

4. S. Gangadhar Reddy, AICTU/MCPI, Andhra Pradesh

BIO-NOTE

He is the general secretary of the AICTU (All India Centre of Trade Unions). It is a break-away group of CITU, and was formed under Mohan Punamiya of Rajasthan.

Born on April 9, 1941 in East Godavari district, Gangadhar Reddy developed sympathies for Marxist ideas while in school. While his friends became naxals, he joined CPM, and then CITU at first. As an advocate, he took up the cases of the naxals. Therefore, he was jailed along with them for 1.5 years during emergency. He also contested Assembly elections in 1978 and 1980, though losing on both occasions. He fought on CPM ticket.

But he soon developed serious differences with CPM with its dictatorial attitude. He said there was lack of democracy in the party and in CITU. In every union and party unit, the state and central leadership tried to suppress and remove Gangadhar Reddy. He was often replaced in the TU bodies with senior CPM leaders having no knowledge and experience of ground-level realities. As a result, the movement suffered and TUs broke up. The public sector VHPB unit was lost due to unholy compromise by central CPM leaders with the central ministry without consulting Gangadhar Reddy and local unions.

Gangadhar Reddy has been an old leader of the jute industry workers. But the CITU and CPM tried to isolate him in the All India Jute Workers' Federation.

Gangadhar Reddy, along with his associates, separated from CITU and established AICTU in Kota (Rajasthan) in October 1987. Recently, Jagjit Singh Layalpuri also has left CPM and joined MCPI/AICTU.

Gangadhar Reddy and AICTU control several unions in jute, steel and other industries.

According to him, caste is one of the major factors for factionalism and splits in TUs and communist movement.

TRANSCRIPTIVE NOTE

(The interview was taken in the AICTU/MCPI office in Vishakhapatnam at about 11 am. Gangadhar Reddy is very active type of men. His thoughts run fast and he speaks loudly, with open views. He was very happy with this work and provided all the possible help and documents. He is quite popular in this area and elsewhere too.)

Gangadhar Reddy was highly critical of the CITU and CPM throughout the interview. He described in great detail the dictatorial and undemocratic attitude of the CITU leaders and how he was sought to be isolated. After doing lot of work for CITU and CPM, he had to quit these organisations and form another with Mohan Punamiya and other leaders. Gangadhar Reddy claimed widespread influence in nine states including Orissa, Kerala, Punjab, Bengal, Bihar and other places. AICTU was initiated by Reddy. AICTU has influence over bidi workers in Bengal, jute and steel and other workers in AP, textile workers in Punjab, etc.

Gangadhar Reddy described in detail the wrong-doings of state and central CITU leaders in VHPB and other units, which were lost due to ungainly compromise by them. A 30-day strike was called by CITU leaders without consulting workers or workers' leaders, and in consultation with central government ministers. It was a big shock. That was in 1977.

Gangadhar also went into the details of CPM domination in All India Jute Workers' Federation, in which he was sought to be isolated.

AICTU controls more than 500 units with an estimated membership of 2.5 lakhs. It has sizeable influence over jute workers.

Gangadhar Reddy is firmly of the opinion that the communist movement and the Left-led TU movement have been split and destroyed, among others, due to upper caste domination. The Left-led TUs never allow cadres and leaders from SC, ST and backward castes.