

Let this historic event augur a good beginning

Let the hope expressed in the Sino-Indian joint communique come true. Let the clouds of mistrust, misunderstanding and bitterness existing between the two great neighbours of Asia be removed by the winds of goodwill to usher in an era of mutual trust, respect, co-operation and joint efforts in the interest of the peoples of the two countries as also of the globe.

The recent six-day visit of the Chinese Premier, Li Peng, to this country has opened a new avenue for re-establishing mutual relations and good neighbourliness that were absent for more than three decades centring round a border dispute. In fact, the dispute on the Sino-Indian border and a clash that ensued had not only generated

between India and China which virtually existed from time immemorial is of supreme importance. Both sides realised that it was high time they forgot the past and so both the countries had taken steps for visit by a top-level statesman as a prelude. Hence the visit of the Chinese Premier, Li Peng, from 11th to 16th December last. At the end of Li Peng's visit a joint communique was issued which reflected the prudence and wisdom of both sides who did not at all insist on solving the border dispute first. Rather, from their experience they learnt that no sensitive issue can be solved without a congenial atmosphere being created. So to promote this relation they outlined several measures like economic,

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Central Committee On Li Peng's Visit

Warmly welcoming the Chinese Premier Mr. Li Peng's long-awaited visit of India, the General Secretary of the SUCI, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, in course of a statement on 9th December, expressed hope that apart from strengthening further the traditional unity and friendship between the peoples of these two great countries, and advancing further towards a final settlement of the outstanding border disputes on the basis of mutual respect and mutual interest, this historic visit would also contribute towards maintenance of world peace and in effectively containing the growing influence of the imperialists, particularly the domineering postures of the US imperialists.

Central Committee Presents Address of Welcome

Comrade.

Along with the millions of toiling people of India, the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Centre of India extends its warm welcome to you. Long have the people of our country looked forward to this occasion, desiring reinforcement of the traditional bond of friendship and unity between our two peoples. And memories well up at this hour of the visit of Premier Zhou Enlai to this country three decades back.

This visit of yours is historic, setting a landmark in the history of mutual respect and co-existence of the two ancient cultures, China and India. We always believed, and we are fortified in our belief today, that your visit will pave the way farther towards an amicable settlement of the border dispute between our two countries in the best interest of the two peoples.

In the background of the current international developments an even greater significance marks out this occasion. People's struggles across the world for national liberation and revolutionary social trans-

formation are faced with greater danger today than ever before. The imperialists, particularly the U.S. imperialists, are taking increasingly more menacing posture now to threaten freedom, peace, security and sovereignty of countries the world over. At this period of grave crisis the need of the hour, above all, is to forge broader unity of all communist and workers parties throughout the world. Unitedly must we succeed to ward off this threat and sustain world peace. Your visit, we believe, will contribute in a great measure towards building united efforts by China and India to achieve this end.

May your visit help to forge the friendship and fraternity of our two peoples in furtherance of their common goals.

Dated : Sd/- Nihar Mukherjee
Calcutta General Secretary
11th December, 1991 SUCI

[Comrade Pritish Chanda, Member, Politburo of the party; handed over this Address of Welcome to Comrade Li Peng on 15th December.]

UTUC(LS) protest anti-labour amendment act

Comrade Tapas Dutta, General Secretary, UTUC (LS) has issued the following statement on 7.12.1991 on the recent amendment to Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act.

"Deliberately trampling on the country-wide protest recorded by the millions of workers of private and public sectors and trade unions against the new industrial and fiscal policies, the central government led by the Congress(I), backed by overt and covert support of the Opposition parties in the Parliament, has secured passage of the utter anti-working class amendment to Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, empowering government to refer the Sick Public Sector Industrial units to BIFR which has already earned notoriety for issuing death certificates to sick industrial units.

This, once again proves that the govt. is determined to implement 'exit policy' throwing thousands of workers out of employment.

We strongly protest against this anti-working-class amendment, and demand, once again, complete withdrawal of New Industrial Policy and call upon the working millions and trade unions to develop and continue a determined united resistance struggle against the New Industrial Policy, imposed by force, on the working people of India.

mutual distrust, animosity and hatred detrimental to the interest of both the nations and their people, but also gave ample opportunity to the imperialists and other reactionary forces to fish in troubled waters. But, following counterrevolutions in the Soviet Union and East European countries, which once worked as the guarantor of sovereignty of the nations against imperialist interventions and of the world peace, a sea-change has taken place in the international arena, giving the imperialist powers, especially the US imperialists, almost an unbridled scope to pursue their predatory role the world over with renewed vigour.

In the backdrop of this grim international picture, the necessity of rapprochement

industrial, agricultural, educational and cultural exchanges between the two countries which will in course of time pave the way for a friendly atmosphere conducive to the settlement of the border dispute, an imperialist legacy no doubt, keeping option open for time-to-time discussions at military level and strictly maintaining the line of actual control. Another noteworthy feature achieved through discussions is that none of the leaders allowed issues like Kashmir and Tibet stand on the way of renewing the accord, though some interested circles tried to raise these questions.

If we analyse the joint communique some salient features cannot be lost sight
(Contd on page 8)

SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRIAL STRIKE ON 29th NOVEMBER PROVES WORKING CLASS REJECT NEW INDUSTRIAL & FISCAL POLICIES

Industrial and commercial activity in almost all parts of the country was thrown out of gear on November 29 last in response to the country-wide 24-hour Industrial Strike called by eight central trade unions including the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) in protest against the Union Government's industrial and economic policies. Apart from West Bengal, where the strike took the form of general strike and hartal, things came to an almost standstill in Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Most of the industrial units and commercial centres came to a grinding halt in Karnataka, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, etc. Barring Tripura and Sikkim the industrial strike evoked fairly good response from the toiling millions in rest of the states.

If the response from the service sector be any guide, then the vast multitude of the working people expressed their burn of indignation that had been brewing in their hearts as a result of ruinous new Industrial and Economic Policies by totally boycotting for the day such sectors as banks, LIC and General Insurance and most of the public sector units including the central and state government offices spread over throughout the length and breadth of the country. Perhaps the Press media contrary to their estimation could not foresee such a convincing response of the teeming millions and that is why even the country's sole news agencies, UNI-PTI, also had to describe the Industrial Strike as ".....a partial to total response." Although serious efforts as expected on the part of the major central trade unions to mobilise public opinion were not up to the mark, yet the response so evoked demonstrated in no uncertain terms the rejection of the out and out anti-people, pro-monopoly industrial policies of the Narasimha Rao Government by the working people as a whole.

When working people were groaning under the wheels of capitalist state machine, ceremonial announcement of new Industrial Policy in July last, euphemistically aimed at revitalization of the Indian economy unfolded as a grim tragedy ever experienced in workers' life. In the face of inhuman

sufferings and frustration galore, for millions of them, the response to the strike action manifested a hard reality in their life about the impending catastrophe due to befall them and, to that extent, it was no mean a show of strength to rise against all odds and adversity to register such a success. We heartily congratulate and share all glory to the Industrial Strike of the Indian working people on 29th November.

The success has been made possible by the working people's strong resentment against Rao Government's anti-people misrule. Within days of assuming office, the minority Central Congress(I) Government had been unabatedly putting crushing burdens, one after another, on the shoulders of the common people with impunity. In quick succession, anti-people fiscal onslaughts, the so-called New Industrial Policies, the Railways and General Budgets, besides steep devaluation of Rupee etc. have set forth an untold and unprecedented sufferings for the vast multitude of the people. What to speak of waiting for 2-3 years more to attain the promised 'bright future', if one goes by the official figures about the percentage of rise in all the daily consummable items index, it is really alarming even by Indian standards. Steep galloping price rise in most of the primary articles is playing havoc with the common men for mere sustenance. Over and above, they are now on the constant threat of being thrown out of employment, thanks to privatization spree let loose by the New Industrial Policy formulation of Rao Government. As a result, the toiling people are passing through agonizing moments of uncertainty and insecurity in the daily life.

The privatization drive aimed at firing the workers are now on the doorsteps. To name a few, the mining and heavy engineering sector, Mining & Allied Machinery Corp. have listed 400 labours for retrenchment with another 1300 to follow the ominous course quickly thereafter. Central Inland Water Transport came out with notification that the employees who had already completed 35 years of service or

attained 55 years of age would, perforce, have to retire. Then again, Jute Corporation of India is preparing a list of 2200 employees for effecting a forced retirement. Besides, by declaring eight public sector units sick and having referred them to the Bureau of Industrial Finance & Reconstruction Corporation (BIFR) for their future, the Union Govt. is all set to fire those working in these 8 units. Reports trickling in the Press suggest that Scooter India Ltd., National Bicycle Corp., Cycle Corp. of India, Bharat Ophthalmic Glass etc., are on the list of sick units. In the absence of any alternative programme for employment before them, with closure of such sick units awaiting from sometime past, thousands of workmen of these industrial concerns are sure to lose their jobs sooner than later. The grim reality gets its corroboration in one premier English daily the other day. It commented in an editorial, on 1st December, that the Union Minister of State for Labour was not forthright in public statement to carry through the 'revitalization' scheme by which, according to it, in the public sector, alone, "around 800,000 workmen will have to be given the 'golden handshake', not to speak of the private sector which will have to go through the process."

Apart from resorting to autocratic measures to foil the strike, which has now become a routine affair before any democratic movement, various spokesmen of Central Congress(I) Government, including some columnists and critics in the mass media, went even this far as to exploit innocent people's humane sentiment. Like all previous occasions when people's voice of resentment gets a united face through Bandhs or General Strikes and Hartals against the owning class or misrule of the Government these gentlemen through mass media come up nonchalantly to suggest that when law of the land offered ample opportunities to settle any demand through peaceful negotiation across the table, going to the path of strikes and bandhs does not lead the workmen to anywhere near

(Contd. from page 2)

settlement of disputes. Rather, it creates chaos and dislocation of production system. Negotiation with whom and what for? Can there be any negotiation with a government, either at the Centre or in the State, which not only always ignores the legitimate aspirations and the demands of the people but also ruthlessly suppress and muzzle the voice of them? In the instant case, the New Industrial Policy manifests itself to meet all the demands of the private monopoly houses at the cost of sucking out all resources of the country's economy with further pauperising the poor countrymen. So, when the state run by the Congress(I) Government launches the ever most savage attack on the toiling people in order to serve and safeguard the Indian monopolists, can there be any earthly reason for any organization worth the name with a modicum of dignity and honour to sit for a negotiated settlement with the Govt. simply in response to these pious platitudes of the spokesmen of ruling capitalist class? Does not the Govt. know that employers violate provisions of law with impunity for labour welfare, various recommendations of number of wage boards for providing at least a living wage to the workmen? Why crores of rupees of Employees' Provident Fund and ESI Scheme are grabbed, in violation of statutory law, by the employers year after year who go scotfree without any punishment? Why the employers violate indiscriminately safety and social security measures for the workmen to which they owe statutory obligation? Ever since the days of independence when the people are constantly subjected to grinding poverty, retrenchment, forced retirement, lock-out, lay-offs and host of other burning problems tormenting people's life daily, as before, and successive bourgeois governments remain silent spectators towards their sub-human existence, what are the purpose other than self-deception to sit with the Govt. for discussion? Thus, when the state has become subservient to the monopolists and the state run by the Congress(I) shamelessly abdicates its minimum responsibilities to the people, only to further the interests of private monopoly capital, the congenital charlatan or lackeys of the ruling exploiting class only can advocate opening of dialogues with the Govern-

ment on the negotiating table by accepting the terms dictated by the government. Similarly, question of daily wage earners, also is raised to confuse the public opinion. What a cruel joke! Have they ever felt any qualm for the wretched condition and distress of the teeming millions who starve, rot and die daily? Surely for it, people's united action expressed through strike or bandh is not responsible. Rather, what they want to hide the hard fact is that Congress(I) Government's fiscal savagery in the forms of skyrocketing price-rise, steady erosion of wages, etc., had created the present grim poverty which crushes and kills the vast masses every moment?

The mischievous arguments put forth by such gentlemen at large do not stop here. The bogey of 'national loss' to the detriment of 'national interest' very often finds a fertile ground among the nonpolitical confused masses. Answer to such questions should meet with equal contempt

Industrial Strike

they deserve. To raise the bogey of 'national interest' on the eve of any Central strike etc., or to dub it as 'anti-national' is equally wrong. None should forget that our nation is not an undivided homogeneous whole; it is divided into different classes. On the one side are the Tatas, Birlas, Singhanias, Ambanis and such other monopolists, the capitalists, the jotedars, the top bureaucrats, the agents and lackeys of the exploiters. On the other side are the workers including agricultural labours, landless and poor peasants, lower middle peasants, lower middle class and other exploited masses of the Indian people. The Indian nation thus is broadly divided into exploiters and the exploited. Whether one likes it or not, the social forces in our country today are historically placed in this way with definite and distinct class interests and corresponding historical roles to play. There cannot be any idea or act in such a class-divided society which is supra-class and serves the interests of both the exploiter and the exploited alike at the same time. Now if the people constitute the 'nation' then what serves the interest of the overwhelming majority of the people is national while what does

not serve the interest of the people but serves the interest of the microscopic minority of exploiters is surely against the nation and its people. Everywhere in the capitalist countries, making use of the 'national interest' as a plea, the capitalists and their henchmen usurp people's love for motherland to intensify their ruthless exploitation. So any loss in national income sustained on such occasions is actually some decrease in the capitalists' super profits. It is urgent to note in this context that broadly speaking, the national income in a capitalist country means income of the capitalists of the state taken together. So whatever loss in terms of super profits of the capitalists is sustained due to strike or a bandh is actually realised ten times, nay thousandfold, from the starving people in course of time.

From the people's point of view, it is the harsh reality that people's organized movement is built up, bit by bit, at the cost of great sacrifices and even at times, at the cost of life. The case is not such that, at one's pleasure or whims or anything like that, such movement is developed. On the contrary, life's experience tells that it is the unbearable burning problems in people's life that pushes them to the path of organised democratic mass movement, from one plane to still higher one for realisation of their legitimate demands. And for that, problems never allow a suffering man for all time to come bleed silently. Life's burning problems and for that maintaining sustenance would compel the masses to the path of movement and when thrown in the midst of battle, fight and win victory or perish, becomes the natural outcome of struggle. For the exploited millions, history is replete with the saga of mass movements without which there is no other way than to survive and advance with dignity and honour.

Glimpses of the Industrial Strike that daily trickle in the Press as also through our organisation channels in 22 different states, suggest that with a great enthusiasm toiling people all over the country participated in the last strike action. It confirms, at the same time, that given a call of movement upholding the genuine cause of the working people, people's suppressed feeling gets roused and naturally finds its reflection in mass participation.

(Contd. on page 6)

BJP's Ekta Yatra will only widen communal & parochial divide

After the riotous Ratha Yatra resulting in communal bloodbath throughout the country before the last Lok Sabha Polls, the BJP has launched a new variety of Yatra, viz. Ekta Yatra, which will cover 14 states and terminate at Srinagar on the 45th day. The ostensible purpose of this Yatra is for doing away with Article 370 of the Constitution, campaign against terrorism and divisivism and for maintaining the unity and integrity of the country. To one who is not so acquainted with the BJP variety of politics, all these purposes may seem laudable and it may seem to him that Article 370 of the Indian Constitution is anomalous. But the utterances of the BJP leaders and the carefully selected route of the Yatra, touching all the sensitive spots including Ayodhya and terminating at Srinagar will speak volumes about the real intent of the BJP. The country has witnessed the result of the Ratha Yatra. The sanctity of all democratic and secular values was ravaged and human lives were lost for petty parliamentary gains. Now the leaders of the same BJP which launched this Ratha Yatra for creating and widening the communal divide of the people, are trying to hoodwink the people with the talk of the unity and integrity of the country. But the gap between the profession and the practice widens when just after launching the Ekta Yatra, Dr. Murali Manohar Joshi, the BJP leader, says: "Muslims are Hindus because they live in Hindustan. If you call yourself Indian, you are simply calling yourself a Hindu in English." Will such an outrageous statement create an atmosphere congenial to the strengthening of unity and integrity of the country?

The BJP leaders are trying to create confusion among the people by raising and distorting such issues for which the people might have some misgivings. The Article 370 of the Indian Constitution is one such issue. Before dealing with this issue which is linked with the sensitive Kashmir question, we like to state that one should have a logical approach and a mind free from bias and unreasonable emotion and any pre-conception in analysing such a sensitive issue. So when the demand for scrapping of the Article 370 of the Constitution is raised one should have a clear idea why this particular Article was incorporated and whether the purpose for the same has been exhausted. It is no doubt a fact that Article 370 of the Constitution was incorporated as a temporary measure when Hari Singh, the then Kashmiri ruler, signed the 'Instrument of Accession' to the Indian Union and the National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah lent full support to this move of Hari Singh. It may be pointed out here that the National Conference was in the forefront of the anti-British and anti-feudal struggle of the Kashmiri people and in fact this political organisation alone reflected the patriotic hopes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The anti-British and anti-feudal struggle of the Kashmiri people developed

separately and was not in the mainstream of the Indian freedom movement though due to geographical contiguity there was a close affinity between the two. So with the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union the political integration has become complete, but the task of emotional and cultural integration remains unaccomplished. So the necessity of Article 370 was felt at the time of accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union as a temporary measure till the task of bringing the Kashmiri people to the mainstream of Indian body politic is complete. When the provision of Article 370 was incorporated in the Constitution for safeguarding the interest of the Kashmiri people till they were brought in the mainstream of Indian body politic, Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee who seems to be the source of inspiration to the BJP leaders, did not raise any objection in the Parliament to the incorporation of this provision. On the contrary, he supported this provision because of the objective reality. As long as this objective reality does not change this Article 370 should not be scrapped. But the question is what steps and measures the successive central governments have taken to hasten this process in bringing them into the Indian mainstream. If we analyse the policies of the successive central governments we could easily

see that these policies have further and further alienated the Kashmiri people and because of ignoring this task the Kashmiri people are now feeling let down. The government did not adopt any economic development policy and no programme for industrialisation of Kashmir has been taken. Right from Pandit Nehru to Smt. Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and the BJP-supported NF government, all of them took such steps and imposed such political decisions arbitrarily and highhandedly that instead of accelerating this process of bringing them into the Indian mainstream those helped create a sense of apprehension and suspicion. The arrest of Sheikh Abdullah by Pandit Nehru, the attempt to create cleavage in the National Conference by Smt. Indira Gandhi and the whimsical shufflings of the Chief Ministers one after another by the successive Congress governments are but a few instances to show how the psyche of the Kashmiri people was severely wounded and as a result a sense of injured feeling developed among the Kashmiri people.

At least after the installation of the NF government the Kashmiri people expected a change of policy from the previous Congress(I) governments. But the BJP which was supporting the minority NF government put effective pressure on that government and managed to install the notorious Jagmohan as the Governor of Kashmir. The CPI(M) which was also supporting the NF government had not taken any positive stand to oppose this mischievous move of the BJP at that time. As a result, the BJP-nominated governor had a free hand. The elected state government was forced to resign at the instance of Jagmohan and President's rule was imposed. In the name of containing and combating terrorism Jagmohan instead of trying for a political solution unleashed a wave of state terrorism and the Hindus of Kashmir Valley were transhipped to Jammu at the expenses of public exchequer. Never before such a massive exodus happened in the past and this was motivatedly done to create a permanent communal divide among the people. As a reaction to state terrorism popular support has gone in favour of the 'extremists' and 'ter-

(Contd. on page 5)

Ekta Yatra a ploy to divert people's attention

(Contd. from Page 4)

rorist' forces which were isolated till the recent past. So, can the BJP absolve itself of the responsibility of creating a favourable and congenial situation through Jagmohan for the 'terrorist' and 'extremist forces' to thrive in Kashmir? All these political acts one after another have helped create a sense of hostility among the Kashmiri people and instead of hastening the process of cultural and emotional integration of the people with the Indian Union, they have gone in the opposite direction. But after doing so much mischief the BJP leaders are now crying hoarse about terrorism! Again when the the people of Kashmir are so much alienated at present because of all these wrong policies of the successive central governments the BJP is demanding the scrapping of the Article 370. So can any sane and well-meaning person support this call of the BJP at the present moment? Can this call of the BJP enhance unity and integration? Rather, this will definitely create further ill feeling and suspicion among the Kashmiri people causing hindrance to the path of emotional and cultural integration of the Kashmiri people with the Indian Union.

Another revealing feature has come out from this Ekta Yatra. Though Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, the Indian Prime Minister, commented that Article 370 would continue, Mr. Chavan, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs said on the floor of Parliament before the Prime Minister's statement that it was time for reviewing the question of scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution. Mr. Chavan's statement was made just after the commencement of the Ekta Yatra. This apparently contradictory stand between the Prime Minister and Mr. Chavan might be due to the internal squabbles of the Congress(I). But will it be wrong for one to conclude that while Mr. Chavan was assuring the BJP on the demand of scrapping of Article 370, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao as the head of the government and the party is assuring the National Front-CPI(M) combine and also the Kashmiri people and the people at large about the government policy regarding Article 370? This is yet another manifestation of the

politics of consensus. We have seen before how by taking advantage of the dependence of the N. F. government on its support the BJP compelled the V. P. Singh government to swallow its demand for installing Jagmohan as the Governor of Kashmir and shrewdly launched Ratha Yatra which created a countrywide communal holocaust and the BJP got rich electoral dividend out of that. Now again the BJP wants to take advantage of the present vulnerable position of the minority Congress(I) government and this Ekta Yatra is another attempt to gain further political mileage. We have mentioned that the CPI(M) had exerted no positive pressure on the N. F. Government to prevent the BJP from taking advantage from its communal game and the CPI(M)-led 'Left Front' government even did not stop the communally surcharged Ratha Yatra to pass through West Bengal. Now again the CPI(M) which is instrumental in the survival of the minority Congress(I) Government at the Centre through consensus politics has not taken any step to put pressure on Congress(I) government to take effective steps against this Ekta Yatra which is really meant to create disunity and communal divide among the people. The CPI(M) has only called for convening a meeting of the National Integration Council and everybody knows from past record that this National Integration Council cannot take any effective step except expressing some pious wishes.

Now another motive of the BJP in launching this Ekta Yatra is to take advantage of the present turmoil within the Janata Dal. During the last Lok Sabha poll the BJP candidates were pitted in triangular contests with the Congress(I) and the Janata Dal in the fray. But by taking advantage of the turmoil within the Janata Dal the BJP is now trying to emerge as the only national alternative and the leaders of the BJP hope that this Ekta Yatra will help it a lot in this plan.

When the people of the country are groaning under ruthless capitalist exploitation, price rise, tax hike, hike in fares of road and railway transport and innumerable other burning

OBITUARY

Red Salute Comrade Sridhar Setti

On 15th of November, while returning from the November Revolution Anniversary Rally held at Bhubaneswar, under the auspices of the Orissa State committee of the SUCI, Comrade Sridhar Setti met with untimely death in a road accident. Along with him eleven other members and supporters of the party were seriously wounded and admitted to the Cuttack Medical College Hospital.

Comrade Sridhar Setti who was an active worker of our party at Binjharpur area under Jajpur, Cuttack District, came in contact of the party in 1985. He was a poor daily agricultural labour. Inspired by the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great Marxist leader, he was able to bring his family members within the party fold and imbued them to work for the party.

Comrade Setti's premature death at the prime age of 30 is a great loss to the party. He will be remembered for his pro-people activities which made him a beloved leader of the local people.

issues, the attention of the BJP is not focussed on all these burning issues. The BJP helped the minority Congress(I) government in getting the anti-people Budget and industrial policy passed in the Lok Sabha and in lieu of this positive help the post of Deputy Speaker went to the BJP candidate, as a reward. The BJP is raising those issues which can communalise the politics. Whatever may be its rhetoric on 'positive secularism', the utter communal outlook behind raising these issues is amply clear. This is also an attempt to divert the attention of the people from the burning issues confronting their life and keep them embroiled in the fratricidal strife. This Ekta Yatra is yet another move in this direction. Whatever may be its professed goal, the Ekta Yatra will bring disunity, disaffection among the people. All well-meaning and democratic people of the country must realise the danger posed by the communal politics of the BJP and they must come forward to arrest this vicious politics of the BJP and save the country from the venom of communalism.

(Contd. from page 3)

This thing was very much witnessed in the heyday of democratic mass movements in West Bengal in the Sixties and more so during the last two United Front governments. No confusing issues used to find place in the mass minds in a big way then. The reason is not far to seek. Because West Bengal was then in the vortex of democratic mass movements centring round the burning issues in people's life. It is a fact of history that the scenario began to change gradually with the departure from the people's movement by the big Left parties claiming themselves to be 'Marxists' and 'communists'. With the assumption of governmental power in the state by the Left Front Govt. led by the CPI(M), hard realities in people's life have conclusively proved whatever its claim to the contrary, that the Left Front Government has been virtually strengthening the hands of the exploiters and they bother least for the tears of the people turned pauper day by day. That is why they do not sound any word of struggle against this moribund capitalist system with a view to winning the confidence of their masters—the capitalists and rural jotedars. That is why people see them inviting and opening industries in collaboration with multinationals in West Bengal. People also find the Chief Minister assuring the capitalists in the state and elsewhere in the meetings of Chambers of Commerce & Industry and asking even the working class not to resort to strike and disrupt the productivity and industrial peace, and so on. Is it not clear, therefore, that the Left Front Govt. is trying to handle the administration as a part of the bourgeois design to stabilise the existing exploiting social order with the inevitable outcome of rampant corruption and is thus becoming instruments of ruthless exploitation! What all this indicates? From their stand and practices is it not clear, the deceptive slogans and vocabularies of the Left Front led by the CPI(M) notwithstanding, that they are playing the role of compromising force between capital and labour? What the grim reality of workers thrown out of employment due to lock-out, closure and retrenchment in thousands of industrial units in the State tell? Is it not a fact that owing to their collaborationist

INDUSTRIAL STRIKE

approach and attitude towards the owning class, not to speak of protracted mass movement, even united trade union movement could not be developed in the state during the tenure of 15 years' stay in power. Thus through deceptive slogans to confuse the workers, are they not, in fact, disarming the working class organisationally, politically, ideologically, true to their social democratic character? What are the roles of the CPI and the CPI(M) which are crying hoarse against the industrial and economic policies of the Congress(I) Government? They did not oppose the policies in Parliament and did not vote against the government either. Only three months after the end of the Parliament session could they find time to call for a rally at the Boat Club and thereafter in September last joined other central trade unions to call for a countrywide industrial strike, on 29th November last!

This is only to hoodwink the people to refurbish their image because duality of their hypocrisy has already been exposed. And people by now have come to realise what these parties are objectively practising today in the name of Strike and Bandh are nothing but gimmicks born out of the politics of consensus and understanding with the minority Congress(I) Government to serve the interest of the capitalist class! Otherwise, how could the minority Congress(I) Government venture to impose such a nakedly pro-monopolist and pro-imperialist industrial and economic policies on the people had it not been sure to carry it through the Parliament without major resistance?

So to them, resorting to oppositional gesture by means of Strike and Bandh has practically been reduced to handy weapons to deceive the people by posing themselves as champions of people's cause. It is known to all that West Bengal stands out as a glaring example to such a ritualistic yearly Bandhs, which the CPI(M)-led Left Front government thrusts on the people for purely sectarian party interests with all-out backing of police and civil administration. We have discussed on earlier occasions that, painful though, such an weapon of democratic mass move-

ment has been used time and again to befool the people having nothing to do with the genuine interest of the exploited and oppressed people. On the other hand, calling bandhs and strikes with sheer backing of police and civil administration, gradually have made these highly powerful instruments of struggle blunt and participation of the people in these struggles became redundant in course of time. As a result, the combatibility, power and fighting spirit of the people became the first casualty.

In counter-reaction to this bizzare game of nefarious parliamentary politics when people in fact coming to know how behind the back of consensus parliamentary politics, the Left Front Govt. led by the CPI(M) is playing gimmicks with ritualistic strikes and bandhs, the Chief Minister Mr. Jyoti Basu even went so far as to explain that their stand on supporting the Industrial and Economic Policies pursued by the Congress(I) was not permanent. If it becomes anti-people, they will have to oppose it, so on and so forth. Whatever might be the compulsion of such pronouncement, if it be their honest admission it is all for the better; better late than never.

Now that the will of the people for movement is reflected in the last strike action, it becomes incumbent on the genuine Left, democratic forces to jump into the fray so that the message of the movement may not get arrested within the four walls of worst sort of parliamentary politics.

Truly, one day's strike action, however militant it might be, cannot solve the crux of the problems in people's life. What people need today is a sustained mass movement. So, we reiterate our fervent appeal to the rank and file members of all Left, democratic and Opposition parties and forces: would they still stand as mute spectators when the ominous danger is looming over the horizon? Do they not see the real design through the game of politics of consensus and tear it asunder and rally round the working class against the impending holocaust? Is it not because of absence of powerful united resistance movement that the Indian bourgeoisie could launch such dreaded offensive against the working class? So, to develop this unity in a united platform of mass action is the call of the hour. Any wasting of time may prove too costly for the common people.

W. B. State Conference of UTUC (Lenin Sarani)

Santalidih, 18th Dec. : From 15th to 17th Dec. '91 the remote townships of Bhojudih Coal Washery and Santaldih in Purulia district took a new look. It was really a never-seen-before occasion particularly to the people of Bhojudih where the 18th State Conference of UTUC (L S), a distinctly illumining name in uncompromising trade union movement in India, took place. The conference was held there on and from 15th to 17th December '91—15th, the day of Open Session held at the Thermal Township maidan at Santaldih and 16th to 17th, the Delegate Session, held at the Netaji Community Centre at Bhojudih.

Right from the early morning of 15th the townships of Sandaldih and Bhojudih along with the surrounding mazdoor bustees and villages, market places and streets; residential colony, factory and office campuses all beaming with eagerness and enthusiasm got ready to welcome the pouring hundreds of delegates totalling more than 1250, including fraternal delegates, from different districts of the State representing the workers and employees of various industries like coal, steel & iron, mines, engineering, electricity, dock and port, railways, insurance, bank, jute and textiles, chemicals, tea, post & telegraph, defence and various private, semi-government and govt. offices and also different unorganised sectors like agricultural workers, weavers and bidi workers. Both the two townships were beautifully decorated with red flags, festoons and banners. The walls were covered with dignified portraits of the great leader of the proletariat, Lenin and valuable quotations and slogans highlighting the demands of the conference. Beautiful arches were erected on the streets welcoming the delegates. From the early morning the delegates started arriving at the delegate camp and delegate session venue of the conference at Bhojudih township. A big, beautifully decorated with flags and festoons and highly disciplined procession began marching from Bhojudih at 2 p.m. towards the Santaldih Thermal Township maidan. During its five-kilometer long journey it was continuously swelled in by big and small groups of employees and workers and enthusiastic local people.

The open session started at about 4 p.m. The maidan was full to the capacity with thousands of local people and organised rallies of workers and employees from the surrounding districts also. In the open session conducted under the presidency of Comrade Sanat Dutta, President of the W. B. State Committee, UTUC (L S); Comrade Tapas Dutta, General Secretary, All India Committee of the UTUC (L S), was present as the main speaker. Others who spoke were Comrade Fatick Ghosh; West Bengal State Secretary of the organisation, a renowned trade union leader of the State and Comrade D. K. Mukherjee, noted leader of trade union movement of the district.

The two-day delegate session was held at the Netaji Community Centre, Bhojudih on the 16th and 17th December last. The session started after the flag-hoisting by the State Committee President, Comrade Sanat Dutta, and placing of wreaths at

martyrs' column one by one by Comrade Sanat Dutta, Comrade Fatick Ghosh; Comrade Shankar Saha, Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta, Comrade Achintya Sinha and Comrade D. K. Mukherjee. At the start the Murshidabad Dist. Committee of UTUC (L S) presented the conference an engraved portrait of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the departed Founder-President of UTUC (L S), the great leader of the proletariat.

Comrade Tapas Dutta was present in the delegate session also. Both in the open session speech on 15th and in the inaugural speech of the delegate session, Comrade Dutta; in a most lucid and emotional language dealt with various aspects of working class movement,—national and international, moral, cultural, and organisational ones. While dealing with the international situation he strongly opined that the fall of socialism in the Soviet Union and East European countries brought about by counterrevolutionary Gorbachev-Yeltsin clique in connivance with US imperialism was nothing but a temporary setback to the international communist movement and it was sure to stand triumphantly again as the ideology of communism or Marxism-Leninism was based on science. But the

working class of India, he cautioned, must not forget that all these could happen mainly because the working class and people in those countries could not take guard of the all-pervading economism-opportunism and lure of individualism fostered by their leaders starting from renegade Khrushchev to counterrevolutionary Gorbachev after the death of Stalin. We, the proletariat of India, must take lessons from it.

On the national plane he severely criticised the disastrous economic and industrial policy of the Central minority Congress(I) government, its policy of privatisation of public sector undertakings, reducing work force in the name of computerisation and modernisation, the notorious 'exit policy' being pursued with the clandestine and deceptive support of the so-called Left Opposition parties and the Janata Dal-BJP Opposition. In conclusion he urged the working class of the State to stand unitedly raising their heads high against all sorts of onslaughts of the ruling class—economic, political and moral and for this purpose to change themselves first being guided by the teaching of the great leaders of the proletariat.

In the delegate session Comrade Fatick Ghosh, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee, placed his Secretarial Report embracing, inter-alia, present international and national situation in the domain of working class movement, situation in the State, organisational aspect including present membership figure of unions affiliated to state UTUC (L S) and a call for uplifting both individual and collective initiative,

(Contd on page 8)



Comrade Tapas Dutta addressing the open session, a part of which is seen in the picture

Historic Visit

(Contd. from page 1)

of. Rather, they are very much significant at this crucial juncture of international relations when the US imperialists, in the name of a unipolar world or a new world order, are not only unleashing naked aggressions on the sovereignty of nations fully baring their tooth and claw and endangering world peace, but have also launched fiscal piracy on the weaker nations through their financial tentacles like the

UTUC (LENIN SARANI)

(Contd. from page 7)

building up of unyielding individual character of the workers and the leaders capable of combating newer offensives on working class and to prepare for united resistance movement and not to surrender.

The main resolution placed by Comrade Shankar Saha while corroborating with international and national situation as highlighted in the secretarial report consisted of a 12-point task essential for building up of effective trade union movement and a 19-point demand including withdrawal of new industrial and fiscal policy and Sick Company (Special Provisions) Amendment Bill and Exit Policy amongst others. One hundred and thirty three delegates participated in the deliberations. Both the Secretarial Report and the main resolutions were adopted unanimously. The delegate session also elected unanimously a 28-member State Committee headed by Comrade Fatick Ghosh as President, Comrade Sanat Dutta, Comrade Renupada Halder and Comrade A L Gupta as Vice-Presidents, Comrade Shankar Saha as Secretary, Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta as Treasurer and Comrade Dilip Bhattacharjee and Comrade D K Mukherjee as Assistant Secretaries. The newly elected President and former State Secretary, Comrade Fatick Ghosh, in his open Session speech elaborately showed how in this State the 'Left Front' Govt. and the so-called left trade unions like CITU, as also the INTUC etc. were nakedly acting like the stooges of the owning class in frustrating the trade union movement in the State and betraying the workers' cause. He showed how the Left Front Government was shamelessly acting hand in glove with the owners in defalcating PF and ESI funds. He called upon the working people of the State to come forward for building up a real united mighty trade union movement to frustrate all sorts of overt and covert onslaughts on the working people of the State. In his concluding speech in delegate session he urged the delegates to rise to the occasion and discharge their vital role in making the ensuing All India Conference to be held in Calcutta on and from 15-17 March 1992, a grand success

IMF and the World Bank and making the sovereign nations abjectly surrender to their most harmful and humiliating conditionalities. They do not stop here. In brazen violation of international norms they are interfering in the internal affairs of countries and are practically dictating terms regarding what should be the economic and political structure of a country—glaringly visible in the case of the Soviet Union. From this point of view the regional cooperation through various bodies like the SAARC etc. are very much encouraged in the communique so that nations can thrive on mutual co-operation.

As against the US overlordship in every sphere and its dictating the shape of economy and politics in the Third World countries and also in the UNO, they laid special stress on: "Every country, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, is an equal member of the international community entitled to participate in the decision-making and settlement of international affairs. Each country shall have the sovereign right to formulate and implement its own strategies and policies for socio-economic development best suited to its national conditions." The communique expressed concern about the "international economic relations plagued by ever-intensifying north-south contradictions and widening gap" as a result of deprivation and savage exploitation of the poor nations by the affluent ones. And hence both sides firmly believe that "without economic development there will be no genuine peace and stability in the world." Both sides reaffirmed their "commitment to the cause of peace and development and held that the international community should continue to work for maintenance of world peace and promotion of common progress of mankind". And to guarantee world peace the communique gives stress on total disarmament "including total destruction of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons".

Both sides were against the US-sponsored idea of a unipolar world which virtually means a world kneeling down before the whims of the US imperialists, and expressed their faith in a multipolar world where the people of different nations including India and China will determine their own destiny as suits them most.

The visit of Li Peng, viewed from this angle, has opened a new vista in the global political and economic scene much to the chagrin of the imperialists and other reactionary forces. We trust, if the two great nations with their past glorious anti-imperialist traditions, can work together true to the spirit of the communique, the people of not only Asia but of the whole world will find in it a ray of hope and ultimately come forward to frustrate the evil design of the imperialist predators. And this is the cry of the hour. Raising any question as to who is the gainer or who is the loser at this hour will frustrate this honest and costly effort and only help the imperialists.

SUCI KARNATAKA UNIT

Appeals to maintain unity and amity

Bangalore, 17th Dec. : The Karnataka State Committee of the SUCI expresses grave shock over the wanton violence, largescale arson and looting, police firing taking toll of as many as 16 innocent lives leaving behind hundreds of people injured and continued gruesome attacks on poor people and rendering hundreds homeless in the background of the state-wide bandh observed in protest against the Centre's gazetting of the interim award on the vexed Cauvery dispute.

More shocking is the revelation contained in the charges levelled against the Government by even those within the ruling party that the violence was engineered and the Government machinery was paralysed with the sole object of promoting the interests of men in power.

While demanding of the State Government to institute judicial enquiry into the bandh-related violence to unravel the whole truth and book the guilty, the SUCI fervently appeals to the people belonging to all sections to protect and safeguard their traditional unity. The SUCI also demands adequate compensation to the families of the victims of the violence and security to the terror-stricken people in various regions of Bangalore and elsewhere.

Karnataka Students Snatch Victory

The Karnataka State government recently decided to increase the examination fee from Rs. 30 to Rs. 75 for Second year Pre-University students.

Immediately after the announcement, the Karnataka State Committee of AISDO gave a call for movement against the unjust fee hike. Responding to the call, different district committees of Bellary, Gulbarga, Raichur and Bangalore organised protests involving thousands of students.

Addressing a well-organised demonstration of students in front of PUC Board on 4.12.91, under the auspices of Bangalore unit, Com. K. Uma, State Secretary, AISDO, called upon the students to carry on the movement till the demands were achieved.

Later, a delegation led by Com. K. Uma met the Director of PUC Board who assured to place the matter before the government.

Fearing growing resentment of the students throughout the State, the government announced its total withdrawal.

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