

## RANADIVE ON AITUC SESSION

BY TRADE UNIONIST

B. T. Ranadive, member of the Politburo of the Communist Party (Marxist) has written a special article for the first anniversary number of his party's organ, the *People's Democracy*. As all anniversary articles go, morale-boosting is an essential ingredient of Ranadive's article too. It was certainly an exhilarating experience to read through the article and benefit from the wisdom strewn all around.

Even while recording this appreciation, it might perhaps be fruitful to reflect on some of the problems of unity in the organised trade-union movement which Ranadive has touched upon in his special article.

The 27th session of the AITUC was an important turning point in the life of the organised TU movement in India. The session, above all, gave it as the living experience of the largest sector in the organised movement that politics cannot and should not be a factor to prevent the development of the organic unity of the TU movement.

Or, to put it more bluntly, trade-union centres need not necessarily exist as pocket boroughs of political parties.

This was the reversal of a trend in post-independence history of our country, seen in the formation of four and more national centres on the sole consideration of political divisions.

It was, indeed, the game of the bourgeoisie and the trend was heralded with the formation of the INTUC, as the first breakaway from the All-India Trade Union Congress, at the dictates of the political bosses of the Congress party.

It was therefore only logical that the bourgeois press should have been speculating on the eve of the 27th session

on the imminent split in the AITUC, following the split in the communist movement.

That the split was averted due essentially to the correct policy pursued by the majority trend in the AITUC is an undeniable fact of history. Many were surprised, indeed, how the unity was maintained. And, after reading Ranadive's article, the performance would, truly, seem to be a miracle.

It is not proposed to deal in this article with the political issues posed by Ranadive. One might only say, in passing, that the wildest slanders are hurled on the international working-class movement nowadays by some people misquoting the writings of the immortal Lenin.

### WE ARE NOT CLAIRVOYANT

Nor is it the intention to compete in the technique of clairvoyance and adopt a we-told-you-so-long-ago position and pretend that even the very date of outbreak of the Indo-Pak conflict was written down into the prophetic party programme, by adopting positions against 'modern revisionism'.

We may only discuss some points which concern the trade unions and the problems of unity and organisational norms.

First, it is Ranadive's charge that no important issue facing the working-class movement today was discussed in the 27th session.

The draft report placed before the session had posed precisely these problems of the TU movement but it was Ranadive and his followers who chose to indulge in shadow-boxing and wanted to impose their particular political positions on the AITUC.

Ranadive himself had put across at the 27th session precisely that political line he has since written down in the article for the *People's Democracy*.

In fact, the AITUC had before it, for the first time at the 27th session, printed industrial reports covering the major

industries but the members of the CP (M) who participated in the debate had no use for such discussion material.

It is amusing now to hear the criticism that no industrial problem was discussed at the 27th session. And equally interesting is the charge that the majority trend had sought to impose its own political line!

Second, it is alleged that 'several of our (led by CP (M) members) unions were not given recognition or were dis-affiliated'.

As a delegate to the 27th session and a member of the new General Council of the AITUC, it was not expected that Ranadive would pose himself as so ill-informed.

Can he name a single union which was disaffiliated from the AITUC on the basis of its political orientation? It is most unfortunate that such irresponsible utterances should be made without being sure of the facts.

It will not be unknown to Ranadive that the Working Committee of the AITUC had established a subcommittee to look into the disputes relating to unions and the rival claims. The personnel of this committee included P. Ramamurti, another member of the CP (M) Politburo.

Can it be that Ranadive was not informed by his colleague that all disputes referred to this subcommittee were resolved unanimously?

The Credentials Committee of the 27th session as well as of the Working Committee contained members belonging to the CP (M) and the reports of these committees were drawn up on the basis of well-laid-down principles traditionally followed by the AITUC.

In the face of such democratic functioning, free discussions in the general session and free voting, it is amazing that a responsible leader of the CP (M) should now make wild allegations against the majority trend in the AITUC in the press instead of naming them in the organisation, if he had any differences.

Third, Ranadive makes much of the so-called 'industrial truce' which S. A. Dange is alleged to have signed with

Gulzarilal Nanda. Anyone who is familiar with the published documents of the AITUC can see that this allegation is pure invention.

In fact, in the General Council of the AITUC which met in February 1966, a document was placed on record correctly stating the AITUC standpoint on the issue, of industrial truce.

It goes to the credit of the AITUC that it was the only organisation which declared its reservations—and substantial reservations at that—on the clauses of the industrial truce and firmly opposed the clause relating to the 'blanket ban' on strikes.

And it is also recent history that this very standpoint of the AITUC was supported six months after at the Indian Labour Conference by other TU centres—those very centres which had refused to sit with the AITUC in a tripartite meeting because of their blind anti-communism.

Can it be that Ranadive wants to be deliberately misinformed or ill-informed about the AITUC in order that the spectre of revisionist collaborators can be conjured up before his followers.

If this can help his party grow, he is at liberty to do so without, of course, trying to pose as a champion of unity of the working class and its organisation.

No one can be in doubt that if this oldest and strongest mass organisation of the Indian working class was not split in the Bombay session, not only as expected by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois press but also as accused of by Ranadive and his partymen, the majority of the delegates and the group they followed deserve their due.

If the majority trend was bent upon disruption, wanted its own politics to be imposed on the AITUC session and rout the minority, nobody could stop the disruption.

That it was not so is clearly evidenced in the manner the General Secretary accepted to amend his report and present it to the new Working Committee as well as in the accommodation shown to the minority viewpoint both in resolutions and organisational elections.

## WILDEST CHALLENGE

It was not very long ago that the acting CP (M) General Secretary challenged the right of the top leadership of the AITUC belonging to the CPI to manage the affairs of the AITUC since the CP (M) followers were allegedly in a majority.

It is not in the interest of democratic functioning and the unity of the organised TU movement to throw out such wild challenges and write articles of the kind the *People's Democracy* has carried. That will not be the way to consolidate the gains for TU unity so impressively recorded by the 27th session of the AITUC.

Ranadive should congratulate the 27th session of the AITUC for upholding the unity instead of being piqued at what has been achieved and hurling calumnies and invectives at those who made the Bombay session a remarkable success notwithstanding all provocations and disruptive approaches made by various quarters.