

Industrial Scene In West Bengal And Role of CPI(M)

The other day in the glowing morning light the body of a middle-aged man was found lying on the railway platform of Bandel in West Bengal. Amidst the bustle of the crowded platform when some porters were busy shifting the corpse to some corner, suddenly a worn-out dirty service book dropped out of his pocket onto the earth. That service book identified the man as a worker of the Ganges Jute Mill that was under lock-out for a pretty long time. Unable to bear the continuous strain of starvation he breathed his last unnoticed and disturbing nobody's peace. This, however, is not the solitary instance that has taken place in the state. In fact, from the whole workers' belt of West Bengal nowadays such news about starvation death, suicide or agony for remaining without food day after day has become a common occurrence.

Only in Panihati industrial belt of North 24-Parganas not less than 30 workers have lost their lives due to starvation. At Champdani in Hooghly district this starvation has taken a toll of 35 lives. The lives of about 120 workers of Bangodoy Cotton Mill of Sodepur which is under closure for last seven years, have sapped away. Belghoria has witnessed the tragic, unusual death of at least 100 workers of Bani Limited Co., due to hunger and want of medical treatment. What is more tragic is that 3 minors of an employee of the long closed down Guest Keen Williams Company being unable to withstand the strain of starvation any further have recently chosen the path of self-annihilation. These deaths are really grisly. Needless to say that these workers did also have their beloved ones and shelter and dream to live with. But in bitter frustration born out of poverty and endless misery they were slowly pushed to the abyss of death. No light of hope was there before them in their struggle against poverty and starvation that ultimately snatched away their lives. Though while alive they were perhaps buoyant once in fighting for Leftism holding aloft its banner, today the scene is one of unceasing death blows.

The whole of West Bengal today is caught up in the convulsive fever of industrial crisis. And its horrible backlash is the victimisation of thousands of workers. In fact, such spell of lock-out, closure, retrenchment, forcible retirement and lay-off did never occur earlier with such dreadful intensity as it has now. Dunbar Cotton Mill is under lock-out for 16 months, its 400 workers have been proceeding steadily towards a grim future; 4000 workers of Ranigunge Bengal Paper Mill have turned into beggars since 1983; about 4500 workers of Guest Keen Williams going out of employment since last one year due to lock-out, have been groaning under untold poverty; about 9000 wor-

kers of Keshoram Cotton Mill, the biggest spinning factory in the eastern region, are long out of employment and have been languishing under severest of afflictions. Added to this is the Central Government's unhesitating denotification of seven factories including Indian Rubber, Sridurga Cotton Mill, Mohini Mills and Bengal Potteries throwing thousands of workers into uncertain life. In Barrackpore industrial belt also the picture is the same. About 220 big factories have been closed down resulting in more than 1.50,000 unemployed. Throughout the country 1,47,770 industries have become 'sick' today and virtually closed down. Of these, West Bengal alone accounts for over 30,000.

These 'sick' industries, the government itself declares, are almost irrecoverable.

The picture of industrial relations in West Bengal is also very grim. A few instances may be mentioned to understand the situation better. It has been observed that to reopen the closed factories, the owners are imposing arbitrary terms and conditions like retrenchment of workers, extra workload etc. In Keshoram Cotton Mills the (Contd. on page 2)

Movement Against Police Gang-rape in Muzaffarpur

In condemnation of the crime and rape perpetrated by the Ahiyapur police on a number of women in the village Kolhua - Paigambarpur around midnight on 28th of December last, the Kolhua Police Julm Virodhi Sangharsh Samity, comprised of the SUCI, CPI, CPI(M), IPF and many other parties and social organisations, gave a call of Muzaffarpur Bandh on 6th January which created history through its totality marked by people's deep wrath and indignation.

On 28th December last at midnight about a dozen armed policemen from Ahiyapur P.S. in Kanti Block of Muzaffarpur district went to the village Kolhua and on the plea of searching out some criminal allegedly in connection with some crime committed elsewhere entered the houses and indulged in gang-raping of several women besides misbehaving with many others threatening the women of dire consequences if they cry alarm.

The victim women, the village people and some local organisations including SUCI moved

(Contd. on page 7)

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Karnataka Students On Warpath Against Black Ordinance

Students throughout the length and breadth of Karnataka have plunged into a glorious movement against the Black Ordinance — "Conduct of Examinations and Prevention of Malpractices Ordinance, 1988", clamped by Karnataka State Government which stipulates a fine of Rs. 2000/- and imprisonment of 3 months to those who are found indulging in malpractices in examinations and a fine of Rs. 1000 and imprisonment of 6 months to the teachers who boycott examination work. AIDS0 has been spearheading the agitation, giving proper guideline.

Every well-meaning student and teacher is always against adopting unfair means in examinations and it is also known to all that there are so many ways and means in the hands of the educational authority and the government for preventing such malpractices. Those have been used by the authorities since long and if those are now considered inadequate by the government or the authority it is for this reason that those are not properly utilised. And there was no necessity to formulate such draconian law for this purpose. Then what made the government formulate this Ordinance? In fact the government wants to arm itself with this law in order to prevent the growing unrest among the students because of sense of depriva-

tion arising out of this socio-economic setup of our country. In all the movements the students are at the frontline and hence to crush the movements taking advantage of this law is the obvious motive.

At a time when all other students' organisations failed to expose the real design of the Government and clarify the confusion among a section of the people, it was AIDS0 which gave the ideological direction and moral strength to the movement.

A State level rally against the Ordinance was organised on 28th December '88. Thousands of students from different districts of Karnataka rallied at Chicklabbagh in Bangalore at 11 A.M. The procession which was supposed to start at 11-30 A.M. got delayed due to many hurdles created by the police. The student leaders addressed the student gathering and placed the whole understanding and the real design of the ordinance and gave a call to the students who were ready to start the procession. Immediately the police surrounded the starting place — Chicklabbagh. Shouting slogans against the ordinance, when the students in a most disciplined way started to move, they were stopped by the police force. Resisting this, when student leaders pro-

(Contd. on page 4)

Only Aim Of CPI(M) Is To Earn Confidence Of The

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management has 'demanded' retrenchment of 1461 workers; in Guest-keen Williams 1800; in Metal Box 500; in India Jute Mill 450; in Hindustan Lever 253; in Meghna Jute Mill more than 1000 including casual labourers; and in the Ganges Jute Mill about 900 workers. In the Cycle Corporation of India a committee comprising union leaders has been set up to effect retrenchment of workers. However, even after retrenchment when the factories somehow open, the workers are not safe. They then face wage-cut, non-implementation of new wage agreement, compulsory forced self-retirement etc. Hence a way of gambling-like revelry is very much discernible among the owners of the factories and mills in West Bengal. The game is: 'lock out the factory and reopen it through black agreement on humiliating terms and conditions'. There is no interruption to it—no movement to thwart this game. Rather the CPI(M) in power is directly or indirectly forcing it. In fact, turning the workers into street beggars by snatching away their means of livelihood, and then palming off a heinous anti-labour agreement upon those starved and helpless workers, have become epidemical nowadays. Moreover, if these workers despite their boundless destitution dare opposing such abominable agreement, they are desisted from doing so through repression or oppression in many a way like disconnection of electricity supply, water supply etc. in their quarters. It matters little, however, if non-supply of water in the densely populated slums causes horrifying condition thereby bringing in its trail the killer epidemic; little also it matters if under such stifling poverty mothers and sisters of the workers find no other alternative than to sell their chastity, their dignity. Creating such disastrous situation the pet unions and the

owners raise the bogey of: 'let the hard reality be realised', 'the situation is very grave now', 'if opened, the dying workers of the mill might at least be able to live on a square meal' etc.! As if the workers are the beggars and the beggars can't be choosers!

Today, side by side with thrusting of lock-outs and black agreements on the workers, the owners are trying to transform the labour-intensive industries into capital-intensive ones. In the name of modernisation and computerisation thousands of workers are thrown out of employment. Where automation is introduced, both the marginal production and the marginal profit of the owners are increasing. So also the work-load on the workers but without any financial benefit.

Added to this is another ruthless feature causing grave apprehension among the toiling millions. Today, the owners are misappropriating with impunity the Provident Fund and Gratuity of the workers. This results in the workers' going back to their home penniless at the end of their long service life. The Government Statistics alone shows that till 31st December 1987 the owners and management of both the private and public sectors did not deposit Rs. 140 crores with the Provident Fund and Rs. 23.62 crores with the ESI Fund. Besides, the owners are misappropriating crores of Gratuity money and are depriving the workers of their bonus, too. The workers' slums nowadays are engulfed by darkness of despondency and dejection. Everywhere the dreary faces of the just turned-into-beggar workers witness the fierceness of crisis. Indeed, the spectre of hunger, death, disease and starvation is haunting each hut of the workers' slums today.

During the 50s, West Bengal occupied the premier position in industrial production in India. Today it has come down to

much lower position. The situation is deteriorating still further. Industrial crisis is not the only problem in West Bengal, it is coupled with tremendous unemployment problem, too. Apart from the unrecorded semi and disguised unemployment, the recorded number of unemployed throughout the country stands over and above 3.5 crores. Of these, West Bengal alone accounts for about 57 lakhs. As a matter of fact, whereas the population in West Bengal is only 8 per cent of the whole country, the number of unemployed there is registered at 17 per cent of the all-India figure. It is to be noted here when the 'Left Front' came to power in West Bengal the number of registered unemployed was around 13 lakhs.

(While the number of registered unemployed is increasing every year on an average of 3 lakhs, the rate of new employment is very negligible. During the past 6 years the number of employed has marginally increased by only 2000).

Leaving this apart there is another hidden feature in the industrial arena, which is also no less alarming. In West Bengal out of 35 unorganised sectors 16 have not yet implemented the Minimum Wages Act. Factories and mills are staffed with maximum contract and casual labourers etc. These labourers are deprived of all the benefits of a regular worker and are not provided with the job throughout the year even. With such a horrible industrial picture before us, the question is—why did this happen? How could such a shadow of crisis pervade the workers' life? Who is responsible for this? How could this go unprotested? Where from the owners get such audacity? And above all wherein does its solution lie?

West Bengal was once considered to be the citadel of democratic movements but nowadays such movement is the story of the past even in the face

of the relentless attack on the toiling millions. Despite random lock-out, rampant retrenchment and inhuman attack on the workers there prevails a grotesque tranquillity. Even the dying workers are listening to the incessant chant of the Government pledge to maintain peace in industries coupled with the assurance of the roundtable conference held in the air-conditioned room. Innumerable industrial disputes are kept in abeyance and gathering dust in the heaps of files at Writers' Buildings and the New Secretariat. What is more discernible is that the owners of the mills and factories are caring little about the Government instruction and adjudication..

Ascending the Governmental power in West Bengal in 1977 the CPI(M)-led 'Left Front' tried to persuade the toiling people that it was their Government; it would serve their interests only. So, there was no need of any movement now. The government in its capacity would solve the whole problem through collective bargaining and administrative fiat. Creating the mental make-up that 'government itself would get the people everything', a vile opportunism has been given birth to. And in its snowball effect the whole psychology of the mass movement has been virtually destroyed from within. Sitting in the cozy rooms of the ministers and bureaucrats the trade union leaders mostly of the CPI(M) now sip tea and raising the plea of 'necessity of the situation' provide theoretical cloak to their attitude to the movement. In fact, owing to such attitude of those great(!) leaders the so-called 'peaceful' structure of West Bengal is going to be buried. Today, while the number of strikes is negligible, the number of lock-out is on the steady increase in this state.

Year	No. of lock-out in West Bengal	No. of strike (including both token and protracted)
1981	11	43
1986	178	29
1987	192	39

Actually, when 2.4 crores of man-days are wasted every year due to lock-out, the strikes are going only in 7 factories at present affecting only 4,000 workers.. In this context it is worth remembering the role of the United Front in 1967 that comes in sharp contrast to the present situation in West Bengal. Guided by the thought of the great leader of the proletariat, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our party had been able to get the United Front adopted as its declared policy that 'police shall not interfere in legitimate democratic mass movement' and 'the government administration shall not depend upon the bureaucracy' which was first implemented by the then Labour Minister, the SUCI leader, Com. Subodh Banerjee, through his Ministry. This resulted in an unprecedented waves of movement in West Bengal. While the long deprived workers could achieve many of their demands, the capitalists were mortally frightened. That is why, coming to power, in 1977 it was the first task of the 'Left Front' to declare that the 'Left Front' was altogether different from the previous United Front. 'This time there is no SUCI among the constituents', 'Now there shall be no frequent movement', 'strike will be the last weapon of the workers' etc. Moreover, since the very induction to power in 1977 the CPI(M) leaders keep on appealing to and alerting the people in general and working class in particular to strictly maintain 'law and order' and 'peace in industry' in the state. They are also inviting the indigenous and foreign capital to West Bengal and always holding out the assurance to the capitalists that they would not face any 'labour trouble' in the state (as if the labourers themself

Bourgeoisie At The Cost Of Working Class Interest

ves create the 'trouble').

The main partner of the 'Left Front', the CPI(M), has of course, evolved a theory to cover up this policy. In fact, fitting their whole design under a theoretical cloak, they are trying to convince their supporters. The CPI(M) leaders argue that due to the policy of the Central Government, the capitalists are winding up their business in the Eastern region. They maintain that the Central Government is pursuing the policy of depriving the eastern region. So raising the slogan 'we shall not let West Bengal turn into a desert' the Left Front is endeavouring to hold back the capitalists through appeasement in West Bengal itself. They are urging upon the capitalists, including multinational corporations, to invest capital in this state to solve unemployment problem' here as if shortage of capital is the root cause of unemployment! Hence, to woo the capitalists they are pursuing the policy of 'all discouragement to workers' movement and all encouragement to capitalists to invest capital in the state'. If anyone raises the question of movement, the leaders retort: 'when the unemployed come for jobs can they be satisfied with Marxist jargons alone?' The question then naturally follows, when and where can Marxism be applied to? However, side by side this argument the CPI(M) leadership does not miss to buguile their rank and file saying that it is their tactical line. With this tactics applied, they contend, as the capitalists can be encouraged to set up new industries in the state on the one hand, so also can be protected the interests of the workers by virtue of their being in power, on the other. Consistent with this tactical line the 'Marxist' Chief Minister of the state, Mr. Jyoti Basu, is moving round the corner of the capitalists, both national and foreign, to develop intimacy with them. To appease them the CPI-

(M) leaders are going even to such an extent as to concede to them undue concession at the cost of the people's blood. For example, though the Goenkas have a minimum share in a joint enterprise with the State government which is, in fact, providing the lion's share of capital from the public exchequer, the former are given the privileges of major partner by the 'Left Front'. The Chief Minister, moving from door to door of the chambers of commerce, is trying to dispel the fears among the capitalists about communism. The capitalists too in response, are singing glory to the Left Front Government and its Chief Minister Jyoti Basu.

We are providing here a few examples of the utter betrayal and double standard of the CPI(M) and the CITU. In the very recent past the Northbrook Jute Mill has opened through agreement. In this Mill introducing wage-cut policy the monthly salary of a worker has been slashed to Rs. 875 suffering a loss of at least Rs. 350 per month. Moreover, the former owners of this Mill had misappropriated the P.F. and ESI money of the workers including a loan amount taken from the Bank of Bekarir guaranteed by the West Bengal government and Champdani Municipality, Hooghly district, to the tune of Rs. 15 crores. The Government claiming to be the 'instrument of struggle' could not even touch the hair even of that impostor owner.

But what is most ridiculous and heinous too is that the CPI(M) Bengali Daily *Ganashakti* has described such humiliating reopening of the factory in the following language:

"Consequent to the heroic and historic battle conducted by the workers under the banner of the CITU, the company is going to reopen". "The peep of a bright day is

there in the east", or, "thousands of workers shall enter into the factory with their heads high", etc. Consistent with this description the same *Ganashakti* shamelessly discovered the 'happy mood' of the workers who remained out of employment for long six and a half years due to closure! A tragic betrayal indeed! While due to the wage-cut, loss of P.F. and gratuity benefit the workers out of extreme sense of deprivation are grievously aggrieved, the *Ganashakti* has unabashedly taken the brief in favour of the owners. In the same vein, CITU, the CPI(M) labour organisation, has yielded to the wage-cut in Gourishankar Jute Mill and Empire Jute Mill. In the Empire, Jute Mill both the CITU and INTUC, however resorted to a novel method of deceiving the workers. There the agreement of wage-cut has been reached through a fake committee, as if neither CITU nor INTUC is responsible for this. We do not know if the CITU and INTUC leadership have been able to, through such finesse, cover up their blemished faces, but 2500 helpless workers of the Empire Jute Mill are very much alive to the black hands that played behind such a black agreement!

In this connection we want to mention that Mr. B. T. Ranadive while addressing the General Council meeting of the CITU held on 23rd September '88 at Dhanbad said: "It is true that reformists of all hues take the first opportunity of accepting adverse compromises facilitating plans of retrenchment, pleading that under crisis conditions retreat is essential and inevitable. Their tactics are intended to facilitate the employers' offensive. The CITU, on the other hand, relies on the workers strength and resistance and tries to get as favourable a bargain as possible in the most difficult circumstances. In the absence of combin-

ing militant resistance with flexible approach based on the resistance capacity on the workers false illusions are created among the workers and they are inveigled into disastrous agreements and often robbed of their Provident Fund earnings..."

(*People's Democracy*, October 2, 1988).

What can this speech of the CITU President be termed—honesty or deception? Is it not a fact that the role of the CITU today is much worse than that of the reformists as depicted by Mr. Ranadive in his speech above? It is, in fact, more than obvious nowadays that CITU is nakedly pandering to capitalist class. In other states the owners are preferring the CITU to even INTUC. Actually they are prevailing upon the workers to join the CITU. From our direct experience in North India we know, the owners are advising the workers 'if you at all desire to go under any red banner, join the CITU', but not the UTUC(LS)! What else can it be called other than utter deception when the President of this very CITU highly acclaims the struggling role of his organisation? Mr. Ranadive says, the reformists conclude agreement even conceding to retrenchment. Is it not true for the CPI(M)-led government and CITU too? Are they not doing the same thing by forcing the workers to swallow the black agreement? Besides, today the CPI(M) or CITU is supporting automation everywhere. Jyoti Basu, the CPI(M) Chief Minister, is openly asserting that computer is a must, even if that causes shedding of tears of the workers. Not only that; as the Central government is mischievously trying to throw thousands of workers out of employment by resorting to denotification of 7 companies in West Bengal, the 'Left Front' government too is set in the same process of trimming workforce in its own controlled factory in the

state. It is reported that in the state government undertaking of Kalyani Spinning Mills 1026 workers have been retrenched being declared surplus. Can one find by this any basic difference between the Congress and the CPI(M) in running the governments at the Centre and in the state respectively?

Mr. Ranadive sensing the all-India situation appears to be very much agitated over the fact that the owners of the mills and factories are desperately misappropriating the Provident Fund of the workers. But doesn't he know that it is in West Bengal where his party heads the government this is happening most frequently? In this state, the Central as well as State Government-controlled enterprises alone have not deposited about Rs. 140 crores to the Provident Fund. Pending cases relating to this are also maximum in West Bengal—about twenty thousand. And over the past 11 years of Left Front rule there can never be cited a single incident in which the Government has taken at least a minimum step against any of those unscrupulous owners who have defalcated the P.F. of the workers. It cannot be said, however, that there is no law in the hands of the government at least to put a check on, if not complete stop, to such heinous acts. What does it evince? Is it then an exaggeration if one characterises the labour department of the 'Left Front' as a department of the owners? The CPI(M) leadership must answer to this.

We know, deluded by the cunningness of the leadership a good many honest cadres, supporters and sympathisers of the CPI(M) including thousands of workers and common people of the State are made to believe that by avoiding movement and appeasing the capitalists industrialisation in the state is possi-

(Contd. on page 6)

KARNATAKA STUDENTS ON WARPATH AGAINST BLACK ORDINANCE

(Contd. from page 1)

ceeded further, police swooped upon the students. Com. Manjunath, State DSO President and Com. Uma, the State DSO Secretary were arrested and taken to the police station. Then students became more emotional and rushed like a turbulent stream to break the police cordon and to start the procession. At that moment, girl students who were at the front, were lathi-charged brutally and even slapped and stamped by the male police. Other student leaders, Com. Sriram and Com. Somshekar were

brutally beaten up and they got head injuries with heavy bleeding. Countless number of students were also beaten and chased away by the police. Later on 63 students, including 12 girls were arrested and taken into police custody and cases were instituted against them on false charges. Actually this attack of the police on students was motivated and directed by the Government to crush the movement to intimidate students. But the students, especially the girl students, faced the brutal attack of police undauntedly and boldly with de-

termination and conviction.

A protest meeting against police brutality was organised in Bangalore on 4.1.89. Hundreds of students from various colleges attended the meeting. Com. Uma who presided over the meeting in her speech condemned the police brutality which aimed at suppressing the students movement against the ordinance. She also analysed the ordinance as a motivated step to curb the growing student movements in future under the plea of curbing the malpractices. Condemning the act of the Government in send-

ing police to crush the movement, a resolution was placed by Comrade Suchetha and seconded by Com. Sriram. Student representatives from various colleges spoke against the inhuman attack by police on students and the resolution was unanimously passed. Com. Manjunath, in his concluding speech gave a call to the students to resist the draconian Ordinance and fight till it was withdrawn. At the end of the meeting a State level Committee, named Karnataka State Students' Action Committee Against Black Ordinance was formed with Com.

Manjunath and Com. Uma as joint convenors.

GULBARGA

A Protest procession of hundreds of students was taken out under the leadership of AIDS0 and students conducted the law violation in protest against police attack. About 70 students were arrested.

TUMKUR

Students and teachers boycotted colleges expressing their protest against lathi-charge of police and on the same day thousands of students took out a procession shouting slogans against the police brutality and later on a memorandum was submitted to the District Commissioner.

BELLARY

A successful "Bellary Education Institutional Bandh" was observed under the leadership of AIDS0 against police attack on State level movement against the Ordinance.

BLACK DAY OBSERVED

Responding to the call of the Karnataka State Students' Action Committee Against Black Ordinance, January 11th was observed as 'BLACK DAY' throughout the State. College-level gate meetings, Cycle Rallies, Protest meetings, Burning of a copy of the Ordinance were conducted in Bangalore, Bellary, Tumkur, Raichfur, Gulbarga, Channapattana and other places.



Protest meeting against Black Ordinance and government repression on 4th January at Hebbar Shri Vaishnava Sangha, Bangalore. Comrade M. N. Sriram speaking with his head bandaged as a result of lathicharge by police on 28th December. Sitting: (from left) Comrades M. Shashidhara, B. R. Manjunath and K. Uma.



Police stopping the students at the gate of Chiklabagh, Bangalore, the scheduled venue of the gathering on 28th December last.

CORRIGENDUM

We regret the errors which crept in the article on Bodo movement in the previous issue of P. Era and are giving the following corrigenda:

1. Page 2, 3rd Col. 37th line after the word 'Mizoram' the words 'and Meghalaya' is to be added and in the 41st line the words 'and making' are to be replaced by 'attempts to make'.
2. Page 2, 4th Col. 31st line the words 'may turn' to be read as 'turned'.
3. Page 7 Col. 4 in clause (d) 4th line 'may' is to be replaced by 'cannot'.

W.B. Education Convention against anti-people language policy

Under the auspices of the Siksha Sankochan Birodhi - O - Swadhikar Raksha Committee the All Bengal Education Convention was held at the Mahajati Sadan Hall in Calcutta on the 8th January last in order to chalk out programme of fresh movement against the anti-people language and education policy of the 'Left Front' government in West Bengal. Eminent historian Dr. Protul Chandra Gupta (Ex-V.C., Visva Bharati & Rabindra Bharati University) presided over the convention.

Thousands of guardians, teachers and students from all over the State attended the convention and the venue of the meeting was overflooded and the participants were compelled to stand outside the hall and on the road. Dr. Ajit Kumar Ghosh (Ex-Dean, Rabindra Bharati University), Dr. Aurobinda Bose (Ex-V.C., Jadavpur University), Dr. Manindra Mohan Chakraborty, (Ex-V.C., Jadavpur University), Dr. Asit Kumar Bandyopadhyay (Ex-

Head of the Deptt. of Bengali, Calcutta University), Prof. Hossenur Rahaman, Eminent litterateur, Sri Sailesh Dey, Sri Saibal Gupta and distinguished leader of cultural educational movement in the state, Comrade Manik Mukherjee, were present as speakers in the mammoth gathering. Due to his ill health eminent linguist and educationist Dr. Sukumar Sen could not attend the convention and his recorded speech was played

on in the house. All the speakers unequivocally and severely condemned the anti-people language and education policy of the 'Left Front' government and urged upon all to build up mighty movement in the State to force the government to change its harmful language and education policy.

A resolution demanding teaching of English and abolition of 'no detention' policy in primary level, scrapping the un-

scientific syllabus of English in Secondary level, introduction of mothertongue as the medium of instruction in all levels of education, ensuring autonomy of education in all levels were unanimously adopted in the convention. At the initial stage to mobilise public opinion in favour of the movement a programme of (a) intensive mass collection and propaganda on and from 9th to 12th January '89, (b) street corner meetings in Calcutta and mufassil districts, (c) holding education convention in all districts and (d) whole day sit-in demonstration at the Esplanade East in Calcutta on 3rd February was adopted.

Kerala School of Politics

A three-day School of Politics was held in Kerala from 24th to 26th December 1988 at Ermallikara, near Chengannoor Town in Central Travancore. Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, Central Committee member of our party, conducted the School in which 237 comrades from 9 districts attended.

It was announced in advance that due to shortage of time and considering the vastness of topics which are to be covered in the School, simultaneous translation into Malayalam will not be possible. Moreover, the school was organised with this clear idea that advanced theoretical questions based on party theses on international-national situation, current developments in the Soviet Union, Communist Code of Conduct and building up of the party will be dealt in the school. Hence, in addition to the party members, comrades having knowledge in English and having that standard to grasp the advanced theoretical question only took part in the school.

In fact, this school was the culmination of statewide programme for the uplift of ideological standard of the comrades starting at Local Committee level with study classes held by State Secretariat members and district level schools of Politics conducted by Comrade James Joseph, member, Central Editorial Board. This programme had been taken up since last 5th August, one by one.

State level School of Politics started with the song on Com. Shibdas Ghosh presented by DYU music squad. A thorough reading of the thesis on International situation was the next agenda and group discussions ensued which was held in a most lively air. Almost all the



Sitting on the dais : (from left) Dr. Asit Bandyopadhyay, Sailesh Dey, Dr. Manindra Mohan Chakraborty, Dr. Aurobinda Bose, Dr. Pratul Gupta, Manik Mukherjee, Dr. Saibal Gupta and Dr. Ajit Ghosh.



A portion of the audience at Mahajati Sadan, Calcutta on 8th January.

(Contd. on page 8)

W. B. Industrial Scene

(Contd. from page 3)

ble and the problem of unemployment would be solved and the state of West Bengal would progress as a whole. In other words, their inadequate political consciousness is very slyly exploited by the CPI(M) leadership in their interest. And to do this they have persuaded their honest and dedicated cadres that 'it is a temporary tactics'. Through industrializing the state in collaboration with the capitalists peacefully, they argue, they will surely baffle the conspiracy of the Central Government. Chanting this slogan of industrial development the CPI(M)-led government and the CITU ruthlessly are crushing the workers' movements and killing workers.

However, the inevitable crisis of the capitalist economy has blown up the colourful balloon of industrialization. Peace in industry today is unfurling its victory flag over the cold corpse of the workers. That is why the CITU leaders are singing on a different note now. Mr. Manoranjan Roy, the CITU Secretary of West Bengal, observes, 'those who speak of industrial crisis in West Bengal alone, fail to take note of its all-India character' (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 14th October 1988). Bravo! What an 'excellent analysis indeed! Actually, their wiliness is not working now; that has already been exposed. Hence this pitiful attempt at donning deceptive cloak! In fact, the very slogan, 'Left Front Government—an instrument of struggle' has now very oddly created a self-contradiction. Capitalist crisis has aggravated with each day passing by and is still aggravating further. And averse to fight against this crisis-ridden capitalism, the Left Front Government's so-called fight against the Central Government has, in fact, turned into mere paper statements.

The way the indus-

trial situation is being handled by the 'Left Front' Govt. in West Bengal reminds the teachings of a great leader of the Communist movement, Comrade Stalin who says:

"After the experience of Social Democrats in power, when they broke strikes, organised lock-outs and shot down workers, the false promises of 'industrial democracy' 'peace methods' of struggle sound like cruel mockery to the workers."

"...Needless to say, crisis will strike a crushing blow at all these and similar illusions."

Does it not sound a striking similarity with the present-day painful experience of the toiling millions in West Bengal? Is it not our party's analysis done over the past 11 years about the role and character of the 'Left Front' Government that admit to the above formulation of Comrade Stalin?

It is painful but true that to cling to the governmental power and to protect the interest of the bourgeoisie the CPI(M) leadership has now wholeheartedly deserted the working class except for some ostensible utterance in their favour now and then. Otherwise, Mr. Jyoti Basu could not say further in an address to the members of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India, an organisation of the monopolists, that "many trade unionists do not appreciate many things about running a factory. I suggest that the management meet them in our presence and lay all their cards before them. They should tell the workers what exactly the financial organisations demand of them. That will educate the workers. We have tried this approach in some of the State sector units." Mr. Jyoti Basu takes it for granted that the owners speak the truth, and what they submit as the grim situation of their industries alleged to be caused by workers' movement as

well as their profit and loss account maintained by them is also correct. Does it not convey a striking similarity with the attitude of the Congress (I) and other bourgeois leaders holding the reins of the Government both in the states and at the Centre? Further, from Mr. Basu's speech an ominous sign also looms large. That is, he advises the trade unionists to be the appendage of the management. No movement, no protest but unstinted support to the management's desire in the conduction of the factories and mills. He tries to make the people believe that the trade unionists in particular and trade union movements in general are irresponsible and have led to situation in the present-day industries.

But the experience of the hard reality speaks eloquently of how false and unreal these assurances are! Pushing the workers to die in starvation capitalism has once again proved that appeals and requests or means of reaching solution through roundtable conference are nothing but a mirage. It is to be remembered clearly that unless backed by movement, the demands for discussion are arrogantly trampled down by the owners. Hence to survive today is to organise resistance movements; the toiling millions will have to stand erect and resist onslaughts of the owners and their varied defenders. The crisis in the industries is the crisis of capitalism.

So to get rid of the crisis this capitalist system must be done away with and in its place a socialist system is to be established. And to achieve that the working class and other exploited masses will have to build up movement which on the one hand will resist the exploiters in doing whatever they like and on the other enrich the working class with experience regarding the hollowness of this democracy and the combatibility of the working class against various onslaughts on them. So let the pledge be

CITU plays disruptionist role in Joint TU Movement in Delhi

The Joint Action Committee of Trade Unions, Delhi comprised of UTUC (Lenin Sarani), AITUC, BMS, HMS, IFTU and UTUC has been launching a movement for past two years for the implementation of the minimum wages for workmen at the rate of Rs. 1050 per month with a flexible dearness allowance linked with Consumer Price Index at Rs. 2 per point increase. The Delhi Administration has come up with a proposal of Rs. 601 P.M. which has been refused by each and every Trade Union with one voice as inadequate.

Misery and privation being increasingly suffered by more than a million wage earners not covered by a need-based minimum wage structure have given rise to an intense resentment among them against government apathy and neglect towards their plight. A number of meetings, strikes and dharna and

deputations to the Lt. Governor of Delhi followed in which lakhs of workmen took part. The TUs also chalked out further plan of movement after the successful Token Strike on 16th November when the CITU which was a constituent of the committee all of a sudden unilaterally declared a 7-day industrial strike which met with a very poor response and which was virtually an attempt to disrupt the movement pregnant with the possibility of gaining further momentum and earning victory because it not only enjoyed the overwhelming confidence of all the workmen of Delhi but also could create cleavage among the owners themselves on this issue.

It is a known fact that CITU alone is not at all capable of leading the workers' movement let alone lead it to victory because it does not have that potentiality. That only the united movement of the TUs can lead the workers to victory was not at all unknown to the CITU and its disruptionist role last year cost so many workers their job when the CITU unilaterally called a 3-day strike and gave enough handle to the owners to retrench hundreds of workers who have not yet been reinstated.

The CITU this time too, has disrupted the movement from within and helped the owners in attacking the workers' movement with renewed vigour. The owning class also reciprocated by giving the CITU not only wide publicity through their newspapers but also unleashed a slander campaign against the 6 major Central Trade Unions by publishing reports full of utter lies which tantamount to yellow journalism.

However, in spite of playing such heinous role

(Contd. on page 7)

taken: no more appeasement, no more yielding to the hoax of industrial peace. Let us build up a united movement of the workers which can force the owners to concede to the demands of the workers and on the other hand to unmask the real character of the social democrats and thereby identify the genuine party of the workers which can guide them to their cherished goal.

Finally, we appeal to the honest and dedicated cadres of the CPI(M) and CITU to come back to the path of movement and build up a united movement if they really want to save the working class of this state from this predicament. For, it is only through the united trade union movement that this all-out onslaught on the working class can be resisted to some extent at least and the dignity and nobility of the working class can be held high.

Gang-rape by Police in Muzaffarpur

(Contd. from page 1)

the matter before the District Collector and other high-ups of the Police department in the district demanding investigation into the incident and punishment for the culprit policemen but all their efforts went in vain. The Collector, a woman herself, preferred to attempt to wash clean the police of all allegations by saying that on enquiry she found that there was no raping. But when Daulatia Devi, one of the victims of gang-rape, appeared before the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court and lodged her complaint against gang rape on her and others by policemen the Collector and police administration's heinous design to suppress the issue got exposed. This must have infuriated the administration very much. And probably this was the reason why on 6th January even though the Bandh was total and peaceful the police lathi-charged creating situation for that at three places and injured many. The DIG along with the police force stationed in his

Owners back CITU against joint movement

(Contd. from page 6)

by the CITU, the Joint Action Committee of Trade Unions tried to bring the CITU to the track of joint movement but it kept mum to the invitation and letters sent by the Committee. Meanwhile the Committee organised a day-long dharna and rally in front of the old Secretariat in which more than 5 thousand workers from all walks of industrial field took part on 20th January when the Minimum Wages Advisory Board held its meeting at the office of the Executive Councillor (Health). The rally was addressed by prominent TU leaders.

office attacked the processionists and personally brutally assaulted Com. Satyanarayan Thakur, the Convenor of the Shangharsh Samity. On the same day later police arrested about 30 workers and leaders of different parties while they were holding meeting in the Town Hall. Arrested leaders included Com. Shivshankar, the Muzaffarpur District Secretary of SUCI, Com. Arun Kumar Singh, President, All India DSO, and Com. Md. Idris, member of the District Committee, SUCI, Muzaffarpur.

The police raided the District Office of SUCI at Moti Jheel, Muzaffarpur, after midnight the same day.

On 11th January women belonging to different women's organisations including the Muzaffarpur unit of Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan sat in day-long Dharna at Kalyani Chowk, Muzaffarpur, in protest against the police atrocities and demanding judicial probe into the incident of 28th December and release of all persons arrested in this connection. From the Dharna spot the police arrested SUCI activist Com. Rajesh Shabi.

On 13th January at the call of the Sangharsh Samity people marched through the important streets of Muzaffarpur city in a silent procession in protest against the police repression and the anti-people attitude of the government and the administration. The procession could not be started from the Company Bagh Maidan from where it was scheduled to start as heavy police mobilisation from the morning that day virtually sealed all entry points to the area. Even then the procession was a fairly large one which ultimately converted into a mass meeting near the Collectorate. The meeting was addressed by Com. Shankar Singh, veteran member of the Central Committee of the SUCI, Com. Chaturan

Mishra of CPI, Com. Krishna Kant Singh of CPI(M).

Com. Shankar Singh in his speech stressed the strengthening of united democratic people's movement as the real way to assure security and safety in social life of the people against the steadily deteriorating law and order situation under the present Congress(I) misrule. Emphasising the urgently needed democratisation of the police in the country Com. Singh criticized the Bihar Police Association for its stand in defence of the rapist and guilty policemen.

Poets of International Fame Launch Stir For Compensation to Bhopal Gas Victims

The "Zahreeli Gas Kand Sangharsh Morcha", a committee fighting against the Union Carbide of Bhopal for the compensation for victims of the gas disaster of 1984, undertook a novel method of their movement by collecting signatures from twenty-three poets of international fame from 16 countries and sent a memorandum to the US President on 15th January last for taking steps against the Union Carbide Corporation so that the Bhopal Gas victims get their due compensation as early as possible. The copy of the memorandum was also sent to the UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and the Indian Prime Minister.

It may be noted here that some of the poets enjoy the confidence of lakhs and lakhs of their countrymen who on past occasion mobilised behind them. Some of those poets from Cuba, Indonesia, Chile, Nicaragua and Nigeria also had suffered uncalled for torture and repression at the hands of their respective governments earlier.

The memorandum

Movement for proper compensation in Talcher

In protest against the Orissa government's undervaluation of 3500 acres of land of 15 villages in Talcher area for establishing the Talcher Super Thermal Project the people of 15 villages under the auspices of SUCI held a meeting on 20th January at Dalki grounds in Kania block of Talcher in which Com. Mayadhar Nayak, eminent mass leader of Orissa and General Secretary of Sukinda Upatyaka Mines Workers' Union was the main speaker with Sri Naresh Chandra

Pradhan in the chair.

Com. Nayak said in his speech that the Orissa government's declaration of compensation of Rs. 12000 to Rs. 42000 per acre of land depending on the category was a sheer deception to the people and demanded at least Rs. 2.5 lakhs an acre for the patta land and Rs. 1.75 lakhs for the government land occupied by the villagers, a job in the thermal project for one member of each family and proper rehabilitation of families in the event of their eviction. He said whereas the current price of the land in the area was Rs. 2.5 lakhs per acre and whereas the land near the National Aluminium Company fetched still higher price, the State government by its declaration of much lower price was depriving the people of crores of rupees. He said the government must be forced to yield to the just and legitimate demands of the villagers through a mighty mass movement.

Later in the meeting an action committee in the name "NTPC Khatigrasta Gana Sangram" was formed with Com. Nayak as its president. Sri Bhagirathi Pradhan as the acting president, Sri Bibhudendra Pradhan as its secretary and Com. Bishnu Das, SUCI leader, as organising secretary. The Committee decided to stage a mass rally of much bigger dimension later in the week with at least 20,000 people in front of the Kania BDO's office. The committee also decided to submit to the BDO a memorandum containing signatures of the villagers and their three demands and resolved to continue the movement till these demands were met.

demanding of the US President to confiscate the properties of the Union Carbide Corporation of USA all over the world and pay the compensation and long term medical relief and rehabilitation to the gas victims. The memorandum urged upon the US President to immediately get released the 200 million dollar insurance cover of the UCC in favour of the victims by the US insurance company.

Com. Alok Pratap Singh, Convenor of the Morcha, released the letter to the Press on 16th January. He said the poets pledged to launch signature campaign in their respective countries for mobilising world public opinion in favour of the gas victims and against the toxic merchants of the imperialist countries who are experimenting their products on the people of the Third World Countries.

Joint TU Rally in Calcutta against anti-labour stance of State Government

At the call of six Central Trade Unions, UTUC(LS), HMS, BMS, NFIU, IFTU and AICCTU, a massive protest rally of workers and employees was organised before the State Labour Department and the Office of the Provident Fund Commissioner on the demand of im-

cern was expressed over the unprecedented situation in public life of the State created by rampant lock-out, closure, retrenchment etc. and the role played by the State government in this critical juncture as also over systematic default of the owners in respect of depositing P.F. contribution

Moreover, after declaring lay-off and lock-out the owners are compelling the workers to sign black agreements completely detrimental to their interests whereas the same are being concluded at the direct or indirect instance of the government or the State Labour Department..



A portion of the mammoth workers' rally. Comrade Fatik Ghosh, eminent trade union and mass leader, addressing the gathering in front of the Labour Department, West Bengal.

mediate reopening of all closed mills and factories without any precondition and arrest of all owners misappropriating employees' P.F. and ESI funds and on other trade union demands on 29th December last in Calcutta. Thousands of workers and employees from each and every district of West Bengal joined the demonstration.

In the memorandum submitted to the State Labour Department and the Commissioner of Provident Fund grave con-

to the Fund. In the memorandum it was stated, at this moment, at least three lakh workers stood jobless due to lay-off, lock-out and retrenchment in the State and suicide death and starvation death had been the order of the day. The owners including the Central and the State government undertakings and sectors, have not deposited P. F. contributions amounting to Rs. 140 crores to the Fund and the government's role in this regard is simply that of a silent spectator.

All the speakers in the meeting severely condemned the anti-working class attitude of the 'Left Front' Government and urged upon the government to convene immediately tripartite meeting or discussion on the grave industrial situation of the State. Comrades Fatik Ghosh (UTUC - LS), Bhajan Dasgupta (HMS), Rashbehari Moitra (BMS), Anil Sen (NFIU), Phani Bagchi (IFTU) and Tapan Batabyal (AICCTU) jointly led the massive workers' rally.

DYO Seminar in Moradabad

The Joya Local Committee of DYO in Moradabad district of UP organised a seminar against unemployment, obscenity, communalism and Safdar Hasmi's murder on 14th of January last at the Town Hall, Joya. The seminar was presided over by Dr. Iqbal, member of the Town Area Committee and was convened by Comrade Rakesh Kumar Tyagi, local DYO organiser.

The speakers in the seminar, among others, were Comrades Rajbal Tyagi, Moradabad District Secretary of the party and Com. Gambhir Singh, member of the State Organising Committee of DYO, Sheel Kumar, B. N. Sharma, Sri Ram Chandra, Dr. Mahendra Singh Malik, Sri Munshi Hanif and Sri Arwar Saheb.

Com. Rajbal Tyagi in his speech said: The ruling class is destroying the moral values of the youth in our country to perpetuate its rule and the responsibility has devolved on the youths to fight against this moribund capitalism.

Com. Gambhir Singh said: The DYO is the only organisation in the country which genuinely fights for the cause of the youth and other youth organisations are helping the ruling class through their activities.

Four resolutions were adopted in the seminar one of them being on the gruesome murder of Safdar Hasmi. It was sent to the governor of UP and other three were sent to the President of India.

Kerala School of Politics

(Contd. from page 5)

participants took active part in the deliberation exhibiting serious attempt on each one's part to acquire a thorough understanding on the subject. Questions raised for further discussion in the school also reflected their better theoretical aptitude and standard.

Thorough dealing of all such advanced theore-

tical questions and Communist Code of Conduct in the light of the teachings of our beloved departed teacher and guide Com. Shibdas Ghosh was made by Com. Krishna Chakraborti. The School and 3 days of camp life proved to be an unforgettable experience for all comrades in their course of revolutionary training and learning. The School ended with the Internationale.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF—COMRADE NIHAR MUKHERJEE

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