

Bi-Annual Conference Report

Adopted by
Indian Workers' Association Delegates
On 11th September 2016



Indian Workers' Association (G.B)
Established in 1938



Report of the Indian Workers Association (G.B.)

23rd November 2013 – 11th September 2016

Introduction

The report to be presented by the National Secretary, Joginder Bains, on behalf of the Central Executive Committee at Biennial conference to be held in Derby on 11th September.

The Last Biennial Conference was held at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Welfare Centre, 88 Hasting Road, Leicester on 23rd November 2013. Since then, the IWA has been continuously and consistently in struggle on a number issue. Some of these were specific to the non-EU nationals while others are in response to direct attacks on working and most vulnerable people causing them living misery and economic hardship. In the name of reducing the national deficit and the slogan, "we are all in it together" the Coalition Government and the current Tory Government has forced their austerity programme on people who already are struggling to make the ends meet. Over a million people rely on food banks and thousands have died as a direct result of the reformed Department of Work and Pensions.

The Tory and Lib Dem Coalition Government had shamelessly taken a xenophobic and racist path transforming and strengthening institutional racism through immigration legislation. The nature of all past immigration legislation has been discriminatory, creating conditions for economic hardship, fear of deportation which resulted in denying people private family life.

The Tory Government continues to introduce pro-monopoly capital and anti-working class policies. Despite the deep recession that Britain struggles to come out of, the top 1000 wealthiest individuals have increased their wealth by 60% since the

economic crash of 2008. The Coalition and Tory Governments have been busy creating grounds for big business to increase their profits and declaring war on Trade Unions, the Public sector and the NHS. The Government aims to remove education out of local authority control and for them to be transformed into academies by 2020.

Clearly IWA and the British working class are faced with harsh challenges ahead. Our struggle is a common one; we must continue to work collectively for the interests of working people nationally and internationally. We are meeting at a time when the whole capitalist world is engulfed in an unprecedented crisis embracing the sphere of production, monetary and credit. Unlike the earlier crisis when there was only a decline in the rate of production that was soon overcome by some capital adjustment, this crisis we witness has hit the core of the capitalist system that ruling classes are struggling to come out of. Internal contradiction in the capitalist system have also become so sharp that it is finding itself incapable of resolving the problems of stagnation in growth of the local economy coupled with the global economic crisis. Instead of targeting the economic industry that caused the crisis at the first place, the British ruling classes have been playing a blame game by diverting public anger towards immigrants.

The British public is being crushed under the burden of the economic downturn. Devalued pensions, lack of job security, increasing housing crisis and unemployment are the contributory factors for increasing poverty, homelessness, and economic hardships. The Trade Unions being the only formal system to protect workers' interests are also under attack. This is a process started by Margaret Thatcher. We must not forget the internal contradictions in the ruling classes which the Tory and Labour Parties are split down the middle and beyond repair, while Liberal Democrats and UKIP have lost trust in people. However, we must not underestimate UKIP and its anti-immigrant and racist policies. **It's high time the working classes take advantage and exploit these contradictions in its favour.**

In the recent passed we have witnessed sharpening contradic-

tions at a global level between imperialist / ruling classes. A race to who to control the world's natural resources creates conditions of rising aggression against weaker nations. We have witnessed illegal wars on Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and now Syria. Millions of innocent civilians have lost their life and millions more have been displaced causing global refugee crisis. Counter aggression has given birth to terrorist forces that have increased their activities causing further loss of innocent life. Imperialist powers are increasingly finding themselves incapable of putting an end to terrorism.

Socio-economic/socio political situation in the UK

The economic downfall of October 2008 leads the Labour Government, under the leadership of Gordon Brown, to adopt draconian anti-working class policies that have been carried forward by the Coalition Government and the current Tory Government. In the name of reducing the deficit, British citizens, particularly those at the lower end of the spectrum, have been targeted and punished for the recession that they did not cause. On the other hand, both the Coalition and the current Tory Governments have been busy protecting and promoting the interests of the rich. The 1000 richest individuals and families have increased their wealth by £547 Billion since the recession, an increase of £18 Billion in the last two years.

Austerity Programme

The monstrous austerity programme has proven to be the biggest blow to all state services. It is beyond comprehension how fast privatisation is being introduced by open door policies for the profit making multi-national companies. The ruling Coalition Government and current Tory Government have reduced employment rights thus making it easier for employers to exploit human and economic resources. Direct employment has become a thing of the past and has been replaced by employment agencies that dictate working conditions for social and private sector employees. A huge amount of publically owned money is pocketed by these employment agencies and private industries; the public pot is quickly drying out. Consequently, all public services are struggling due to financial hardship. Some Services are

seriously in the red and in danger of closing down. This includes acute and community hospitals, many health clinics, homes for older people, day centres, libraries, refuges. We have recently witnessed the children's heart unit in Leicester under threat. The Care Act 2014 has placed the liability on clients to find own resources for care. Public sector employees are earning £5000 on average less in real terms resulting from a four year pay freeze and subsequent low pay increase.

Reformed policies in the welfare state has increased financial hardship, social misery and housing crisis for disabled people. Billions of pounds handed over to private companies like ATOS and now Capita to assess disabled people's ability to work. After the "Work Capacity Assessment" the majority of disability benefit claimants are taken off the Employment Support Allowance with 60% of them winning their appeals. A report in the Guardian on 27th August 2015 revealed that DWP statistics indicate that:

- Nearly 90 people die every month after declared fit for work
- According to the report, "2,380 people died between December 2011 and February 2014 within 14 days of being taken off Employment and Support Allowance
- "Between December 2011 and February 2014, 50,580 recipients of ESA had died.

The bedroom tax – reversed for disabled people after a long and hard campaign, has caused financial hardship and social displacement to the lower income tenants. 80% of those effected run out of money by the end of the week. Many are left with no choice but to cut down their food bill. The DWP's own report revealed that the bedroom tax is having a toll on children's sleep and ability to learn, – Independent 17th December 2015. Similarly, the Universal Credit has been made so complicated that causing additional hardship for low earning families. Reintroduction of child credit has given some relief to families who have to rely on this credit.

Due to the Austerity Programme, child poverty has reached an

unprecedented level and still increasing. Similarly, poverty in general is also increasing faster than ever before. Over a million people rely on food banks to supplement their shopping. Homelessness is also on the increase.

Pensioners have also been hit by the Austerity Programme. The adjustments and slashing of pension entitlement and reduced value of pension have pushed pensioners into poverty. They have to choose between heating or eating.

Funding for community and voluntary organisation have either been removed altogether or reduced to rock bottom. A major blow has been to Citizens Advice Bureau and refugees, leaving victims of domestic violence and those in financial difficulties with no one to turn to forcing them to suffer in silence.

Indian Workers' Association has been in constant struggle and have been campaigning, along with many other organisations such as People's Assembly, against the Austerity Programme. They have participated in direct action, protests, and demonstrations locally and nationally and have been active raising public awareness and have received a positive response from the public. IWA has been particularly active with the People's Assembly.

Unemployment

Government statistics show that the national unemployment figures in June 2016 were 4.9% in total. However, there is a gender and age difference, with unemployment among young people as high as 17.1% for men and 15.6% for women. These figures do not include people who are on zero hour and / or flexible contracts.

Employment rights, protection and job security

With the absence of direct employment most employees enter the job market via an employment agency giving them no guarantee of work or job security. Although employment law applies equally to the agency workers after three months of continuous employment, employers often adapt ways and means to deny

them these rights. These employees, usually being an unorganised workforce, are forced to work in appalling inhumane working conditions with limited employment rights, protection and reduced health and safety. We have witnessed such practices recently in the Sports Direct Warehouse. No doubt other industry practices are not much different, only these may not be publically known.

To avoid offering equal employment rights, many companies enforce self-employment. This is a common practice particularly among the young. These uncertainties prevent people to enter into the housing market or take any other necessary loans.

Youth – Please read it as male and female

Youth in Britain are hard done by, by the current administration. Standards of education have become significantly lower, with school budgets being slashed. The move towards academies has opened doors to a profit generating system that has turned the right to education into a commodity. **Increased tuition fees** add a burden of a loan even before young people start life.

Unemployment among young people is more than threefold higher than the national average. Please refer to the above figures. The cuts in Jobs Seeker's Allowance have created financial hardship for the young generation never witnessed before. Unemployed and disabled youth are more likely to be victims of benefit sections compared with any other group.

Those in work are paid a lower **MINIMUM WAGE** than the national minimum wage:

25 and over	21-24	18-20	Under 18	Apprentice
£7.20	£6.70	£5.30	£3.87	£3.30

A majority of young people are on zero hour contracts or are agency workers with no job security or employment rights although an agency worker has the same employment rights enjoyed by permanent employees provided they complete a three-month probation. However, they are hired and fired at an

employers' will, usually before the initial three months are over, only to be rehired weeks later.

Consequently, young people living in Britain are unable to lead an independent life. They are left with no choice but to continue living with their parents longer than was the norm some 15 years ago. They are unable to save for a deposit for renting or for purchasing a property. They are forced to delay getting married and/or start a family. In addition to the above, young people have become easy prey for the illegal industry such as drugs, pushing them into unsocial and criminal activities. Violence and sexual abuse is on the increase. Prison population is overflowing with young inmates compared to other groups.

Psychological problems are on the increase among young people who suffer from conditions ranging from mild depression to Schizophrenia.

Young disabled people are equally, if not worse, affected by Government policies deployed in addition to the national austerity programme.

Due to racist and discriminatory legal and social policies, black youth have a rough deal in every field of life including the justice system. Disability benefits have been slashed and with the removal of the Independent Living Fund has forced young disabled people to rely on their families and friends for care as well as for financial support.

Indian Workers' Association have done little work in this area. Why would youth be attracted to us if we do not pay attention to their specific needs and recognise their struggles? As well as new generation Indian Immigrants we have to work with all youth.

Women socio-economic status

Despite the Equal Pay for Equal Value of Work Act passed in 1970, the gender pay gap is still significant. Figures in 2015 show the current pay gap is 13.9% in full time employment. 54,000 women are forced to leave their job early every year be-

cause of poor treatment after child birth. Unfair treatment of women related to maternity is still very common.

Women are dominated in low paid traditional employment with fewer opportunities for training and promotion. Women are missing in the higher level of the pyramid. They are predominately concentrated at the lower level of the spectrum. They are more likely to be in zero hour contracts and earn 4% less than the national minimum wage.

Women are more likely to shoulder the care of children, the sick, the disabled and the elderly and as result have no choice but to work part time.

Women are victims of sexual abuse at work; even teasing at work and in society at large is very common. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men are victims of domestic violence that leads to 2 women lose their life every week while 30 men die each year. Domestic Violence being 16% of total violent crime should worry us all. Approximately 85,000 women and 12,000 men are registered as victims of rape crime every year in England and Wales alone.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of external female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM has been categorised into four types, ranging from a symbolic prick to the clitoris or prepuce, to the fairly extensive removal and narrowing of the vaginal opening. Despite the anti FGM Act 2005, 5,700 cases of all these forms of FGM have been found in the UK in 2015 / 2016. Parents take their young girls back to the country of origin to carry out the centuries old practice. As a result of this practice, death rate increases between 15% and 55% depending on the type of FGM.

The Independent's (the daily newspaper) own study – 15.01.2014 revealed that in some ethnic groups, sex selective abortions are common in UK. Data analysis of 2011 census by the Independent has shown a wider gap in gender ratio in some ethnic minority groups. However, Government's own investigation in 2013 found no evidence to such practice.

Women in many ethnic minority communities are denied the right to inherit as part of the practice in their country of origin. This is violation of right to identity and human rights. The right to inherit not only gives financial security it empowers women to lead an independent life.

Honour killing: 11,744 cases of honour based violence were recorded by police between 2010-14. 12 women are recorded to be victims of honour killing each year.

Forced marriages: In 2015, and up to March 2016, the Forced Marriage Unit has given advice and support to 1220 cases related to possible forced marriage. True figures are not available. 80% of these cases were females and other 20% were males.

Both of these practices are violation of basic human rights, practice of patriarchy and balance of power.

Modern Slavery: It is estimated that more than 13,000 people are victims of modern day slaves living in Britain. More than 3000 including 1000 children were referred to British authority as potential victims of slavery in 2015, 40% increase from the previous year. The purpose of the trafficking is forced labour in industries such as agricultural, construction, hospitality, domestic work and a vast majority of women and girls entered into industry of sexual exploitation.

The above figures do not provide a full picture of women's socio-economic status. Not every rape and violence case comes to the attention of the authority. It is clear from the available data that women face many additional discrimination and disadvantages to the ones experienced by both men and women. If we are serious about female liberation and want women to join us in the struggle, we cannot afford to turn our backs on difficulties specific to females and have to include them in the wider class struggle. We have to be self-critical and educate ourselves before we educate others. Comrades, women's experience at work and racism is different to that of their male counterparts.

There has not been any progress on the women's front other than two new recruits in Derby. This is our biggest weakness. We will have to systemically and thoroughly discuss the reasons for our sisters not being attracted to our movement and find solutions.

Immigration and discriminatory laws and regulations

The Government figures indicate that immigration figures have soared to the highest level ever experienced in Britain. Numbers of people entering the UK are considerably higher than those emigrating. Statistics show that in the 12 month till March 2015, 330,000 new immigrants including the ones from non-EU countries have entered Britain. The rising figures have unprecedentedly disturbed the establishment and heightened public debate aired by the national media. Far right groups such as UKIP, Britain First and EDL have exploited public outcry by increasing their anti-immigrant activities. Britain First and EDL have used historical sentiments to widen the divide between some minority communities especially between Sikhs and Muslims. Some misguided Sikh youth are failing to understand the monstrous plan of these racist thugs.

Instead of directing its anger at the establishment British public have focused their disappointments at immigrants. They believe that immigrants are the source of their socio-economic disadvantages and for all the ills that are actually created by the capitalist system. Immigrants are believed to be enemy number 1. UKIP, have not only have been taking advantage of public anger, it has played a huge role in diverting public attention away from the real enemy. It has successfully divided and poisoned the mind set in our society.

Though the immigration card has always been played by all political parties, such an unprecedented hue and cry and poisonous atmosphere has not been witnessed since the Birmingham election of 1964. Responding to public opinion leaning towards UKIP's argument, David Cameron promised reduction in immigration to 100,000 per year. In order to calm public anger aris-

ing from free movement of labour, David Cameron also promised the EU Referendum.

The Tory Government escalated its attack upon non- EU immigrants by adapting several anti-immigration social policies. Despite the opposition from all sides, the Coalition Government passed Immigration laws taking away people's fundamental right to privacy and family life and violating the Human Rights Convention. New sanctions have been placed on illegal immigrants and rogue employers preventing illegal immigrants from accessing housing, a driving licence and bank accounts. Liabilities to check immigrants' legal status have been placed upon employers, landlords, the DVLA and banks.

The right to appeal has been removed. Unjust income threshold dividing families and five years' income rule of £35,000 has been introduced due to which many families have been deported. IELTS test for nurses has been made harder, forcing many to work in care assistance. Students have been unjustly removed from Britain without receiving evidence of their alleged crime. Fees for Home Office Services have been increased, placing extra burden on lower income families. And let's not forget the regulations introduced by the previous Labour Government especially the Probationary Period Rule forcing many new immigrant spouses to live in horrendous and inhumane conditions.

IWA has successfully built a public movement against Immigration Legislation:

- we wrote to every MP and 200 Peers requesting them to oppose the bill and participated in the HOC
- lobby by JCWI
- Income Threshold - 12000 signed petition and Lobbied HOC
- IELTS test for nurses – 4000 signatures and two lobbies to HOC
- Unjust treatment of students and increased fee for Home Office Services – lobbied HOC
- Visa Bond - petition and Lobbied HOC

We have been successful in having Visa Bond removed, Students

case has been won, IELTS test has been relaxed, waiting for the outcome of Supreme Court Hearing re Income Threshold.

Struggle has to continue

The Tory Administration's attacks do not end with non-EU immigrants; EU immigrants are equally suffering from draconian rules such as removal of welfare benefits, child benefit, and child tax credit, forced upon lower income immigrant families and they are forced to work in appalling working conditions and live in poor housing.

The struggle is common.

EEC, EU and EU Referendum

Please read about formation of EEC. From a left's perspective the EEC was formed by the Treaty of Rome in 1957 in response to the development of the Soviet Union and Socialist Camp worldwide. As such was the formation of NATO. Britain signed the Treaty of Rome in 1973 and two years later in 1975 the Labour Government gave British people the opportunity to decide whether to stay in the EEC or to come out. Indian Workers Association took an active part in the Leave Campaign with other left leaning organisations. 33% of the 65% turnout opposed the EEC membership. The Labour Party and Trade Unions, same as at the recent Referendum, were divided while the left forced campaign highlighted EEC being pro-capitalist and neo-liberalist.

The European Economic Community increased its membership reaching 28 before this year's EU referendum in the UK and transformed it into the European Union in 1993 and Euro being the common currency. The UK stuck to its guns against adopting the Euro and refused to sign the Social Chapter until 1997. Some people, even those with left views, strongly believe that the Social Chapter radicalised employment rights in the UK. They felt let down by the Lexit campaign. They appeared to have failed to acknowledge the centuries old struggle by working people all over Europe to achieve their rights. EU administration have formalised them in one document applicable to all mem-

ber states but placed no obligations upon them to implement the Social Chapter, leaving it to their discretion. Indian Workers Association believes that the EU became an institution to promote monopoly capital corporations for super exploitation. The single market has been destroying the economies of developing countries including those in Africa and Asia. The free movement of labour worked to serve the interests of monopoly capital and has proven to be anti-working people. We have recently witnessed the attacks on the labour movement through anti-union laws and the EU has done nothing to intervene.

The EU has become an undemocratic super state where the elected representatives were left with no power to introduce or pass laws other than raise hands. Even if they did raise their concerns, the chance to be heard is minute with representatives of the other 27 countries who may take a different stance in favour of their nation. The unelected EU commission has been given far too many powers that are used against the interests of the general population and in favour of the big corporations.

Austerity programmes are not independently/ democratically decided plans of action; they have been imposed by the EU upon each and almost every member countries. The UK public has been experiencing the consequences since 2010.

Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal have been hit the hardest with increasing poverty, unemployment, housing crisis, reduction in public services and expanding of the private sector.

Indian Workers' Association joined the Lexit campaign and actively propagated against the EU membership and took its message to the public as far as it possibly could with limited resources.

Indian Workers Association recognised the immigration card played by all main political parties to create anti-immigrant views. The far right populous party UKIP had been successful in dividing communities and created a toxic atmosphere among the general public. No doubt that both campaigns, Remain and Brexit alike, had been using scare mongering tactics. Some tried

to divert public opinion towards increasing the numbers of immigrants entering or were likely to enter while the others tried to create fear from predictive economic down turn should Brexit win.

The British public rejected the fear mongering, blackmails, threats and pressures. They voted to come out of the EU leaving a huge crack in the capitalist establishment. It has created unprecedented turmoil in the British, and EU, political systems. Both the Remain and Brexit camps were not prepared for the public verdict. The referendum and its outcome have split all political parties down the middle that it may never recover from. David Cameron resigned immediately, Nigel Farage a few days post referendum, while Labour Party's internal bickering was fought in the public arena; placing the blame entirely upon Jeremy Corbyn.

Other divisions such as the SNP threatening another referendum, Northern Ireland discussing the agenda for a united Ireland and the north south divide has shaken up the unity of United Kingdom.

We also have witnessed that the country had spoken loud and clear about their socio-economic status, about South and North division that has long been ignored by the UK establishment. The disadvantaged people felt the referendum has given them a voice they never had before.

The struggle is not over. Both the UK Government and the EU establishment are busy trying to negotiating a programme to best serve the interests of monopoly capital. We will have to be vigilant and work to defeat the ruling classes' tricks and ensure the Brexit negotiations favour the interests of working classes.

Indian workers however take responsibility for not debating the referendum openly and adequately. Our members have rightfully raised questions about the effects of Brexit, questions about the racist nature of the Brexit campaign and how we could have argued our case better. These are genuine questions and in future we must have an in depth debate ourselves before taking it

out to the public. It is not too late to have a debate soon after this conference because brexit negotiations will take years to complete.

TTIP – Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership; CETA – Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement.

We have heard less of CETA than TTIP. Why, because unlike TTIP CETA negotiation has been done in total secrecy with no debate by MPs and MEPs. No one even saw the negotiation papers until it was too late. The secret negotiation started in 2009 and completed in 2015. It represents big business, undermines our democracy and destroys basic rights. Same as TTIP it includes Investors State Disputes Settlements (ISDS). Even though British public has given its verdict, European Commission will try to push the deal though ahead of British Exit. Once it is in place some of CETA's worst elements will apply to us even after the exit.

We have debated TTIP so much that we all are well aware of its effects and implications. Although the TTIP's trade negotiation is not completed, the danger is that the Commission once again will try to complete it and push it through before the process of Exit is completed. This may be the reason why goalposts are being moved from two years to longer, may stretch it to 2020.

Both, especially TTIP, of these negotiations have raised public outcry and under public pressure the NHS has been exempted.

Indian Workers association has written in the papers, written to MPs and MEPs, produced written material opposing TTIP and worked to raise public awareness through workshops and talks in public meetings.

Rise of the Far Right – A global picture

While British National Party has been inactive for some time, small groups such as English Defence League and Britain First have increased their activities. However, BNP's replacement,

UKIP, has been proven to be a populist party in Britain and with its divisive scare mongering anti- immigration policies has successfully been poisoning the mind-set of the British public. There has been a notable rise and increase in racist attacks, particularly against immigrants from EU countries after the public mandate on 23rd June.

A similar picture is emerging in the whole of Europe. The most recent election results show a dangerous trend leaning towards national parties with vote share of between 4.7% in Germany and 35% in Austria.

Despite the McPherson report following the cold blooded murder of Stephen Laurence by some racist thugs, institutional racism is still common practice in all state run institutions. Black and African Caribbean people are eight times and Asians are six times more likely to be stopped and searched compared to their white counterparts. Similarly, black people are discriminated in the job market and in work.

We need to be vigilant of the media contributions in moulding public views and creating divisions. We often hear of settled migrant communities making derogatory remarks about the newly arrived migrants similar to the ones made by the far right populists. **Comrades, we must not shy away from challenging racism, discrimination and racially motivated actions wherever they may occur.**

A similar picture is emerging in India since the Modi lead BJP Government came into power. Intolerance has become such a phenomenon that some communities are living in fear of their lives and livelihood. In the name of Gao Raksha, Muslims and people from lower casts have become main targets by the Hindutva forces such as RSS, Sangh Privar and so on. These forces have become above law and order of the country. They do not hesitate to kill rape or publically beat people to near death and seriously injure them. BJP, instead of taking any actions against the culprits, is seen to be defending them. Never before has India witnessed such aggression against one religion and disadvantaged communities. High classes / casts think it is their birth

right to take out their aggression against Muslims and those from lower casts. The irony is when the general public quietly watches such activities taking place and do nothing to intervene. Worst still, when those who have a duty to maintain law and order stand by as spectators. All this works to raise confidence of the perpetrators and criminal forces.

Comrades, we have a duty to ensure such activities are not tolerated and we must actively protest against the BJP Government in support of Indian Brothers and sisters fighting these forces. Moreover, it is our duty to fight in every way possible for social justice and to defeat such anti people forces.

Caste Based discrimination

Cast based exploitation and discrimination is a centuries old system that has been embedded in our society. Though it has been weakened in some areas but still very strong are many others. People from lower casts are classed as inferior and unworthy of equal human and economic rights. They are forced to do menial jobs including carrying human excrement. (Please refer to IWA documents on Dalits (Attached). They are victims of modern day slavery. We have witnessed an increased attacks and sub-human treatment of people from lower castes since the BJP Government came to power. Evidence shows that cast based discriminatory practice is rife in Britain too, especially among Asian communities. Referring people by their caste is common. Employees are often recruited at lower rank not matching their education, experience, and skills. They are denied promotion because of their caste. Bullying by pupils is also practiced in schools. After a long struggle, the British Government has agreed to include a clause in the Equality Law 2010 to cover caste based discrimination. However, the Government has been digging its heels not to implement it in practice.

We note a number of weaknesses in the clause and feel it may bring negative implications particularly to our younger generation; we need to have a proper and thorough debate with other activists before we lobby the Government. Some activists seem satisfied for the clause to be a tool for deterrent. Principally,

Indian Workers Association supports the movement to root out caste based discrimination wherever it exists.

Islamophobia

Indian Workers Association strongly condemns the rise of terrorist attacks in Britain and other western countries. Jihadis' do not discriminate against who gets hurt, whether they are old, disabled, women or children is not their concern. Almost all the dead and injured are members of the civilian population. Their primary aim is to spread terror among the general public in the only way they believe to counter war mongering Governments in the west. They fail to understand that their activities breed Islamophobia making the lives of Muslims in Britain and other western countries a misery beyond imagination. No doubt many are radicalised in the country they are borne in.

Not only are Muslims targeted by far right groups and contemporary Government's response has also been fuelling anti-Muslim activities. Community's secretary, Eric Pickles wrote a letter to 1000 Muslim leaders in January 2015 asking them to guarantee Muslim loyalty to Britain. David Cameron gave his full support to this. Furthermore, British Muslims are asked to integrate fully by adapting to the British way of life, giving instructions to school teachers to police children as young as three and pick out radicalism. Funding is handed out to ensure Muslim women are taught English so they can help combat radicalisation. The Tory Government even threatened Muslim women with deportation should they opt out of learning English. This is an insult to thousands of Muslim women who are highly educated. Moreover, such moves divide and create resentment among other communities also struggling for funds to continue their services.

The contemporary Government turns a blind eye to its own foreign and war mongering policies that result in a rise of radicalisation, terrorism and racism.

Statistics collected by Tell MAMA indicated that anti-Muslim hate incidents have increased by 326% in 2015. We also noted that there has been an increase in hate incidents against Polish and other minority communities.

Religious Intolerance and Rise of Fundamentalism in UK

We are witnessing a rise of religious intolerance in our communities. We see some people joining far-right parties and organisations only because they are anti-Muslim or vice-versa. Some Sikh organisations are openly opposing inter-faith marriages and have attacked people and temples where these marriages are taking place. The Hindu fundamentalists are active in building support for Hindutva agenda in India.

IWA has been active in opposing all forms of religious fundamentalist forces which try to divide communities on religious basis.

Wars and the UK Involvement

The primary aim of the imperialist war has been to control natural resources: Oil and in case of Afghanistan the aim was to have a military base making it easier to keep a close eye on developments in Asia particularly China. A puppet Government in Afghanistan will continue to serve the interests of imperialist western powers. Hundreds of thousands of civilians including the old, women and children have lost limbs and life while hundreds of thousands more have been displaced. Yet the imperialist powers have failed to wipe out the Taliban and other terrorist groups only to create more radical groups and increased terror in the world proving it impossible to combat.

Despite the majority of British public standing at the opposite side of the war mongering Blaire and Bush regimes, they were determined to attack Iraq. The British public was presented with a dodgy dossier and intelligence by Blaire claiming that Sadam had WMD's and had capability to attack Britain in 45 minutes. However, the British public rejected the evidence presented and continued its protest with two million people from all over the country blocking the streets of London. Determined Blaire already promised Bush his full support. He, therefore, chose to disregard public opinion and went ahead to attack Iraq. Lord Chilcot's report (please read the summery) has proved that the British public were lied to. However, Blaire is still insisting that

he did not lie and the world is a better place without Saddam. Over a million civilians have lost their life, an equal number of people have been injured and millions more have been displaced. Terrorist groups have escalated their activities all over the world. Iraq's economy has declined and poverty is on the increase. In fact, the entire infrastructure is totally ruined with no plans now to rebuild it.

Blaire is being condemned all over the world. Since the Chilcot Report, families who lost their loved ones are angry and are planning to file a case against Blaire in court. There are calls from all sides for Blaire to be tried as a war criminal. People have rejected his crocodile tears and continue to protest for justice.

Same has happened in Libya. Western powers proudly claim the removal of colonel Gadhafi and replaced him with a democratically elected Government. Instead, a picture is emerging similar to Iraq.

Then Syria and Ukraine: both countries are in ruins. Had Russia not intervened President Bashar-al Assad would have been long removed. We witnessed huge numbers of lives lost, people dying of hunger, no medical facilities or sanitation and basic need not met.

Wars in the Middle East and Africa have caused a huge refugee crisis. Because of horrendous living conditions in their own countries, people are taking risks to escape. And yet the west is keeping its borders closed. Even Germany has withdrawn the offer to take refugees. Instead, negotiations are underway to send them back.

Imperialist powers will have to be defeated. Indian Workers Association has a proud history of raising opposition to Imperialism. We have taken an active part in the Stop the War Coalition and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. We must remain active in action and take even more initiatives to campaign. Imperialist powers are in chaos, unable to find solutions to economic problems, terrorism and the refugee crisis. It is high time that we take advantage of this turmoil in our favour. We must

continue to take an active role in anti-war and anti-arms campaigns. We must support families campaigning to take Blaire to the court of justice. We must join the campaign for Blaire to be tried for war crimes. We must ensure world peace and social justice.

The brutal and merciless terrorist groups such as ISIS, and the Taliban that has caused loss of civilian life, injured and maimed people, are creating terror at a world level must also be defeated. This is only possible through the installation of world peace, equalities and social justice.

Cuba

The world's largest imperialist power, United State of America, accepted defeat from the Cuban people by announcing it has failed in its aim to isolate Cuba. After 18 months of secret talks President Obama agreed to open up diplomatic relations with Cuba, exchange its spies and close Guantanamo Bay. However, President Obama has not agreed to end the trade embargo. This does did not happen as a matter of fact but is the result of world-wide campaign. IWA branches have been active in supporting Cuba Solidarity Campaign in its activities raising fund, organising support meetings and participating in demonstrations. Our Leicester branch has been instrumental in raising more than £3,500 in the last three years.

We are confident that the Cuban people and their leadership will ensure that American Imperialists do not succeed in achieving their aim to harm the Cuban socialist system. Danger of such activities cannot be ignored. We, the friends of Cuba will have to continue to support the Cuban people and be vigilant to ensure America does not succeed in using different methods to undermine the Cuban Socialist System.

After a long struggle, the Miami Five were released last year and visited Britain last month. Indian Workers' Association has missed an opportunity to have a meeting with them. Some comrades from London participated in a meeting. Leicester Branch had a fund raising event in support of the Miami Five's visit to UK and collected £500.

Kashmir and Fund Collected for Floods in Kashmir

Kashmir Valley was engulfed with a natural disaster resulting in hundreds of deaths and millions displaced. Kashmir floated on water for months. Indian Workers Association took the initiative to raise funds for Kashmir. Every member contributed at least £100 for this cause and Derby alone raised more than £10,000 that was added to the relief fund. This contribution to this fund was from Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities – a humanitarian response to a natural disaster.

We have grave concern for the deteriorating political situation in Kashmir. A massive eruption of unrest is the result of the failure of successive governments at the centre and Jammu & Kashmir state governments... It is an expression of alienation and anger against the oppressive policies. While the activities of the extremist groups need to be checked to maintain law and order and civilian rule, it cannot be an excuse for excessive use of force against stone-throwing protesters. IWA feels that it is important that the authorities at the centre and state level start dialogue with all political forces and groups to end this growing strife in the state and restore peace and normalcy.

Palestine

With the blessings of the world's largest super power, the United State of America, and the UK and other EU Governments, Israel is continuing its aggression against Palestinians. Indian Workers' Association has always supported the Palestinian struggle and will continue to do so. We condemn the illegal settlement in the Gaza Strip and all the other illegal activities by the Israeli military. IWA has been affiliated to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, organised meetings and fundraising activities. Our Leicester branch organised a joint public meeting with Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and raised £1,400. We should have done much more for this cause.

Cultural Front

Indian Workers' Association recognise the contributions by the cultural and social activities to raise public awareness about is-

sues related to working classes and to expose the ruling classes' anti-people activities that we have witnessed in the recent years. Writers, painters, drama, singers, poets, dancers and musician, they all can play a positive role in building a movement for equality, peace and social justice. Indian Workers' Association has always encouraged and promoted people with artistic skills. However, we have been inactive in this area of our work that had its draw backs to out movement.

It is encouraging that we have taken a positive move in re-activating Progressive Writers Association, and actively organising Chetna and Progressive Malayali Society. Through their activities the three organisations have taken and promoted our work and activities to Indian Masses living in Britain. It has been proven to educational for Indian Workers as well. We now know that there are Indian Art Academies in many cities of the UK.

Indian Workers' Association will continue to strengthen the cultural front for furthering our movement.

Situation in India

- The present BJP government has pursued the neo-liberal trajectory of economic reforms, more aggressively than pursued by the UPA government under Dr Manmohan Singh, imposing unprecedented
- burdens on the vast majority of our people;
- The relentless pursuit of aggressive communal polarisation in the effort to transform the secular
- democratic character of the Indian Republic into the RSS version of a rabidly intolerant fascistic 'Hindu Rashtra'.
- Increasing recourse to authoritarian measures undermining the institutions of parliamentary democracy and running roughshod over democratic rights and civil liberties.

Relentless Economic Onslaught on the People

The highlight of PM Modi's aggressive implementation of the neo-liberal economic reforms has been the provision of greater access to foreign capital to maximise their profits at the expense of India's domestic economy.

Economic revival was the biggest commitment made by the BJP during its campaign. Many, who were not comfortable with the party's regressive social and political agenda, latched on to that promise. Two years down the line, we have an economy which is declining on all fronts.

With the industry in decline, there are no jobs for the 14 million Indians who enter the market every year. Declining exports, subdued manufacturing and poor investment demand portend further worrying times for the banking sector. Used by various governments to prop their favoured crony capitalists, India's banking sector is already in a deep mess. The bad loans of banks are estimated to be around Rs 13 lakh crore (USD 195 billion). This amount of bad loans owed to our banks, which is going to increase next year, is bigger than the GDP of 112 countries. Not only that, the amount of bad loans now actually exceeds the market value of the banks. **The big defaulters are ten top crony capitalists of India: Adani Group – 7 Lakh crore rupees, ESS Air Group- 10100 crore rupees, GMR- 4796 crore rupees, GVK Group- 33933 crore rupees, JP Group -75163 crore rupees, JSDW Group- 58171 crore rupees, Laco Group – 47107 crore rupees, Reliance Group – 12500 crore rupees, Vedanta Group – 10300 crore rupees, VDOCON – 45405 crore rupees.**

Who owes these loans? The government is not willing to make this data public, let alone take any punitive action against these fat cats. But the same people have no qualms auctioning a poor farmer's utensils for defaulting on a loan of Rs 5,000. It is worthwhile to remember that these loans to crony capitalists have been extended by public sector banks which have been capitalised by taxpayers' money.

Government statistics, which underplay the real numbers, show that 2,997 farmers committed suicide last year and 116 farmers, have already taken their lives in the first three months of this year. Their numbers have only risen since, but the prime minister does nothing except mouth homilies during his various monologues.

Thus, these two years have seen a sharp increase in the economic

burdens imposed on the vast majority of our people. It is only through widespread powerful popular people's struggles, can this all-round offensive be met. Therefore, as we move into the third year of this government, the tasks before the Indian people are clear – mount the resistance to defend the people's right to a decent livelihood and in defence of the fundamental rights enshrined in our constitution. This resistance must be in the coming years to reverse this disastrous course and defeat all efforts to negate our secular democratic foundations. IWA stands shoulder to shoulder with Indian masses in their struggles.

Aggressively Sharpening Communal Polarisation

No sooner than Narendra Modi assumed office of the prime minister began the litany of hate speeches being delivered by union cabinet ministers and BJP MPs.

This unambiguous signal of official patronage and encouragement for the spread of communal poison continues to be fully utilised by all the RSS tentacles across the country. The Day light murders of Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare and Dr Kalburgi saw the unprecedented protest action by the country's intellectuals, literatures, scientists, historians and others, many of whom returned the awards that they had received in protest. Various communal campaigns starting from *love jihad*, *ghar va-pasi*, against beef eating, prescribing dress codes and the moral policing – all contributed to generate an atmosphere of hatred against religious minorities particularly Muslims. The lynching of Atlaq over allegations of beef eating or the public hanging of two youth in Latehar, Jharkhand on unfounded allegations of promoting cow slaughter etc. have only vitiated the atmosphere even further.

Simultaneously began the systematic effort to communalise the entire education system and academic research in the country. RSS *pracharaks* continue to be appointed in key positions in these institutions. Efforts for rewriting the syllabus and curricula to be taught in schools and colleges continue relentlessly. The brazen attack on premier educational institutions like JNU, the film institute, IITs and other important education centres is part

of the drive to attack secular progressive values and intimidate the students and teaching community into becoming servile conformists of the Hindutva ideology.

In its effort to transform the Indian Republic into the RSS version of a 'Hindu Rashtra', Modi government is attempting to masquerade Hindu mythology as Indian history and Hindu theology as Indian philosophy.

The latest instance of misusing the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to absolve the leading lights of the Hindutva terror organisations, brazenly negating the impeccable evidence collected against them in the Malegaon terror attacks is a clear case of official patronage and protection being provided to the Hindutva terror outfits.

The Modi government is compromising India's struggle to root out terrorism from our country. It is universally accepted that terrorism in India knows no religion, caste, or region. Instead of treating all terror attacks as being unacceptable and not to be tolerated, this Modi government is patronising Hindutva terror.

Growing Authoritarianism

During the course of these two years, this Modi government has embarked upon a systematic course to undermine the institutions of parliamentary democracy to advance its partisan objectives.

The Modi government's authoritarian face was nakedly exposed in the manner in which it is grossly misusing Article 356 to dismiss legitimately elected governments of the opposition parties. Its effort in Uttarakhand has now been reversed with the Supreme Court intervention. The apex court had passed a severe indictment about the brazen manner in which Article 356 is sought to be misused.

Attacks on people's democratic rights, freedom of expression, right to life and liberty are escalating across the country.

Fanciful Slogans and Tall Claims

On various counts, the claims associated with the propaganda blitz undertaken by the Modi government continue to be exposed. It had promised a corruption free government. This claim was punctured by various scams that have occurred in BJP-ruled states like the Vyapam scam in Madhya Pradesh etc. One session of the parliament was rocked by the sensational revelations of protection and patronage provided to the former IPL chief, Lalit Modi (a fugitive from Indian law), by the external affairs minister and the Rajasthan BJP chief minister. The course of 'crony capitalism' that the Modi government is pursuing is bound to generate greater corruption

Foreign Policy

During the course of these two years, India's time-tested independent foreign policy has been severely undermined. In a singular obsession to promote Prime Minister Modi's personal image abroad, this government has systematically shifted India's foreign policy to dovetail the global geostrategic priorities of US imperialism. The series of bilateral agreements undertaken with the USA, including defence and logistics support agreements, have exposed India's vulnerability to the penetration of imperialist agencies and armed forces into our domestic facilities. They have only provided USA and other Western powers avenues to maximise their profits through the sale of defence equipment to India. In global perception, this Modi government has reduced India in foreign policy diplomatic discourse to a hyphenated existence with Pakistan, i.e., the standard usage 'Indo-Pak'.

However, there is shining light of hope. Despite the negative propaganda people of Kerala have put Left forces into power with land slide majority vote. Similarly Left has gained power in Tripura also with vast majority.

Work that has been undertaken by Indian Workers Association

Despite making requests, I have not received branch reports to date.

However, following are the work we have been involved in since the last conference.

1. Campaign against systemic discriminatory practice against non-EU nurses. We collected 4000 signatures that were delivered to 10 Downing Street and conducted two lobbies one on 17th November 2015 and another on 20th January 2016. Lobby was attended by 13 MPs, representative from Unison and Royal College of Nurses and 70 members of IWA. Raised issue with Unison and TUC.
2. Campaign against Immigration Law 2014. Indian Workers' Association took the issue to the public through workshops and public meetings, distribution of information. *We wrote to all MPS and 200 Peers asking them to oppose the proposed Bill.*

We participated in the lobby organised by JCWI at House of Commons.

3. Campaign against the Income Threshold for sponsors of non EU nationals: Indian Workers' Association collected 12000 signatures that were delivered to 10 Downing Street on 12th February and lobbied House of Commons. Lobby was attended by 6 MPs including Keith Vaz and was attended by Unison and 40 IWA members. **A memorandum was presented to Theresa May – Then Home Secretary.**
4. Non-EU students have been hard done by the Administration. They were wrongly accused of fraudulent in English Test and had been subject to public arrest and deportation without a right to appeal. IWA took this issue

with Keith Vaz who promised to support student to get justice. With our support students have won their case. Credit goes to all of us.

However the home office has appealed against the judgement and case hearing is from 26th October 2016 for three days. The lobby of HOC has been arrange with the support of IWA on 18th October.

5. Fee for Home Office Services: An increase of 25% was introduced that has been imposed from April 2016, another indirect tax upon lower earning income. We lobbied the House of Commons and written to Theresa May – then Home Secretary. She wrote back refusing to back track even to make a reduction.
6. Anti-Austerity campaign: Indian Workers' have been actively involved in People's Assembly and organisation opposes Government Austerity Programme. We have been working to raise public awareness, participated local and national protest marches.
7. Indian Workers' Association together with other organisations highlighted the sexual violence against women in Indian particular to the rape victim on 16th December 2012.

Indian Workers' Association Southall Branch organised a public meeting to commemorate issues related to women in Britain and international giving specific emphasis to the documentary "Daughter of India," where Lesley Udwin –the producer of the documentary was invited.

8. TTIP/ CETA: Raised people's awareness produced and distributed written material explaining what TTIP is and how it will affect us in Britain and EU. We have written in the press and written to Vince Cable- then Business Secretary and all the UK MPs requesting them to oppose TTIP. We have not done as much work as we did on TTIP.

9. Anti-Racist activities: Indian Workers' have a proud history to challenge racism and fascism. We have been actively involved in exposing far right populous organisations including UKIP. We have participated in the Anti-racist National Demonstrations.
10. Cast-Based discrimination: Principally Indian Workers' Association opposes to cast based discrimination in Britain. However, we need to have a discussion on the anti-discriminatory clause Government has agreed to include in the 2010 Equalities Law.
11. Anti-war Activities: Indian Workers' Association have jointly opposed all wars waged against developing nations by US and British Imperialism.
12. Response to events in JNU: A memorandum was presented to High Commission London just a couple days after the attack on Left front organisations in Delhi and Chandigarh.
13. Junior Doctors' Strike: Indian Workers Association took an active role in support of Junior Doctors' struggle for better conditions for work and services.
14. EU Referendum: Indian Workers' Association nationally took a decision to oppose EU and campaign with Lexit. We managed to take the issue to public, took part in the debates and public meetings and tried to expose scare mongering and anti-immigrants campaign by Remain and Brexit campaigns.
15. Employment Law Seminars: Seminars were carried out in 28 cities that have helped to take IWA's name and work to the immigrants primarily from Kerala. This has helped us to initiate IWA branches in some city while very little progress made in others.
16. Cultural Front: There has impressive progress in re-activation of Progressive Writers' Association and inspiring work done by Chetna and Progressive Malyali Society that was officially launched on 16th July 2016 in Manchester.

17. **New Branches:** There is a possibility of new branch in Gloucester and to work with other branches have not been so active.
18. **Celebration of 125th Birthday of Bhim Rao Ambedkar in Derby** attended by Tikinder Singh – Deputy Mayor of Simla.
19. Other public meetings involved celebration of India's Independent Day, International Women's Day, May Day, Silk Mill Memorial March and Rally, Comrade Harkishan Singh's Birth Centenary.

Future Tasks:

1. **Team Building :** Our first task has to be team building as without it we will not be carry out our work successfully. At present most of the work is done by some individuals and branches.
2. **Accountability:** we have no system for accountability. This is the reason why some branches complete the decisions taken by the CEC and do take initiatives on local and national issues while others tend not to.
3. **Taking lead:** It is pleasant to see Indian Workers Association has started to take initiatives unilaterally on the issues related to legislative discrimination. However, it is seriously noted that though we jointly work with other organisations we lack initiating activities.
4. Continue to work on all the tasks we have been working previously.
5. **Probationary Period:** To initiate campaign on this rule. It is causing horrendous consequences for the newly arrived spouses from non-EU countries.
6. **Inheritance Right:** Indian Workers' Association will campaign for equal, non-discriminatory inheritance right.
7. **Issues Related to Women:** We in conjunction with other organisation will campaign against all the specific issues related to youth and women as highlighted in the report.

8. **Brexit Negotiations:** British people have given a mandate to the UK and the EU establishment but the struggle is not over. We have to ensure that Brexit negotiation favour British working people.
9. **CETA and TTIP:** We have to ensure that EU Commission do not slip in CETA and TTIP during the Brexit process. There is a clear danger.
10. **Free Market:** Now the British Trade Market has entered into the Free Market there is a danger of foreign companies may bypass British employment rights and the Government opt into privatisation.
11. **Anti- Union Law:** Campaign against Anti-Union Laws
12. **Equality, Peace and Social Justice:** Continue to campaign for equalities, peace and social justice, nationally and internationally.
13. **International Support:** Continue to support the nations fighting imperialist power, and for national independence.
14. **Jallian Wala Bagh:** Campaign for an apology from the British Government for the Jallian Wala Bagh Massacre on 13 April 1919.
15. **Debate on EU:** Some of our members feel we did not debate Lexit campaign. As the issue is still live and some activists believe the Government may push for another referendum before the end of Exit process, we should have a proper debate with exploring the pros and cons of Lexit and why we supported it.
16. **India/ BJP:** We are worried for the situation in India and should formalise a campaign against the anti- people, anti-press and intolerance policies by BJP lead Government.
17. **Religious Fundamentalism:** IWA will continue to fight and oppose religious fundamentalist forces in all its forms.

18. **Cultural Front:** IWA will endeavour to build and strengthen cultural organisations to strengthen the unity of the people.
19. **Cuba:** Indian Workers Association will continue to support Cuban Solidarity Campaign and Cuban people until the Trade Embargo imposed by the US Imperialist power is ended. We also support Cuban national Sovereignty, liberty and right to build socialism according to their national conditions.
20. **Division of work:** Lastly but most importantly we must draw a work programme with duties depending on individual skills so that the work is shared out.
21. **Formal educational events:** conference has taken a decision to hold formal seminars, discussions and educational events. Seminar on Future of EU and Britain to be organised to be organised in the new year.

Despite many shortfalls and limited resources, I, on behalf of the CEC, feel proud that the work of Indian Workers' Association's has increased. Not only it has joint worked with other progressive and democratic organisations we have taken a number of initiatives. Our name once again is mentioned with respect in the labour movement. Credit goes to all members of Indian Workers' Association and the public that has supported us in every way it was possible, be it a petition or personal participation in the lobbies, demonstrations, protests and at the picket lines.

I thank you all for the hard work to make our work a success. I thank you all for giving me support in the journey that no doubt was bumpy at times.

Class Struggle v Caste system in India test

Caste system is an age old phenomenon that has been haunting Indian Society from ancient times. Although the Caste system exists in many South Asian Countries, its deep rooted religiously justified hierarchical social norm is unique to Indian Society. The tight grip of the system allows feudal lords, religious leaders and Bourgeois elitists the powers to strengthen the inequalities and injustices that serves and protects class interests. Letting go of cast system, they fear, will lead to downfall of contemporary feudalist/capitalist systems.

Manusmriti (writing of Hindu law giver) divided the Indian society into four sections better known as Varnas on which today's cast system is founded and designed, and it was strengthened and sanctified by Hindu religious texts and Vedic scripts. Manusmriti positioned shudras (Lower cast), atishudras (lowest of the lower Casts) and women into an unequivocally unequal and miserable existence. Compare to social class, cast is hereditary, compulsory and endogamous. The worst affected by the cast related oppression have been dalits (All lower casts), shudra and atishudra, adivasis (natives) scheduled casts and scheduled tribes. The rules of Manusmriti prohibited all these groups and women a right to own property, education and knowledge. They are treated like sub-humans, forced to exist on the foulest food often left over and thrown away by the higher varnas (for further reference please view India untouched). They are not allowed to draw water from the common village wells, prevented from entering temples – allowed only to shatter their human dignity- (Sree Subrhanya Mander in Karnatka is a classic example for such an insult). They are barred from a right to education and knowledge. They could only access menial jobs for the higher casts – that includes manually cleaning and carrying human excrements, deprived from all sources of economic mobility. They are classed as sinners in Indian Society, not even allowed to be buried / cremated in the common ground and not allowed to live in the main village. In other words social apartheid based on cast system exists in every village. Thus the dalits have been

subjected to social exclusion as well as economic discrimination. In the 21st century when India has joined the world race for scientific achievements, travelling into space, dalits continue to suffer inequalities, economic and social oppression and discrimination. Instead of weakening such system feudal and bourgeois classes as well religious Pundits are very active to protect the status quo.

Indian Bourgeois national parties and its leaders promised to replace social hierarchical system with socialist system to provide equal opportunity for everyone in independent India. Unfortunately, these bourgeois leaders, after 67 years of independence, have miserably failed to bring even basic change in cast system. Manusmriti and the economic structural relations are still very strong. People from Dalit casts are still suffering social segregations and are deprived to economic sources for social mobility. Gang rapes and mass murder of schedule casts and tribes by upper casts are a norm in many parts of India and the justice system has failed to protect them and/or bring perpetrators to justice. No attempt is made to provide infra-structure for basic human needs. The social reforms by bourgeois leaders remained limited to vote grabbing exercise.

In 19th and 20th Centuries a number of social reformists, such as Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Sri Narayan Guru, Jyothibha Phule, Periyar E,V, Ramaswamy Naicker and others lead many social reform movements against the caste system, caste oppression and struggled for emancipation of dalits. However, these struggles narrowly remained to social reforms and did not address the crucial and deep rooted issue of economic independency, neither were they made part of wider class struggle. Hence these struggles made no attempt to educate general public about the impact of cast system on those at lower end of the spectrum. They appeared to have only been interested in making some social changes within the cast hierarchy. They did not wish to attack religious doctrine that teaches disadvantaged people to accept their social position as their fate and a will of the God and or it was the result of their past deed to be born in lower caste. Hence it did nothing to the break centuries old cast based hierarchical system.

On the other hand Rashtria Soyam Sangh (RSS; Hindu fundamentalists) and the Sangh Parivar (collective organisation of Hindu Fundamentalism) have vigorously opposed and played a reactionary role against the reform movement ever since its inception. Promoting the Brahmanical divisive philosophy RSS opposed the amendments to the Hindu Code Bill after independence. Following the same footsteps BJP (Bhartya Janta Party – currently in power) resisted implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations. Moreover, atrocities on Muslims, dalits, adivasis and Christians have increased in the states where BJP were in power. Godhra Kand in Gujarat (communal riots in Gujrat) is a classic example for such resistance and after 20 years, victims are still waiting for justice while some of the perpetrators are enjoying high positions of power. There is no doubt left that the caste oppression, class exploitation and communalism are interlinked and the struggles against these and abolition of caste system will have to be fought as such.

As it has been previously mentioned that despite the caste based discriminations been outlawed, dalits are continued to suffer impacts of untouchability, social and economic diaspora. Growing consciousness among the dalits have taken them to struggle for emancipation. However the activists of such movements have met brutal atrocities. These brutalities, instead of crushing the minds and souls of the activists, have proven to make them even more determined and they are bravely continuing to assert their democratic right to resist the oppression they have been forced to bear for centuries. On the other hand bourgeois political and religious leaders continue to perpetuate the cast divisions for their narrow interests and for increasing their vote banks. These Pundits of Indian society, especially the Congress Party, have exploited and abused the sentiments of the people from lower casts by making false promises of equal rights. For example reservations, though has worked to raise living standards to certain extent and of certain sections, has played a major part in weakening and even crushing struggle for a casteless / classless, an equal and a just society.

In order to progress, capitalist system requires weakening divisive social conditions such as caste based divided society. More-

over, another well proven fact is that capitalist system can only develop and make advances in a socio-economically divided society based on class divisions. Indian Bourgeoisie, therefore, opted to compromise and perpetuated caste and class system and dalits are part of the labouring classes as well as are from lower caste. For Indian bourgeois classes, caste and class systems provide perfect conditions for dual exploitation of working people and never to let them unite for common struggles. Owing to fostering of caste system, imperialist dictated policies of liberalism, privatisation and globalisation, Indian bourgeois classes have been working to further aggravate the socio-economic problems of all downtrodden people especially those of dalit communities. They are forced to live and work in sub-human conditions. They are denied basic infra-structures for basic life resources, such as travelling safely to and from work, safe drinking water, food and housing facilities. They are forced to do menial jobs with no guarantee for minimum wage or safe working conditions. The drive to privatisation of nationalised industries and state lead institutions has hit reservations, replacement of automated plants and closure of thousands of factories and mills have pushed millions of people into unemployment leading to further economic hardship. This trend is evident in the agrarian rural communities also. Furthermore, growing commercialisation of health and education services have moved away from the reach of lower castes and classes.

Working to unite working people in such fragmented, divisive and hostile conditions is a challenge for the democratic and progressive movements. It has become a duty of such movements to understand that the cast and class struggles are linked and have to be fought as such. The progressive parties that are championing such struggles will have to raise awareness of the masses of historical, political and socio-economic perspectives of oppression of downtrodden people as well as to acknowledge the differences in caste and class. They will have to raise awareness of all sections of our society the evils of cast system as well as exposing the cast based, communal, and capitalist forces working to their extremes to maintain and strengthen such evils. Though it is true that socialism is the only path forward to eradicate cast and class systems and for an equal and just society, we cannot

wait until then. The progressive parties will have to be aware of the NGOs who exploit the sentiments of dalits and other down-trodden masses to keep them away from the class struggles, that forces play in the hands of imperialist powers to weaken the class struggles.

Cast System in Britain / Indian Workers Association

We the Indian people have brought with us the semi-feudal values into Britain.

Phenomenon of caste system is one of such values. We are carrying the burden of the cast based status quo. Religious Pundits, such as Sikhs, are tirelessly claiming that cast has no place in their religion while the Hindu leaders are claiming that such system does not exist among British Indian communities and it has no place in 21st century Indian society. Behind the public eye these Pundits are actively promoting this divisive system. *Manu Smriti* is read as part of Vedic prayers, *Manu* is worshiped as God (*Manu Bhagwan*), while in the name of *Rahit Nama* (Sikh religious rules) cast system is being perpetuated by the Sikh Religious High Command in Amritsar adapted by Sikh Shrines in Britain and other countries alike. Marriages are arranged within ones caste. Every effort is made to prevent young people from choosing their life partners from a different caste and/or religion especially from a lower cast. Children from an early age are taught and continuously reinforced the hierarchy of cast system and are encouraged to be proud of their caste.

Discrimination in the places of worship has always been a normal practice. Dalits feel they are treated as sub-human and are prevented from taking part in religious activities. Even the common religious festivals are celebrated separately depending on one's caste. This is particularly evident among Gujarati communities. These practices, in the hope of maintaining personal dignity, have resulted in cast based Sikh temples and Hindu temples.

The advanced British Bourgeoisie no doubt has helped people from the lower castes raise their economic and social conditions and have been able to live a dignified life. They are able to attend same educational institutions, compete for jobs for which they may have same level of qualification, training and experience. However, some surveys have suggested that the Indian entrepreneurs discriminate dalits from recruitment to promotion and favour those from higher casts even if their qualification, training and experience does not match the requirements of the job.

Taking the absence of legal protection against such practices, dalit activists together with some other progressive movements took the campaign to the UN, and House of Commons. After a four years long struggle the British Government has accepted caste based discrimination happens in Britain and has finally agreed to outlaw such practices by including it in the clause 9 of the Equality Law. This no doubt is a move to right direction and it provides a platform for victims to challenge such practices in court. The decision to include caste based discrimination into clause 9 of Equality Law has successfully brought into public debate and it has proven to have shaken grounds under the feet of religious pundits forcing them to examine their practices. However, we have to be vigilant and be aware how to ensure the law does not do disservice to our young generation who are working so hard to challenge centuries old system.

The Government:

1. Is dragging its feet to implement the clause 9 of Equality Law
2. Has no programme plan for empowering victims
3. Has no plan for educating those responsible for implementing the law such as judiciary, police and so on.
4. Is reluctant to give powers to those responsible to implementing the legislation
5. Is reluctant to invest in resources necessary for successfully implementing clause 9.

The enlightened individuals and the progressive and democratic movement will have to determine this fight is not separate from wider class struggle.

Indian Workers Association (G.B.) has a proud history of fighting against all forms of discrimination that includes class, caste, gender, race, religion and creed. The Association has consistently been forging a broad front to fight against the divisive racist, religious, fascist and communal forces into wider class struggles. The Indian Workers Association will continue to fight these forces and will always stand by all downtrodden people nationally and internationally.

Dyal Bagri

National President, Pundit Kishori Lal Bhawan
88 Hasting Road Leicester LE5 0HL
dyalb@yahoo.co.uk

INDIAN WORKERS ASSOCIATION (GB)

Established in 1938

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To organise people of Indian origin to:

1. Safe guard their interests.
2. Fight to improve their conditions of life and work.
3. Encourage them to join trade unions and to promote co-operations and unity with the trade union and labour movement in Great Britain.
4. Strengthen friendship with the British and all other people in Great Britain and co-operate with all progressive organisations on this end.
5. Fight against all form of discrimination based on race, colour, cast, creed and/or sex, for equal human rights and social and economic opportunities, and co-operate with other organisations for the same.
6. Express solidarity with the people fighting for national salvation and promote the cause of friendship, peace and freedom of and co-operate with other organisations, national and international striving for the same.
7. Keep its members in particular, the people in Great Britain generally informed of political. Economical and social developments in India, and to strengthen the democratic forces there.
8. Undertake social, welfare and cultural activities.



National President

Mr Dyal Bagri

Shaheed Bhagat Singh Welfare Centre
88 Hasting Road, Leicester LE5 OHL

Tel: 0116 2714497

Email: dyalb@yahoo.co.uk

General Secretary

Mrs Joginder Bains

Shaheed Bhagat Singh Welfare Centre
191 Upper Dale Road, Derby DE23 8BS

Tel: 07877553949

Email: Joginder@b41n5.com

www.indobrit.co.uk