

C.R. Bakshi - Bio-sketches

C.R. Bakshi was born in Sherpur town of Mymensing district that is in present day Bangladesh. Bakshi's whole family was left oriented and Bakshi learnt his first lessons of Marxism from one of his uncles Poolin Behari Bakshi in his childhood. One of the first movements into which Bakshi got involved in was the movement for restoration of the language of Bengali in Bengal removed by the British. It was a big movement by all sections of society in pre-independence Bengal and very strong in what is today called Bangladesh. After that partition came but it was that movement that led to Bengali being recognised as the official language despite the Muslim League's attempt at the time of partition to impose Urdu. Bakshi was just 16 years old and ended up being arrested and put for five months in a juvenile jail and the result was that he was released on in July 1951 when his family had already left for India due to the partition. Another influence in his childhood was comrade Moni Singh in Mymensing district who was leading a struggle of the Garo Hill tracts in the district of the Garos to get land. Bakshi saw this struggle too as it was happening where he lived and it too influenced him. He was a member of a cultural troop in those days and would present plays and cultural programmes in the conferences and meetings. Bakshi remembers particularly one such conference organised of Garo peasants in which he was part of the cultural group. The whole atmosphere at the conference really influenced him. After coming to India he did his schooling in Cooch Behar i.e. north Bengal and in 1958 joined a job at Bengal Potteries in Calcutta but very soon left it due to ill-health and started working as a school teacher in a party school. In 1959 he got a job as a Drill Assistant in the Bhilia Steel Plant on muster roll and so had to leave Calcutta and his job as school teacher. He started his job at Dalli Rajhara iron ore mines. There after arriving very soon he was introduced into SKMS and trade union work by the then leader Prakash Roy who picked him up. In 1961 he joined SKMS and started leading the contract workers. Due to his trade union work the management transferred him to Nandini mines where he started work as a Drill Operator and there too it was C.R. Bakshi who founded the SKMS union and built the union office too later. There too he did not stop his trade union work and led continuous struggles for the thousands of contract workers and organised cooperatives and in 1977 the management of NMDC at Nandini mines finally regularized over 3000 contractual cooperative workers who were made into departmental workers at Nandini mines. This was a historic moment. The struggle had gone on for more than two, three years. C.R. Bakshi's greatest achievement was that between 1974 and 1980s he through various struggles had managed to regularize many thousands of workers. In Dalli Rajhara mines he had regularized about 10,000 contract labourers of the mines after more than five years of struggle. He was transferred from Nandini mines in 1973 after 12 years of work to Bhilai steel plant. There though the recognised union was INTUC Bakshi through his struggles forced them to sign good wage agreements with the management. The other big struggle he led with other leaders was the great Bailadila struggle for preventing the sale of the 11B mine at Kirandul in Bastar, Chattisgarh. This was a nearly 12 to 14 year struggle from 1991 and only in 2002 did they win the case in the Supreme Court. Apart from these major struggles as MP's AITC General Secretary from 1987 he got involved in leading struggles against Birlas in Satna, and Nagda textile plant i.e. GRASIM, cement, textiles, beedi, BHEL etc. He visited Berlin and China.