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**AITUC
GENERAL COUNCIL
MEETING**

***NEW DELHI
March 27-29, 1974***

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GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING
New Delhi; 27th to 29th March 1974

STRIKE STRUGGLES AND BANDHS DURING 1973

(Since the 29th Session) and upto date

The year 1973 achieved unique distinction of registering unprecedented price rise and rise in the cost of living, scarcities and shortages. The All-India average consumer price index number has gone up during 1973 by 50 points with 1960 base and 61 points with 1949 base, compared to 16 points and 25 points respectively in 1972.

The year 1973 is marked by intense strike struggles and bandhs throughout the country.

1. Almost all textile centres were on long drawn strikes during the year.

About 30,000 textile workers of Indore and Ujjain (M.P.) went on indefinite strike in February demanding casual leave, abolition of contract labour. The award of the M.P. Chief Minister conceded the major demands of the workers.

In April 27,000 textile workers of Delhi went on indefinite strike for increased wages and D.A. which ended on 6th May on reaching a settlement.

Jute workers (2,30,000) of West Bengal went on repeated strikes during the year. On 15 June one-day strike was observed against cut in D.A. on the alleged fall in CPI, sponsored by AITUC and CITU. The INTUC and HMS stayed out. Again on 5 November the jute workers observed one day strike in support of the demand of the jute growers and for nationalisation of foreign trade in jute goods. The strike this time was joined by INTUC and HMS.

Once again from 14 January 74 the jute workers went on indefinite strike which continued for 33 days against imposition of the unsatisfactory agreement entered into by INTUC and HMS.

In July, the Bombay textile workers repeatedly struck work against the introduction of seven day week and against cancellation of Sunday holiday. On 30 September the textile workers of Bombay observed one-day strike demanding 20% bonus. INTUC, CITU

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and Lal Nishan opposed the strike. The marathon strike started on 30 December and ended on 8 February against imposition of the unsatisfactory agreement by the INTUC union. The strike ended in victory and the earlier agreement was forced to be changed.

Agitation of textile workers Tamilnadu started in October on the demand of higher bonus which ended in victory with a minimum of 11.33 per cent and upper ceiling raised by 25 per cent. All the 208 textile mills of Tamilnadu involving 1.25 lakh workers were strike bound for two months from 1 January 74 to 1 March 74 for revision of wages and D.A. An agreement was reached increasing wages and D.A. and the strike called off.

In West Bengal on the threat of an indefinite strike, the wages and D.A. were revised in April 73. Bonus struggles in cotton textiles in West Bengal succeeded in achieving rise in bonus compared to 1972.

2. The deep discontent amongst the railwaymen found expression in repeated strikes and other forms of work stoppage by different categories of railwaymen. Strikes by Loco Running Staff took place in different railways and also on an all-India basis in April, in May despite the banning of the strike and then in August, and again in December 73. The Railway Ministry had to negotiate with the striking union and come to a settlement. Besides the Loco Running Staff, Station Masters, Gangmen, Yard Staff and Mechanical Engineering Staff under the leadership of the category unions and also zonal unions like S.E. Rlymen's union launched agitations for sectional demands. These strikes and agitations were expressions of loss of confidence on the two recognised federations - the AIRF and the NFIR which gave birth to the categorywise unions and actions and the formation of their Confederation. During the year several zonal unions were formed under AITUC leadership. These developments took a new turn culminating in the national convention of railwaymen on 27 February 74 convened by the AIRF and formation of a Coordination Council and action committee consisting of both AIRF and unrecognised unions outside the AIRF, and Central TU organisations on common demands and agreed programme. The AIRF earlier decision of strike from 27 February was put off by its general council.

3. During the year the 3rd Pay Commission submitted its report and recommendations. These were to some extent and in some respects subsequently improved as a result of discussions that the employees organisations had with the Government.

But discontent is still lingering particularly on wage levels and on the question of bonus.

4. Against unprecedented price rises and against economic and financial policies of the Government the trade unions along with other sections of the working people went on general strikes and

bundhs in many States.

(a) The high water mark of the people's protest against rising prices was the massive march to Parliament on 27 March last year.

(b) The Bangalore public sector units trade unions took the initiative by observing one-day strike on 23 June followed by Bangalore Bundh on 30 June which was a magnificent success despite INTUC leadership's opposition.

(c) On July 27 West Bengal observed bundh despite opposition by INTUC and HMS and active resistance of Congress and the State machinery.

(e) On 24 August a Statewide bundh was observed in Andhra Pradesh against high prices.

(e) On 24 July Rajasthan bundh was observed in support of the State Government employees' strike. INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS, Banks and Insurance employees participated. On 2 March 74, Rajasthan bundh was observed against high prices.

(f) Tamil Nadu Bundh was observed on 13 September against price rises by all political parties and Central trade unions. 20,000 arrests were made.

(g) Delhi Bundh was observed on 6 November participated by AITUC, CITU, UTUC, HMP against high prices.

(h) Bihar Bundh observed on 21 January 74 with unprecedented strike in all industrial centres against scarcities and high prices.

(i) General Strike of industrial workers was observed in West Bengal on 31 January 74 in support of the strike of jute workers.

(j) Faridabad Bundh was observed on 16 January 74 in support of the strike of workers of Esports and against police repression. Call given by AITUC, INTUC and BMS.

(k) Goa Bundh was observed on 18 February 74 called by all Central trade unions including AITUC.

(l) Maharashtra Bundh on 2 January.

(m) Bundhs in Gujarat:

Ahmedabad Bundh on 10 January 74 called by students and 14 August committee formed by trade unions including AITUC.

Gujarat Bundh on 25 January against high prices, scarcities.

5. Besides statewide bundhs and general strike, several notable strike actions took place during the last one year on industry-wide and plant basis in different states.

(a) Newspaper employees all-India token strike on 21 March 73 demanding wage revision.

- (b) Haryana Electricity Workers strike for 36 days from 3 April 73 against non-implementation of earlier settlements. 10,000 workers courted arrest in Chandigarh and Delhi.
- (c) Dock workers strike in Madras from 3rd to 16th April 73. Settlement on the basis of minimum daily wage for mazdoors at Rs.8.45. 15 days strike of Dock workers of Calcutta numbering 14,000 despite banning by applying DIR for increased bonus.
- (d) Wimco workers of Madras strike for more than 6 months from Nov.72 to 10 June 73.
- (e) Resident Doctors' strike in Bombay for 26 days from 17 August to 11 September, 1973.
- (f) Rajasthan Government employees numbering 260,000 struck work for 37 days ending on 15 August 1973.
- (g) Power engineers strike for 40 days in Punjab, U.P., Rajasthan Delhi, Bihar and other areas in August 1973 for status equal to that of IAS.
- (h) Jay Engineering workers strike for more than 5 months against non-implementations of earlier settlements, wage increase, etc.
- (i) Strike in Bangalore based public sector units including branches in other states on 16 January 74 for revision of wages and benefits.
- (j) On 14 January 74, 2 lakh tea garden workers of West Bengal of 293 tea gardens observed one-day strike in which all unions excluding INTUC participated demanding revision of wages and takeover of closed and sick gardens.
- (k) Strike in Dalmianagar involving 14,000 workers in all Industrial units of Sahu Jains from 14 January 1974 to 11 Feb. participated by AITUC, INTUC and independent unions against unsatisfactory agreement made by HMS recognised union.
- (l) Junior Doctor's strike starting from Delhi spread to several other States numbering a total of seven thousand of about 40 Government hospitals for more than 2 months demanding increased emoluments and better amenities.
- (m) Strike of doctors and engineering including power engineers of various government departments in West Bengal in March 74 for equal status and parity in pay and emoluments with IAS.
- (n) Delhi Nurses strike in August 73 and dharna for increased washing allowance and again in January 74.
- (o) Token strike of General Insurance employees on 28 Sept. 73 for one hour for 20% bonus.
- (p) Prolonged strike in Escorts (Faridabad) ending in February demanding implementation of engineering wage board Award..

6. Besides strike actions, several notable agitations that were organised during the period are:

- (a) 10,000 electricity workers demonstration before Parliament on 25 April 73 for revision of wages.
- (b) University teachers drawn from all parts of the country demonstrated in Delhi for better pay and uniform grades.
- (c) Protest day called by the All-India Bank Employees' Association against the credit policy of nationalised banks was observed throughout the country.
- (d) Agitation by LIC employees for revision of pay and improvement of amenities followed by sectional lock-out and ending in a settlement.
- (e) General Insurance Employees' agitation for implementation of the agreement arrived at between the management and unions.
- (f) Agitation by Air lines employees against prolonged lockout and imposition of new norms of employer-employee relationship.
- (g) 5 September 73 was observed throughout the country as Protest Day against high prices on the call of National Council of Trade Unions.
- (h) Bhilai Workers' successful agitation in November 1973 for increased bonus.

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THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS MAY BE DRAWN:-

1. During the last one year mood of the workers and the people at large have shifted further leftward and defiant.
2. Runaway inflation and galloping prices which seem to be beyond the control of the Government have generated an explosive situation.
3. Economic insecurity arising out of economic crisis has engulfed even higher bracket salary earners. From University Teachers, Doctors and Engineers, even Chief Engineers to the ordinary workers, strike weapon and also long drawnout strikes are being increasingly utilised defying Governmental threats and often hostile press propoganda.
- 3(a) The wage map is changing and the working class in organised industries and occupations have during the last one year achieved significant gains in wages. A new pattern and standard of minimum wages have been set up through bipartite and tripartite negotiation, with threat of strike or by means of strike actions.
4. Vital sectors of the national economy - the infra-structure in particular, have been more prone to unrest and work stopages with consequent chain reactions spread over all industrial sectors, due firstly, to bureaucratic management, long neglect in redressal of genuine grievances, and secondly, on account of the failure of the established unions backed by the management to effectively take up the rightful grievances and interests. It speaks of the utterly rotten and archaic industrial relations system, such as in the Railways, which is outdated and out of tune with the present day realities and mood of the workers.
5. A new thinking in the matter of the pattern of industrial relations and communication channels is urgently called for. No single union or organisation even if it be a majority one by any standard, can in today's situation act effectively on behalf of all. A system of consensus is gradually taking shape and has been proved meaningful, effective and acceptable to the workers.
6. In the midst of intermittent flare up of anarchic and chaotic situations, the organised working class, although severely under the strain of inflation and price rises, have refused, by and large, to be swayed by ultraleft sectiarian and right reactionary anarchic tendencies. The danger is, however, real and potent.
7. Discontent is widespread and deep and it is bound to be so. Prohibitory orders on strikes have had little effect on the workers. The defiant mood of the people shows scant respect or obedience to the authority of law and order and the repressive machinery of the state.

8. The situation is extremely complex and explosive. The Government does not appear to be inclined to take corrective measures to stem the price rises, against artificial shortages and scarcities. In fact it is retreating before the offensive of the vested interests which are economically far more strengthened.

9. The problem that the democratic and progressive trade union movement faces today is not that of organising struggles, strikes and bandhs, but to do so on a correct line, both organisationally and ideologically, without following prey to the ultraleft and right reactionary objective of creating chaos and anarchy in the economy which is ultimately harmful to the fundamental interests of the working class and democracy. In the context of the developing economic situation and attitude and policies of the Government it is no doubt a difficult and complex problem. But the forceful intervention of the working class in the situation to meet class and national interests and the combination of the two, is what is urgently called for. There is no question of being inhibited by strikes and struggles for fear of being taken advantage of by anarchic forces, but to achieve what, is all that matters.

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COAL AND INDIAN ECONOMY

The Management of Coal mines was taken over by the Government on 31st January 1973. The Coal mines were nationalised from 1st May 1973. Except the Captive Coal Mines of TISCO and IISCO entire coal mines industry is now under public sector. Coking Coal mines were taken over earlier and there was a public sector in coal mines managed by NCDC and Singareni Coal Mines (run by the A.P. Government with 40 per cent share of Central Government now CMAL also).

Nationalisation of Coal industry has been virtually a liberation for coal miners. Under private sector their exploitation knew no limit and even normal TU activities were not possible.

Immediately after nationalisation two more issues were settled. In private sector wages were not paid according to the recommendations of the Coal Wage Board in a number of collieries and to some categories. Government announced that they will be paid wages according to the Wage Board recommendations in all nationalised mines.

Similarly V.D.A. was not paid to the workers as per recommendations of the Wage Board in all coal mines. This was also brought on par.

A system of forced and slave labour called CRO or Gorakhpuri Labour which was introduced by the British Imperialists and which was being retained by the private sector employers inspite of unanimous agreement to do away with it in tripartite bodies several times was abolished. The workers were brought from Eastern U.P. by contractors, kept in group, in a concentration camp like surroundings. They were not paid full wages and were repatriated every year in exchange new ones.

Earlier when coking coal was taken-over the coal mine owners had created chaos and anarchy. Not only cash was taken away but machinery and spare parts and materials were removed with the result that after taking over for some time work could not be resumed in some mines. Those very persons re-sold the old material at higher cost.

Private sector had not attended to Safety precautions. Quarters and living and working conditions were also very much sub-normal.

Based on the old experience, workers and our trade unions had taken precautions and were successful in not allowing the employers to play old tricks, in some places even at physical risk.

A new problem created by them was, in the absence of proper records to ascertain fully about the employment of thousands of workers. In some places rightful workers were denied their place in the collieries and at others new names or those working for

contractors or on casual basis were inducted in the register. This created a lot of discontentment among the workers. Some of the old managers played with workers lives. Goonda elements in various groups became active on this job while many genuine workers and TU activists could not succeed in getting jobs. In Bihar region this problem is still not solved fully. In other regions this problem now is not so acute.

For the first time the complaints of TUs against some of their corrupt officers of mines could be placed before the officers of CMA and BCCL. A few of them were dealt with but others are still sabotaging from within.

When these officers found that they cannot rule in the manner they used to do earlier, they also formed an association and even went on strike, besides sabotaging from within. Management of the CMA and BCCL did take some steps but are unable to contain their activities.

Workers in some of the mines have shown that even if Managers are on strike, production goes on. The political implications of nationalisation has to an extent gone home to them.

With this the decks were cleared for bipartite negotiations on coal industry. The issue of representation of Workers' Group, as in many other industries was a thorny problem. AITUC did not get its due as INTUC insisted on the ratio of 6:3:2:1 (INTUC, AITUC, HMS and CITU respectively). We gave priority and preference to bipartite negotiations than to the number of seats. HMS has not yet nominated its representative on the Committee as it is not satisfied with its representation.

Bipartite negotiations are going on. A sum of Rs.39/- was agreed to as interim relief from 15.11.73 and a minimum wage of Rs.325/- p.m. on Cost of Living Index 246 as on June, July, August average with 10% of the pay more as underground allowance (subject to a ceiling of Rs.125/- p.m.) and house rent allowance of Rs.15/- p.m. has been agreed to. Negotiations for other categories and certain allowances are going on and are likely to be finalised by April end.

This will also be a Permanent Committee for the industry as in Steel industry and will ensure implementation of the agreement as well as discuss the problems of the industry.

Coal is not only fuel for household but on it depends industries like steel, rail transport, power and many basic industries on which the economy hinges. Therefore enough production and its proper and timely distribution of coal is a key factor for national economy.

Bourgeois circles are against the general policy of Nationalisation of industries. They particularly felt hurt when basic industry like coal, which also gave them unrestricted right to exploit and earn fabulous profits, was nationalised.

So they attempted to bring down the production of coal through their erstwhile employees - managers and supervisors in which they failed, thanks to the vigilance and patriotic class attitude of the coal miners. Taking advantage of the faulty transport and distribution system of coal, they used their propaganda machinery to shout from housetops that after nationalisation coal production has gone down and by implications demanding de-nationalisation. This propaganda is helpful to them to denounce the policy of nationalisation as well as Indira Government. Tatas even announced dramatically the shutting down of their steel plant - TISCO - in early February, due to alleged shortage of coal though they have their own captive mines nearby and are affected much less than other steel plants like Rourkela and Bhilai.

Last year due to irregular rains generation of hydel power was adversely affected and this in turn affected Steel and other production. Stress was laid on Thermal power which is dependent on coal.

Power shortage in turn affected railway transport in certain areas specially Eastern belt, where almost all the Steel plants and major coal producing areas are situated.

With the hike in prices of oil and its shortage, much more stress has been laid on coal.

For non-availability of coal following reasons were assigned:

Firstly - less production of coal.

Secondly - transportation difficulties particularly rail transport.

Government announced on several occasions that high level Committees with representatives of the three departments (Steel, Mines and Railways) for coordinating their activities to ensure solution of this problem have been set up. For some time the situation eases but again erupts at intervals. And the mouth-piece of bourgeoisie take pleasure in denouncing one and all departments of Government of India by turns but stressing more on the shortage in the production of coal after nationalisation - linking it with other nationalisation policies particularly of Food-grains trade and alleging that whatever industry is nationalised suffers from shortages causing immense hardship to the people. Lack of regular supply of coal is therefore not a question of a particular industry or trade but a first rate political issue.

Let us examine first what is the position of production after nationalisation. In Bharat Coal Company Ltd., the production in 1973 (from June 1973) has been 14.54 million tons.

The following chart will give comparative figures of production in 1972 i.e. before nationalisation and in 1973 i.e. after nationalisation

PRODUCTION IN B.C.C.L.

(Figures in 000 tonnes)

| <u>Coking Coal</u> | | <u>Month</u> | <u>Hard Coke</u> | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>Before Nationalisation</u> | <u>After Nationalisation</u> | | <u>Before Nationalisation</u> | <u>After Nationalisation</u> |
| <u>1970-71</u> | <u>1971-72</u> | | <u>1970-71</u> | <u>1971-72</u> |
| 1,153 | 1,018 | October | 67 | 75 |
| 1,163 | 1,078 | November | 66 | 96 |
| 1,268 | 1,186 | December | 70 | 101 |
| 1,253 | 1,083 | January | 76 | 107 |
| 1,237 | 1,052 | February | 75 | 98 |
| 1,275 | 1,125 | March | 79 | 108 |
| 1,259 | 1,049 | April | 74 | 95 |
| 1,232 | 1,071 | May | 75 | 102 |
| 1,173 | 1,024 | June | 77 | 96 |
| 1,142 | 1,013 | July | 82 | 98 |
| 1,105 | 1,037 | August | 80 | 99 |
| 1,041 | 1,072 | September | 79 | 100 |
| <u>14,301</u> | <u>12,828</u> | | <u>900</u> | <u>1,175</u> |
| | 1,003 | October 72 | | 103 |
| | 1,040 | November 72 | | 102 |
| | 1,103 | December 72 | | 109 |
| | 1,100 | January 73 | | 113 |
| | 1,031 | February 73 | | 102 |
| | 1,092 | March 73 | | 115 |

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NON-COKING COAL

(in million tonnes)

PRODUCTION IN MINES UNDER COALMINES AUTHORITY LTD.

| | <u>1972</u> | <u>1973</u> |
|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| February | 3.81 | 4.55 |
| March | 4.10 | 4.80 |
| April | 3.99 | 4.35 |
| May | 4.03 | 4.46 |
| June | 3.90 | 4.30 |
| July | 4.01 | 4.25 |
| August | 3.90 | 4.29 |
| September | 4.03 | 4.12 |
| October | 4.02 | 3.79 |
| November | 4.36 | 4.47 |
| December | 4.78 | 4.78 |
| January 74 | 4.70 | 4.92(4.70 in Jan.72) |
| February 74 | 4.55 | 4.68(4.55 in Feb.72) |
| Total | 54.18 | 57.76 |

It is evident that the production has gone up by about 3 million tonnes after nationalisation. This is in spite of the trouble of take-over, re-organisation, officers' (taken over sector) non-cooperation and various shortages.

Production would have been still higher and can go up if the following issues are settled:

1. Shortage of Explosives
2. Shortage of Equipments like tubs, head-lamps, etc. and spare parts .
3. Shortage of Power specially in West Bengal and Bihar areas.
4. Shortage of wagon - to remove accumulation at pit heads.
5. Settling the issue of so-called 'industrialisation' particularly in Bihar.
6. Sound industrial relations policy particularly at the Colliery level (Manager and M.D.)
7. Bipartite wage negotiations to the satisfaction of the workers.
8. Provision of food grains - both scarcity and too high prices persist.
9. Improvement in ventilation.

In Bihar particularly, the old contractors in various garbs including as TU leaders (of puppet or nominal unions) and backed by political factions of ruling party are disturbing peace very often. CMA and BCCL officials are unable to deal with them and often play into their hands. This remaining vestiges of the private sector will have to be removed to create normal conditions.

In the coming years and after more machinery and other equipments are received (for which socialist countries particularly USSR and Poland are giving help), new collieries are to be opened.

The target of 95 million tons of Coal production for the year 1974-75 is dependent on various steps taken to solve the problems indicated above.

In reaching the coal to various parts of the country and factories and power houses, availability of transport - mainly Railways - is very important. Since stocking at the pits can be limited due to danger of fire; sometimes production has to be stopped or slowed down if transport is not available. Availability of wagons; their movements on the lines, and siding facilities are the main bottlenecks.

It is an acknowledged fact that there is wagon shortage in the country. Coal movement is given some priority. Still for coal movement regular supply of wagons is not available. In the controversy between the Railway Board and the coal management, efforts are made to score the point. For example, if the wagons are supplied irregularly the purpose is not served, and they are not fully utilised. Also if the wagons are supplied in the evening (there is no loading in the night), wagon utilisation is not full. Lack of siding facilities also delay full utilisation.

Recently some efforts are being made to use truck and river transport to carry coal, from pithead to Railway siding. To the nearby Steel Factory it can also be taken by roadways if provided. Nonetheless these methods can be used for short term and to a very limited extent. Railways will remain in the near future main transport to carry coal. It is worth investigating how far bureaucracy is responsible for avoidable delay in loading and transporting the coal. Lack of power also affects production of coal specially in the working of washeries.

While steel industry is dependent on regular supply of coal, coal industry also require steel rails and certain other items for maintaining current production and expanding it.

Coal, Steel and power are the basic industries and Railway transport very essential not only to coordinate inflow of coal in these industries but also to carry products for other vital industries which are the back bone of our economy.

Working class and these industries - Our Approach

At present in each industry the working class is concerned with its own management. Mostly these are based on local relations between the management and the workers.

In the steel industry where work stoppage has been the least -

though agitations took place - the workers and the trade unions are concerned with shortage of production because of non-availability of power and coal. It has also affected their incentive bonus earnings. Production has risen and can go up everywhere (except perhaps Durgapur Steel Plant) if coal and power is supplied as required.

In coal industry though production has gone up since nationalisation, there is every possibility of more production.

In power industry the industrial relations are most disturbed. The managements of State Electricity Boards and Power projects have been unwilling to discuss revision in wages on national basis. Efforts of Labour Ministry to bring the, together and take decision of interim relief has not been implemented everywhere. State bosses incorrectly consider it as an encroachment on their authority and autonomy. As a result there has been in almost every State agitation and strikes, partial settlement but no satisfaction among workers.

Even the Engineers - junior and senior - have been on the path of long drawn struggle. In some cases sabotage and wilful reduction in power generation has been reported, as also of pilferages.

In Railway transport the industrial relations are at the lowest ebb, because of the bureaucratic behaviour of the all powerful Railway Board, its policy to help the monopolists and attitude towards Railwaymen and their genuine grievances and trade unions organisations. There have been several stoppages of work on Railways and if the present policies are not radically changed, this state of affairs are likely to continue. This will upset all the calculations and plans.

Bourgeoisie and the vested interests in the ruling party are suggesting a tough line meaning thereby crushing working class struggles. This has not and will not serve the purpose.

Suggestions

Reactionaries, bureaucrats and the vested interests are bent on ruining the economy to teach a lesson to the Government in their attempt to change whatever progressive policies it had adopted since 1969 to 1973. Besides, workers are not getting their due; the monopolists and imperialists want to stage a come-back and bring fascist-like rule.

The sufferings of the workers are immense because of the steep rise in prices and the bureaucratic management. They have to defend the interests and fight for it.

At the same time if they do not fight for the national economy and specially for democratic functioning of the public sector and against wastages and corruption there is real danger of some of the policies being reversed which will ultimately adversely affect the working class.

Working class will therefore have to think not only in terms of his industry and local management but in an integrated way, at least with regard to these four industries, which are very much inter-dependent and create crisis for the entire economy.

Railway workers, coal miners, power workers and engineers, and steel workers will have to expose and correct the practices which hinder full production and full utilisation of the productive capacities. In the present situation this is one of urgent tasks.

We have suggested to the Government:

1. To call a meeting of the management of these 4 industries and trade unions - particularly in the region of West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar - to discuss the present problems of production and full utilisation of capacities.
2. Make it compulsory for the employers to procure and arrange foodgrains at reasonable rates to workers.

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PROPOSALS FOR NEW COAL MINES

In so far as Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. is concerned, there are no proposals to open new coal areas immediately. But for the purpose of achieving increased production during the Sixth Plan certain new areas will be opened as a part of the programme after a report is submitted by the Polish Consultants, who are studying the problem.

2. The Coal Mines Authority will be opening new mines as detailed below, in all its divisions for production of medium coking coal and non-coking coal. The additional production expected during the Fifth Plan from these new mines in each division are as follows:-

(Figures in Million Tonnes)

| | <u>Production by 1978-79</u> | <u>Final target</u> |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>1. Eastern Division</u> | | |
| (Raniganj and Mugma coalfield) | 2.53 | N.A. |
| <u>2. Central Division</u> | | |
| Orissa | 0.55 | 3.20 |
| Singarauli | 4.30 | 7.05 |
| Argada | 2.30 | 3.00 |
| Rangarh | 0.80 | 1.40 |
| North Karanpura | 0.40 | 0.65 |
| Kargali | 0.85 | 1.95 |
| Kathara | 0.30 | 1.50 |
| | <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> | <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> |
| | 10.10 | 20.75 |
| <u>3. Western Division</u> | | |
| Chanda | 0.18 | 0.18 |
| Korba | 1.60 | 4.50 |
| Pench | 1.06 | 1.06 |
| Nagpur (Kamptee & Pathakhera) | 0.80 | 0.90 |
| Soharpur | 0.40 | 1.00 |
| Baikunthpur | 0.95 | 0.95 |
| | <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> | <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> |
| | 4.99 | 8.59 |

Grand Total: (17.62 or say 18 M.T.)

Detailed project reports are not yet ready for all the new mines. The approximate capital investment would be about Rs.216 crores.

BIPARTITE WAGE NEGOTIATIONS

AITUC as far back as in 1966 declared that the then prevalent tripartite Wage Board system is being utilised by the management and the Government to delay the wage settlements and it created difficulties in implementation. AITUC suggested bipartite wage settlements. Everyone who swore by collective bargaining between the management and workers talked of bipartite settlements but expressing doubt in practice because of multiplicity of unions. A committee was appointed by the Government to improve upon the tripartite Wage Boards and it submitted its report with various suggestions.

AIBEA had entered into bipartite Wage Negotiations in the year 1966. But in this establishment the AIBEA has overwhelming majority and therefore the issue of various unions and trade union centres did not create much problem.

When the Steel Wage Board period was ending AITUC gave a call for revision of wage-structure through bipartite negotiations with all the unions and TU centres. In the Industrial Committee of Iron & Steel held in October 69, it was agreed that a bipartite negotiation between the Public and Private sector employers of steel industry and the three national TU centres which are recognised by the Government of India for tripartite meetings and which have units in Steel industry should take place. Government (Labour Ministry) offered to give secretariat assistance and bear expenses of travelling of workers representatives.

The composition of the Workers' Group presented some difficulty and delay but ultimately it was agreed that it should consist of three representatives each of INTUC, AITUC and HMS. INTUC was insisting on bigger representation which was ensured by having one representative from each recognised TU in the Steel plants. Thus INTUC got three more representatives from Jamshedpur, Burnpur and Bhilai. AITUC got from Durgapur, and HMS from Rourkela. From Bhadravati an independent union got representation. Subsequently Durgapur union disaffiliated from AITUC and joined CITU. This representation continues on the Committee. This body with divergent ideological views and rivalries in the TU movement was able to arrive at settlement, first for interim relief within 15 days of its starting work and then wage-structure and some other working and living conditions by September 1970. This broke the monopoly of INTUC of entering into agreements since 1947 and a new pattern was evolved. The agreement including for interim relief had been quite a big rise as compared to earlier Wage Boards and that this agreement in subsequent period has been looked upon as a model.

This bipartite Committee (minus Secretary from Labour Ministry) has been retained to look after the implementation of the agreement and subsequently late Mohan Kumaramangalam when he took over as Steel & Mines Minister re-christened it as Joint Negotia-

ting Committee on Steel industry. This Committee can discuss every issue concerning the industry, it fixes up targets of production and it reviews it periodically. It has also taken up the job of standardisation of nomenclature of jobs and wages, which is likely to be completed soon. Concurrently it is busy negotiating new wage structure after the present agreement expires in September 1974.

Immediately after this NMDC workers through a Committee which was appointed earlier (bipartite in character) had a similar agreement in January 1971.

Subsequently in BHEL, Cement, Electricity, Sugar, Coal Mines, Bangalore based Public Sector units (except ITI), Magnesite mines and Port & Dock industry, bipartite talks are going on in various stages. Details as far as known are given in subsequent pages.

In some industries agreements have been arrived at, at State-level; either through bipartite or tripartite forums e.g. Engineering industry in West Bengal and Bihar.

Some feature of these bi-partite agreements are given below:

1. Usually the help of the Labour Ministry either directly or indirectly is still necessary to start bipartite negotiations. Representative of the Labour Ministry is taken as Convener or Secretary. In case of Cement when negotiations could not succeed, Union Labour Minister was asked to arbitrate on the amount of minimum wage. In Electricity, the Joint Secretary of the Union Labour Ministry is still the convener and a sort of Conciliator.
2. The concept that because of multiplicity of trade union centres and trade unions collective bargaining cannot be successful has been blown up. Several difficulties about composition etc. have been faced but these have not been proved to be insurmountable. Even among the Workers' Group serious differences exist and often delay matters but unanimity or consensus have been possible.
3. This system has proved definitely better from the point of view of workers' interests. There has been less delay, less expenditure of the Government and comparatively better benefits to the worker. Implementation has also created less difficulties.
4. This have been possible yet mostly in industries which are all in public sector or where public sector has a dominating role. Cement and Sugar are exceptions but then they have yet to arrive at final settlements.
5. Composition of workers' delegation has presented a formidable job in almost each case. INTUC has insisted on lion's share based on their verified membership of 1968 and present claimed membership. A set pattern has not been evolved and in each case after mutual consultations ad hoc agreements are arrived at. In BHEL and Cement, HMS was excluded, while in coal they have not joined the negotiations being not satisfied with their number of representatives. In Electricity, coal mines, Sugar and Magnesite mines,

CITU was given a representation. In some cases as in Steel, HMT, HAL, and Sugar even some independent recognized unions at plant level or persons were also called.

6. Though in all these negotiations representatives of workers have consultations among themselves before discussing their demands with the employers, nowhere workers' Group functions as such. Often Workers' Group speaks in different voices before the employers, also.

In Steel industry it was a Convention that JNC will consider only those items which are placed by either employer or Workers' Group and not by individual representative or organisation. But recently this is being broken.

7. These negotiations have brought a wage level of near about Rs. 325/- as on 1.1.74 and D.A. revision formula of Rs. 1.30 per point. The call of the AITUC at its 29th Congress at Calcutta in January 1973 to revise wage-map of India is being implemented. These agreements have given impetus to various agitations, demands, agreements for higher revision of wages in other industries at plant level including revision of minimum wages by the State/Central Governments.

There have been a number of wage agreements in other industries at plant/industry level, particularly in Textile industry at Calcutta, Bombay, Tamilnadu, Kanpur etc. In oil industry and Engineering industry also wage revision have taken place. These have been published in T.U.R.

8. Government through its Finance Ministry and the Bureau of Public Enterprises have succeeded in not allowing the minimum basic wage to go up beyond Rs. 200/- p.m. (Additional amount being treated as non-reducible D.A.). In coal basic minimum wage will go up.

9. These bipartite negotiations between the management and the unions have not been smooth. Some agitations have invariably preceded the bipartite talks being started, in some cases even during negotiations workers had to go on strike or threaten it untily, before agreement could be reached. In fact for the success of bipartite talks and getting workers their due, united movements are essential before and even during the negotiations.

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STEEL INDUSTRY

Participants: Representatives of AITUC, INTUC, HMS and unions (T.U. Organisations - CITU and one independent union of Bhadravati unions)

Interim Relief: Rs.33/- p.m. w.e.f. 1.11.69

Final Wage Revision: Rs.67/- p.m. W.E.F. 1.9.70

Minimum Wage: Rs.240/- (Rs.200/- Basic + Rs.40/- D.A.) at C.L.I. of 183 (1960 Base)

Dearness Allowance: Rs.1.30 per point rise, Quarterly revision

Period of Agreement: 1st September 1970 - Four years.

BHEL

Participants : Representatives of AITUC, INTUC, CITU and (T.U. organisations) Independent Union

Interim Relief: $8\frac{1}{2}\%$ of basic wage subject to minimum of Rs.25 and maximum of Rs.35 w.e.f. 1.8.73

Minimum Wage: Rs.260 (Rs.200/- Basic + Rs.60 D.A.) at C.L.I. of 201 (1960 Base) as on 1.10.73

Dearness Allowance: Rs.1.30 per point rise, quarterly revision

Period of Agreement: 1st November 1973 for four years.

CEMENT

Participants : AITUC & INTUC Unions (T.U. organisations)

Interim Relief:

Minimum Wage: Rs.295/- at C.L.I. of 227 w.e.f. 1.9.73

Period of Agreement: 1st September 1973

(other details still under negotiations)

ELECTRICITY

Participants : AITUC, INTUC - HMS - CITU (T.U. Organisations)

Interim Relief: Rs.30/- where V.D.A. is not paid at the same time VDA is to be introduced from 1.10.73 and where VDA already exist Rs.15/- as interim relief.

Negotiations on minimum wage etc. are continuing

COAL MINES

Participants : Representatives of AITUC, INTUC, HMS
(T.U. organisations) and CITU

(HMS though given representation has not yet joined)

Interim Relief: Rs.39/- p.m. w.e.f. 15.11.73

Minimum Wage: Rs.325/- for surface workers
Rs.357.50 for underground workers at C.L.I. 246
(1960 Base).

Other issues are still under discussion and are likely to be finalised in April 1974.

SUGAR

Participants : Representatives of AITUC, INTUC, HMS, CITU
(T.U. organisations) and Shri Shibbanlal Saxena.

Interim Relief: Rs.33.22 for those drawing revised Basic wage
upto Rs.150/-

Rs.37.30 for those drawing above Rs.150/-
for all States except Tamilnadu & U.P.

In Tamil Nadu and U.P. the respective amounts are
Rs.28.22 and Rs.32.30

W.E.F. 1.11.73 to 30.6.73

It is expected that wage-revision will be done by 30.6.73.

BANGALORE BASED PUBLIC SECTOR INDUSTRIES

(excluding ITI)

HAL, HMT & BEL with its branches all over India

Participants : Recognised T.U.s in all Branches which
(T.U. organisations) include AITUC, INTUC & independent unions

Minimum Wage: Rs.300/- (Rs.200/- Basic + Rs.100/- D.A.)
at C.L.I. 241 for Bangalore as on 1.10.73

Wages as on 1.1.74 - Rs.351/- and one on 1.4.74 Rs.367.90

Dearness Allowance- Rs.1.30 per point quarterly revision

Period of Agreement: 1.1.73 to 31.12.76 (4 Years)

Magnesite Mines Salem

Participants : AITUC, INTUC - CITU
(T.U. organisations)

Interim Relief: Rs.30/- offered

This has not been agreed to by the AITUC & CITU unions
and strike is going on from 25.2.74.

PORT & DOCK

Participants : AITUC, INTUC & HMS
(T.U. organisation)

Interim Relief: Decision to be taken within 2 months
(meeting held on 31.1.74)

Bipartite Committee to be set up.

L. I. C.

Participants : Three Federations (one affiliated to
(T.U. organisations) INTUC, 2 independents)

Minimum Wage of Assistant: Rs.412/-

Period of agreement from 1.4.73 for four years.

REPORT ON L.I.C. STRUGGLE FOR WAGES

When the All India LIC Employees Federation came into existence on November 14, 1972, the first and the foremost objective of the Federation was to lead the battle on the charter of demands on correct slogan and tactics. While circulating the draft charter the All India Insurance Employees Coordination Committee- the harbinger of this Federation observed on October 6, 1972: "Do these national developments present a dismal picture as the prophets of doom would have us believe? In our firm understanding the picture is not at all discouraging and we are sure the LIC employees will refuse to hold to the apron strings of the bankrupt theory that no wage rise is possible under these conditions for they have faith in the capacity of the working class to meet new offensive and smash the idea of wage-freeze. The recent bonus struggle has shown what the workers can do when they unite in militant actions over fundamental issues".

The above understanding has proved to be correct. The employees have refused to hold to the apron strings of wage freeze in LIC. They have secured in this agreement more than 15 p.c. wage rise. The cost of the settlement is about Rs.6.40 crores and in addition Rs.2 crores in 1975-76. According to one's estimate the cost of the settlement may go almost upto Rs.7 crores if the anomalies are removed as also taking into consideration the actual rise in D.A. since 1.4.1973.

COMPARISON WITH PAST AGREEMENTS

Let us however compare this agreement with the past achievements for our better understanding:

| | |
|--|---|
| Standardisation of Pay scales in May 1957 | = cost of Rs.78 lakhs. no. of employees 20,000. |
| Agreement in Jan. 1963 (including interim settlement of 1961) After 5½ years | = cost of Rs.2.33 crores. (no. of employees 40,000). |
| Agreement of June 1970 After 7½ years | = cost Rs.4.78 crores (no. of employees 40,000) |
| Agreement of Jan.. 1974 After 3½ years | = cost of Rs.6.40 crores (no.of employees 43,000) |

AHEAD OF BANK EMPLOYEES

The coordination committee further observed "from the position of enjoying a better Pay Scale in 1957 we have gone down to such a position today that our wages are far below the wage level prevailing in banks." An important reason for this wage depression was that we missed one settlement in 1967 due to Sectarian Policies followed by the Marxist leadership of AIIEA.

Let us have a look at the comparative figures of total wages of Assistants in Bank and LIC. working in big cities.

| | Before agreement | | | After agreement | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------|------------|-----------------|---------|------------|
| | LIC | Banks | Difference | LIC | Banks | Difference |
| Starting | | | | | | |
| Rs. | 317.30 | 335.30 | 18.00 | 412.00 | 397.60 | + 14.40 |
| Total Wage | | | | | | |
| After 20 years. | Rs.706.00 | 1034.50 | 328.50 | 1172.80 | 1242.00 | - 69.20 |
| After 22 years | Rs.773.60 | 1034.50 | 260.90 | 1276.80 | 1242.00 | + 34.80 |

THE BONUS VICTORY

The comparison eloquently shows the advance we have secured the agreement. However the comparison is not full and complete for the simple reason that it does not speak about bonus rates. As a result of this agreement we have secured 15 p.c. bonus as against about 12½ p.c. bonus in Banks.

The advance is very significant as can be seen from the following table:

| Minimum | | Maximum | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Bonus at 10 p.c. on March 31st salary in LIC | 15 p.c. bonus on average annual salary in LIC | Bonus 10 p.c. on March 31st salary in LIC | 15 p.c. bonus on average annual salary in LIC. |
| As per revised grade | | As per revised grade | |
| Peon Rs. 395.28 | Rs.554.04 | Rs.717.36 | Rs.1,005.48 |
| Record Clerk 444.28 | 627.98 | 973.44 | 1,375.92 |
| Assistant 511.68 | 723.24 | 1460.16 | 2,063.88 |

This information shows the difference in the Bonus payment as a result of the bonus rate having been changed to 15 p.c. of gross annual earnings. The actual rise in the bonus payment as compared to bonus paid for 1972-73 will far exceed the difference above. It can be safely said that it is almost double.

The agreement provides a number of other benefits including House Rent Allowance on percentage basis and enhanced Gratuity for all employees. Now the Gratuity is almost doubled and most of employees would get amount of Rs. 20,000/- as Gratuity.

The Provident Fund contribution has been raised from 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.c. to 10 p.c. of basic salary and it is expected to go upto 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.c. on gross wages from 1st April 1975. Thus there would be substantial rise in this retirement benefit. Again for the first time, the LIC employees can now look forward for a comprehensive medical benefit scheme covering the families as well.

We are of course not happy over the preamble of the agreement relating to Productivity, profitability and economy as also the fact that the employees in the locked out divisions would have to suffer wage cut. We put up stiff resistance on these two matters but ultimately could not succeed as all other unions including AIIEA submitted to the dictates of the management.

The Central Committee Meeting of All India LIC Employees Federation held at Lucknow from 19th to 22nd February has hailed with one voice, the agreement as a great advance securing in as much as 20 p.c. wage rise within a span of 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years from the last settlement. The correct trade union approach displayed by the Federation in combating the policy of denial of the management and a systematic campaign in the name of wage freeze on the Trade Union Front by AIIEA leadership only to condition the employees for total surrender, stands vindicated and the Federation has redeemed its pledge to the LIC employees to secure a fair deal and to improve their life and living.

The Central Committee echoes with one voice the feelings of LIC employees that but for the emergence of All India LIC Employees Federation this settlement in so short a time would not have been possible. The role played by the Federation in salvaging the negotiations and securing a fair settlement which at the concluding phase seemed to be wrecking due to the interaction of infantile adventurism on one hand and the unprecedented repressive measures of the management through lockouts, mass suspensions and victimisations on the other has been fully appreciated and placed on record. The Central Committee is of the unanimous opinion that but for the great struggles launched by the Federation and its predecessor All India Insurance Employees Coordination Committee on the slogan of higher bonus the big leaf in the Bonus rate from 10% to 15% would not have been possible and the credit for this outstanding achievement goes to all LIC employees who frustrated the attempts of those who wanted to divert the attention from the issue of bonus which was the main flank of struggle for the entire working-class in recent years.

This is what we have secured at a time when the management used the lockouts against us and the three unions which talked earlier of confrontation with the Government collapsed and surrendered. It has to be stated here that our movement forked off in

two different directions after the successful non-cooperation movement and the total strike on December 28. The AIIEA leadership made calculated attempts to divert the movement on wrong slogans and tactics. Its programme of holding meeting and shouting slogans inside office premises during office hours was the beginning of the diversion and an end in itself. It resulted in mass scale suspensions and lock-out. A big leap forward in a wrong direction led to a hasty retreat and surrender to the great advantage of the management. True, an attempt was made to keep the tempo by organising indefinite strike in lockout divisions. But the very fact that the strikes actions were confined to the locked out divisions created an adverse effect on the morale of employees in these divisions.

In a refreshing contrast the Federation took full advantage of the non-cooperation movement and the total strike on December 28 to make advance on the slogan of improvement over what the management termed as its final offer. The situation in LIC had already attracted the attention of the Government of India and the Labour Minister invited us for talks on the disputes.

However the stalemet continued as the LIC management refused to go beyond six crores and repeated the threat of total lock out. In this situation our President Com. S.M. Banerjee suggested that the Labour Minister or the Finance Minister should mediate in the dispute over the improvements beyond Rs. six crores Com. Banerjee also threatened that in case the management went ahead with lock out in any more division, the LIC employees would go on an indefinite strike all over the country. This move worked on the Labour Minister as well as on the LIC. The Tripartite was held on 17th January where the cease fire was ordered that the management should not resort to further lock-out and suspensions. The parties should hold bipartite talks to resolve the dispute which could be finally resolved on January 24th at the initiative of the Federation.

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STRUGGLE, UNITY AND GAINS
IN
HEAVY ENGINEERING
IN JAMSHEDPUR, B.H.E.L. AND STEEL INDUSTRY

After the AITUC Calcutta Session, February, 1973, the delegates went back to their respective places and started mobilising the workers to achieve the wage revision to Rs.250/- in unorganised industry and more in organised industry, to change the wage map of the country from semi-colonial pattern to a industrial pattern. The movement started in different form in different places. The workers were hit hard by rising prices and were anxious to form a united front in the industry.

Though the last agreement in B.H.E.L. was due to expire only in 1974 end, wage negotiation started there in the month of April, 1973. Following pressure from the Hardwar unit by way of demonstration, hunger strike, gherao and one day token strike.

The B.H.E.L. has five units i.e. Hardwar, Bhopal, Trichirapally, Hyderabad (two units) with a total working force of 39,043 (Bhopal-17,107, Tiruchy-7,479, Hyderabad-7,603 and Hardwar-6,854) excluding 6 thousand casual workers. Out of these five units we have unions in three plants only. In Hyderabad we do not have any union. Unfortunately there was split in our Trichy and Bhopal unions. But immediately after the split our comrades formed our own unions. We coordinated among ourselves and started joint movement in all the units simultaneously for upwards wage revision. Meanwhile in Trichirapally unit the annual bonus issue became acute. A united front was formed comprising AITUC, INTUC, CITU and Independent unions (recognised) and a one day token strike call was given. However, a settlement was arrived at one day earlier, i.e. on 9th September, 1973. By this agreement workers got Rs.200/- each over and above 20% annual bonus, based on production scheme. It was not deductible but a part of it was to be adjusted in 1973-74 production. At the time of the agreement we successfully kept out the CITU from the negotiation table. As usual CITU opposed this agreement but the workers put them in the right place. By this struggle and gains, the confidence among the workers obviously grew considerably.

The worker members in the Joint Negotiating Committee got strength and after hard bargaining part agreement was concluded on 18th January, 1974. By this agreement workers got from Rs.55/- to Rs.80/- minimum increase in wages with Rs.260/- as basic. Number of scale marged in to 20 from 44 with 8 basic scale. Point to point fitment was also agreed upon. The second part of the agreement is to be concluded by April, 1974.

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In all the major industrial engineering units of Jamshedpur the wage revision was due for revision on October, 1974. But the price rise made the workers restless. The AITUC union there took the lead for wage revision before its expiry. We started leafletting gate meetings, and took steps for bringing a united front. On 12.9.73 one of the department of Indian Tube Company went on strike. The management discharged 3 workers and suspended 4 workers as they gheraoed the officer inside the factory. On 14.9.73 the Tube Co. workers went on one day token strike. Department strike continued. Ultimately the management declared lock out on 30.9.73. Bihar Government intervened and the lock out was lifted on 25.10.73. Workers resumed the work along with their suspended workers. The discharged workers were allowed to resume work on 25.11.73. This was for the first time in the history of Jamshedpur that the monopoly house of Tata could not victimise any worker. This naturally became a great source of encouragement for Jamshedpur workers in their fight against monopoly house there. We took the opportunity and formed the united front with AITUC one faction of INTUC, BMS, HMP and CITU. Here again CITU insisted to include BMS. But it failed miserably.

Now the united front jointly started gate meetings, leafletting etc. and chalked out a plan for strike. This time strike was planned not at a time in the whole engineering industry, but one by one. The so called recognised INTUC union tried its level best to disturb the unity of the workers but they failed miserably. For a better understanding of Jamshedpur, an account of peculiar situation of this town is given below:-

TELCO: (Tata Engineering and Locomotive Co.) With 21 thousand workers besides casual and temporary workers..

T.R.F. (Tata Robin Fraser) This is most sophisticated Engineering concern which produces machineries for Coal Mines. More than 500 workers are engaged in this concern.

I.T.C. (Indian Tube Co.) Of Tatas with about 5,000 workers, produces tubes for domestic use and export purpose, seamless tubes for Aeroplanes and boilers and Railway Engines.

INDIAN CABLES: British firm producing cables. About 4,000 workers are engaged in this concern.

TINPLATE CO. (Show Walles & Tata Combined) About 500 workers are engaged in it. It produces heavy mould and different type of tin boxes.

JEMCO: Owned by Sardar Indar Singh & Sons. About 500 workers are engaged in it. It produces heavy mould and different type of castings.

I.S.W.P. (indian Steel & Wire Products Ltd.) Owned by Sardar Indar Singh and others. About 2,000 workers are engaged in it. It produces telephone wire and different types of coils, nells etc.

Apart from this, there are a good number of small scale engineering concerns with about 10,000 workers.

After engineering comes TISCO, Tata Iron and Steel Co., engaging about 40 thousand workers. Besides this there are 25 thousand workers working under different contractors.

One has to remember that the workers of big engineering concerns had gone on a strike in 69-70 lasting for 48 days. In this strike workers did gain in terms of wages but 25 militant workers lost their services.

The run-away prices, scarcity of food grains and other essential commodities due to machinations of hoarders and profiteers and at the top of it ineffective Govt. machinery, denial of living wages to the workers, frequent shut downs, and reduction of real earnings of the workers have all combined to bring about sharp deterioration of the living condition of the engineering workers.

The 17 point charter of demands along with strike (1st to 5th November) notice was served on all the employers by all the registered trade unions, constituent of the united front. The united front decided to give a call for one day token strike in each industry. It was planned that every day workers of one of the factories would go on strike.

On 19.11.73: The Tinsplate workers on strike. Out of 5,500 workers only 49 attend their duties.
The strike was peaceful.

On 20.11.73: The JEMCO & T.R.F. on Strike. In JEMCO recognised HMS in the front in T.R.F.
Strike 90 per cent successful.

On 22.11.73: In TELCO Plant, inspite of INTUC and management's joint effort to break the workers unity, more than 93% workers participate in the strike.

On 26.11.73: Strike in the Indian Steel and Wire Products and Indian Cable Co. Here also strike was successful.

On 27.11.73: Strike in Indian Tube Co.

It is to be noted that in this company inspite of their recent strike the workers responded on the call given by the united front and this strike was also successful.

After chain of strikes by one after another unity, the management and INTUC (so called recognised union) had to change their wage agreement which was to continue up to October, 1974. By the new agreement (for four units) the workers got the following benefits.

1. Minimum guarantee Rs.55/- only with minimum basic 250 and 50 D.A. in the case of TELCO. For others 295/- and 285/- only.
2. (A) D.A. increase at the rate of Rs.1.30 per point (Base 1960=100)
(B) In the case of Tinsplate increase rate was at the rate of Rs.1.15 per point. (Base 1960=100). Previously it was 75 paise per point (Base 1949=100).
3. Number of scales merged.
4. Change in Bonus scheme.
5. Some other minor concessions.

The above mentioned agreements covered only about 32 thousand workers. By this one stage of the struggle was over. The workers are preparing for another type of struggle.

The strike by 25 thousand workers working under different contractors continued for 8 days effecting all the industrial units including TISCO. It ended only after Bihar Labour Minister's assurance for higher wages within one months time. The the workers were getting Rs.4.50 paise only.

STEEL (BHILAI) (Bonus Struggle)

During the year 1972-73 Bhilai production was a record one. In some sections workers produced more than the target. It went up to 2.1 million ton. Under this background we demanded 20% bonus and gave a call for united front to achieve this demand. A united front was formed comprising AITUC, CITU both the factions of HMS and one Independent union. One by one all the unions gave the call for 20% bonus, including the union under newly elected INTUC. The management declared 8 $\frac{1}{3}$ % bonus to the workers. This time a joint call was given for bonus boycott. It continued for months. Meanwhile

negotiation started at the local level with INTUC (recognised in plant) and AITUC (recognised in Mines) as well as at central level. Negotiations however, could not bring any result. Then relay hunger strike started by INTUC leadership was supported by AITUC. Others however, remained neutral. There was no result. Deshahara and Dewali were over. No body took the money offered by the management. The united front again met and decided to serve a strike notice to the management. Except AITUC and INTUC no other unions including the CITU served any strike notice. The strike date was fixed for 15th November. Again we tried to form united front with INTUC and other major trade unions at the plant to build up a strong united movement for the achievement of 20% bonus. But INTUC leadership did not agree to have the joint front.

After receiving the strike notice the management started negotiation seriously with both of us. We tried to discuss with the management jointly, but in the plant INTUC refused to have joint discussion.

Absence of a proper and workable joint front of the trade unions at Bhilai plant has been the main weakness of our movement. In mines we formed united front with all major unions. Ultimately by 14th November, 1973, the workers got Rs. 100/- extra over and above 8½% bonus. The workers engaged by the contractors in captive mines are not benefited by this yet. The dispute is still there.

BOKARO: There are about 28 thousand workers working under Bokaro Steel Ltd. of which 14 thousand are operation workers, 4 thousand ministerial staff and 2 thousand officers. A strong group of officers badly divided among themselves and with bitter internal differences, dominate the administration there. Some of the officers have their men in the category wise organisations e.g. operatives union, Drivers Union, Central Workers Union etc. our union (Bokaro Ispat Kangar Union) has influence among 3 to 4 thousand B.S.L. workers and a general influence, amongst other section of B.S.L. workers.

In the last week of October, 1973, about 700 Crane drivers went on a strike on the demand that their scales of pay should be put on a par with light vehicle drivers who had fought earlier a struggle and as a result of it had been able to achieve a higher scale of pay. The strike lingered on for about 10-12 days and a chain reaction began to take place.

The senior operatives Assosn. held a meeting and decided to fight for their own demands. The main demand was counting of training period for the purposes of seniority. The central workers committee also decided to embark upon a course of agitation from badge wearing to strike on 13.11.73. The Bokaro Pragatisheel Mazdoor Union which was confined to drivers and had recently converted itself into a general union of workers gave a call for a general strike from 6.11.73. The important office-bearers of this union belong to Jana Sangh. The whole workers were in ferment and our followers and general workers began to pester us what the red-flag was to do. By 5.11.73 it became clear that majority of the workers would go on strike even if we did not give a call. We, therefore decided to give a strike notice on 6.11.73 for a general strike from 8.11.73. If it was not done we would have been isolated from the main bulk of the workers and accused of having betrayed them in their struggle.

A section of officers were also goading the workers to go on strike and the workers having the support of their higher officers were in high morale and got much encouragement in embarking on the strike. The motive behind it may be, as we could assess, that Steel Melting Shop (S.M.S.) which was to be opened by Comrade L. Brezhnev by the end of November, 73, was lagging behind schedule. It was not possible to finish it so that Com. Brezhneve could inaugurate its operation. So workers' strike could be a possible way out. Therefore, the whole-hearted support of a section of officers to the strike. Another plausible reason might have been to denounce the leadership of the present Managing Director who can then be charged with utter incapability and removed from this post for which another senior officer was aspiring.

The call of the Pragatisheel Mazdoor Sangh went unheeded by the general mass of workers. Out of 14 thousand construction workers only about 2,000 went on strike and were joined by about 600 drivers on 6.11.73. On 7.11.73 evening we had our mass meeting attended by about 10-12 thousand workers in which we declared our strike from 8.11.73, about 98% of the workers were on strike. But the category unions tried to prevent us to be present in the joint meeting saying that they would not allow any out siders nor any political parties.

Under these circumstances we planned and decided to hold a meeting on behalf of our union in support of the strike on 11.11.73. The INTUC (recognised union in BSL) was badly isolated and in order to save its face or being goaded by another section of officers, called a general strike on HSCL workers (the construction Co. of GOI and main contractions of BSL) from 13.11.73.

Our meeting which was held in another sector (just in opposite direction of the other portions of strike) and where we have good mass base near our newly-built party office, proved to be immense success. About 40 thousand workers attend. We enumerated the common demands, exposed the anti-political and anti-outsider themes of the partners, called upon for a just and quick settlement of the demands and called upon the workers to protect the plant and save it from the machinations of corrupt officials. Our meeting had a good response from the mass of workers. We also called for Bokaro Bundh on 19.11.73 and not on 13.11.73 as called by INTUC. We also explained that we as red flag union wanted a solution of demands. Who signed it was not the problem.

It was on this stage that the Labour Minister of Bihar intervened on our initiative. Strike started from 8.11.73 and withdrawn on 16th noon.

The agreement was in the shape of an appeal by Labour Minister to withdraw the strike in view of certain concessions made. She had a written undertaking from the management on some points which she informed the striking organisations and it was on that basis that the unions and organisations withdraw the strike. The unsettled issues were to be referred to Labour Minister whose advice was to be binding on all parties. The negotiations were held on 14 & 15 November, 1973.

The main demands conceded were:- An interim relief of Rs.10/- p.m. to all the workers in the plant till canteen arrangements were made, re-inbursement of Rs.5/- enhancement in the transport charges from plant to colony (the state transport corporation runs the buses), introduction of reward scheme for both operation and construction workers with effect from 1.11.1973, provision of more quarters, free diet in hospital for employees drawing basic wage up to Rs.300/- p.m., no victimization and withdrawal of all suspension and terminations and some other small demands.

The strike was withdrawn at a mammoth mass meeting held on 16.11.1973 at 12 noon. About 25 thousand workers attended. The workers went back with a sense of victory and with more confidence in our union and Red Flag. We were the one, who gained most out of this struggle. The other unions were thrown in the background and we emerged before the workers as real leaders.

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CONCLUSIONS:

Our experience in this sector shows that the working class today wants joint effort by unions. The anarchic price rises, unavailability of essential commodities, fall in real earnings of the workers, are the main features of the struggle. Where ever AITUC unions were strong, and could take the lead for mobilising the workers with the slogan of united front, only there the workers could achieve more. Where ever we were weak it was difficult to have a proper united front. Some times if we failed to assess the pulse of the workers in proper time, the other forces took the lead and created trouble to form any democratic and real united front. Results were obviously contradictory demands coming to the forefront, and workers getting confused, as it happened in Bokaro. Experiences show that we had to build strong organisation of our own only then others came for united front. When every political party is bent on having its own trade union wing, it is more necessary that we educate the workers politically, explain to them their responsibility towards public sector and how they are to guard our national property and at the same time expose those who are sabotaging our economy and are working against the interest of the working class. To make our organisation strong it is necessary to remain among the workers for most of our time. In 1974 Steel workers wage revision is due. From now on, we have to build our organisation first and only then try to form united front to achieve the just demands of the working class

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INDIAN RAILWAY WORKERS' FEDERATION

24, Canning Lane, New Delhi-1

The following resolutions were passed in the Convention held on 14 - 15 March 1974:

Resolution No. 1

The Railway System as run at present follows a policy in its major areas of activity which only strengthens and enriches the big monopolists and traders. Its so-called services to the public i.e. the passengers is so arranged as to fleece the public and serve the vested interests.

As a result of this basic policy the vast mass of Railway workers are also exploited and denied their legitimate demands.

Taking note of this, this Convention of the Railway unions of the AITUC which are functioning on almost all zones hereby decides to establish the Indian Railway Workers' Federation.

This new Federation in many ways has common objectives with the already existing two Federations of Railwaymen, NFIR and AIRF who alone have been recognised so far by the Railway Board though without using any democratic procedure for such recognition.

But unfortunately, in our opinion, the two Federations for a long time had been functioning in a manner which did not meet the needs of the Railway workers. So the different sections of the Railway workers came up with their categorywise organisations and actions ignoring the existence of these two Federations as was seen in the strike of Locomen and others.

In such a situation the Convention feels the necessity of coordinating the general demands of all railwaymen and those of the categories. This, we are of the opinion, could be done by establishing a new Federation. Hence, while AITUC and its railway unions participated in the National Convention, called by the AIRF leadership on 27th February, 1974, we called our Railway unions Convention to establish a new centre as the platform for a comprehensive policy on the Railways whose main ingredients are as follows:

1. To defend Railway workers' demands and interests;
2. To integrate their demands with the need to establish a socialist oriented democratic economy;
3. To demolish the bureaucratism of the Railway management which not only harms the railway workers and the public but also the whole national economy;

4. To rear among the railway unions a power to resist the activities of anti-people bureaucrats and vested interests;
5. To create a democratic management system by participation of the workers in the management at all levels of the Railway system through elected workers' councils, which alone can fight corruption, pilferage, sabotage, etc; and
6. To generate among the working class a new type of class-unity which will defend workers' interests combined with and as part of the general national interests.

Such an approach alone can generate an attitude based on anti-imperialism, national development and democracy, thereby defeating the conspiracies of right reaction to thwart the progress of the toiling people and the country as a whole.

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RESOLUTION NO. 2

The Indian Railway system is the biggest transport industry of the country and its proper and efficient functioning is very vital for the economy of the country. The organised trade union movement on the railways has to play the main role in running the railways efficiently. The management of the railways is still being continued on the old colonial pattern in which the railway workers have no say. The working conditions and wage system of the railway workers are also not satisfactory and whenever demands were made for improvement in wage structure of the railway workers, the same were referred to Pay Commissions which were appointed for going into the question of service conditions and wages of all the Central Government employees and such commissions failed to do justice to the railway workers as industrial workers. There has been no scientific job evaluation of the different categories of railway workers for fixing their wages.

The last Pay Commission has failed to do justice to the different categories of railway workers in fixing their wages according to the nature of their jobs. This Commission did not only deny the need-based minimum wage to the railway workers on the basis of the norms laid down by the 15th Indian Labour Conference held in 1957 but also refused to treat them at par with the workers of other public sector undertakings. The Commission also denied 100% neutralisation in the cost of living through dearness allowance and a minimum bonus of 8.33% to the railway workers, which is being given to all other industrial workers, whether in private or public undertakings.

..... 3

The unprecedented rise in the prices during the last two years and non-availability of essential commodities in the market has also hit the railway workers very hard but the Railway Ministry is not prepared to arrange supply of essential commodities to railway workers at fixed prices through subsidised shops.

The working hours of the railway workers are still based on the 'Adjudicators Award' which was given more than 25 years ago and under the pretext of this Award, many railway workers are forced to work more than 8 hours a day, without paying any overtime allowance.

No proper attention is being paid to the day-to-day grievances of the railway workers and the workers are forced to resort to agitations and direct actions for their demands and grievances.

Instead of taking a realistic view of the situation and changing the labour relations policy on railways to suit the present day requirements, making it possible to settle the demands and grievances of railway workers irrespective of the same being raised or agitated through recognised or unrecognised organisations of railway workers, the Railway Board have been trying to put the blame for industrial unrest in the railways, on the railway workers and victimising the railway workers for genuine trade union activities.

The formation of a united front of the different organisations of railway workers for a struggle to achieve at least some minimum common demands of the railway workers was the only answer to defeat the policy of the Railway Board to "divide and rule" over the railway workers and many organisations of the railway workers have been pleading for quite some time for such a broad-based united front of railway workers, which culminated in the holding of a "National Convention of Railway Workers" at Delhi on the 27th February 1974. In this Convention a broad-based united front of railway workers organisations under the name of "National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle" has been formed for the realisation of 6 common demands of all the railway workers.

The AITUC and unions of railway workers, affiliated to it, who have all along been pleading for such a broad-based united front, having participated in the National Convention on 27th February, 1974 and participating in this Convention of railway workers' unions, affiliated to the AITUC whole-heartedly support the decisions taken in the National Convention and ratify the resolution unanimously adopted by the Convention.

This Convention, which has resolved to form a Federation of the railway workers' unions, which are affiliated to AITUC and such other unions and associations of railway workers, which want to join in this Federation, directs all the unions participating in this Convention and appeals to all other organisations of

railway workers to make sincere efforts to make the united struggle of the railway workers a unique success.

This Convention also warns the Railway Ministry that if it failed to take the decisions of the National Convention of railwaymen seriously and come to settlement by the 10th April, 1974 on the six common demands of the railway workers, they will have to face a united general strike on the railways and be entirely responsible for its consequences.

DEMANDS

- 1.(a) All railwaymen be treated as industrial workers with full trade union rights including the right to negotiate.
(b) The working hours of Railwaymen shall not exceed 8 per day.
(c) There shall be job evaluation of all railwaymen through a scientific system to be followed by their reclassification and regradation with the need-based minimum wage as the wage for the lowest-paid worker.
(d) Pending the completion of job evaluation and reclassification immediate parity in wages with those of workers in the Central Undertakings, viz. HMT, BHEL, HSL, HAL, etc.
2. Dearness allowance linked to the cost of living index with full neutralisation for every rise of 4 points in a six month period.
3. Bonus at the rate of one month's wages for the year 1971-72 and 1972-73.
4. De-casualisation of all casual railwaymen and their confirmation in service with all benefits given to them with retrospective effect.
5. Adequate and subsidised foodgrains and other essential commodities through departmentally-run shops.
6. All victimisation cases should be withdrawn.

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RESOLUTION No.3

The labour relations policy on the railways has become out-moded and unreal due to which demands and grievances of railway workers remain unsettled and unattended to for years together. In this situation the railway workers are compelled to resort to agitations and strikes for focussing attention upon and settlement of their demands and grievances. When such agitations take place, the Railway Minister shows his concern about difficulties which arise due to such agitations but nothing is done to set right the labour relations policy and to improve industrial relations on the railways.

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At the time of locomen's strike in August, 1973, the AITUC and the railway unions affiliated to it as well as some categorywise Associations had urged upon the Railway Minister to Convene a conference of all recognised and unrecognised associations of railway workers, whether industrial or categorywise to discuss the industrial relations on the railways. But the Railway Minister did not respond. When the locomen again struck work in December, 1973, the Railway Minister announced in the Parliament that he was anxious for a new approach towards industrial relations on the railway and to discuss this matter with all those concerned, he will call a Conference of various organisations of railway workers. But later on the Railway Minister called a meeting of the two recognised federations and 4 Central TU organisations only, on 4th February. As a large number of railway workers' unions/associations were kept out of that meeting no concrete decisions could be reached by that meeting. The AITUC representatives again demanded in that meeting for calling a conference of all the unions/associations of railway workers to discuss industrial relations on the railways.

Now when the railway workers have formed a united front to wage a struggle for some minimum common demands the Railway Minister has come out with an appeal to the railway workers "not to resort to strikes or any agitations for a minimum period of three years". The Railway Minister has also offered to discuss the demands with the railway workers and take the problems in a constructive spirit and with expedition but for doing so he wants to lay down the condition that the railway workers should assure him that they would not resort to strikes or agitation for a minimum period of 3 years. Laying down such preconditions for starting talks on demands is certainly not a constructive approach to the problem. If the Railway Minister is serious about peaceful settlement of demands and improvement of industrial relations on the railways, then he should immediately start dialogue with the "National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle", which has been formed at the National Convention of Railway Workers held at Delhi on 27th February, 1974.

This Convention welcomes the acceptance by the Railway Minister of the principle that a single representative organisation of Railwaymen can be chosen through secret ballot. The Convention demands that all trade unions should be given equal opportunities and facilities in taking part in such a ballot and the negotiating body to be formed after such a ballot should ensure proportional representation to the various organisations taking part in the Ballot.

Pending the formation of such a representative negotiating authority, the Railway Minister should negotiate with the National Coordination Committee formed on 27th February.

This Convention of railway Workers' unions affiliated to the AITUC, which are part and parcel of the National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen's struggle, hopes that the Railway Minister would act constructively without loosing any time otherwise he will be responsible for any struggle which the railway workers may be forced to wage under the banner of National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen's struggle.

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RESOLUTION NO. 4

This Convention notes with serious concern that the railway administration at Zonal levels are vindictive towards genuine trade union activities of railway workers belonging to unions/association of railway workers, which are not recognised. The workers belonging to unions affiliated to AITUC are made a special target with a view to harass them and with the intention of making it impossible for them carry on their trade union activities. It is a matter of great regret that nothing is done to stop such victimisation even when the cases have been referred to the Railway Minister. According to the Constitution of India and the Indian Trade Unions Act, the workers have the right to join and work in the trade union of their choice. The Railway Board and railway administration are acting unconstitutionally when they indulge in victimising the workers belonging to unions which have not been recognised by them.

This Convention strongly condemns such policy of the railway Board and the railway administration. It urges upon the Railway Minister to view this matter seriously as such policy leads to industrial unrest on the railways and take necessary steps to stop such victimisation and also set right all the past cases of victimisation.

In case nothing is done by the Railway Minister to stop victimisation and set right past cases of victimisation of union workers, the unions concerned will be compelled to take recourse to agitation to fight this policy of victimisation and the Railway administration will be responsible for the consequences.

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INDIAN RAILWAY WORKERS' FEDERATION

LIST OF OFFICE-BEARERS:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| President | : S.A.Dange |
| Working President | : Parvathi Krishnan, M.P. |
| Vice-Presidents | : i) M. Kalyanasundaram, M.P. ii) Sarjoo Pandey, M.P. iii) Ram Avtar Shastri, M.P. iv) Ch. Sivarama Sharma |
| General Secretary | : P.K.Kumaran |
| Joint General Secretary | : Sri Krishna |
| Secretaries | : i) Roza Deshpande, M.P. ii) J.M.Biswas iii) K.Gopinathan |
| Treasurer | : B.R. Shivankar |

MEMBERS OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. A.Bhupathi, Madurai | 14. Man Singh, Driver, Tundla |
| 2. P.Narayana Swamy, Guntakal | 15. Ved Prakash Sinha, Gorakhpur |
| 3. P.K.Chandra Sekharan, Cochin | 16. Jai Narain Singh, Sonapur |
| 4. C.Achuthan, Golden Rock | 17. Ram Pravesh Ram, Gorhara |
| 5. K.S.Ramaswamy, Mysore | 18. J.P.Upadhya, Lucknow |
| 6. J.Satyanarayana, Hyderabad | 19. Ram Balak Singh, Patna |
| 7. M.P.Singh, Vijayawada | 20. Ramesh Das, Sealdah |
| 8. T.Narayana, Lalaguda | 21. S.B.Guha, Calcutta |
| 9. V.Bhaskaran Pillai, Hubli | 22. Ram Jiwan Mandal, Jamalpur |
| 10. Ramji Lal Sharma, Jaipur | 23. Jyotirmoy Biswas, Maligaon |
| 11. Chamal Lal Nadha, (Delhi | 24. B.M.Bose, Pandu |
| 12. Pyara Singh Deosi, Jagadhari | 25. Nimai Das Gupta, Katihar |
| 13. Buaditta Sharma, Amritsar | 26. Nathu Ram Yadav, Nagpur |
| | 27. R.Dakshina Moorthy, ICF, Perambur |
| | 28. A.Bhoopathy, Perambur |
| | 29. Biswanath Roy Choudhary, C.L.W |

ALL INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS

24, Canning Lane, New Delhi-1

LIST OF FOREIGN DELEGATES FROM AITUC

in the year 1973

Administrative Committee of the Miners' Trade Unions International, Budapest, Hungary, 18-28 January, 1973

- S.K. Sanyal (Maharashtra)

I.L.O. Seminar on Workers' Education, Manila, (Philippines), February, 1973

- A.B. Bardhan (Maharashtra)
Member, Working Committee

South East Asian TU Congress of SOHYO, Tokyo, Japan
15-17 March 1973

- (Late) K. Balathandayutham, M.P.
(Tamilnadu)

WFTU Bureau meeting, Hanoi, DRVN, 29-30 March 1973

- S.A. Dange, General Secretary
- Roza Deshpande, (Maharashtra)
Member Working Committee

World TU Solidarity Conference with Chilean workers and people
Santiago, Chile, April 1973

- S.A. Dange, General Secretary
- Roza Deshpande, (Maharashtra)
Member Working Committee

Seminar by Trade Unions International of Food, Tobacco, Hotel &
Allied Industries' Workers, Sofia, Bulgaria,
20 March to 5 May 73

- R.L. Narasimha Rao (Andhra Pradesh)
- S.A. Salaam Shahedi (Andhra Pradesh)
- A. Subba Rao (Andhra Pradesh)
- B. Lakshmaiah (Andhra Pradesh)
- A. Narayana (Andhra Pradesh)
- K.N. Shamasundaram (Karnatak)
- P.D. Bhonsle (Maharashtra)

VIII meeting of Petroleum Committee of ILO, Geneva,
2-13 April 73

- Sunil Chakrabarty (West Bengal)

TUI Administrative Committee of Metal & Engineering Workers,
Bucharest, Romania, April 1973

- M.S. Krishnan, Vice-President
(Karnatak)

Conference on Problems of Working Women in the Rubber & Pharma-
ceutical Industries, Berlin, GDR, 25-26 April 1973

- Roza Deshpande, Member Working Committee (Maharashtra)
- Irene Saldhana (Maharashtra)

MAY DAY DELEGATIONS

G.D.R. (Late) P.D. Marathe (Maharashtra)
Hungary: Ramesh Rattan (Himachal Pradesh)
USSR: S. Ulaganathan (Tamilnadu)
Czechoslovakia: Srimani (West Bengal)
(could not proceed due to delay in
Govt. clearance)

T.U. Movement among non-aligned countries, Belgrade, (Yugoslavia)
14-16 May 1973

Nanda Dulal Srimani (West Bengal)
Member General Council

Drafting Commission of WFTU Congress, Prague, Czechoslovakia
15-21 May 1973

- S.A. Dange, General Secretary

Administrative Committee of Miners' TUI, Bucharest, Romania,
29 May to 5 June 1973

- S.K. Sanyal (Maharashtra)

Seminar on Labour & Health Protection of Railway, Moscow (USSR)
25 May to 2 June 1973

- Shri Krishna (Railways) (Rajasthan)
Working Committee Member

Administrative Committee of TUI of Allied & Public Services, Berlin,
(GDR), 30-31 May 1973

- H.L. Parvana (New Delhi; AIBEA)

International Conference of Transport Workers TUI, Warsaw (Poland)
4-8 June 1973

- Shri Krishna (Railways, Rajasthan)
- A.K. Shah (Port & Dock, Gujrat)
- K.C. Mathew (Road Transport, Kerala)
- Kali Banerjee (Tramways, West Bengal)

Administrative Committee meeting, TUI Chemical & Oil Workers,
Moscow, USSR, 29-31 May 1973

- Y.D. Sharma (Delhi), Member Working Committee

International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid, Geneva,
Switzerland, 15-16 June 1973

- K.G. Sriwastava, Secretary

Administrative Committee of TUI of Food, Tobacco, Hotel & Allied
Industries, Leningrad, USSR, 24-26 June 1973

- M.M. Gope (Delhi) Member, General Council

Administrative Committee of TUI of Textile Workers', Warsaw (Poland)
25-29 June 1973

- Arun Sen (West Bengal)

Conference of the Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions, Colombo
August 1973

- J. Chittaranjan, Vice President (Kerala)

International Trade Union Seminar of Engineers, Paris,
13-14, September, 1973

- Sibro Prosad Sen (West Bengal)

Bangladesh Railway Shramik Union Conference, Chittagong
18-20 September 1973

- Sunil Kumar Chakrabarty (S.E.Rlymen's Union,
Kharagpur; (West Bengal)

Asian TU Seminar, Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 30 Sept. to 12 Oct. 73

Prof. K.H. Deodhar (Maharashtra)

Conference of trade unions of Non-Aligned countries, Belgrade

Roza Deshpande, (Maharashtra) Member Working Committee
(did not attend)

8th World Trade Union Congress, Varna, Bulgaria, 15-22 Oct. 73

1. S.A. Dange, General Secretary
2. Dr. Ranen Sen, M.P. President
3. Chaturanan Mishra, MLA, Vice President
4. K.G. Sriwastava, Secretary
5. Y.D. Sharma, Secretary
6. N.C. Dutta, Secretary
7. M.V.N. Kaparde, Secretary (APTUC)
8. R.K. Garg, (U.P.) Member General Council
9. D.N. Yelkar, MGKU (Maharashtra)
10. Prof. K.H. Deodhar, College Teacher's Union
11. Mannalal, AITUC Centre Staff
12. Bhowani Roy Chowdhury, Secretary (WBPTUC)
13. P. Bhaskaran, General Secretary, Kerala TUC
14. Madan Lal Di di, General Secretary, PTUC
15. M.C. Narasimhan, Vice President, Karnatak TUC

Fraternal delegates:

16. O.P. Gupta, NFPE
17. Madhusudan, Confederation of Central Govt. Employees
18. Prabhat Kar, AIBEA
19. S.M. Banerjee, M.P. AIDEF (could not attend)
20. Kali Mukherjee, INTUC
21. K. Tulpule, HMS

World Congress of Peace, Moscow

1. S.A. Dange, General Secretary
2. Chaturanan Mishra, M.L.A. Vice President
3. Prof. K.H. Deodhar (Maharashtra)
4. D.N. Yelkar (Maharashtra)
5. Mannalal, AITUC-Centre Staff

Seminar on Development programme and Population for Asian Trade Union Women, Manila, Philippines, 14-27 October 1973

Parvathi Krishnan, Secretary

STUDY TOURS

German Democratic Republic - (August) H. Natarajan (Karnatak)

USSR (July) Gaya Singh (Bihar)

G.D.R. M.R. Salvi (Maharashtra)

Romania: (October) Dr. Ranen Sen, M.P. President

N.C. Dutta, Secretary

Madan Lal Di di, General Secretary, PTUC

Y TOURS cont...

R: November: S.N. Junnarkar (Maharashtra) Pharmaceutical
L.S. Dias (Maharashtra) Pharmaceutical

IDE UNION SCHOOLS

cow (USSR) (i) R.H. Nathan (Tamilnadu) (ii) P. Prabhakaran Nair
(Kerala) (iii) Gobin Karar (West Bengal) (iv) Madhav D.
Mokashi (Maharashtra)
(v) S. Arangil (Karnatak) could not proceed as not
cleared by Govt. of India

Ria, Bulgaria: S.G. Ranadive (Maharashtra)
Amarchand Verma (Himachal Pradesh)

GB Seminar for Public Sector, Berlin, GDR; 15 Oct.-30 Nov. 73

(i) R.P. Ranga Rao (Andhra) (v) Manas' Roy Choudhury (West Bengal)
(ii) S.K. Rai, MLA (Bihar) (vi) K.K. Mundul (Maharashtra)
(iii) N.K. Mitra (West Bengal) (vii) L.H. Dewani (Maharashtra)
(v) Nemai Ray (West Bengal) did not go
(viii) S. Chandra (Delhi) not cleared
by the Government.

Best and Treatment:

Czechoslovakia: July 1973: Raman N. Nair (Maharashtra)
Mrs. K. Bhanumathi Nair
V.B. Tamhane (Maharashtra)
Budapest, Hungary: July 1973: Madhav Mokashi (Maharashtra)
Mrs. Suhagini Mokashi "
Kumari Vinaya M. Mokashi " did not go
Moscow, USSR: Dilip Roy (West Bengal)
Kumari Roy (West Bengal)

13th Congress of Cuban T.U., Havana, 11-15 Nov. 1973

Indrajit Gupta, M.P. Vice President

T.U.I. Chemicals, Paris, 13-14 Nov. 73

Y.D. Sharma, Secretary

T.U.I. Metal & Engineering, Berlin 4-8 Dec., 1973

M.S. Krishnan, Vice President

1974

WFTU BUREAU meeting GENEVA (Switzerland) 17-18 January, 74

K.G. Sriwastava, Secretary

TUI Miners, Bureau meeting, Nicosiya (Cyprus) 29-31 Jan. 74

S.K. Sanyal, Member Working Committee

3rd Congress of Vietnam Federation of TUs, Hanoi, 11-14 Feb. 74

T.N. Siddhanta, Secretary

ILO Population Workshop for Trade Unions, Manila (Philippines)
11-29 March, 1974

Nihar Mukherjee, Member Working Committee

COPY OF LETTER FROM COMRADE GEORGE FERNANDES,
PRESIDENT, ALL INDIA RAILWAYMEN'S FEDERATION,
ON 17 MARCH, ADDRESSED TO COMRADE DANGE.

Dear Comrade Dange,

17 March, 1974.

The newspapers report the formation of the AITUC Railwaymen's Federation. Of course, you had mentioned about this to me when we had a meeting on February, 7.

There are only two points that have surprised me, and on which, I hope, you will provide some clarification.

First, you mention that if a general strike should materialise on the Railways consequent upon the failure of the Government to negotiate and settle on the demands (though you mention that your federation has put forward certain demands with an ultimatum to settle them by April 10, I take it that you are referring to the February 27 Convention which was convened by the AIRF), the "main stress of (your) Federation even during the struggle would be to ensure an undisrupted flow of supplies like steel and coal, vital to the national economy". I am afraid that this was not visualised by the February 27 Convention where the main stress was on a total general strike on the Railways if the Government should fail to settle the demands of the railwaymen.

Second, you complain that AIRF has been functioning in a manner which did not meet the needs of the workers.

You are aware that the only union of some following which the AITUC has on the Railways is on the South Eastern Railway, and this union has been an affiliate of the AIRF, fully participating in all decision making and the implementation of these decisions. So if there have been shortcomings in the AIRF, the AITUC is also a party to them. Therefore, why take the posture of holier than thou while justifying a decision which is a purely political?

A question incidental to the second point is whether in view of the AITUC having its own federation, the AITUC union on the S.E. Railway will disaffiliate itself from the AIRF and seek affiliation to the AITUC federation?

Many other issues arise out of your decision to launch a federation, but they could be discussed, if necessary, on another occasion.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
(George Fernandes)
President

Comrade S.A. Dange,
General Secretary,
A.I.T.U.C., New Delhi.

COPY OF LETTER FROM COMRADE S.A.DANGE,
GENERAL SECRETARY, AITUC, ON 18 MARCH
1974, ADDRESSED TO COM. GEORGE FERNANDES

18 March, 1974.

Dear Comrade George Fernandes,

Your letter dated 17th March, 1974, regarding certain points arising out of the formation of a new railway workers federation under the auspices of the AITUC, has been received.

As we finished our work only on 16th evening (Saturday), I was going to send you the papers of that Conference. But you have written to me on 17th morning, obviously basing yourself on what appeared in the newspapers on Sunday morning of 17th.

As I had told you this is a federation of Railway Unions some of which were formed long ago and were affiliates of the AITUC.

The S.E. Railway Union to which you refer and which is an old affiliate of the AIRF, was not invited to this Conference. In reply to your very relevant query, I might tell you that though the S.E. Rly. Union is an affiliate of the AITUC, it is not going to disaffiliate from your AIRF to join the new AITUC Federation. We have no intention of taking away any unions which are already your affiliates.

I am sending you separately the list of Railway Unions of the AITUC which now form the new IRWF.

The demands and call for action adopted by this Federation are more or less identical with those of the National Convention convened by you and which the AITUC attended.

You have raised the question of a reference in the Press Conference that we are suggesting a line of keeping the flow of certain vital supplies unaffected, even during the general strike, when it materialises.

The reference actually was to food supplies to the people. This is nothing new. In many bundhs and strikes, the trade unions have agreed to exempt such services as milk vans, fire-brigades, hospitals, etc. You are aware of such exemptions as we all have done so in Bombay, in several strikes, and bundhs.

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My main reference was to such exemptions first. You may remember that in the proposed All-India General Strike of Railways, called in 1951 or so, by the AIRF, under the leadership of Jaya Prakash Narain, the then President of the AIRF (which did not come off as a settlement was offered), J.P. had assured the Government of India that food movements would be kept going, since Nehru had attacked the proposed strike on that account.

You are also aware, that in coal-miners' strikes, the world over the safety servicemen are allowed to enter the mines so that they may not be rendered unworkable due to flooding or explosions.

The reference to iron and coal arose out of this context - that if it is said that coke-ovens and hearth-furnace refractories may be ruined if suddenly coal does not reach them, the matter could be considered. But it did not imply continuous running of the whole industry during the strike. Since they will get enough notice of action, they should prepare in advance measures to prevent ruination of the vital plants.

Short of such points, which can be discussed, the strike has to be total, if the government does not negotiate and settle.

I shall now take up my reference to the AIRF functioning. The criticism refers both to NFIR and AIRF. You yourself know that the AIRF has been nothing but the handmaid of the Railway Board so far. It attacked militant workers, not only those, who belonged to AITUC line of thinking, but also the militants in the AIRF itself. The P.N.M. machinery of both the NFIR and AIRF was nothing but a vehicle for jobbery and corruption at various levels.

And when workers went into action on their own, in various sectors or categories, the AIRF denounced them and helped the Rly. Board to break their struggle, as is on record in many instances.

Even the action of the Locomen last August was not supported by the AIRF and the AITUC intervention alone broke the deadlock and opened the way to negotiation.

These are all wellknown matters of fact and history. My reference, therefore, was not without a basis of truth.

Now, since you became the President and called the wide and broad National Convention to plan the General Strike things do promise to assume a new look in the AIRF. Even then I am not so sure, because the President that is you alone do not make the whole AIRF. Moreover, the whole galaxy of men, who made the old AIRF and against whom you yourself were planning to float new unions and a new federation, still remains where they were. I hope a real change

will develop in due course. But one cannot be so sure. Even if you try to do it, there will be many hurdles.

One more point in this connection I would like to mention. Indian trade unionism has come to a stage, where no one or two centres alone can claim to represent the majority or demand exclusive recognition. But in railways, you and the NFIR insist on no one else being "recognised" or even allowed "to talk" to the Railway Board and government on any of railwaymen's questions. Why this attitude? You know the categories are a fact and cannot be just ruled out of existence. Hence, we should not obstruct their recognition or right to negotiation and talk, if they feel like that and more so because they have developed strong feelings of category-fraternity. During the Loco Strike and the Guard's strike, I was surprised at the AIRF obstructing their recognition or even direct negotiation. Of course you took the Guards' leader with you (as recognised AIRF leader) to the Railway Board, which then talked to the Guard's leader. This almost looks like the God almighty refusing to talk to his own mortals except through the mouth of a recognised Brahmin! Why this haughty ritual of the Ministry or the Railway Board, we should support, I do not know.

That is perhaps why the Confederation of Category Unions at the National Convention wanted that the Convener should not be only the President of the AIRF but should have their representative also along with you.

On this question, our attitude is different from years, and I can well understand that you may not agree with it.

On your records as well as in practice, there is a resolution of the NFIR and the AIRF and an agreement with the Railway Board that the Board will not "talk or negotiate" with anyone at any level, except through the P.N.M. machinery of your two Federations. This was agreed to by the Railway Board in your joint meeting with them, because in some cases the Zonal managers had talked to workers, who had gheraoed him or had gone on lightening stoppage and settled matters on the spot, as the corrupt joint PNM machinery had failed to redress the grievances of the affected workers.

That agreement of the two Federations with the Board is now being used by the Government and the Board in refusing even to talk to the Locomen or the Guards or others. I think this line should be amended on the basis of democratic approach.

I have had to write a long letter, because I do not know if you would be in Delhi next week and I am also scheduled to go out. We will of course meet some time and discuss things further.

But let me assure you that the AITUC Federation is not doing things with a view to have a quarrel with the AIRF. We want to build an around unity of all railwaymen and their organisations in order to defend their interests in all spheres.

The Convention met on 27th February and it is now 10 days since then. I hope you have sent to the Government and the Railway Board the demands and the notice contained in the main resolution. Moreover, you should try to open negotiations on the demands both with Government and the Board and let the Coordination Committee set up to the Convention know what is happening.

With regards,

Yours fraternally,

Sd/-

(S.A.DANGE)

Com. George Fernandes,
President,
A.I.R.F.,
New Delhi.

ALL-INDIA AVERAGE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS

| <u>Base: 1949=100</u> | | | <u>Base: 1960=100</u> | |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| <u>1972</u> | <u>1973</u> | | <u>1972</u> | <u>1973</u> |
| 230 | 255 | January | 194 | 210 |
| 235 | 259 | February | 193 | 213 |
| 236 | 263 | March | 194 | 216 |
| 237 | 269 | April | 195 | 221 |
| 238 | 277 | May | 196 | 228 |
| 244 | 283 | June | 201 | 233 |
| 249 | 295 | July | 205 | 243 |
| 252 | 300 | August | 207 | 247 |
| 253 | 301 | September | 208 | 248 |
| 254 | 309 | October | 209 | 254 |
| 255 | 315 | November | 210 | 259 |
| 255 | 316 | December | 210 | 260 |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 245 | 287 | AVERAGE | 202 | 236 |
| | 321 | January 1974 | | 264 |

During 1972, the index rose by 16 points on 1960 base, and 25 points on 1949 Base. But during 1973, the index with base 1960, rose by 50 points and that with 1949 base rose 61 points.

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ASIAN TRADE UNION SEMINAR

An Asian Trade Union Seminar was held in New Delhi from 12th to 17th December, 1973.

The report and the conclusions have been printed in T.U.R. dated 28th December, 1973.

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NATIONAL FEDERATIONS FORMED

Since last meeting of the General Council the following National Federations of various Industries has been formed.

1. All-India Hotel Workers' Federation: 28.3.1973
2. All-India Sugar Workers' Federation: 10-11 Nov., 1973.
3. All-India Federation of Tea Plantation Workers: 26-27 Jan., '74.
4. Indian Railway Workers' Federation: 14-15 March, 1974.

The Industries where certain steps has been taken to form All-India Federations:

1. Building and Construction Industry.
2. Cement
3. Paper
4. Steel (Convention has been called on 20-21 April, at Bokaro.
5. Pharmaceutical
6. Cotton Textile

In Paper and Building & Construction Industries Co-ordination Committees exist and Convention have to be held.

In Cement several efforts has been made but not yet succeeded.

Representatives of Pharmaceutical are meeting on 30th March, 1974, here to decide date & venue for calling Convention.

The existing defunct organisation has in a Convention called at Bombay in February, 1974, elected office bearers from C.I.T.U.

In Textile the meetings were called several times but postponed. Comrades in this meeting can discuss the issues.

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