

## **END OF A SAGA**

Ardhendu Bhushan Bardhan popularly known as A. B. Bardhan, veteran Trade Union leader and a life-long crusader for the working class passed away on 02-01-2016 evening around 8-30 PM in G.B. Pant hospital, in New Delhi, where he was admitted after he suffered a paralytic stroke.

Born in 1924, Com Bardhan was drawn to the movement in his school days itself. He joined the students' movement as member of All India Students' Federation (AISF) in the year 1940, when he entered the University of Nagpur. He was enrolled as member of Communist Party of India in the same year. He continued with the movement, while continuing his higher studies and in 1945 he was elected the Secretary of AISF and continued to hold the position till 1948. He was also elected the President of the Nagpur University Students' Union. He left home and became a Party full-timer from 1941.

After leaving the student movement, he joined as a Trade Union organiser, and worked amongst power workers, railway workers, textile workers, defence workers, press workers, engineering workers and so on. He was the pioneer in organizing handloom weavers all over the country. He was the darling leader of All India Federation of Electricity Employees.

For his activities as a student, trade union and Party organiser, he was arrested several times, and spent a total of about four and a half years in jail starting from the 'Quit India' (August 1942) Movement. He was underground for nearly two years, during which he worked as a trade union organizer in Calcutta (West Bengal).

He continued his studies which were interrupted several times due to arrests etc. and obtained the M.A. (Economics) and L.L.B. (Bachelor of Law) degrees. In 1957, he was elected for a five-year term to the Maharashtra State Legislative Assembly.

He was elected to the National Council of the CPI in the year 1968 and to the Party's Central Executive Committee in the year 1978. In 1982, he was elected to the Party's Central Secretariat and became the Deputy General Secretary of the CPI in 1995. In the very next year 1996 he was elevated to the post of the General Secretary of the party when Com Indrajeet Gupta was inducted as Home Minister in UPA Government. Since then, he had continuously been elected as General Secretary till 2012 when he decided to step down in view of failing health.

Com. A. B. Bardhan has held several leading positions in the Indian Trade Union Movement, as a top official of several unions and National Federations. He became the General Secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) in March 1994, a post which he relinquished on becoming the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India in 1996.

Com. Bardhan was an honest politician with a sweeping view of history and was also a prolific writer. Apart from writing on ideological and political issues, he has written number of books and booklets on problems of Adivasis, minorities, history of working class movement, etc. His last book was 'Crisis of Corporate Capitalism' that had number of editions during the last one decade.

Com Bardhan was a multi-faceted leader – a great scholar, an effective orator, organiser, writer, campaigner, crusader, fighter, and negotiator – all in one. He was an uncompromising champion of the downtrodden and the marginalized. He was a very matured and seasoned political leader. His death is a great loss to the workers & engineers' movement, trade unions and to the people at large.

We convey our respectful homage to the legendary trade union leader. May his soul always rest in peace!