

217
14 January 1966

Comrade I. Kostjukov,
President, Central Committee,
Metallurgical Workers Union,
Moscow, USSR

Dear Comrade Kostjukov,

Thank you for your kind letter. We have also received today the condolence message sent by you to our Federation on the sad demise of Prime Minister Shastri. It has indeed been a most tragic loss, especially after the big contributions he made in the signing of the historic Tashkent Declaration.

The working class in India deeply appreciate the role played by the Government of the Soviet Union and personally by Comrade Kosygin, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, in bringing about the Tashkent Declaration which will certainly be a landmark in the history of our sub-continent and to the promotion of peace throughout the world.

Our delegation which participated in the Congress of the USSR Metallurgical Workers Union and the visits to various industrial centres has returned to India deeply impressed by the affection shown by the Soviet metallurgical workers and the Soviet people in the course of their stay in the Soviet Union. The impressions of the delegation are being reported back to our workers.

The programme of the iron and steel workers' conference at Durgapur has not as yet been finalised. We would be writing to you shortly on this subject.

We take this occasion to convey the fraternal greetings and goodwishes of the metal and engineering workers of India to the USSR Metallurgical Workers Union and its members and leaders, for new successes in the New Year.

With warm greetings,

Yours fraternally,

M. Elias
(M. Elias)
General Secretary

Com. Dange
for information

29 June 1966

Dear Comrade Satish,

Thank you for your letters and the material for publication. We are using them suitably.

With regard to the unfortunate experience of Comrade Zavagnin, this has come as a great shock and surprise to us. The Sectt of the National Federation, of which I happen to be a member, had specially met to plan Comrade Zavagnin's visit to India and we were awaiting information from the TUI Sectt as to how many days he could be present in India. In fact, we were planning to take him to Bombay and Calcutta after receiving him here and Com.Elias had come to Delhi specially to escort him to Calcutta and went back to Calcutta only on 17th. We received no information from the TUI Secretariat about Comrade Zavagnin's detailed programme and no indication was given to us to receive him at Calcutta. The copy of the cable you have sent shows that it contains no address and it is no wonder that it failed to reach us. The TUI Secretariat in their earlier cables had sent them to: ELIAS AITUCONG NEW DELHI. It was expected that the TUI Sectt would at least brief the General Secretary about the detailed address of the National Federation or of the telegraphic address of the AITUC. The cable seems to have been sent on 4th June and if a letter was correctly addressed to us, it would have reached well before the 18th and we could have received Comrade Zavagnin in Calcutta and then chalked out a programme in consultation with him.

This episode should give us all some experience as to how to arrange things in future. When such important tours are arranged, these should be put down in detail and planned ahead so that the unfortunate experience, embarassment and misunderstanding all round can be avoided. We here are most regretful that such a thing has happened.

It would also be better before such tours are undertaken from the WFTU end that the comrades discussed with our Indian comrades there and get briefed adequately. The TUI General Secretary should have at least been told that there is an office of the State Committee of

the AITUC at Calcutta and what its address is. He could also have been told that Com.Elias' HQ is at Calcutta when the Parliament is not in session. In fact, on 18th and 19th, Com.Elias was physically present in Calcutta and could have been contacted on telephone. Of course, the TUI General Secretary had difficulty of not knowing the English language and especially when he was travelling without interpreter, adequate arrangements should have been made to prearrange the programme here.

The Federation is writing officially to you as well as to Comrade Zavagnin.

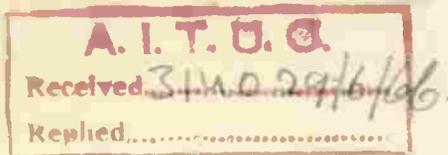
We here are certainly a disorganised lot but not so disorganised that we cannot welcome an international guest, you will admit.

With greetings,

Yours fraternally,

P.S. I will write a "non-official" letter later on.

X



Prague, 24th June, 1966

Dear Comrade Achutan,

I wish to draw your attention to the following serious incident for your information and for ^{the} information of the leaders of the National Federation of Metal Workers.

Comrade Zavagnin, the General Secretary of Metal TUI, after having an agreement with Comrade Satish Loomba and Elias about his visit in India, arrived at Calcutta on June, 18, flight No. 911 BOAC from Tokyo. Comrade Zavagnin told me that he informed about his arrival at Calcutta to the AITUC Office. But unfortunately he did not find anybody at the Airport to meet him. Being a stranger, not knowing the English language, he experienced great difficulties and inconvenience. He stayed there two days in Grand Hotel but nobody contacted him. Ultimately he had to come back without contacting anybody, wasting money and time in India.

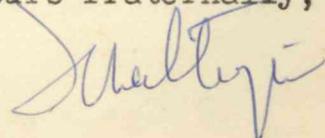
Comrade Zavagnin has told me politely that it was very disagreeable for him to face this experience in India in spite of his cable informing his arrival time to the AITUC.

I was very embarrassed when he narrated me this experience ^{time} after he had arrived to Prague. It has created a very bad impression in the mind of the Metal TUI Secretariat.

I hope you will discuss the reason for this lapse so that it is not repeated any more when specially concern, the leading officials of WFTU. I am writing this letter because as an Indian I felt very awkward due to this incident.

My greetings to you all.

Yours fraternally,



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Copy of this Cable

National Federation of Metal
and Engineering Workers of India,
New Dehli /Inde/

ZAVAGNIN ARRIVE CALCUTTA SAMEDI 18 JUIN H. 19,25
VOL NO. 911 BOAC

ZAVAGNIN

4-6-1966

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A. I. T. U. C.
Received... 4008
Revised... 217
5/9/66

July 5, 1966.

TO AFFILIATED AND FRIENDLY ORGANISATIONS.

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No. 5382/66

At its meeting held on July 1, 1966 in Prague, the Presidium of the Trade Unions International of Metallurgical and Engineering Industries, unanimously condemned the new criminal act of aggression perpetrated by the Government of the United States which deliberately provoked a dramatic aggravation of the war in Vietnam by its order to bombard Hanoi and Haiphong.

Under enclosure you find the cable sent by the T.U.I.s Presidium to the President of the United States of America, L.B. Johnson, as well as information material published by the International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and People of Vietnam and the leaflet devoted to July 20, 1966, the International Day of Solidarity with the Workers and People of Vietnam.

At this moment, a big movement of protests and active solidarity has been developing all over the world. Our affiliated and friendly organisations have never hesitated to express their fraternal solidarity with the struggle of the workers and people of Vietnam. That is why the Metalworkers' T.U.I. invites them at this serious moment to strengthen their united actions against the aggressor, particularly on the occasion of July 20, 1966, the date of the 12th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Agreements and the International Day of Solidarity with the Workers and People of Vietnam. These united actions will largely contribute to the strengthening of active solidarity with the workers and people of Vietnam in their struggle for independence, sovereignty and peace.

Accept, Dear Brothers, our fraternal greetings.

Antonio ZAVAGNIN
General Secretary

Antonio Zavagnin

At its meeting held in Prague on July 1, 1966, the Presidium of the Trade Unions International of Metal and Engineering Industries (Trade Department of the W.F.T.U.) decided to send the following cable to the President of the United States of America, L.B. Johnson :

AT ITS MEETING HELD IN PRAGUE ON JULY 1, 1966,
PRESIDIUM OF THE TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL DENOUNCED
RESOLUTELY NEW STEP IN AMERICAN AGGRESSION IN VIETNAM
TAKEN BOMBARDEMENT OF CITIES OF HANOI AND HAIPHONG STOP
CONDEMNS THIS NEW ACT OF AGGRESSION ORDERED BY PRESIDENT
JOHNSON AND DECLARATIONS MADE THEREAFTER INDICATING THE
WILL TO PURSUE POLICY OF ANNIHILATING VIETNAMESE TOWNS
AND POPULATION STOP DEMANDS CESSATION OF BOMBARDEMENTS
AND IMMEDIATE STOPPING OF AGGRESSION STOP INVITES
13 MILLION ADHERENTS AND METALWORKERS OF THE WHOLE WORLD
TO STRENGTHEN THEIR UNITED ACTIONS AGAINST AGGRESSOR AND
EXPRESS THUS THEIR POWERFUL AND ACTIVE SOLIDARITY WITH
THE WORKERS AND PEOPLE OF VIETNAM FIGHTING FOR
TERITORIAL INTEGRITY INDEPENDENCE SOVEREIGNTY AND PEACE
STOP

METALWORKERS' T.U.I.

* * * * *

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR SOLIDARITY

WITH THE WORKERS AND PEOPLE OF VIETNAM

Address: Nam Curieovych 1, Prague 1, Czechoslovakia

June 1966

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== I N F O R M A T I O N M A T E R I A L ==

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20 July 1966 - The 12th Anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam

Workers and trade unions of the world!

Organise great united demonstrations in solidarity with the courageous people of Vietnam and demand in every corner of the world and in the most effective way possible;

- An immediate end to American aggression in Vietnam
- The immediate withdrawal of American troops and the dismantling of their military bases in South Vietnam
- An immediate end to the bombing and strafing and other aggressive acts against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam
- The respect and implementation of the Geneva Agreements by the American Government
- The settlement of South Vietnamese affairs by the South Vietnamese people themselves, without any foreign interference, and on the basis of the political programme of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front
- Recognition of the NLF as the only genuine representative of the people of South Vietnam
- Settlement of the problem of the peaceful reunification of Vietnam by the people of the two zones themselves, without foreign interference

(These demands are taken from the resolution that was adopted in Hanoi on the 7th June 1965 by the 2nd Conference of the International Workers and People of Vietnam against the American imperialist aggressors)

IN VIETNAM

Twelve years after the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, the American aggressors are continuing to step up and extend their war in South Vietnam, as well as escalate their destructive air attacks against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The United States military budget in 1966 for the war in Vietnam is more than 13 thousand million dollars.

The American expeditionary corp in South Vietnam, including the personnel of the 7th fleet who are also actively taking part in operations, is now at more than three hundred thousand men.

The American air forces estimate that by the end on 1966 they will have dropped 638,000 tons of bombs on Vietnam.

Toxic chemicals have been dropped over almost the whole of South Vietnam. They have been added to drinking water and put into sweets, cakes and medicine so as to kill the whole of the civilian population, including children and sick people.

The American soldiers are equipped with toxic gas which they use in both military operations and against civilians.

By using "scorched earth" tactics, the American imperialists hope to regain the initiative that they lost long ago on the battle field.

In North Vietnam the American aggressors indiscriminately strafe and bomb industrial areas, villages, schools, hospitals, churches, pagodas, dams and electricity generators etc. Recently US aeroplanes have even bombed the outskirts of Haiphong and Hanoi.

But the more atrocities the American imperialists commit, the greater becomes the Vietnam peoples hatred and resistance.

The American expeditionary force is suffering heavy blows at the hands of the people and liberation army of South Vietnam. More than 40,000 of the American aggressors and hundreds of thousands of puppet troops have been put out of action. Even in the towns still under enemy occupation, the struggle is developing strongly, with demonstrations, students' and traders strikes. Armed struggle and actions against the Americans and the puppet administration have thrown the towns, provincial capitals and even Saigon itself into a ferment. particularly noteworthy have been the anti-US and anti-administration activities organised by the buddhists .

.../

In the Democratic Republic of Vietnam the army and the people are putting up a courageous resistance against the aggressors.

More than 1,100 US planes have been brought down and several pilots of marauding aircraft have been captured. It is hardly surprising that wide sections in North Vietnam have demanded that these captured pilots should appear before special military tribunals to answer for the crimes they have committed.

Developments in Vietnam clearly demonstrate that the American imperialists have made a gross mistake in imagining that the massive disembarkation of troops in South Vietnam, the use of the most barbaric methods of mass slaughter and the intensification of bombing in North Vietnam could ever hope to crush the patriotic struggle of the South Vietnamese people, or hamper and weaken the fighting spirit of the North Vietnamese people and their determined support for the people in the South.

In order to deceive world public opinion the United States leaders insist on repeating that Hanoi does not want peace and refuses to negotiate. The truth is that the people of Vietnam have suffered war for twenty years, and they fervently want peace. but they want a genuine peace that can only be assured by gaining independence.

Peace would immediately be restored in Vietnam if the American imperialists ended their war of aggression, withdrew their expeditionary force from the South and recognise the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam.

The United States government has only to respect and implement the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam!

TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

SOVIET UNION

... Answering the appeal issued by the Havana Tri-Continental Conference, the Central Council of the Soviet Trade Unions took an active part in the Week of Solidarity with the people of Vietnam, that took place from the 12th to the 19th of March 1968. In factories, workshops, establishments of every kind, in kolkhoz and sovkhos massive meetings and gatherings took place. In Moscow representatives of the DRV and the NLF The Trade Union Councils of the republics, regions and territories organised meetings in Leningrad, Vilno, Tallin, Riga, Erevan, Kiev, Tashkent, Tbilisi, Achkhabad, Alma Ata, Kichinev, Baku, Volgograd, Novosibirsk, Khabarovsk, Krasnoyarsk, Odessa, Frunze, Duchanba, etc. Throughout the Soviet Union the working people re-affirmed their solidarity with the heroic struggle of the patriotic people of Vietnam, condemn the crimes of the American military and made the following demands; an immediate end to the aggression, the withdrawal from Vietnam of all United States and American satellite troops, an end to the bombing of the DRV, and respect for the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.....

Chile

A Committee of Aid for the Vietnamese People was set up under the presidency of a Senator Exequiel Gonzales Madariaga to mark the Week of Solidarity with Vietnam which took place from 12th to the 19th March. Throughout the whole country there were film shows and displays of paintings and photographs, as well as conferences and discussions exposing American crimes in Vietnam. These demonstrations of solidarity acculminated on the 20th of March in a great public meeting in Santiago de Chile, during which a collection was taken for medical supplies for Vietnam.

India

At the 27th AITUC Session it was decided to hold a "Week of Solidarity with Vietnam" from the 4th to the 11th July next. The various State organisations are organising demonstrations at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, at the U.S. Consulates in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and at the United States Information Service Bookshops in all the major centres. Also during the Solidarity Week the AITUC will continue the collection that was begun at the 27th Congress (1,845 rupees), and which will be used to buy medicine.

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The AITUC is also planning to publish a special pamphlet on Vietnam to coincide with the Solidarity Week.

North Korea

In a recent speech Brother Ryou Hai Young, a leading member of the North Korean Trade Union Centre, said "... The Vietnam question has still to be solved on the basis of the DRV's four points and the South Vietnamese NLF's five points... The Korean people regard the struggle against American imperialism as their very own. They will spare no energy in assisting their Vietnamese brothers in their struggle and they are determined to remain shoulder to shoulder with them however difficult the situation. The Korean people will be with their brothers in Vietnam in life and in death...."

Cuba

From the 12th to the 19th March a great many meetings and mass demonstrations were held throughout the country, during which the people of Cuba stoutly condemned the American imperialists and made it known that they were prepared to render all necessary help to the Vietnamese people.

The RCOW in an appeal urging the Cuban workers to take part in their thousands in the solidarity week, said.

"Cuba has declared its views in the words of its highest representative, Fidel Castro - we are ready to sacrifice our own lives for Vietnam".

Tens on millions attended the tremendous meeting that was organised by the Cuban Solidarity Committee, and which was held at the Havana Sports Centre on the 18th of March.

Italy

On the initiative of the "Galileo" enterprise in Florence a 150 works committees from the biggest Italian factories met on the 17th April 1966, in order to co-ordinate their activities for peace in Vietnam.

The delegates endorsed an appeal to the workers demanding an end to the war in Vietnam. They also unanimously accepted a proposal to convene with all urgency an international conference of workers organisations representing the whole of Europe, so as to organise joint action among all those fighting for an end to the war in Vietnam, and for peace, freedom and national independence.

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German Democratic Republic

For May Day 1966, the FDGB sent a special plane to Vietnam with a cargo of solidarity gifts worth 1 million dm. The trade union delegation handed messages of solidarity to the Vietnam Trade Union Federation, signed by more than a million German workers and conveyed their whole hearted support for the struggle of the Vietnamese people against American aggression...

A great many workers, including a large number of young people have given their blood to help their wounded Vietnamese brothers...

The FDGB is also planning to issue a joint appeal with the GDR government calling on the workers of the biggest socialist enterprises to exceed their targets in those products needed by Vietnam. The trade unions will spare no energy in assuring the success of this active and effective expression of solidarity.

Algeria

The Algerian workers and their trade union centre, the UGTA, whole-hearted support the just struggle of the Vietnamese people. In a recent edition of "Revolution and Labour," the central organ of the UGTA, there was an important editorial on Vietnam under the heading "American aggression is everybody's business". In the words of this editorial, "the oppressed people of the world did not choose their calling. They have rejected the alternative of dying in poverty or being threatened by nuclear weapons. We will not accept the pak Americana". We will answer their aggression with unfaltering solidarity, for it concern every one of us. Perhaps our fate too is in jeopardy"

In the same issue "Revolution and Labour" printed an important interview with Hoang Quoc Viet the President of the Vietnam Trade Union Federation...

Sweden

The Stockholm workers' made a demonstration, involving mainly supporters of the Social Democrats, was the biggest anti American demonstration that has ever taken place in Stockholm. The central theme was the Vietnam war. The Americans were booed and hissed and greeted with slogans demanding freedom and independence for Vietnam. A number of young workers even tried to tear down the United States flag and replace it with the flag of the South Vietnam NLF.

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West Germany

Speaking on behalf of 33,000 young workers the Chemical Workers Union Youth Conference, which was held in Bremen on the 27th and 28th May 1966, adopted a resolution condemning the United States military aggression in Vietnam, and protesting against any form of assistance, either men or material, from the Bonn government. The resolution also criticises the government and the political parties in trying to give the impression that all West German citizens support U.S. official policy in Vietnam...

France

For May Day 1966 the CGT issued an appeal based on the justified demands of the people of Vietnam; "... Working men and women of France, the CGT calls on you to make this May Day a tremendous demonstration of your moral and material support for our courageous brothers in South Vietnam and for all the people in that country, who, in spite of incalculable sacrifices and sufferings, are showing unbreakable spirit, and are waging a battle that has won the admiration of all freedom and peace-loving people. In the time leading up to May Day let factories, workshops and offices make their protests heard through petitions, resolutions and demonstrations, and let the workers re-affirm that they want to see the restoration of PEACE IN VIETNAM....

... On the 7th of June 1966, the CGT made a third remittance of 20,000 U.S. dollars in solidarity with the workers and people of South Vietnam, and to assist them in their heroic struggle against American imperialism.

Mexico

Meetings and mass demonstrations were held in the capital and in other towns during the "Solidarity Week". On the 18th of March thousands of workers, students and intellectuals marched through the streets of Mexico City demonstrating their support for the Vietnamese people and their condemnation of U.S. imperialist aggression.

The W.F.T.U.'s whole hearted support for the Vietnamese people

At its 32nd Session, which was held in Nicosia (Cyprus) from the 26th to 28th May 1966, the WFTU Executive Committee conducted an exhaustive examination of the Vietnam situation, and discussed the setting up of international working class and trade union solidarity. All 29 speakers who contributed to the discussion dealt with the Vietnam problem, including the trade union representatives from the DRV and South Vietnam. Summing up, Louis Saillant, the WFTU General Secretary, made a deep analysis of the Vietnam issue;

He drew attention to the immense impact produced by the WFTU appeal, which had called for May Day to be a day of international solidarity with the Vietnam peoples struggle against American aggression. "Our slogans," he said, "echoed throughout the world on that day... The war in Vietnam is not simply an Asian matter, it concerns all the people of the world, doubtless in varying degrees, but absolutely everyone is concerned. The responsibility of the WFTU is to give the whole of its forces and means in the service of our Vietnamese brothers, against the criminal aggressors who are sowing death in that country".

Below are extracts from "The Appeal for a world-wide upsurge in the solidarity of the workers and trade unionists with the just struggle of the Vietnamese people", which was unanimously adopted by the WFTU Executive Committee;

"On July 20 next, 12 years will have gone by since the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam... The United States government, which made a solemn undertaking to fully respect these agreements has for many years been violating them in an unscrupulous and increasingly cynical way....

No terror, nor the most atrocious crimes committed by the American aggressors against the Vietnamese people, can prevent the ultimate defeat which awaits American imperialism in Vietnam...

... The determined struggle, with many sacrifices, by the Vietnamese people is a major contribution to the struggles of the working class and peoples throughout the world for freedom, national independence and world peace.

... All over the world, the wave of indignation, resistance and protest against the barbarous American aggression is rising more powerfully every day among the working people and other sectors of the population, including those in the United States...

... The Executive Committee calls on the trade union organisations of the world, regardless of their international affiliations, to give support by their mass action and their joint effort in varied forms to the sacred cause of the heroic Vietnamese people...

... In this spirit the Executive Committee of the WFTU invites all the workers and trade unions of the world to intensify, notably on July 20, 1966, the 13th anniversary of the signature of the Geneva Agreements, their campaigns of solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese people for their legitimate aspirations.

WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF THE WORLD,

Make every effort to meet your obligations in developing active solidarity with the Vietnamese people in the spirit of the noble principles of working class internationalism!

Do everything in your power to hasten the day when the Vietnamese people themselves, without any foreign interference, can peacefully decide their own destiny and the future of their country.

By powerful actions of solidarity we can and must contribute to the victory of the just cause of freedom, national independence and peace in Vietnam and throughout the world.

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UNION INTERNATIONALE DES SYNDICATS DES TRAVAILLEURS DU COMMERCE

(DEPARTEMENT PROFESSIONNEL DE LA F. S. M.)

TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF WORKERS IN COMMERCE

(TRADE DEPARTMENT OF THE W. F. T. U.)

UNION INTERNACIONAL DE SINDICATOS DE LOS TRABAJADORES DEL COMERCIO

(DEPARTAMENTO PROFESIONAL DE LA F. S. M.)

МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЕ ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЕ ПРОФСОЮЗОВ РАБОТНИКОВ ТОРГОВЛИ

(ПРОИЗВОДСТВЕННЫЙ ОТДЕЛ В. Ф. П.)

Adresse: Rue Opletalova 57, PRAGUE 1 (Tchécoslovaquie) • Téléphone: 220680, 220501, 220662

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Prague, September 15, 1966

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FRANCE

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WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY

The 1966 holidays are over and are put away in the drawer where our memories are kept. In France everybody is again on his accustomed way to the shop, the cash desk and the office.

During the holidays, we have tried to forget our worries. Radio and television newscasts and newspapers have been left aside.... after all, we are on holidays ! The surprise awaited us back home. And it was not a pleasant surprise at that !

The French Government, so slow when wages are to go up by two per cent, this time did their job in double-quick time : new increases in postal charges vary between 11 and 100 per cent despite the fact that the G.P.O. make an annual profit of one billion new francs.

Sugar and milk are going up as well, alongside taxes and rents which account for the biggest share of the family budget. Gas and electricity charges will soon follow suit. The rises will not apply to the trusts which will enjoy privileged fees, but the high prices will be paid by the workers for domestic use.

As for big business, they don't complain. They are all right.

Newspaper headlines announce : Department store shares are going up again. Official figures show that the female commercial employees' average wage is 539 francs - in 1966 ! - the average for men is 923 francs, i.e. a gap of 42 per cent to the detriment of women. Subtly the campaign conducted by the CGT for the rate for the job for women and young girls will be very popular in the distributive trades and elsewhere.

These anti-social measures will stir up the still smouldering fire. The big actions conducted in the first half of the year were not a mere bonfire. The demands as yet remain unsatisfied and are more pressing than ever. It looks as if further and more powerful action will have to be taken for their satisfaction.

It is to these demands and to unity of all trade unions that all trade union officials and members will devote their attention on their return from holidays. We wish them every success in their endeavour.

PARIS DEPARTMENT STORES - A 30% DELAY IN GUARANTEED MINIMUM RATES

The last agreement on guaranteed minimum rates for Paris department stores was signed in October 1965.

The employers' Association has unofficially announced their readiness to increase this rate by 4 per cent and to raise the wage of a skilled sales assistant with 5 years of service from 520 to 541 francs.

Despite repeated demands by trade union organisations, the employers refuse to discuss real wages and to conclude agreements re-valuing present rates and putting a stop to innumerable injustices in the present system.

The guaranteed rates, serving as a basis for calculating seniority bonuses, are lagging behind real wages.

A collective labour agreement concluded in July 1955, stipulated the guaranteed rate for a skilled salesman (category 6) of 26,500 old francs. Since October 1965, the rate for the same group is 520 new francs, i.e. an increase of 92 per cent. Over the same period, according to official figures published in April 1966 by the Ministry of Labour, the official index of wage scales went up from 560 to 1,267, that is an increase of 126.25 per cent.

This shows that there is a lag of 30 per cent. It is this lag that must be overcome and the employers who want to pay guaranteed wages only, must at least agree to discuss about catching up this lag.

NEWS FROM THE STORES

Rouen . The staff of Monoprix-Saint Sever withdrew their labour for 2 hours on June 30, 1966, to protest once again against the set-back in pay.

Paris region - The employees of the company ANKER (sale of machinery) went on strike all afternoon on the 5th July in support of the fulfilment of the firm's commitments in matters of demands.

In the Louvre store, the minimum wage paid from now on will be 7,200 francs annually.

Toulouse - More trouble with the management of Monoprix : two cashiers were searched following an error in the cash register which was not their fault, as the manager later admitted. Such vexatious measures, directed against human dignity, must stop, stated the trade union committee which lodged a protest with the Managing Director.

Arcachon - A new trade union branch, set up at the Nouvelles Galeries in May 1966 once more demonstrates the effectiveness of an enterprise trade union branch.

Since May 1, pay increases ranging from 90 to 130 Frs were won. Seniority bonuses were increased to the level stipulated by the Bordeaux collective agreement, the main clauses of which are now being applied in Arcachon, with the exception of provisions in case of sickness.

The employees also won seven fully paid public holidays per year. One free day will be granted in compensation for any holiday worked. Two special bonuses, one at half-term and one at X-mas, will be paid. Employees who take the fourth week's leave after the holiday season will receive a bonus of 100 Frs.

IMPRESSIONS FROM A TRIP TO THE USSR

Upon invitation of the Soviet Commercial Workers' Union, a delegation of the National Federation of French Commercial Workers, composed of Georges Pompey, General Secretary, Helène Mabillet, Secretary, Monique Soulier and Maurice Ophol, members of the Federal Executive Committee, visited the USSR from June 20 to July 4, 1966.

In the September issue of the Federation's journal LA VOIX DES EMPLOYÉS, Maurice Ophol gives his impressions about the delegation's trip which was occasion to re-iterate the feelings of solidarity and friendship of the French Federation to the Soviet trade unions.

The Soviet Commercial Workers' Unions gather within their ranks 5 million workers in State-owned distribution, consumers' co-operatives and food processing factories.

Wherever there are more than 15 employees, the establishment of a trade union committee is compulsory.

The essential and most important difference between the Soviet and our trade unions is that they are playing if not a preponderant, than at least a determining role in the country's economic activities and development, while we are not even being consulted.

We are using 95 per cent of our intellectual and material forces to fight against the monopolies which are encouraged and supported by the State, for our pay claims, guarantee of employment, vocational training, etc.

The Soviet trade unions, whose membership is by no means composed of Communist Party members alone, actually administer social insurance, supervise and provide for improvement of health protection and labour safety measures.

Vocational education, sports, culture and youth problems also fall within the Unions' activities.

What about demands ?

Does this mean that there are no demands or that they are not tolerated ? Not at all. Demands are being put forward primarily when collective labour agreements are concluded and later at all levels, right from the shop floor level, by the unionists, participating in all bodies that decide about production and distribution targets. The satisfaction of demands is included in the plan, provided they are compatible with its execution and accomplishment (for instance working hours and wages).

This particular aspect of the trade unionists assuming responsibility gives us food for thought. Everywhere we went the plan was mentioned. This is quite understandable. Every shop has its own targets and the shopworkers are interested in their accomplishment as citizens as well as wage-earners, although in the USSR this epithet has not the same meaning as in our country.

Having been agreed upon by all branches belonging to the city trade union, the plan is then put into operation in every shop. For better comprehension by the people used to our economic system, let us call it turnover targets.

A table showing plan fulfilment hangs next to the trade union's announcement board and every worker can follow it daily; when the plan targets are reached, wages are raised by 10 per cent and when they are topped, by another 3 per cent. A ceiling is naturally fixed in advance.

The man in the street.

In this brief report giving our impressions, a place should be reserved to what we have seen of "the man in the street".

We visited Moscow, Leningrad and Yalta. We saw no difference in the way people dress (an important question for a number of our compatriots) and on the promenade in Yalta we could not distinguish the nationality of any young (and not so young) woman whose carriage is so familiar to the French.

The shop windows and displays are not very different from ours, apart from the smaller quantity of goods and the lack of blaring advertising. The Soviet people are queuing up in front of restaurants, many of which could be qualified in our country as first class.

When describing what we have seen, I am often being asked with healthy curiosity: "Do you have the impression that they are growing bourgeois?" This question is put almost always, and certain people await some relief from a reply in the affirmative, while others are ironical.

I have clearly seen: in the course of the country's development which, we are often inclined to forget, was stopped by the Nazi war that left distinct traces, the Soviet people are finding more consumer goods on the market.

The super-priority of heavy and building industries is increasingly being replaced by mere priority. As a result of this, personal requirements, gradually exceeding the mere essential needs, can be satisfied. The Soviet people had to put up with this hard necessity over a certain period, and have always done so with great courage.

We discussed these problems in great detail at our daily meetings with the trade union officials and I for my part asked a number of questions on the most varied subjects, very often concerning details about the functioning of institutions.

My informants were always ready to reply to all my questions with a competency to which I pay tribute and they were doubly concerned: to explain their system and to draw a lesson from our comments.

A NEW DEPARTMENT STORE

The Nouvelles Galeries, owners of 250 retail outlets in France, opened their thirty-fourth department store in Lille in September 1966. The completely air-conditioned building with a selling area of 13,500 square metres is said to be the largest department store in the area. It has 70 sales departments and offers a range of 120,000 articles.

A restaurant with 250 places, a cafeteria, a hairdresser's saloon, a nursery for the shoppers' children and an underground car park are some of the services offered by the store to its customers. The new building is equipped with a power station with a capacity sufficient to supply electric current for a city with a population of 10,000.

The Nouvelles Galeries recruited 850 employees for the store, from the manager down to the last stockroom assistant. These 850 employees, united in a militant trade union, will represent a great force for the defence of their social and economic interests and for wider democratic rights.

AUTRIA

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A NEW PROGRAMME OF ACTION

The Austrian trade union of Private Employees represents very varied groups of employees in private firms, divided up in six sections.

A broad discussion about a new programme of action has started. According to information published in the Union's journal DER PRIVATANGESTELLTE, the Union is preparing to draft a new programme of action, since the present one, valid since 1954, is no longer in keeping with present conditions.

The Union's two leading bodies, the Presidium and the Central Committee, already dealt with the contents of the new programme and unanimously agreed on the need for a new document.

Following discussions in the Union's sections and regional committees, the draft will be submitted to the entire membership who will be able to subject it to a critical study and to put forward proposals which will be incorporated in the final draft programme, presented for approval and final decision to the Congress, due to be held in 1967.

"As conscious trade unionists", writes Josef Hindels in the journal DER PRIVATANGESTELLTE, "we realize that the success of the unions depends on economic development....In the new programme of action we shall set forth the main aims of the economic policy which should serve the entire Austrian population and not only a small privileged group....."

...We are well aware that pay rises are not much use when most of the workers' gains are offset by price increases. But the solution cannot consist in renouncing pay rises. Measures must be adopted to prevent unjustified price hikes.

In this connection I am thinking of the monopolies artificially keeping prices high and persecuting everyone who is prepared to sell cheaper...."

Other important issues to be dealt with in the programme of action are

- automation,
- collective labour agreements to be negotiated by each of the Union's six sections for the various branches ,
- reduction of the working week to 40 hours,
- an adjustment of the income tax scale, the reason being that in recent years every pay rise was considerably offset by income tax.
- In addition, the programme of action will contain a list of social demands.

GUADELOUPE

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We are convinced that our readers will be very interested in reading the article by brother P.Tomiche, General Secretary of the Trade Union of Workers in Commerce of Guadeloupe (S.P.E.C.O.G.) reproduced from the first issue of the TRIBUNE OUVRIERE, a monthly of the General Confederation of Labour of Guadeloupe, published in August 1966.

The problem of dismissals and unemployment, sharpened by the colonialist regime, are very clearly set forth by brother Tomiche in connection with the struggle for a collective labour agreement in commerce which should be in keeping with the aspirations of the distributive workers of this small country in the Antilles, still subject to an inhuman exploitation by the French monopolist circles.

A PANORAMA OF COMMERCE

Alongside all workers looking for an explanation of their difficulties, the commercial employees are living under very precarious conditions.

This is the position : the employers who a year ago grumbled about the commercial workers' union, think that they can check their employees' action for demands , supported by the General Confederation of Labour. This is why at the beginning of the year a wave of repression has been unleashed against our colleagues working for various firms.

At MANSSOUR's, an under-nourished employee, aged less than 20, who came from a family with many children from the country to earn his living since his childhood, was beaten up.

At KALIL's, a woman employee who for three years had to carry mattresses on her back, was helping in sales by auction and at the same time worked as a maid, was dismissed because she joined the Union. With four of her colleagues and another five from MANSOUR's she will swell the ranks of the unemployed with all the consequences arising from this state.

Many more similar examples could be quoted. These two suffice to prove the misfortunes faced day by day by the distributive workers due to the fact that the employers are taking advantage of the complete lack of collective agreements in our trades and feel free to act often illegally and immorally.

When the idea of an agreement first came up, the employers used intimidation and division to sabotage the commercial employees' desire for unity and solidarity. But despite all their subtle manoeuvres, the S.P.E.C.O.G. is determined to fight for the satisfaction of the distributive workers' pressing demands for higher purchasing power and better working conditions.

Among the aims for which the Union is determined to fight are :

- a general pay rise in view of the high living costs,
- family allowances such as paid in France ; the immediate aim is equal family allowances with those paid to public servants in Guadeloupe,
- 4 weeks' paid holidays in 1967,
- better social security schemes,
- a collective labour agreement, an indispensable factor of social progress.

The S.P.E.C.O.G. will also fight against migration, made into an institution by the government. The Union will publicise the demand that everything possible shall be done for a reform of the economic structure of the country to provide work for everyone. In the meantime and under the present conditions the S.P.E.C.O.G. demands that the Guadeloupians should have priority in recruitment.

POLAND - BULGARIA

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TECHNOLOGY IN COMMERCE

In the fourth quarter of this year a show of refrigeration equipment and other machinery for commercial purposes, produced in Bulgaria, will be opened in Warsaw. The exhibition will show the technical progress made in the Bulgarian distributive trades and catering.

In the first quarter of 1967, on the other hand, Poland will show her own refrigeration equipment in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

These shows are a fresh step forward in mutual exchanges of goods and know-how between the socialist countries.

POLAND

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YOUNG WORKERS IN THE DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES

In one of the Warsaw residential districts the situation in shops recently became very awkward. Several managers and shop assistants had to be replaced. New managers and assistants had to be recruited for 36 shops.

The only way was to find them among young people, graduates from commercial schools. To start with, the youngsters were not very keen on taking on this great responsibility. However, the prospect of post-graduate specialist training in shop documentation and technology of merchandise persuaded a group of girls to agree with the proposal. In the near future, having completed the course, they will start in their responsible jobs.

Another group of young shop assistants will attend courses run by the enterprise for prospective managers. The theoretical training, provided by the school is not a sufficient preparation for the job of managers. The curriculum of the course, therefore, will contain theory as well as practical training.

In the same residential district 145 girls, graduates from various commercial schools, were recruited as shop assistants. A social was organized to provide the opportunity for them to meet their older colleagues. In a friendly atmosphere, around the coffee table, the young sales assistants and manageresses met each other and exchanged views.

Most of the shops, where the young staff started working, are re-decorated and adapted and the enterprise is confident that the young people will render efficient service to the population.

GREAT BRITAIN

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WORKERS ARE ORGANISING AGAINST THE WAGE STOP

An example of the growth of opposition against the wages standstill is the policy of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW). This is the sixth largest British trade union with a membership of 352,000 and until quite recently has strictly followed the Labour government line. They had accepted Mr. Wilson's programme and its outcome, the incomes policy. In all previous meetings and

discussions they have always shown utter loyalty with the Government. However, the recent political development forced the Union to adopt a different attitude.

The General Council of the T.U.C., meeting on July 27th, decided by 20 votes to 12, to acquiesce in the Government's plan for a six months' wages standstill. Among those voting against this acquiescence, and thus against the Government's wage freeze, was Mr. Alfred W. Allen, the Union's General Secretary. Mr. Allen feared that the Government's plan would create internal dissension in the Trade Union Movement.

His attitude to the wage freeze was determined by the fact that so many of the Union's members suffered acutely from low wages, and these would be frozen. There is also to be borne in mind the weakness of trade union organisation in the distributive trades generally.

A wage freeze would split the Trade Union Movement, he felt. The weak would suffer whilst the strong would always find a way round. The measures that the Government were introducing in the Bill went far beyond anything that had happened before in Trade Union history. Mr. Allen was not convinced that other measures to find a way out of the present economic difficulties would not have been more effective.

We are publishing below an extract of a resolution, adopted by a specially convened meeting of the Executive Council of the USDAW on August 21, 1966, when this body decided to oppose the Government's measures for a six months' standstill on wages, followed by six months' severe restraint:

"Control prices, Dividends and Interest Rates

We believe that concurrent with these proposals there should be complete control of Prices, Dividends and interest rates. We also believe that there is a need for the introduction of quantitative restrictions on imports plus further drastic reductions of overseas expenditure with particular reference to military commitments.

The Union has in membership many thousands of poorly paid workers whose low wages represent their total earnings. An incomes policy would have brought them some hope of social equity, whereas the wages standstill holds them in their low standards for six or possibly twelve months, with the added threat of unemployment.

The Executive Council of U.S.D.A.W., on behalf of the Union's 350,000 members and in unity with all other trade unionists opposed to the present policy, urges the Government speedily to plan for expanding production and increasing efficiency and productivity, including a planned growth of wages and salaries, as an inherent part of such a policy."

Even though the results of the vote on the wages standstill which was the central issue at the British T.U.C. Congress, concluded in Blackpool on September 9, are not in keeping with the workers' desires, they showed the strength of the pressure of the rank-and-file, very noticeable also in a number of industrial unions which are generally taking a more right-wing attitude.

The Government and the T.U.C. succeeded in having their plan for a wages standstill for 6, and possibly 12 months, approved by a majority of 4,567,000 against 4,223,000 votes, i.e. a difference of 344,000 votes. However, this victory was won only due to the fact that the leaderships of certain Unions voted in favour of the Government policy, in contradiction with the decisions adopted by their own Conferences.

The near future will show what is going to happen in the factories and enterprises and in the trade union branches.

In the meantime, the results of the vote and the workers' position over the next 12 months are being widely discussed among the rank-and-file unionists. It will be up to them whether this period will pass in the spirit of the votes cast at the last T.U.C. Congress.





UNION INTERNATIONALE DES SYNDICATS DES TRAVAILLEURS DU COMMERCE

(DEPARTEMENT PROFESSIONNEL DE LA F. S. M.)

TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF WORKERS IN COMMERCE

(TRADE DEPARTMENT OF THE W. F. T. U.)

UNION INTERNACIONAL DE SINDICATOS DE LOS TRABAJADORES DEL COMERCIO

(DEPARTAMENTO PROFESIONAL DE LA F. S. M.)

МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЕ ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЕ ПРОФСОЮЗОВ РАБОТНИКОВ ТОРГОВЛИ

(ПРОИЗВОДСТВЕННЫЙ ОТДЕЛ В. Ф. П.)

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A. I. T. U. C.
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NEWS FROM

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Prague, September 30th, 1966

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA
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DECISION ADOPTED BY THE 13TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMERCIAL WORKERS' UNION

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The 13th Session of the C.C. of the Czechoslovak Commercial Workers' Union discussed this year's accomplishment of the main tasks of home and foreign trade, took note of the present stage and of the preparation of the plan for 1967 and of the 4th Five-year plan.

After a thorough discussion, the Plenary Session adopted the following decisions:

- To convene the 4th Congress of the Commercial Workers' Union for the 21st, 22nd and 23rd November 1966 to Prague with the following Agenda:
 - Report on the accomplishment of the Union's tasks in keeping with the indications given by the 13th Communist Party Congress,
 - Auditors' Report
 - Discussion
 - Election of the Central Committee of the Commercial Workers' Union and Auditors
 - Election of delegates to the 4th All-Union Congress: (420 delegates with a right to vote, 10 % of the total number of participants shall be guests and one-sixth of the total number shall serve as stewards and technical staff at the Congress.)

The Plenary Session instructs the Presidium of the Central Committee

1) - jointly with the Ministries of Home and Foreign Trade and the Central Co-operative Union to make a survey of the accomplishment of the Government's decree N^o. 78/66 on reducing working hours in the distributive trade and to jointly adopt measures for the improvement of the present conditions. To conclude the negotiations with competent authorities on the reduction of the working week to 43 hours in noisy work places. To agree with competent authorities on effective measures for recruitment of staff for the distributive trades to secure the desired proportion between the raise in labour productivity and the average wages.

2) The Plenary session instructs the Sectional Committee of the C.C., to elaborate plans, in accordance with the suggestions made at the National Conferences of the sectors, for a new organisation of socialist emulation for 1967, taking into account the experiences gathered in the course of the introduction of the new system of management in the individual sectors; in each sector to evaluate the accomplishment of collective labour agreements in the 1st half of 1966, with special reference to the influence of the new economic instruments in management and to agree with the trusts and branch enterprises

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of the sector on the preparation of collective labour agreements for individual undertakings for 1967.

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MAURITIUS

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We are publishing news from Mauritius, throwing some light on the structure of distribution. It is also of interest that for the first time we have received a letter from Mauritius and a Mauritius trade unionist visited the TUI office.

The traders in Quatre-Bornes and Belle-Rose rose in protest against new taxes introduced by the local authorities on the sale of numerous food commodities. Until the beginning of this year, taxes were paid only on rum. They were extended to the sale of bread and cakes, non-alcoholic beverages, pre-packed flower and childrens' foods, fried fish, cereals and fodder, fruit and vegetables, milk and milk products, edible oil, tinned fish, meat products, tobacco and cigarettes, storage and sale of petrol, weed killers. In addition, a "starting of business Tax" of 50 rupies has to be paid by anybody opening a new business and for transfer of patents.

Right from the start, at the end of march, the traders refused to pay the new taxes; the local authorities granted them a delay. At the beginning of August, seeing that the petition sent on the 29th June to the Governor, with a copy for the Prime Minister and several other competent personages was left unanswered, the shopkeepers' trade unions called a protest strike in which the supermarkets of Quatre-Bornes and the co-operative society in Belle-Rose were also involved, against the taxation victimising small shopkeepers and last not least the consumers.

Upon receipt of further news from Mauritius we shall inform our readers about further developments.

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NEW ZEALAND

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We are reproducing extracts from an article published by the official journal of the Canterbury Shop Assistants' Union COUNTER POINT in June 1966, showing the trade unions' effort to oblige the employers to provide better conditions for shop-women.

We ask our readers to send us news about their efforts in this field which will doubtlessly be of interest for all commercial workers' unions:

WHAT ABOUT WORKING MOTHERS?

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The economy of N.Z. would collapse if married women were suddenly withdrawn from their jobs. This is a statistical fact.

Employers rely on them. They are among the hardest working, most conscientious and worst paid of all employees.

Every shopkeeper who employs women on his staff knows that the courteous and experienced married woman will attract custom-regular custom, to his shop. He knows she is a source of increased income from sales.

Yet what does she get out of it? Does she get the encouragement of appreciation and reward? NO.

As a rule she gets just the basic wage that an employer is bound, by law, to pay any woman on reaching 22 years, which means after a maximum of six years experience. There is no compulsory sickness pay - no guaranteed regular rises for merit or experience.

She must tear round the shops in her lunch time to do the family shopping, to the detriment of her digestion and health.

So come on businessmen. How about a new deal for that over-worked, under paid, often neglected and sadly unappreciated section of the N.Z. community WOMEN.

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FRANCE

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SELF - SERVICE STORES

From now until 1970, 1,300 self-service shops could be opened in France. Provided this target of the 5th Plan is reached, the number of this type of shops will have doubled in six years, rising from 7,850 at the beginning of 1965 to 15,650 in 1970.

Supermarkets will have a lion's share in this increase. Their number will grow three-fold. This would not fail to accelerate the changes that have already taken place in merchandising methods in France. Almost one out of every five newly opened supermarkets has a large car park and some of them are selling petrol at reduced prices.

These forecasts are not pure imagination. They come from the very serious 5th Plan commission on distribution.

According to the Commission, distribution will employ about 2,250,000 workers by the end of the 5th Plan (1966-1970), which is 13% more than last December. While in 1954, 10% of the active population were engaged in distribution, in 1970 it will be 13%.

Quoting the French Association of Research and Statistics (AFRESCO), the report states that 6,000 new commercial establishments were opened in 1965 (after deduction of those that closed down).

While the annual growth rate of wholesale enterprises (about 270) and of "multiples" (2,400) is more or less stable the number of "retailers" fluctuates: having dropped in 1962 and 1963, the number of small traders increased strongly in the course of the following two years (1,460 and 2,620 new firms respectively).

It seems that this growth and drop are due to the strong trend towards "de-specialisation" of the French distributive network.

The introduction and improvement of certain merchandising methods also brought about deep changes in distribution; the development of self-service, supermarkets, discount stores, and mail order stores.

Sales of petrol at reduced prices

The number of self-service stores and supermarkets went up about 4.5 times between 1960 and 1965. At the beginning of this year about 49 % of these establishments - a total of 7,855 - were run by independent traders; 6% were in the category of supermarkets with a sales area of more than 400 square metres and about 20 % were "superettes" with a sales area varying between 120 and 400 square metres. Last year, self-service establishments accounted for 13 % of the total food sales.

On January 1, 1965 there were 566 supermarkets which in 1965 made a total turnover of 3.76 billion francs. Their average

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sales area was 665 square metres; 17% have private car parks strengthening over an area of 2,000 square metres on the average. The newest ones are selling petrol at reduced prices.

The report estimated that at the end of the period covered by the 5th Plan, France's distributive network shall comprise 15,650 self-service stores (including 1,450 supermarkets and 4,200 superettes). This type of shops should account for 25 to 28 per cent of retail food sales.

Discount houses - Discount houses have found their place in France's retail trade, states the report, despite the fact that the expansion of this form of merchandising is somewhat checked by the difficulties faced by the traders in this group in buying property and providing car parks in city centres.

Mail order stores - This type of distribution, states the report, which until recently accounted for 1 per cent of the total retail turnover, is rapidly developing. Sales by mail orders are on the increase: 14,5 per cent in 1961, 25 per cent in 1965, 20 per cent in 1963, 21 per cent in 1964. Over the same period the average annual growth rate throughout the distributive network was 7 per cent.

There are about one thousand mail order stores in France, mostly small or medium-sized, highly specialized firms (gramophone records, books, photographs, seeds). According to the latest estimates, 5 of these firms alone account for 50 per cent of the turnover made by mail order houses. Two of them are department stores which make 30 per cent of their turnover in this way. The range of goods offered by mail order stores is now being extended to furniture and tools.

Sales promotion and human relations - The report, dealing with all aspects of the evolution of France's distributive sector, says about sales promotion: The increase in expenditure for advertising is moderate, which is characteristic for France. The average annual growth rate is about 10 %. The total expenditure on advertising is estimated at 2,600 million francs in 1962, i.e. 0.8 per cent of the gross home production for the same year and 3,200 millions in 1965. The forecast for 1970 is 5,100 millions. In 1962, 23,000 people were engaged in sales promotion and 14,000 of them in the advertising trade. These figures are expected to reach 30,000 and 17,000 respectively at the end of the 5th Plan.

The group of specialists who has for the first time studied the problems of sales promotion within the framework of the 5th Plan, stressed the need to establish and apply regulations on human relations between the various partners in advertising, including the consumers whose requirements and desires must be particularly taken into account.

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SOVIET UNION
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EUROPE'S BIGGEST HOTEL

Hotel Rossia, near the Moscow-Kremlin, is nearing completion. By its size and installations it can be considered as the biggest and most up-to-date hotel in Europe. It will stretch over an area of 256 by 156 metres, and will have 3,182 rooms with 5,890 beds. The first two of the 22 storeys will comprise a complex of restaurants, cafés and concert halls.

The 22 floors will be served by 90 lifts and 6 escalators and the telephone exchange will service 6,000 extensions. The services in the hotel and restaurants will be handled through closed circuit television and a computer will be used for hotel bills.

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RUMANIA
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THE AUTUMN SEASON AT THE SHELARI STREET CLUB

Walking through Shelari Street, Bucharest, you come upon the Central Club of the trade unions of workers in Commerce and Co-operatives. Its autumn season has started with a rich activity. Most events are aiming to help to improve the service to consumers by raising the workers' proficiency by offering them a solid political and general education. The club is planning several lecture courses on every aspect of commercial activities. One of the courses, organised jointly by the trade unions and the Ministry of Home Trade and the Commercial department of the capital's administration will deal with THE SATISFACTION OF THE POPULATION'S NEEDS ON THE LEVEL OF PRESENT REQUIREMENTS. The course for workers in grocery shoppes includes interesting subjects. Several high officials of the Ministry of Home Trade, mostly university graduates, will lecture on:

- "The development of socialist trade in Rumania"
- "The structure and dynamics of sales in socialist trade"
- "Up-to-date merchandising methods and their economic effectiveness"
- "The importance of market research"
- "Work in distribution - a responsible job of a particular economic importance"
- "Presentation of goods and sales promotions at the level of present requirements".

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Brother Sultana Suta-Selejau, B.Sc., lecturer of the Economic Institute, will lecture on "The scientific character of the economic policy of the Rumanian Communist Party".

A course on "High standard service to the consumers - an important task facing the distributive workers", is being prepared in co-operation with officials of the Ministry of Home Trade, it will comprise the following subjects:

"The principles of a rational location of distributive outlets", "Construction of socialism reflected in the sector of socialist distribution", "Methods of marketing", "The improvement of the quality of goods", "An important contribution to raising living standards", "Shopwindows, visiting cafés of the shop", etc.

Extra mural studies for the workers in the hotel industry and for wholesale trade employees workers were organised to widen their specific economic knowledge.

This year, 300 Bucharest commercial workers will attend language courses of French, German, Russian and English. The plan of the club activities also includes experience exchanges between window dressers and between members of the Union of Artists.

The drama section of the club inaugurated the theatre season. All amateur actors who studied several foreign and rumanian plays, are workers in commerce.

The Bucharest Unions of commercial workers show interest in the club's activities and send several hundred participants to each of the events.

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POLAND

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SCHOOLS FOR SHOP WORKERS

Lately, many new young saleswomen have made their appearance behind the counters of the Warsaw shops. Groups of girls are working in many stores, particularly those run by the enterprise SPOLEM. This is not surprising. Every year a whole army of young school-leavers provided with a bag of theoretical and practical knowledge comes into the Polish distributive trade.

Most of them are girls leaving secondary commercial school. Very few boys attend this school, since in Poland distribution is a predominantly female occupation. Having passed their final examinations in Polish and Mathematics, applicants are interviewed by the personnel and education department of the enterprise where they are to get their practical trade training.

Secondary commercial schools run a three-year course, the fourth year is then devoted to practical training. During this fourth year the youngsters receive practical training in the shops for three days a week and attend school for the remaining three days.

Those who are too young to work in the shops (14 years) spend all their time at school, learning subjects connected with their trade, such as merchandising, organisation of commerce, financing, etc.

Much attention is paid to the study of the main forms of advertising and sales promotion, documentation, rules governing hygiene in shops, etc. Several hours a week are devoted to general subjects such as the Polish language, mathematics, physics, Polish history and present international relations. The programme of practical training in all commercial enterprises contain training in all tasks to be accomplished by a shopworker from the simplest to the more complicated ones.

Every pupil keeps a diary which is supervised by the teachers who often visit the shops where the pupils are trained at checks whether their training follows the schedule.

Practical training is done by shop managers or skilled sales-people, who are trained to qualify as instructors.

The girls naturally get their training in well-equipped, up-to-date shops. At the end they have to pass final examinations. Every spring they step up their efforts because at that time the best pupils are selected to participate in the first round of a competition for the best young sales assistants. The contestants serve customers for three hours in front of a commission, composed of instructors, experienced shop assistants who evaluate their work. They take into consideration the girls' proficiency, their attitude towards their customers, their technical knowledge etc.

Those who win the first round are entitled to advance into the second round at regional level which requires a more thorough knowledge of technology, organisation, merchandising and sales promotion. The winners then advance into the last national round. At this advanced stage, the future sales assistants must show a thorough knowledge of all commercial subjects. The winners of the first three places receive a reward in kind.

The instructors are unanimous in their opinion that the competition for the best salesgirl are an important stimulant during the period of training. In addition, this form of emulation develops the desire of the would-be-sales assistants for rapid promotion and for a thorough knowledge of their trade. This is a direct route leading towards the spontaneous creation of teams of young sales assistants at the places of work, competing for the title "Brigade of socialist labour".

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T R A D E U N I O N R E L A T I O N S

USSR - REPUBLIC MALI

A visit of a delegation of the Federation of Workers in Commerce, Banks, Credit and Insurance Companies of the Republic of Mali in the USSR helped to establish friendly relations between the two Unions.

The delegates were acquainted with the activities of the Central Committee of the Soviet Commercial Workers' Union and its organisations, work in the commercial enterprises, and distributive workers' social conditions. The delegation showed a particular interest for the Soviet co-operative movement. At the conclusion of the visit, the two delegations signed a joint statement.

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USSR - POLAND

A delegation of the Polish Union of workers in commerce and co-operatives, headed by its President Brother Roman Polakiewicz, visited the USSR to exchange experiences on wages of shop and catering workers.

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USSR - FRANCE

At the end of June and beginning of July, a delegation of the French Federation of clerical and managerial staffs headed by its General Secretary Georges Pompey toured the USSR.

In meetings with the leading bodies of the Soviet Federation and with trade union officials, both parties expressed their unanimous desire to develop and strengthen their contacts and co-operation in the struggle for the workers' interest, peace, democracy, and progress as well as their views on the settlement of the Vietnamese problem. Both Federations vigorously condemned American aggression in Vietnam,

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Great Britain - USSR

From June 21 to 30, 1966, a delegation of the Federation of Workers in Commerce and consumers' co-operatives of the USSR visited Great Britain upon invitation of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

The delegation stayed in London, Manchester, Harlow, visited a number of private shops and co-operative societies, and studied distributive workers' living and working conditions and the activities of the leading bodies of the USDAW and its organisations

in London and Manchester. The delegation attended several meetings of trade union leaders and officials.

The delegation was made very welcome. Both hosts and guests stressed the importance and significance of contacts for the strengthening of future relations, for mutual comprehension and co-operation between the British and Soviet distributive workers' unions.

They expressed their desire to expand their mutual relations in the spirit of a joint declaration signed by the leadership of both Unions in 1965 in Moscow.

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USSR - CZECHOSLOVAKIA

A delegation of the Czechoslovak Commercial Workers' Union, headed by its President Marie Radova, visited the Soviet Union following an invitation of the Soviet distributive workers' Union.

The delegation studied the conditions and problems of the consumers' co-operatives. The two parties exchanged experiences on steps to be taken to ensure a steady rise of consumption, the standard of service rendered to consumers, social insurance, vocational education, wage schemes and collective labour agreements in consumers' co-operatives, department stores and hotels and restaurants in both countries.

The members of the delegation talked with their hosts about the structure and organisation of trade union work in State-run and co-operative trade, measures adopted to improve vocational education, problems connected with the reduction of the working week and experiences gathered in this field.

The Czech trade unionists visited department stores, restaurants, canteens, service centres and houses of culture for distributive workers of the State and co-operative sector in Moscow and Kiev, and talked with the workers about their experiences and problems they are facing in their work.

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