

CO-ordination Committee report to the IWAGB'S National Conference 17th Feb. 91.

This conference is being held for the final stage of merger of both the Indian Workers' Associations G.B. The agenda for the national conference is: Co-ordination Committee report, Constitution and the election of Central Executive Committee.

The draft constitution is published in Lalkar. The co-ordination committee recommends the adption of the proposed draft.

The brief history of this co-ordination committee is as follows:

In September 1989, after several discussions between the two organisations it was agreed formally to form co-ordination committee with five representatives from each organisation. The main objective of the committee at its inception was to pave the way for the merger of both organisations through unity in action programme and discussions.

Although, Unity in actions was there in practise on various issues since the split in 1967 i.e. anti-racism, anti- imperialism, anti emergency in India during 70s, support for National Liberation and Independence etc; but with the rise of fundementalism, communalism and separatism in India and particularly in Punjab during the mid-eighties and its reflection in the United Kingdom of physical attacks on both the organisations inspired by Khalistanis, both organisations came more closer, hence organised joint conferences, meetings etc; During

On 9th June 1990, a national Conference was held in Smethwick. It passed a resolution for the merger and authorised the co-ordination committee to process the merger of branches and hold the conference in about three months time. It was a milestone in the merger process. To this date successful merger of all the branches has taken place except Willenhall and Nottingham. Branch Committee elections will be held after this conference in Willenhall and Nottingham. A satisfactory merger programme is almost complete in the branches however it took 8 months to hold this conference due to organisational difficulties.

During 1990, IWAGB played an active role in the following movements:

-Anti Poll Tax

-Anti Racism

-Anti-imperialism

- For Dual ^Nationality for the persons of Indian origin, still under consideration.
- For the abolishment of Visa which resulted in a 5 years multi visa entry and £6.00
- Equal Rights for Non-EEC Citizens in Europe/CARL Conference on 3rd Nov. 90
- OPPOSITION to U.S. led aggression in the GULF/ organising and participating in the protest and peace marches, holding public meetings.
- Campaigning against the dowry system /meeting, broadcasts and press statements.
- Campaigning against communalism and separatism and supporting secular forces in India
- Internationally supporting the liberation movements in South Africa, Palestine, Ireland(North)
- Received an Indian Trade Union delegation consisting representatives from CITU, H.M.S and INTUC.
- Participation in Trade Unions activities for more representation of black members in the structure
- Supported Mandal Commission recommendations implemented by V.P. SINGH Government.
- Working for international Peace and socialist Britain.
- Opposed the capitalist change in Eastern Europe.
- Noted with concern the developments in the Soviet Union for so called democracy.

The IWAGB is playing an important role in the Labour and Trade Union movement.

However, at this conference we need to look deeply into the organisational aspects.

In general terms of principle and campaigning IWAGB have a larger area of influence than its branches network. However we need to review the present situation.

In the whole of United Kingdom there are 14 branches . One in glasgow, Scotland,

8 in the Midlands, 3 in London area, Reading and Bedford. But Persons of Indian origin lives throughout the United Kingdom and the estimated number is around one million. It is important to expand our organisational network to other areas and consolidate in the present branches with more membership.

We can expand our work organising more branches and at the same time seek close co-operation with other organisations on broad issues of anti-racism anti imperialism, dual Nationality, no war in the gulf and Middle east peace conferece to settle the issue of 242 resolution and other issues in the area.

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Cultural and Welfare aspects.

IWAGB has the history of combining Cultural and Welfare activities for the fulfillment of its aims and objectives. Birmingham branch has a drama group functioning under the name of Birmingham Kala Kendar. There are many panjabi writers in the organisation. We know also there are other writers who are not in the IWAGB and functioning with several writers associations. It is the opinion of the co-ordination committee that IWAGB shall play the role of a facilitator to help to form an umbrella organisations of all the progressive and secular writers organisations and individual writers. To assist this process IWAGB can where possible to stage joint events with writers associations.

Welfare work: Welfare work is being carried out in all branches. Some branches have the facilities of welfare offices. Most of the work is advice and case work. Where we do not have our own facilities, we shall try to establish these and in the meantime IWAGB shall not hesitate to refer cases to other welfare agencies. Also, IWAGB according to the local situation can affiliate to welfare agencies as long as their aims and objective do not contradict IWAGB's aims and objectives.

Anti-dowry campaign: Dowry system is still a problem in the U.K. It is a factor in the breakup of some marriages. Our aim is that marriage is not an economic transactions. The question of arranged marriages, where these are arranged without the consent of the man and woman leads to many other problems. We shall support marriages of consent and oppose those without consent. Where a man and a woman definitely and consciously wants to marry each other of different caste or of different national origin, IWAGB policy must be clear cut : "IWAGB support these marriages"

Other organisations of Indian origin, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, African origin organisations and other minority organisations: and IWAGB :

There are hundreds of organisations of above origins including religious organisations. They have different aims and objectives. Many of these organisations at present are not involved in anti-racist campaigns. Also it is a fact that the 'state' does its best to keep various communities divided as it serves the interest of the State.

All black people (African and Asian and Latin American Origin and other origins) suffer from one or other form of racism. The present gulf war has highlighted the problem even more.

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On membership, our approach shall be that whoever accepts the constitution and policy of IWAGB shall be welcomed. We need to broaden our outlook not only in recruitment but also in the participation at all levels by the membership.

At present we lack close contact with our members. It is recognised that it cost time and money for close contacts. As far as money is concerned, the shortfall can only be made up by more participation by members. If we say that with £1.00 fee we can service our membership, it is not possible in conducting our affairs through post or merely leafleting. One of the best way for the branches is to organise their activities on all issues with which our members have concern be these are local issues of housing, grants, social security benefits, poll tax, police and state harrassment, of national significance such as racist laws, of European scale and concerning India and International issues such as the Gulf war and National Liberation movements. We shall keep the initiative of consistent and continuos campaigning and not wait for the events to take place first and react.

For example campaigning against racial attacks or racist laws is two fold. one is constant campaigning work and the other is a combination of campaigning and case work. There are some organisations who only do case work otherwise do nothing. IWAGB role is the combination of both aspects and all branches shall see the importance. We do not have figures for male and female membership yet. It is our understanding based on recruitment pattern that nearly 50 percent members are women members. They participate in meetings, marches, demonsterations in less numbers. Looking at the membership of branch committees, to our knowledge there are only 5 branch committee members, 2 in Birmingham, 1 in Derby, 1 in Southall and 1 in Woolich. Only one or two are branch officer. Why IWAGB is in this position? Rather than passing the buck, IWAGB has a duty to first investigate this sorry state of affairs for the reasons and address the issue to rectify it.

Lets look at youth participation. When we say youth, we say both men and women in their teen and twenties. No figures are available. In general the situation is similar as women. IWAGB shall ask its youth members that how they can involve. This exercise will take time but we shall debate these aspects in this conference to formulate an action plan which CEC shall implement.

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Anti racist platform is a common factor on which people both black and anti racist white can be united. The other common factor is to meet the special needs of the minority communities. IWAGB shall play a role of organising umbrella organisation to defend minorities against racism on more broader base than Campaign against racist laws. One way of doing it is to make use of CARL Charter of human rights for the sponsorship of the charter. All branch committees must take this charter into the community organisation and get their sponsorship and it will provide a broad based campaign. IWAGB shall translate the CHARTER in Asian Languages and distribute it not for the sake of distribution but to get sponsorship.

IWAGB and Trade Union movement:

IWAGB is very well respected in the trade union movement. The ratio of black members is higher than white members. Due to our consistent campaigning and work Trade Unions have started to address the issue of racism as a trade union issue in their policies and programmes. Every trade union has now equal opportunity policy. That is good. But the practise of almost of all the trade unions including the TUC do not fully meets the criteria of their policies. There is no black executive General Secretary or president of any trade union. Only one member of TUC General Council is black(Bill Morriss). We shall now work to translate the policies of the unions into practise within the Unions as Trade union members and outside to intensify the campaign for representations at all levels. It is possible that some black trade unionist are running for trade union offices and IWAGB shall campaign for their elections not because they are black but are TRADE UNIONIST, who understand much better the problems of whole of the membership. All IWAGB members in the trade union membership shall become more active in their respective trade unions and respective branches, and other levels of their involvement.

LALKAR:

Co-ordination committee is recommending to the conference that LALKAR will be the organ of IWAGB under the leadership of the Central Executive Committee. The final responsibility of Lalkar rest with CEC. We are seeking positive proposal to develop LALKAR for more readership and for a Panjabi Section. It cost around £400.00P to publish. This cost does not include any labour for writing, printing, wordprocessing and designing. At present Comrades Godfrey, Iris, Ella are providing major assistance for publishing. We need writers, distributors and sellers for Lalkar. At this conference please give a commitment from your branch for the number of copies you will take and pay the money of one issue in advance.

FUNDS.

So far, co-ordination committee did not receive $\frac{1}{3}$ dues of membership of any branch. Please give the figure of membership of your branch and money. If it is not possible to give the money please send the amount of $\frac{1}{3}$ dues immediately after the conference to the Treasurer.

With membership fee alone it is impossible to run the organisation. We are seeking suggestions and proposal for raising funds.

We have given a broad outline of organisational tasks facing IWAGB. Any proposals from the branches are welcome for the inclusion in the report or exclusion from the report.

You will be adopting the constitution. Its aims and objectives provide broad framework for our tasks. Implementations of these by CEC and Branch Committees will surely develop the IWAGB.

We wish to finish organisational report with a caution. Since the merger programme started, we have noted somelapathy on parts of some of the comrades. Perhaps, they may be thinking that merger in itself will work wonders. No, comrades this is not the case. Only your active participation will make IWAGB stronger and non participation will make it weaker. Its your choice. Please make your choice known in this conference. I can tell you the choice of members of Co-ordination Committee. We have worked very hard and we will continue to work harder. Long live IWAGB.

RESOLUTIONS

ON South Africa: This national Conference strongly condemns the continuation of of white minority rules in South Africa (Azania). The recent proposals for abolishment of meaning less without the right of vote to all people of voting age. We, therefore demands the continuation of sanctions until constitution is agreed which will provide universal suffrage to the people of South Africa. IWAGB fully supports the struggle of South African people to achieve independence from white minority rule.

2. IWAGB National Conference supports the unification movement in Northern Ireland. It calls for immediate withdrawal of British Troops from Northern Ireland. It further calls upon the Home Secretary to free the Birmingham Six.
3. IWAGB National Conference calls upon Government of India to grant dual Nationality to persons of Indian origin who have acquired British or any other Nationality on the basis of their birth, their father and grandfathers birth in India. We note with concern the reported amount of fee in Financial Times under consideration. The Dual Nationality fee shall be within the reach of ordinary persons and not £500 to £1000 as reported.
4. IWAGB condemns the communal and separatist forces in India. We hold successive Indian government responsible for the deterioration of law and order. In Panjab It deliberately (Rajiv Government) deliberately did not implement Rajiv-Longowal accord. V.P. SINGH and Chandershekar policy only appeased the Khalistanis. We believe that without more rights to the states in India, the present situation cannot be resolved. This conference calls upon the government of India to call a National conference on the subject of more rights to the states.
5. IWAGB notes with concern the development of capitalism in Eastern Europe and the set back for socialism. It has given rise to racism and fascism. This National Conference express solidarity with all those who are holding the socialist banner in difficult situation. It extends support for anti-racist and anti fascist organisations.
6. IWAGB National Conference considers that the changes by the Gorvachov leadership in the soviet union are not in the interest of socialism. The foreign policy has given green light to U.S. Lead imperialism to intervene in the middle-east and attack Iraq under the pretext of 'liberation' of Kuwait. This has assisted the U.S. to become again the world POLICEMAN. The Conference Calls upon the Soviet government to take a stand against the U.S. Imperialist onslaught in the middle east.
7. IWAGB supports the liberation movement of palestinian people for a palestinian state in palestine. It further supports the fight of Palestinians and Iraqis against deportation orders by the British Government under the racist Immigration Laws.

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