

## Report of the Executive Committee of the Indian Workers Association (Great Britain)

Comrade President, members of the Executive Committee and fellow delegates,

On behalf of the Executive Committee I welcome all the delegates to this Conference as well as all the fraternal delegates and guests who have taken the trouble to come to this Conference. I present this Report on behalf of the Executive Committee so that all of you may discuss, if necessary amend, and approve this Report, as well as the Report on our work published in the May/June issue of Lalkar, and the accounts which will be presented to you by the Treasurer, Comrade Bajwa. Secondly we are here to elect a new Central Committee, to be responsible for giving direction, in accordance with the aims and objects of the organisation, and guide our work for the next two years. All this requires serious discussion and reasoned debate so that we may arrive at correct conclusions. The Report that I am presenting deals with issues concerning our organisation, the situation in Britain, in India as well as the international situation.

### Report about our Work

To repeat, the report about our work has already been published in Lalkar. Hopefully you have all read it. In that report I requested branch committee secretaries to send the report of their work to me by the end of May. Up to 21st May no report was received. In the circumstances the branch secretaries ought to present their own reports at this Conference.

### Concerning the IWA(GB)

Ours is a centralised organisation with a working-class orientation, which is opposed to exploitation, imperialism and colonialism, racism and fascism and sides with all those who are fighting for socialism, secularism, racial and sex equality. At the moment I am unable to provide the figure for the total membership of the organisation as this information has not been received from the branches. Only Leicester and Birmingham branches held their biennial conferences and elections in time. Other branches were late in holding these functions, consequently this Conference is being held now instead of in March of this



year. Although we have a fairly large membership, the branches have not been able to mobilise all the members for our work. We ought to discuss why we have not been so successful in mobilising people on a large scale for our activities. At the moment we have got 17 branches. The Executive Committee can mobilise the branch committees and the branch committees in turn can mobilise the membership. Some branches did mark May Day and these meetings were attended by a reasonable number of people. Branch committees ought to mobilise, and I suggest that:

- (1) Branch committee meetings must be held once every two months, as per our constitution;
- (2) Branch committees ought to have a plan of work and then implement it;
- (3) The branch committees should send their reports in writing to the Central Committee;
- (4) The branch committees and the central committee must give leadership in matters concerning problems faced by working people;
- (5) The leaders of the Central Committee ought to attend and take part in branch committee meetings from time to time;
- (6) Although we have many young and female members the composition of the branch committees does not reflect this. We ought to have more of our youth and women in the branch committees. Comrade Joginder Kaur Bains published an article in Lalkar concerning the founding of a women's organisation. Up to now the central committee has no information as to whether this article was discussed in branch committees.

#### Concerning the broad nature of our organisation

According to its aims and constitution ours is a broad organisation which every person of Indian origin, of the age of 16 or over, can join provided he or she abides by our constitution whatever his or her political views may be. But we have not been able to implement in practice this aspect of our organisation. We ought to get rid of this failing. This Conference ought to instruct the central committee to be elected to implement this perspective of our organisation.

#### Concerning the functioning of the branch committees and the central committee

Ours is an organisation in which all work is done by volunteers. However not every member takes part in the work of the organisation. The work of the central committee and of the branch committees is dependent on the work of a handful of our active functionaries. There are some members who attend our meetings once every two years, others attend the meetings but do no work in furtherance of our activities. Then there are those who do most of the work of the organisation. If this carries on this will lead to undemocratic tendencies harmful to our work. The Conference demands that the various functionaries and members fulfil their organisational duties.



The Indian Workers Association (GB) is not a political party. It is a working-class organisation fighting against racism, communalism and imperialism. We act as a pressure group through our activity.

### Concerning Britain

In this part of the Report I shall give a brief description of the struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie, as well as about the struggle against racism. During the 14 years of Conservative rule the bourgeoisie has strengthened its position. Unemployment stands at 3 million; poverty is on the increase; privatisation has ensured that huge industries, hitherto publicly owned, have passed into the hands of a handful of capitalists; redundancies are on the increase in local government, as well as in central government. The failure of the labour and trade-union movement to fight against anti-working class labour legislation put on the statute book by the Tory administration has weakened the working class in the 80s and the 90s. The impotence shown by the leadership of the Labour Party and the TUC during the historic miners strike of 84/85 has so weakened the working class as to make it fearful of using the strike weapon. The trade unions are now following a policy of carrying on the struggle within the limits of the law. This presents a stark contrast with the 70s when the trade-union movement defeated the Heath administration and its Industrial Relations Act. But the 80s and 90s have seen the undermining of working-class strength. Now the employers impose harsh conditions and low wages on the workers. Wages Councils are to be abolished. The entire burden of the capitalist crisis and recession is being passed on to the shoulders of the working class. A limit of 1.5% wage increases has been imposed, and there has been a massive increase in VAT.

In these difficult times, notwithstanding the capitulationist position adopted by the leadership of the Labour Party and the TUC, working-class struggles are nevertheless taking place. The Timex and Burnsall strikes are an eloquent testimony of the determined struggle that sections of the working class continue to wage.

Our Conference expresses its solidarity with, and support of, these struggles; it calls upon trade-union members to struggle for the rights of working people even if that involves going outside of the law.

### Concerning the struggle against racism

Racist and fascist organisations are using increasing unemployment, and increasing small business bankruptcies, for the purpose of dividing working people on the grounds of race. The recent speech by Tory MP, Winston Churchill, calling for even stricter immigration control, racist attacks, murders, arson,



police protection for the fascists, Europe-wide restrictions on immigrants - these are all examples of increasing racism, which are being used by the racists and fascists to demand the compulsory repatriation of workers of foreign origin (especially black) living in Europe.

Up to now, the labour and trade-union movement has not given any organised response to increasing racism and fascism. Only the anti-racist organisations have been conducting this fight. The Indian Workers Association (GB) is in the front ranks of such organisations.

The Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) claims to lead the struggle against racism but it follows the erroneous, divisive and downright reactionary policy according to which the anti-racist movement must be led by black people. We are of the view that the fight against racism is not the private concern of black workers and their organisations; it is on the contrary the common concern of the entire working class. This struggle must therefore be led by the working class as a whole.

Presently, instead of leading the fight against racism and fascism, the trade unions and other sections of the labour movement, confine themselves to affiliating themselves to various anti-racist organisations. They are hardly to be seen at the anti-racist demonstrations and their banners are absent on these occasions.

Although in the very near future it may not be possible, but there is a good chance of unity being established between different working-class organisations in the fight against racism and fascism. We in the IWA(GB) will intensify our efforts to achieve such unity. The Conference affirms its support for the policy of the central committee under which we opposed the ARA line of black leadership of the anti-racist struggle. Further the Conference resolutely condemns the anti-working class line of ARA - a line which can only help the racists and fascists.

In the coming two years, the IWA(GB) will attempt to carry out the following tasks:

- (1) Mobilise its branch committees in the struggle against racism and fascism by holding public meetings, demonstrations and leafletting in cooperation with other anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations;
- (2) The central committee will hold a big national anti-racist and anti-fascist conference for bringing together various anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations with the aim of facilitating this work;
- (3) Every effort will be made to give solid support to CARL (Campaign Against Racist Laws);
- (4) Through our members who belong to various trade unions we shall endeavour to get trade union branches to be more active in the struggle against racism and fascism.



## Concerning the situation in India

In accordance with its aims the IWA(GB) has always supported the progressive and democratic, revolutionary struggles of the Indian people, as well as struggles for civil rights and democratic liberties. We have always supported the struggle of the Indian people against authoritarianism, imperialism, communalism and casteism. We have been the unfailing supporters of the struggle of the Indian people for peoples democracy against semi-feudal and monopoly-capitalist exploitation.

Presently the Indian people are engaged in a two-pronged struggle. On the one hand, they are fighting against the increased cost of living, increasing unemployment and low wages. On the other hand, they are fighting against the increasingly pro-imperialist economic policy of the Indian Government, which is increasingly being dictated to by the IMF and the World Bank. In addition to all this the Indian ruling classes are using communalism, and using the dispute over the Mosque-Temple dispute at Ayodhya for dividing working people in order to perpetuate their tottering rule. The BJP is openly playing the communalist card. Everyone has become aware of its fascist character since the events of the 6th December 1992. There are other similar communalist parties, such as the Moslem League and the Akali Dal. We have no illusions about their programmes. The Congress Party, on the other hand, presents a more complicated picture. It claims to be secular but is actually in practice collaborating with the communalist parties. There is no need for us to go into its long history. In the recently held local body elections in West Bengal it collaborated with the BJP and thus exposed the real nature of its alleged secularism. Notwithstanding all these nefarious activities, people still have illusions about the secular nature of the Congress Party. The left and democratic forces in India are busy exposing the open communalism and fascism of the BJP and the not so open communalism of the Congress and its collaboration with the BJP. They are also busy fighting against the pro-imperialist and anti-people economic policies, dictated by the IMF and the World Bank, of the Congress Government. The Conference congratulates all those leaders and political parties who are fighting against communalism and casteism, and for the unity of the country. During the coming two years we will do our best to give further support to the struggles of the Indian people against communalism and fascism. We shall also intensify our efforts in this country against forces of communalism and fascism in order to preserve the unity of Indian workers of various religious origins.

## International Situation

Since February 1991 significant developments have taken place on an international scale. The Soviet Union has disintegrated and Yeltsin is sparing no effort in an effort to restore capitalism in the former Soviet Union. Capitalism is being restored in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe. People in these



countries are once again attempting to follow the revolutionary path. Although imperialism won its war against Iraq, the Iraqi people continued to show their defiance. The events in the former Yugoslavia are the direct result of imperialist interference and intervention. The past two years can be described as years of imperialist ascendancy. Notwithstanding all this, however, on a world scale people continue to struggle against imperialism. It is a hopeful sign that even after such major defeats as those outlined above, people are continuing to resist imperialism and its New World Order. In South Africa the apartheid fascist regime is on the verge of collapse and is sure to make way soon for a democratic regime. The Palestinian people continue to wage their struggle for national liberation with renewed vigour. People in northern Ireland continue to struggle against British occupation. In the backyard of US Imperialism, little Cuba is braving the US economic blockade with the help of people all over the world. International support for Cuba is instrumental in strengthening the determination of the Cuban people in their struggle against US Imperialism.

The IWA(GB) has continued to fulfil its internationalist duty and supported democratic, national liberation and proletarian movements all over the world. We supported the people of Iraq in their anti-imperialist war against the US-led coalition; we support the struggle of the people of northern Ireland against British imperialist occupation, and the struggle of the Irish people for a free and united Ireland; we support the struggle of the Cuban people and the north Korean people against interference by imperialism. We sent messages of condolences to the South African Communist Party and the ANC following the foul murder of Comrade Chris Hani by South African fascism. Unfortunately we were unable to hold a memorial meeting. Such mistakes should not occur in the future.

Conference affirms its support for the struggle of the Cuban, South African, Korean, Palestinian and Irish people against imperialism and sends its good wishes to them. Conference vows to continue its support for their struggles.

#### Concerning Lalkar - the organ of the IWA(GB)

In my report, already published in Lalkar, I mentioned the role played by Lalkar in our work. Lalkar has been publishing articles over the past two years in accordance with our aims and has been instrumental in increasing IWA(GB)'s influence in the working-class movement. In accordance with the November 1991 decision of the central committee funds have been collected for the publication of Lalkar. I leave it to Comrade Bajwa to give details concerning this item in his Treasurer's report.

The English section of Lalkar appears regularly, once every two months. The branch committees must make an effort to send a report of their activities for publication in Lalkar.



The Punjabi section of Lalkar has unfortunately not been appearing owing to the lack of machinery and facilities.

The Conference recommends that, in accordance with the decision of the previous central committee and the decision of the last Conference, every effort must be made to strengthen the work of the English section of Lalkar, and to bring out the Punjabi section.

Comrade delegates, I present this Report for your deliberations. I invite you to express your views on it, so that we may strengthen our organisation. I invite you to make suggestions for improving our work, as well as putting forward any amendments to this Report. After such discussion, on behalf of the central committee, I invite you to honour this Report with your stamp of approval.

Long Live Working-Class Unity !!  
Long Live the Indian Workers Association (Great Britain) !!

Presented by

Avtar Jouhl

On behalf of the Central Committee of the IWA(GB)  
to the Conference, Sunday 27th June, 1993,  
at Woolwich