign and attacks on the minorities by the members of the Sangh Parivar, the RSS, the VHP, Bajrang Dal and the Hindu Jagaran Manch backed by the BJP and its Government are not only

threatening the security of the minorities but also the little democratic norms, values and practices which are still prevailing in our society. Indeed, it is an all-out attack on the democratic system itself.

Under the circumstances it is our strong feeling that no left and democratic party or force can remain as mute spectator, and allow the country to drift into fascism. So, we call upon all left and democratic parties and forces as well as all freedom and democracy loving individuals to come forward and develop a country wide united movement against this alarmingly growing trend of communalism and restore, protect and extend democratic values and norms by giving a crushing defeat to these fascist forces both ideologically and organisationally.

Expecting a favourable response,

Fraternally yours,

Sd/ Nihar Mukherjee

General Secretary

Calcutta

30th January, 1999

SUCI

## Industrial Crisis in West Bengal

### Who are to blame — Bourgeoisie or Victimised Labourers

The bourgeois media has been launching virulent attacks on the working class blaming it for crisis in industry in West Bengal and is justifying retrenchment as a consequence. Politicians of all the parliamentary parties and even the so-called lefts, saddled in power in West Bengal, are repeating the same anti-working class arguments. The present state of anti-politics sentiment of the common masses is providing a breeding ground for making acceptable such anti-working class tirade.

But are the media, are these politicians upholding truth? Let us study the facts supplied by the ruling CPI(M)-led Left Front.

*Labour in West Bengal*, a government publication, draws a grim state industrial scenario and unfolds the crises ridden capitalists' role behind it. In 1997, 174 factories were closed down. Additional 96,000 workers were thrown out of jobs. 90,00,000 mandays were lost. In 1996 the picture was no better. Additional 161 factories were closed in that year. In that very year 1,29,000 workers were newly retrenched. 1,20,00,000 mandays were lost.

Now the specific reasons. In 1997, out of the closed 174 factories, only in 24 factories work stopped due to workers' strike. Whereas number of lockouts by industrialists was 150. The participants in strikes were 7,930 workers and number of mandays lost due to it is 6,10,000. Whereas due to 150 lockouts, 88,490 workers were pushed to peril and 80,50,000 mandays were lost. Are not facts exposing the falsification of the media and the bourgeois servitors?

In 1997 workers called strike only in 8 factories centring round wage, bonus etc. The unhappy owners declared lockout only in 2 out of 8 factories – clearly showing that economic demands are not the basic reason of crisis. Due to financial failure of the management 35 factories suffered lockouts. Also, 61 factories were closed down due to disruption. This include disruption of

the management also. (Statistics referred to in *Sambad Pratidin* 21.1.99)

Let us take one recent instance. Hindustan Motors Ltd., owned by the Birlas, has reported a net loss of Rs. 10.94 crore in the third quarter of the current financial year 1998-99. The management is contemplating a cut in workforce by 7,000 out of a total of 10,000. It has moved the Calcutta High Court seeking permission for layoff. But, are the workers responsible for the loss? The reason lies elsewhere. The company has cited the present recession in the automobile industry and increased competition in the sector as the sole reason for seeking the flexibility to reduce its expenditure on the workforce.

That this is the general feature can be seen from what old automobile manufacturers like Telco and Ashoke Leyland did. These companies have been allowed to lay off by the Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu State governments under more or less similar circumstances.

Thus capitalists are shifting their own burden of crisis on the workers. The Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL) is moving towards closing 60 coal fields and retrenching about one lakh workers. Jute barons of Bengal are conspiring for wage freeze. Kesoram Textile mill has been closed. Dunlop has been closed. The sword hangs over bank workers. The list thus is endless.

In the meet held on 3rd January '99 at Raichak, glamorously named Destination West Bengal, the US based Consultant McKinsey & Company chief Ashwin Adarkar, had the insolence to blame labour militancy in this state for the crisis in the very presence of the CM Jyoti Basu. According to this representative of the capitalist class, labour militancy should be tackled first. And Mr Basu felt no pang of shame to utter that he gracefully accepted praise and criticism on the investment scenario of the state. Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya, a prominent CPI(M) leader, and the state police minister went a step

ahead to declare in that meet of the big houses that any militant movement would be crushed with a strong hand. Mr Bhattacharya earned special applause over his candid speech that day.

But what will happen to the workers, their families, their children? Will they survive, or rot and perish? Can our nation advance, which, the media, the CPI(M), the Congress and the BJP leaders claim ceaselessly to be their only concern, if the workers are hounded by hunger and persecution?

And these forces cry down any possibility of workers refusing to lie low, building up resistance, upholding their right to exist.

In fact, the CPI(M) and the Left Front government led by it has emasculated militant left movement to a large extent from within in West Bengal.

Yet the class is frightened of working class and working class movement. Despite allout attack to emasculate and crush democratic and workers' movement, it cannot be crushed completely, and a current of movement is flowing, getting stronger with time passing.

Frightened of this the ruling class is constantly slandering mass movement. Pointing to an isolated case of excess they try to denigrate the entire labour movement. They raise a hue and cry of legal propriety the way all despots do

But they prefer to remain silent when industrialists loot crores of money of Provident Fund, ESI fund, bonus and other workers' funds. They forget the question of legality then.

On the people the capitalists and their servitor governments' onslaught is constant. For us what is the way out? The solution is protracted mass movement against the onslaughts of the class and government. Let us unleash a mighty movement freeing ourselves from the confusion spread through the media. Unity of the working class and united movement on burning problems are of supreme importance. Let us plunge into it.

# Allocate for Revival of PSUs and Cut Expenditure on Military and Administration

(Contd. from page 2)

undertakings. Hindustan Steel Works Construction Ltd. is one such affected public sector concern. Workers of this concern are not getting their dues for several months.

The fallout of heavy cut in import duties has been widespread. It has cost both public and domestic private sector.

At the same time there has been a drastic fall in revenue collection, leading to rising fiscal deficit. On this ground the Government has announced heavy reduction in the allocation for budgetary support. This will result in continuous non-payment of statutory dues of the workers in PSUs.

## Price rise

Price inflation has reached a scandalous proportion this year. This is a direct fallout of Government's thrust on export of agricultural products, particularly food items. Simultaneously, the banks, with rising deposits because of the absence of demands for credit from large corporate sector suffering from recession, channelised its fund to the middlemen traders in agro-markets. This step by the banks helped the traders to go for hoarding, thus creating artificial

scarcity, which raised price level of food items to scandalous height. The workingmen, as a result, suffered from erosion of their real income. In the face of it the Government took no remedial measures, even as yet.

## Patent measures

Now, the Government is going to hurt the domestic pharmaceutical industry and peasant masses by implementing the Patent Act, a behind-the-scene commitment they made to the WTO.

The damaging effect on the pharmaceutical industry will directly hit the workmen with very real possibility of redundancy.

## Measures to be taken by the Government

Under these circumstances the Government should take the following measures :

1. Allot fund to run all the losing public sector enterprises. Stop winding up loss making PSUs like MAMC, RIC, National Instruments, Bharat Process, Cycle Corporation, Weigh Bird etc.
2. Give necessary financial aid so that the sick units of various industries be able to start working.
3. Provide fund to give guaranteed employment to the workmen of unorganised sectors.

4. Provide fund to ensure health-care and insurance for accident and accident-death to the workmen in unorganised sector. Government of India may give sufficient contribution to ESI Corporation to extend service to unorganised sector.

5. Fund to provide old age pension to the workmen of unorganised sector.

6. Allot fund to run subsidised public distribution system and to run wholesale trading in essential commodities.

7. The NPA (amounting to Rs.45000 crores) should be realised to avert sickness in Bank industry.

8. Allot fund so that tripartite industrial committees may run with a view to better functioning of the industries.

9. To bring down deficit in budget, the IMF prescription should not be blindly followed. Eminent economists of America and Europe have accused the IMF of accelerating the crisis to higher degree. The deficit may be minimised by bringing about austerity in administrative spending, drastic cut in spending on police, para-military forces and defence spending particularly in atom bomb expense.

## Convention by All India Save Education Committee at Jabalpur

Under the auspices of Jabalpur unit of All India Save Education Committee a Convention was held at the Makhanlal Chaturvedi Sabha Bhavan, Jabalpur on 10.1.99 to protest against privatisation, commercialisation and communalisation of education. Dr. Hari Krishna Tripathi, a senior citizen and educationist, Sri Shyam Sunder Sharma, an eminent journalist and editor of *Swatantra Mat*, Sri Debashis Roy and Dr Ramavatar Sharma, members of All India Save Education Committee of Calcutta and Sagar respectively, Dr Bharati Shukla of Hewabagh Mahila Maha Vidyalaya and Sri Gobinda Yadav, a student leader, were the speakers in the Convention. In the beginning Sri Binod Khare spoke briefly on the subject matter of the Convention. Prof Ashoke Ganguly of Indore, the State Coordinator of All India Save Education Committee presided over the Convention while Sri V. P. Biswas, programme coordinator conducted the Convention.

All the speakers stressed the necessity of developing mass movement throughout the country to resist the attempts toward privatisation, commercialisation and communalisation of education.

## Movement in Jeypore, Orissa

On 30.12.98 a procession rally and sit-in-demonstration organised by the SUCI at Kundura Block of Koraput district won the BDO's assurance for fulfillment of the demands.

The charter of demands included the purchase

of paddy by Government agency at Rs.400 per quintal, construction of a bridge on Kurlu stream and Holab river, issuance of BPL and APL cards, jobs for the unemployed, supply of essential commodities at fair price.

The movement was led by Comrades Surya Bisoi, Renubala Mohanty, Dhaneswar Majhi, Kumuda Gouda and others.

## Sit-in-demonstration in Malkangiri

On 30 December '98, our party SUCI in Malkangiri organised a protest march before the collectorate where a sit-in-demonstration was held for 24 hours, till 31 December. Memorandums handed over to the District Magistrate demanding special economic package; setting up of an industrial unit in the district, arrest the People's War Group miscreants who attacked SUCI workers, etc. The delegation was led by Comrades B Madhi, B Majhi, M Madhi, D Padiami and others.

## Demonstration in Moradabad

On 13 January 1999 in Moradabad a procession led by our party traversed through Gulabbari, Manda, Makbara, Gurhatti. It demanded steps against price rise, corruption, privatisation of education, squandering of relief fund by corrupt officers, etc. Before the SDO's office, Comrade Niraj Tyagi and at the Collectorate office Comrades Beer Singh, Gajram Singh, Munshi Ali Hussain, Intejar Hussein, Md Islam and Yasin addressed the rally. All urged to build up mass movements.

## Save Education Meet in Haryana

A State level Save Education Conference was held on 20 January last at Sushila Bhawan, Hissar against privatisation, commercialisation and communalization of education. Teachers, students, guardians and intellectuals of the state participated in the Conference. Brigadier O.P. Choudhury, the former Vice Chancellor of Maharshi Dayanand University inaugurated the Conference. Prof Narendra Sharma of the Delhi University was the Chief guest in the Conference. Sri Babunand Sharma, a senior citizen addressed the Conference. Others who spoke included Sri Omprakash, Sri Rammehar, Sri P.D. Verma and others. Dr H. L. Agnihotra, an eminent educationist presided over the Conference. A unanimous resolution with demands including banning of propagation of blind faith and superstitious beliefs through TV and other media was adopted. A state level Save Education Committee was also constituted in this Conference.

### CORRIGENDUM

Some errors crept up in the last two issues of P.Era. These are: P.Era, Jan 1, 1999 - page 8, column 1, para 4 should read: Patna: 'Anti Communalism Day'. P.Era, Jan 15, 1999, page 2, Column 1, para 1 line 16 should read: It means quick profits by shifting of fields by short-term capital usually called 'hot money'; page 2, column 2, para 2, line 8 it should read 'slump' not 'slums'; page 3, column 1, para 4, line 1 should read: It is further noted that 75 per cent of direct investment of global finance capital is divided into three centers of global capitalism - the United States, European Union and Japan - to the US mainly. A sharp competition between the three currencies of these big centers of world capitalist-imperialist camp before the US dollar etc.

The errors are regretted, - Ed. P. Era

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE