

## **Abani Baral (AIFUCTO) Bhubaneshwar (Orissa)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Abani Baral (AIFUCTO) Bhubaneshwar (Orissa)</b>
<b>Date of Interview</b>	January 22, 2003
<b>Interviewers</b>	Krishna Jha

### **Biographical Sketches**

I was born in a nationalist family and saw charkha since childhood at home. My father was a post master in Puri where I was born in the month of May, in 1935. We belonged to lower middle class but my father never objected to my joining political movement as he was himself a follower of Gandhiji. In college I used to write a lot and some of my writings were praised by Communist leaders like Chintamani Panigrahi and Nand Kishore Patnaik.

I joined Lok Sanskriti and IPTA when in 1955 there was Youth Conference in Balasore. In the same year there was IPTA conference in Cuttack and leaders like Shambhu Sen, Tripti Mitra, Niranjana Sen and Hemanga Vishwas were invited to attend it. I became active in all these fronts.

I was looking after and writing in Communist Party newspaper in Orissa called Nawa Duniya with a circulation of 10,000. I was also active in what was called Seema Andolan. The princely states of Saraikela and Khursan were handed over to Bihar in 1955 and a great popular movement was launched against it. Two of our comrades were killed in the agitation.

I was in Peace movement too. In 1957 I passed my MA in Oriya and wanted to become full time worker but the local legislator wanted me to join the local college and came to our place with Pran Nath Patnaik a veteran communist and trade union leader of the state. I had to agree. However I continued with my party and trade union work from college itself. As the teachers were not organised those days I established Orissa Non-government College Teachers' Association in 1961. In 1969, I organised all India conference of teachers. By then I was elected General Secretary of All India Federation of College Teachers Organisations. Soon I organised the school teachers as well and formed a coordination committee. In 1969 itself, there was first teachers strike in Orissa on the issues of pay scales, unification of education pattern in Orissa, improvement of statutory conditions of the teachers and many other demands.

On September 5, 1969 night, 4000 teachers started sitting on dharna in front of the education minister's place and continued upto 45 days. The teachers were beaten up mercilessly but they refused to leave. It was a great success and first time in Orissa Education Act was promulgated. Later a Shikshak Mahasangh was formed with 14 teachers' associations. In the process of movement itself, not only economic but social problems were also solved, student teacher coordination committee was also set up.

In 1989, more than 80,000 teachers launched a movement to press for their demands in Bhubaneswar. A strange type of ban was imposed on Bhubaneswar that stopped teachers from entering the city and yet the rally was brought out. Even the police receded and teachers were able to gherao the secretariat. The teachers movement has spread over to students, government employees and youth in Orissa at our initiative.

## Transcript Summary

Abani Baral, a veteran leader of the teacher's movement, was born in May 1935 in a lower middle class family. His father was post master in Puri. He never objected to Abani joining political movement as he was himself a follower of Gandhiji. In college Abani used to write a lot and some of his writings were praised by Communist leaders like Chintamani Panigrahi and Nand Kishore Patnaik. He joined Lok Sanskriti and IPTA when in 1955 there was Youth Conference in Balasore. In the same year there was IPTA conference in Cuttack and leaders like Shambhu Sen, Tripti Mitra, Niranjana Sen and Hemanga Vishwas were invited to attend it. Abani became active in all these fronts.

Abani Baral was looking after Communist Party newspaper in Orissa called Nawa Dunia and also active in what was called Seema Andolan. The princely states of Saraikela and Khursan were handed over to Bihar in 1955 and a great popular movement was launched against it. Two of the comrades were even shot dead.

He was in Peace movement too. In 1957 he did his MA in Oriya and wanted to become full time worker but the local legislator wanted him to join the local college and approached him through Pran Nath Patnaik a veteran communist and trade union leader of the state. Abani Baral had to agree. However he continued with his party and trade union work from college itself. As the teachers were not organised those days he established Orissa Non-government College Teachers' Association in 1961. In 1969, he organised all India conference of teachers. By then he was elected General Secretary of All India Federation of College Teachers Organisations. Soon he organised the school teachers as well and formed a coordination committee. In 1969 itself, there was first teachers strike in Orissa on the issues of pay scales, unification of education pattern in Orissa, improvement of statutory conditions of the teachers and many other demands.

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The teachers movement has spread over to students, government employees and youth in Orissa led by Abani Baral.