



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Public Meeting & Rally at Vishakhapatnam

During CITU Working Committee Meeting

(Report Page 5)



CITU Working Committee in Session

Vishakhapatnam, 1-3 November, 2018



WORKING CLASS

NOVEMBER 2018
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Editorial

Forward to 8-9 January General Strike

The call has been given for 2 days nationwide workers general strike on 8-9 January, 2019. Countrywide preparatory campaign is going on at all levels of all trade union organisations – the central trade unions, federations, unions to prepare for massive deeper and widest explanatory campaign, beginning on 12 point demands, policies and politics behind and concluding in the need for removal of anti-worker, anti-people, anti-national BJP government from power; among the mass of the workers and in public meetings converging to 2 days historic strike and workers mobilisation on strike days in all sectors of industries and services, public and private, in organised and unorganised sectors and among all organised and unorganised sections of workers going beyond trade union's membership in widest possible areas.

All past experiences show spontaneous participation of the workers in general strike much beyond the trade unions organisational reach. This establishes the potential of public campaign on issues involving the people's lives and livelihood championed by the working class movement.

The trade unions shall approach and receive maximum support and solidarity actions of the peasants, agricultural workers and of other mass organisations of students, youths, women, cultural activists, self-employed, professionals etc. This will culminate in massive united people's action on 8 and 9 January, 2018. Such workers and people's unity will be big blow to all communal and divisive forces who are the agents of ruling classes. This will also be a big impetus to socially oppressed sections.

The heat that will be generated by workers strike action and supporting actions of the other toiling sections will be carried to the next general election sending strong message to the incumbent and incoming governments against anti-workers, anti-people, anti-national policy issues and going forward for an alternative pro-workers and pro-people policy regime.

In this strike there is much stake for the workers and other sections of the toiling masses on one side and the ruling elites of corporates and their allies on the other side.

Forward to 8-9 January 2019 workers national general strike!

CITU Working Committee Meeting

1-3 November, 2018

Future Tasks

- Two days' meeting of all CITU state committees to plan campaign and preparation of campaign material - to be completed in November;
- Meetings of district committees of CITU and of the state committees of state level unions to concretise the plan in the concerned areas and sectors - to be completed by end of November;
- Meetings of lowest level committees of unions and general body meetings – to be completed by first week of December;
- Solidarity actions to the 'Long March' of peasants – on 30 November;
- Survey among unorganised workers on the coverage of benefits under Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, to expose BJP government's false claims through concrete facts – within November; and

Week long campaign on the specific issues of working women during 13-19 December, 2018.

Credential Committee Report

Attending the Meeting

22 office bearers (7 women) out of total 35; 85 other working committee members (13 women) out of total 125; and 15 invitees from the states and federations attended the meeting.

New Affiliations

151 Applications from 151 unions for affiliation to CITU, covering a membership of 59,308 (Women – 8854) were received; 149 unions affiliations and 2 unions provisional affiliation on fulfilling certain requirements were granted by the Working Committee.

Statewise break up of new unions' affiliations: Andhra Pradesh – 52 (21,534 members); Himachal Pradesh – 2 (212 members); Karnataka – 5 (3,716 members); Kerala – 34 (24,536 members); Maharashtra – 5 (1,142 members); Odisha – 4 (363 members); Punjab – 1 (126 members); Rajasthan – 2 (200 members); Tamilnadu – 2 (1,716 members); Telangana – 41 (5,449 members); Uttar Pradesh – 2 (213 members); and Uttarakhand – 1 (101 members).

CITU Working Committee Meeting

Vishakhapatnam, 1-3 November, 2018

Forward to the Two Days' General Strike The Call

Reverse Neoliberal Policies

Defend People's Unity

Defeat Communal Divisive Forces

- National Working Committee meeting of CITU, held at Vishakhapatnam on 1-3 November, 2018, called upon the working class of the country to launch countrywide extensive campaign for the success of the 2 days countrywide general strike on 8-9 January, 2018 at the joint call of central trade unions and industrial federations to – Reverse neoliberal policies; - Defend People's Unity and – Defeat Communal Divisive Forces – against the policies of and attacks by the BJP-led Modi government at the Centre and the ruling classes of the country.
The Working Committee decided to seek solidarity and support from all sections of toiling people and of the progressive and democratic sections of society to this general strike of the workers.
- The Working Committee called upon its units, unions and the working class in general to extend support and solidarity actions to the Peasants *Long March* to Delhi on 29-30 November, 2018.
- In its opening session the Working Committee unanimously adopted a resolution extending solidarity and support to the ongoing militant strikes and struggles of the road transport workers of Haryana against privatisation; and of the workers of automobile and auto parts manufacturing companies in Chennai and Bengaluru.
In the concluding session, the Working Committee greeted Haryana transport workers for their success when Punjab-Haryana High Court intervened and stayed all punitive and vindictive actions of Haryana government against the striking transport and supporting workers and employees fixing date of government-union bilateral discussion based on which the strike was called off.
The Working Committee also greeted the workers of Delhi for their successful strikes and struggle for minimum wage and Supreme Court's interim order to enforce the notified minimum wages pending final order. The Working Committee also expressed solidarity with the automobile workers struggle in Gujarat.
- The Working Committee by a resolution condemned the killing of five innocents in Assam on 1 November in an atmosphere of hate and violence against religious and linguistic minorities as a part of greater design of RSS/BJP dispensation in the state and called upon the working class to defeat this design through unity of all toiling and democratic sections of the people.

- The Working Committee expressed solidarity with the people of Kerala, who had unitedly faced the serious floods; greeted the working class of the state, particularly the fishers and fishermen, electricity employees, head loaders, construction and scheme workers, state government employees and others who demonstrated exemplary commitment and dedication in bringing the state to normalcy at the earliest; and congratulated the LDF state government for its, well-appreciated by all, prompt and effective rescue and relief operations.

The Meeting

- The national Working Committee, attended by 122 Working Committee members and invitees, began with hoisting of CITU flag by its President Hemalata. Hemalata presided. Ch Narasinga Rao, Chairman of the Reception Committee and President of Andhra Pradesh state committee of CITU, welcomed the participants. After Hemalata's presidential address, condolence resolution was moved by the Treasurer M. L. Malkotia. General Secretary Tapan Sen placed General Secretary's report with future tasks.

Hemalata made power point presentation on future tasks on organisational preparations and campaign underlining importance of activating the lowest level union committees and involving all members of CITU in the campaign. The credential report was placed by M. L. Malkotia.

50 members participated in the discussion on the report, giving rich inputs, endorsed formulations and the future tasks. After summing up by the General Secretary, the report with tasks was adopted unanimously. Hemalata thanked the Steel Plant Employees' Union, and CITU Visakhapatnam City committee and its Andhra Pradesh state committee for effectively hosting the meeting.

Public Meeting

- On the occasion of this Working Committee meeting, on 1 November evening, CITU Vizag City committee held an impressive rally and public meeting at Gajuwaka in the city, joined by thousands of industrial workers from different sectors; presided over by Ch Narasinga Rao and addressed by CITU President Hemalata, General Secretary Tapan Sen, its national secretary and state General Secretary M. A. Gaffoor.

Highlights of General Secretaries Report

- The operative part of the General Secretaries report mainly focussed on review of implementation of Kozhikode GCM decisions; future tasks; and effective preparations for the two days' general strike on 8-9 January 2019.

- The report exposed BJP-led Modi government's anti-worker, anti-people and anti-national policies - destroying country's manufacturing capabilities; - facilitating domestic and foreign big corporates to loot country's resources; - institutionalising measures to heighten exploitation of workers and the loot of their savings and social security; - introducing 'hire and fire' through notifications and programmes like 'fixed term employment', National Employability Enhancement Mission (NEEM), National Employment Through Apprentice Programme (NEPAT) etc; - despite its claims of increased GDP, declining employment;

Resorting to organised transfer of public funds to the corporates / business houses and found new methods for this, like the Insolvency Bankruptcy Code to be presided over by the National Company Law Tribunal; through this procedure, the public sector banks are compelled to undergo 'haircuts' of the NPAs instead of taking firm measures to recover the loans from the corporate defaulters.

NPA's' Hair Cuts

“Around 1000 such cases are registered with NCLT to be dealt as per the IBC Act. And a few cases have been finalised resulting in change of ownership of the debtor and bankrupt company to another corporate entity. Could the entire debt be recovered in favour of the concerned bank of consortium of banks? As per available information, in most of the cases settled so far, the banks could realise not more than 25 to 30 percent on the average of the total debt of the concerned establishment. They were compelled to sacrifice around 75% of total loans as a fate accompli. Very recently, Bhushan Steel was taken over by TATA in exchange of a commitment of around Rs.35,000 crore which is around 41% Bhushan Steel's total bank-loan liability of around Rs.60,000 crore. Again, another bankrupt company Alope Industries is being taken over by Mukesh Ambani led firm at only Rs.6,000 crore as against total outstanding loan of Rs.36,000 crore. Similarly in the case of Monnet Ispat, the highest bid received so far is only 24% of the loan liability. It is by the Jindal Group which itself has number of loan defaulters companies within the group. In this case also, once settled, the banks will have to forego at least 76% of the total loans in favour of another in the corporate community. This process has been termed 'hair cut' by the policy-makers in the Finance Ministry. Can this be called "hair cut" when through that process overwhelming portion of the loan amount are being chopped out, that too in the name of recovery of the NPA? This is nothing but 'beheading' of the country's banking system and only criminals can camouflage such crime on the nation calling it 'hair-cut'.”

- Reviewing implementation of decisions, the report appreciated the efforts made by the various committees of CITU;
But, also self-critically noted that more could have been done by developing understanding of committees at all levels with updated document on organisation while campaigning for the 5 September 'Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally'.
The report emphasised on activating lowest level of union committees and involving largest numbers of cadres, activists and members in CITU campaigns.
The identified shortcomings be removed during coming campaign on 2 days workers countrywide general strike.
- The report emphasised on creating awareness among mass of the workers on need to defeat the neoliberal policies, protect unity and strengthening united struggles of the workers and with peasantry and all other toiling sections.
- The report emphasised on the need to give specific attention on issue basis reaching to all workers irrespective of their trade union affiliations.
- The report stressed on the political direction of entire campaign against the present ruling RSS/BJP dispensation, who are aggressively pursuing neoliberal policies and divisive and disruptive agenda; defeating BJP in elections; and sending strong message to the incumbent and incoming governments against these policies.
- The report emphasised on deepening and widening workers-peasants class unity as pre-requisite conditions for ruling class policy changes and taking the struggle to higher level aiming to end exploitation.

- The report emphasised on strengthen work among working women giving attention to specific women related issues including equal remuneration, maternity benefits, crèches, sexual harassment etc by the entire CITU committees at all levels and campaigning on working women's issues as part of campaign for the 2 days workers general strike aiming at bigger mobilisation of women workers in the strike.

Main Points in Presidential Address

- Workers all over the world are fighting against the attacks on their livelihoods, working conditions and their hard won rights, by the ruling classes. The issues are almost the same as in our country - privatisation, job security, cut down in social security, curtailment of expenditure on social welfare including education, health, housing etc, wages, labour law amendments, right to organisation, improvement in working conditions etc.
- The growing struggles reflect the anger of the workers and the common people against the international finance dictated neoliberal policies.
- As per the World Economic Report of IMF majority of the 180 countries have not reached pre 2008 crisis levels. Investment has fallen in majority of countries by 25%; employment has fallen. But profits are rising as productivity levels have increased. This is being achieved by replacing human labour with technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence.
- The 'Future of Jobs Report 2018' of the World Economic Forum says that in seven years, by 2025, machines would overtake humans in workplace tasks in 12 key sectors. By 2022, machines and algorithms will perform 42% tasks in specific sectors against 29% today. Even those work tasks, which till now are being overwhelmingly performed by human beings, like communicating and interacting, coordinating, developing, managing, and advising as well as reasoning and decision making, will begin to be automated. Almost half of all companies across the world expect to cut their full time workforce in the next four years through automation. In India 54% of employees in these sectors will need reskilling by 2022 to retain their jobs.
- If technology remains under the control of market forces, 'billionaires will reap wealth created by robots replacing human labour, leaving massive unemployment'. If technology is under the control of society, it can be used for the benefit of workers and the people in general.
- Concentration of wealth in increasingly fewer hands has become a defining feature of neoliberalism. It has been reported that bigger companies have captured greater market shares. Their clout is such that 'they can charge higher prices for poor service and pay lower wages'.
- USA which was the pioneer of the policies of imperialist globalisation and thrust it on the developing countries, is now adopting protectionist policies. It continues to retain its world hegemony through political and military interventions seeking regime changes and subverting elected governments. It is interfering in Venezuela, Brazil and other Latin American countries. It continues to support Israel in denying Palestinians their right to Home Land. USA has imposed sanctions on Iran. It continues with its policy of containment of China. It has imposed tariffs on USD 250 billion worth Chinese goods. It sent its warship into the South China Sea. It imposed sanctions against Chinese military for purchasing missiles etc from Russia.
- China, however, has retaliated against these measures. It has counter imposed tariffs on US goods. It has warned US warships through a Chinese naval vessel destroyer and drove the US warship back into international waters. It has summoned US Ambassador and lodged

its protest against the sanctions and called back its naval chief from a visit to the US and postponed military talks.

- In 1949, at the time of its socialist revolution, China was poorer than India. Today it is the second largest economy competing with the US in all spheres. This has been achieved on the foundations laid by the measures it has taken after the revolution like agrarian reforms, planned industrial development aimed at socialist construction. It has taken measures like raising minimum wages and minimum threshold for income taxes, abolishing agricultural taxes, improving public services and social protection in rural areas etc, to bring down rising inequalities under 'reforms' and improve people's conditions. It has achieved fastest reduction in poverty, reducing poverty to 3.1%. It has set targets to solve issues related to food security, clothing, compulsory education, basic medicare, housing etc and totally eliminate absolute poverty by 2020.
- The BJP government, despite all its high talk of being the sole custodian of 'nationalism' and 'patriotism', is shamelessly displaying servile attitude towards USA. It has cemented the status of a junior strategic partner of the USA by signing the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA). This agreement will allow the US to inspect Indian military instalments and monitor Indian military communications. Indian military and armed forces will become completely dependent on US technology; the technology and arms India has earlier purchased from other countries like Russia will become incompatible. This is the extent to which the BJP government led by Modi has surrendered the country's interests to the US imperialist and the big corporates of that country.
- BJP led government has failed in implementing its promises. Unemployment, particularly among young and higher educated is growing. It has now reached 16%. India's so called 'demographic dividend' is evaporating.
- Wage share continues to decline while labour productivity has increased. Permanent workers are being replaced with contract workers, outsourced workers, fixed term workers, and apprentices through programmes like National Employability Enhancement Mission (NEEM), National Employability Through Apprenticeship Programme (NETAP) etc. 92% women and 82% men workers get wages less than Rs 10000 per month. 90% of the industries pay wages less than minimum wages prescribed by the 7th Pay Commission and accepted by the government.
- India now ranks at 77 in the 'Ease of Doing Business Index'. It has achieved this by attacking the rights and working conditions of workers. But its performance in improving human development indices continues to be dismal. It ranked 100 among 119 countries in the Global Hunger Index. It has the largest number of hungry, largest number of poor and largest number of malnourished children in the world.
- The survey of National Bank for Rural Development (NABARD) illustrates the conditions of the rural people. Only 48% of rural households are reported to be 'agricultural households'. 52% were non agricultural. Around 57% of average income of the agricultural households comes from non agricultural sources; 50% from wage labour. There are huge inequalities in rural incomes and expenditure. We have to study conditions of the non agricultural workers in rural areas and organise them.
- Social oppression has increased under the BJP regime which is guided by the RSS ideology and *manusmriti*. Attacks on dalits and minorities, violence against women and children have

increased manifold. At the same time dalits and women are also increasingly asserting their rights.

- It is in this situation that discontent is growing among the workers and toiling people in our country. This was clearly visible in the massive mobilisation in the 'Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally' in the national capital on 5th September. All sections of workers and employees were on the struggle path during this period.
- However, if these struggles are not channelised in proper direction, the right reactionary forces try to utilise this discontent as was happening in many countries in the world. There was growing discontent against the 'Establishment' across the world. Most of the people believe that this was not working. Where the Left and social democratic parties betrayed the interests of the workers and supported neoliberalism, they are losing ground and the right reactionary forces are gaining.
- With growing discontent among the people against the impact of its policies, the BJP and the RSS are trying to divert people's attention and disrupt their unity by dividing them on the basis of caste, religion, region and language etc. With elections approaching they are sure to rake up divisive issues. We have to be vigilant and protect the unity of the working class and the people.
- Struggles have to be broadened to achieve wider unity of working class and also unity of the workers with other sections of toiling people like peasants, agricultural workers etc. CITU has to be in the forefront in extending solidarity to their struggles, in mobilising all workers against social oppression and develop joint actions at the grass root level utilising the existing organisational structure of CITU and its affiliated unions.

Working Committee Resolutions

In Solidarity with the ongoing Strikes and Struggles of Transport Workers in Haryana;
and Automobile and Auto Parts Workers in Chennai and Bengaluru

This meeting of the national Working Committee of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), being held at Vishakhapatnam on 1-3 November, 2018;

- NOTING the magnificent ongoing united indefinite strike of Haryana Roadways workers since 16 October, 2018 against BJP State Government's attempt of privatisation of roadways by hiring private buses and contracting out public sector roadways employees to these buses; and

Massive two days statewide strike on 30-31 October, 2018 in solidarity with the striking Haryana Roadways workers' strike by more than 2 Lakh government, semi-government, undertakings and other workers and employees under the banners of Sarb Karmachari Sangh Haryana and CITU Haryana state committee; and

At the joint call of central trade unions, in solidarity with striking Haryana Roadways workers, countrywide protest and thousands of unions sending protest letters to Haryana Chief Minister;

CONDEMNING the Haryana State Government for unleashing repression to suppress the Roadways workers struggle by largescale dismissals, suspensions, invoking ESMA and arrests;

- FURTHER NOTING the ongoing indefinite strikes in three multinational automobile and auto parts companies - Yamaha, Royal Enfield and MSI - in Oragadam–Sriperumbudur industrial belt near Chennai in Tamil Nadu to establish their rights of forming union and of collective bargaining as per their Constitutional and legal rights; and against arbitrary actions, victimisations and deplorable working conditions; and

At the joint call of central trade unions, other state federations and unions for support and solidarity with the striking automobile auto parts workers; thousands of workers joining statewide protest actions; and workers from other manufacturing units in the industrial area staging massive demonstration in front Yamaha plant;

CONDEMNING police repression, forcible eviction from the plant premises and arrest of the striking workers;

- ALSO NOTING about the ongoing struggle of the workers in multinational auto parts company Tokai Rika Minda India Pvt Ltd in Bangalore industrial area in Karnataka to establish their right to form union and of collective bargaining, and against victimisation and deplorable service conditions; and

CITU Karnataka state committee guiding, organising and joining the movement including its national General Secretary in support of the struggling workers;

CONDEMNING the management for resorting to largescale victimisation of the workers including suspensions and terminations; and the Karnataka police for repressive action and manhandling women workers;

❖ EXPRESSES support and solidarity to these striking and agitating workers;

❖ DEMANDS of

- The Haryana State Government to stop privatisation of Haryana Roadways; reinstate all suspended and terminated Roadways workers and release all workers arrested during this movement and withdraw all cases filed against them;
- The Tamilnadu State Government to intervene and hold tripartite meetings to resolve all demands of the striking workers of Yamaha, Royal Enfield and MSI upholding the Constitutional and statutory rights of the workers; and stop police repression;
- The Karnataka State Government to stop police repression and resolve workers legitimate demands through tripartite meeting upholding workers rights to form union and of collective bargaining;

❖ CALLS upon all CITU units, affiliated unions, national federations and workers in general to extend their support by solidarity actions to the struggling workers of these industries.

Stop violence against minorities and killing of innocents

The meeting of the national Working Committee of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), being held at Vishakhapatnam on 1-3 November, 2018, unanimously adopted the following resolution.

This meeting condemns the dastardly act of gunning down five persons in a village in Tinsukia district of Assam on 1 November evening.

Such killing is taking place in an atmosphere of hatred and violence against religious and linguistic minorities fanned by RSS/BJP since BJP came to power in Assam.

This killing is not just the failure of law and order machinery in the State, but is part larger political design executed through hate campaign and violent acts.

CITU demands of Assam government to fulfill its Constitutional responsibilities; establish the rule of law and protect the life and properties of the religious and linguistic minorities in the State.

CITU calls upon the entire working class of the country to stand united, raise their voice of protest against hate campaign and violent acts against minority sections and defeat the divisive agenda of the ruling dispensation.

Delhi-NCR

Supreme Court's Significant Order on Minimum Wages

On 31 October, 2018, the three members Bench of the Supreme Court with Chief Justice Rajan Gogoi, Justice U. U. Lalit and Justice K. M. Joseph issued an interim order stating that (i) minimum wages, as was notified by Delhi government on 3.3.2017 on the basis of the recommendation of minimum wages advisory board, shall be the current wages of the workers; (ii) no arrears shall be paid; (iii) however, no deductions shall be made by the employers of any already paid amounts to the workers ; and that (iv) Delhi government shall "*re-do the exercise of fixing the minimum wages for the scheduled employment afresh*" following the relevant provisions in the Minimum Wages Act and place the proposed notification on the basis of that exercise before the Court at the end of three months from this day.

The interim order was issued by the Supreme Court on the special leave petition of Delhi government against Delhi High Court's order dismissing the above referred notification on minimum wages on the basis of several petitions of the employers against that notification on alleged ground of technical and procedural deficiencies. By this interim order, the Supreme Court has reinstated that notification to be replaced only by a fresh notification, after Supreme Court's scrutiny.

The bone of contention, however, was that, for the first time, minimum wages advisory board in Delhi based its recommendation on the basis of 15th Indian Labour Conference recommendations on minimum wages and Supreme Court's judgement on minimum wages in Raptakos Brett case of 1992. (*The Working Class May 2017*). CITU Delhi state committee general secretary Anurag Saxena was a member of that minimum wages advisory board and played a significant role in united efforts of trade unions for this approach. The Supreme Court in the same interim order of 31 October, 2018 also allowed Virendra Goud, as President of CITU Delhi state committee, to be an intervener party in this case.

Let Us Renew Our Pledge

A.K. Padmanabhan, Vice President, CITU

CITU, as a class oriented trade union organization, from its foundation, had declared its objective of creating an exploitation free India. Towards that objective CITU raised the slogan of **Unity and Struggle** and has been striving to build up class unity, intensifying the class struggle and working towards strengthening the Worker-Peasant alliance. All these are prerequisites to build up countrywide massive struggles that are required to move towards our cherished goal.

Celebrations of the Centenary of the Great October Revolution and Bicentenary of Karl Marx were the occasions to remind ourselves of the tasks that we pledged for ourselves. Along with these was the 170th years of the release of the Communist Manifesto, which still makes the world reverberate with the slogan – Workers of the World Unite.

This was a period in recent history where questions of exploitation, increasing inequality, Social Justice, Class struggle and Socialism were discussed intensely in different parts of the world. This was happening in the background of the serious and continuing crisis that had engulfed the capitalist system.

CITU, on its part, had called its affiliates all over the country to organize various programmes to commemorate these important anniversaries of historic importance.

The Slogans of Yesteryears

On the occasion of completion 101 years of the Great October Revolution what do we observe? India has enshrined in our Constitution that we uphold Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. We have even constitutionally declared ourselves as a Sovereign Democratic, Socialist Republic.

More than this, during the last 71 years of Independence we have heard the leaders of the ruling class parties raising slogans about a socialist pattern of society, democratic socialism, Gandhian socialism, poverty eradication and also proclamations about total Good Days (*Achhe Din*) to come.

What has been the experience of the Indian masses? Increasing disparities in Indian society – as in other parts of the capitalist world – are now staring at us. All the pious talks about social justice have been futile.

The Reality Today

The crisis, as we all know, has intensified after 1991 and the neoliberal policies have only resulted in increasing inequality. In 1991, India did not have even one dollar billionaire that is one who has more than Rs.7000 crores as per today's conversion rate. By 2000 there were 8 of them in India. The number increased to 53 by 2012 and by March this year the number is 121. All these are the figures of FORBES magazine. The total assets of these billionaires come to 441 billion dollars (Rs.31 lakh crores) which is 22% of the GDP of India.

India's billionaire number one, Mukesh Ambani, increased his assets from \$23 billion in 2017 to \$44 billion in 2018. His increase in assets in a year amounts to Rs.1,19,000 crores! None of the billionaires in the world would have had such a fast increase in their assets. Noted journalist, P. Sainath, who specializes in studying rural India, says that through this annual increase of Ambani alone, 8 crores of people can be given work under MNREGS for 365 days; i.e., without a single holiday. In other words, this increase in the assets of a single individual is equal to the wages of 8 crore people!

Rural India's situation is more critical than that of the urban work force. 90 percent of the rural families earn less than Rs.10,000 per month. The lowest 10 percent of the rural population has had their income reduced by 3 percent to 5 percent in 2017 says Sainath.

This is not, in one way, India specific. Income disparities in the capitalist world are increasing. An Oxfam report, released in the beginning of 2018, said that the richest 1% percent in the world own more than the remaining 99% of humanity. 42 individuals own wealth equaling that of the 370 crores of the poorest. There are 2043 dollar billionaires and the year 2017 saw the highest increase, with '*one being added to the list every two days*'. But the bottom 370 crore saw no increase in wealth at all.

This cruel exploitation, resulting in increasing inequalities, is the basis on which capitalism thrives. And, every crisis in the system is used to heap more miseries on the toiling people. All the tall claims about growth and development are not reflected in the lives of the vast majority of the Indian toilers, both rural and urban.

Even the latest report of the ILO on wages points out the sorry state of affairs in India. That report is on the basis of the figures for the year 2011-12 and we all know, out of our own experience, that situation has become graver since then. 62% of the wage earners in India were employed as casual workers and got only 36% of wages received by regular or salaried workers. The last 7 years have only made the situation more grim. Even in the wage structure, the urban and rural divide and the divide between men and women are also increasing.

All out efforts are being made by the ruling classes to further attack the working people, in various ways.

The increasing disparities are a reflection of the all out aggressive push by the corporates in capitalist countries to garner ever higher profits. In many parts of the world today there is an unholy nexus between the big corporates and governments, who together loot labour and exploit natural resources, heaping immense miseries on the workers and environmental degradation. This political nexus is utilizing reactionary, right wing regressive ideologies to divert and divide the people, along with attacks on the democratic rights of the populace.

In such a situation, we have to build up unity, strengthen struggles, not only on day to day issues, but also related to the policy alternatives. The recent Mazdoor-Kisan Sangharsh Rally in New Delhi and the related countrywide campaign was designed towards that.

The present day challenges can only be met by such unity of working class and other sections of the toiling people and by building up powerful and sustained struggles. This anniversary of the Great October Revolution is an occasion to renew our pledge to strive for a revolutionary change and establishing an exploitation free society.

From the Declaration of National Convention of Workers

Jobloss due to Demonetisation

The estimates by independent surveys and those sponsored by employers' organizations revealed loss of 70 lakh jobs with closure of 2.34 lakh small factory units in the first few months of demonetization. The livelihood-loss of another 6 crore people in informal economy and about 17 lakh job losses in organized sector speaks about the grim ground reality. Faced with such pathetic records the government is busy in concoction of statistics with twists to make fraudulent claims on employment generation. Regular Employment Survey which was conducted by Labour Ministry has been stayed.

Ayushman Bharat

Privatisation of Healthcare System & Insurance Driven Healthcare

J. S. Majumdar, Vice President, CITU

Fundamental Cause of Ill Health and Diseases

Though important, neither the absence of proper environment like 'Sachha Bharat' nor the medical care like 'Ayushman Bharat' is the root cause of ill health and diseases. Fundamental cause of ill-health and diseases is not individual, but social. There is direct connection between the disease and poverty; linked with the level of consumption, overwork and starvation.

Since nineteenth century there have been widespread public health measures and the creation of national healthcare systems in different countries of the world as the outcome of intense and protracted political struggle.

Commodification of Health & Rise of Medical Industrial Complex

With commodification of health, healthcare system has become a system of commercial transactions – a marketplace composed of corporate hospitals and medical centres, research and diagnostic laboratories, pharmaceutical firms, medical equipment manufacturers, health insurance companies and so on.

All studies have shown the importance of governments' role in healthcare and state-run healthcare systems in improving health outcomes and ameliorating the more negative effects of market driven healthcare. It comes as a conflict between the modern state and the market. Where a democratic government has a duty to provide health for all; corporates have obligations to their investors which take priority over obligations to patients. Hence, there are attempts to replace public healthcare services by the corporates in healthcare business.

Public Healthcare Network

Public healthcare network across India has, as in March 2015, 1,53,655 Sub Centres (SCs); 25,308 Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and 5,396 Community Health Centres (CHCs), district hospitals and medical colleges. In urban areas, there are also hospitals / dispensaries in subdivisions and under municipal local bodies.

Each SC serves a population of 5,000 (3,000 in hilly and tribal areas); consists of at least one Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) and Multipurpose Health Worker (MHW); and the expenses are entirely borne by the Central Government. SCs also work to educate the rural people on health.

Each PHC is staffed by a medical officer and other paramedical staff; serves 30,000 population (20,000 in remote areas); supervises over 6 SCs; acts as referral hospital from SCs; and its expenses are borne entirely by the respective State Government. Each CHC serves 1.2 lakh population (80,000 in remote areas); funded entirely by the State Government; acts as referral hospital from PHCs. District Hospitals are the final referral centres for the primary and secondary levels of the public health system. In 2010 there were 605 district hospitals when there are 640 districts in the country. Medical colleges and research institutions under both the Central and State Governments and jointly owned also act as referral hospitals.

This public healthcare network is under serious attack by Modi government.

Ending Healthcare Planning

Coming to power, Modi government abolished Planning Commission and ending planning process altogether leaving economic development entirely on the market forces. Public healthcare system, which was integral to planning process, became the worst victim.

National Health Policy 2017 for Privatisation Drive

Modi government's National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 revolves round '*emergence of robust health care industry*' and '*increased fiscal capacity in public funding*'. NHP 2017 directed to "*Align the growth of private healthcare sector with public health goals*" to "*Enable private sector contribution to making health care systems more effective, efficient, rational, safe, affordable and ethical.*" NHP 2017 proposed to establish Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) for primary healthcare.

Launching of Ayushman Bharat Health Scheme

In this background, Modi government launched Aushman Bharat Health Programmes. Ayushman Bharat healthcare programme has two parts. One part is to establish of Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) for primary healthcare. The other part is Ayushman Bharat – National Health Protection Scheme (AB-NHPS) - for secondary and tertiary healthcare.

Both the components of Ayushman Bharat were announced as 'flagship programmes' and epitomized in Modi government's '*Ayushman Bharat for a New India – 2022*' in the Union Government's 2018-19 budget. BJP is trying to popularise *Ayushman Bharat* as 'Modicare' in 'Obamacare' style of USA.

Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)

Modi government simply renamed more than 1.53 lakh centrally funded existing SCs as HWCs and allotted measly sum of Rs.1200 Crore in the name of supplying 'free medicines' which comes to Rs.781 for 5,000 people in a year in each SC! It has no programme of removing the existing deficiencies in the SCs. Therefore, the NHP, 2017 suggested private sector alignment.

Lowering Budget Allocation for Health

Despite 'flagship' Ayushman Bharat healthcare programme, the budget allocation for health has come down from 2.4% of GDP in FY 2017-18 to 2.1% in FY 2018-19.

Ayushman Bharat Privatisation Drive

Ayushman Bharat is a two prong attack of (i) privatisation of public healthcare system and (ii) privately owned insurance-driven healthcare system.

Before and immediately after Ayushman Bharat project of privatisation of public healthcare system, BJP ruled state governments were in privatisation spree. Rajasthan government has already privatised 42 rural PHCs in 2016, 19 to 'WISH Foundation'; and 43 urban PHCs in 13 districts in 2017; and issued tender notice in August, 2017 for privatisation of 50 more rural PHCs. In Rajasthan PPP model in healthcare, the government offers to pay up to Rs.30 lakh per PHC in return for the private entity taking over the PHC management and all its operations.

Immediately after Ayushman Bharat programme was announced in the Central budget, Chhattisgarh BJP State Government decided in March 2018 to hand over 9 government-run CHCs, including 4 in the State capital Raipur and 2 in steel city Bilai, in PPP model.

On 29 April, 2018 Uttar Pradesh BJP Government announced plan to establish 1000 hospitals in PPP model as part of central government's Ayushman Bharat programme; and already asked the UK consultancy firm Ernst & Young to prepare a project report.

NITI Aayog in July, 2017, issued a guideline for "*Public Private Partnership for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in District Hospitals*".

Insurance Driven Ayushman Bharat – NHPS

The other 'flagship programme' is Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Scheme (AB-NHPS) for hospitalisation expenses up to Rs.5 Lakh per family each year covering 10.74 Crore poor and vulnerable families for secondary and tertiary healthcare.

Data released by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) shows that the hospital and diagnostic centres attracted FDI worth \$4.83 billion during 2000-17. According to National Family Health Survey-3, the private medical sector remains the primary source of healthcare for 70% of households in urban areas and 63% of households in rural areas. This burgeoning private sector hospitals having substantial FDI must have a growing market.

The government had relaxed FDI norms in 2016 in insurance sector permitting 49% FDI through automatic route. Two public sector insurance companies were listed in 2017 for disinvestment.

UPA's Man Mohan Singh Government had already allowed drug companies 100% FDI through automatic route in Greenfield projects (new ventures) and, under approval by FIPB (Foreign Investment Promotion Board), in Brownfield project (existing companies) in India. Those foreign drug companies, who left India during pre-neoliberal stage, started coming back through FDI's Brownfield route. To facilitate the process of Indian companies' take-over by drug MNCs, Modi government has taken one more step allowing up to 74% of FDI in Brownfield in pharmaceuticals through automatic route.

A disciplined, integrated and pan India market has to be provided for this troika of corporates in hospital, insurance and medicine business with substantial foreign capital. NHPS is meant for that. It is the business through public funding through insurance route.

Reaping Huge Profit by Insurance Companies

One can draw conclusion on insurance companies reaping huge profit out of public funding from the experience of Modi government's much touted Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY). According to the data available from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA) shows that 11 insurance companies have hugely benefitted by Rs. 10,000 crore in just one year in 2016 from PMFBY. AB-NHPS is of much bigger scale.

Launching of Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojna (PM–JAY)

On 21 March 2018 Modi government announced launching of 'Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission' (AB-NHPM). It is now renamed as Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojna (PM–JAY). From Red Fort rampart on Independence Day, addressing the nation, the Prime Minister announced launching of PM-JAY on 25 September, 2018 in Jharkhand (It was actually held on 23 September).

PM-JAY subsumed the ongoing Centrally sponsored schemes – Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS). It subsumes States sponsored healthcare schemes.

It also infringes upon the Centre-State relation. Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Council (AB-NHPMC) has been set up being chaired by the Union Health and Family Welfare Minister and State Health Ministers as its members at apex level to take policy decisions in line with GST council. Centre and States contribution in insurance premium would be in the ratio of 60:40.

PM-JAY is governed in corporate style by Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Governing Board (AB-NHPMGB). Under it, Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission Agency (AB-NHPMA) has been registered under Society's Act to manage the AB-NHPM at the operational level which is headed by a full time CEO. On 27 March, 2018, Indu Bhushan, the Director General of East Asia Department of Asian Development Bank in Manila was appointed as the CEO of PM-JAY.

Each State has a State Health Agency (SHA) to implement the scheme. Transfer of funds from Central government will take place through AB-NHPM directly to SHAs. Like GSTN, under NITI Aayog, an IT platform has been created for 'paperless, cashless transactions' at all levels.

Corporatisation of Entire Healthcare Network

In addition to privatisation drive of public healthcare network and insurance driven healthcare system designed in Ayushman Bharat scheme; Modi government has taken other steps for handing over entire healthcare in India to the Troika of corporates in insurance, hospitals and drug making business to decide everything - level of treatment, medicinal prescriptions and supply of medicines and diagnostics and the cost determined by and amongst the Troika.

To facilitate this process, Modi government allowed e-retailers like Amazon and now Wal-Mart to enter medicine supply market as corporate suppliers replacing about 8.5 lakh medicine retailers. For this, the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 and its Central Rules, 1945 are being amended (draft circulated) for e-prescription, e-pharmacy and e-marketing.

To privatise Medical Education and Practice, the Government placed Medical Commission Bill 2017 in Lok Sabha on 29 December 2017 and in Rajya Sabha on 8 January, 2018 replacing the Medical Council of India (MCI) and repealing the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956. It is now pending before the Parliamentary Standing Committee. But, the Government has already issued ordinance appointing a nominated body.

The Government circulated the draft of Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions which proposes repeal of Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Service) Act, 1976 (applicable to Medical and Sales Representatives) and, thereby, ending their statutory status as 'workmen' and coverage under other labour laws through it.

From the Declaration of National Convention of Workers

Aggressive Privatisation of Public Sector

The government is aggressively going ahead with privatization of all strategic PSUs; including defence production, public sector banks and insurances, railways, public road transport, oil, power, steel, coal etc through disinvestment, strategic sale, outsourcing and promoting 100 per cent FDI. It is stripping all cash rich PSUs. Defence sector privatization is designed to destroy manufacturing capability and research initiatives developed during last over last six and half decades. Complete privatization of the Railways step by step is going on.

Legislative measures to pave the way of privatization of major ports are also in the advanced stage. CPSUs even in core and strategic sectors like Energy, Petroleum, Telecom, Metal, Mining, Machine Building, Electronic and Digital, Road, Air and Water Transport, Port & Dock and more are under the privatization onslaught of the Government.

In J & K, the entire land and building of the production unit of the sole PSU, ITI Ltd., is being taken over in the name of building an NSG Hub there. The Convention notes that workers of these industries are fighting sectoral battle unitedly.

Railways Privatisation

Operating private trains in the existing tracks built by Railways is being permitted. Moreover, free access to railway yards, sheds and workshops for maintenance of private coaches, wagons and engines etc are being offered to private operators. Already 23 railway stations in all metro cities have been shortlisted for privatisation. More than 600 railway stations along with land around them have been identified for development through private players in the name of "redevelopment of railway stations and land around them". It was part of budget speech of the finance minister. Workers not only in Railways but in all Government and Public Sector Undertakings shall be worst victims of privatization in terms of job security, democratic trade union rights and protection of achievements in the areas of pay, perks, social security etc. Like Central Electricity Regulatory Authority (CERC), a Railway Development Authority (RDA) has been created. Given the skyrocketing increase in electricity tariff by CERC, under RDA railway fare and goods freight is poised to be hiked hurting the common people and benefiting the private profiteers.

Big Battles in Automobile MNCs in Chennai

For Rights to Form Union & of Collective Bargaining; and
Against Victimisation & Deplorable Working Conditions

R. Karumalaiyan, Central Secretariat Member, CITU

Thousands of workers of multinational automobile companies in Oragadam–Sriperumbudur industrial belt near Chennai are on indefinite strike and in other forms of militant agitation for more than a month now, till filing this report, mainly to establish their rights of forming union and of collective bargaining as per their Constitutional and legal rights; and against arbitrary actions, victimisations and deplorable working conditions.

Starting on different dates in September, 2018 and independent of each other, the workers of three multinational automobile companies - Yamaha, Royal Enfield and MSI - in Oragadam–Sriperumbudur industrial belt are on indefinite strike basically on issues of unionization and collective bargaining; and against arbitrary actions, victimizations and deplorable working conditions.

Encouraged by the pro-corporate policies of BJP's Modi government at the Centre and a pliant government in the State; the managements of these automobile MNCs, throwing the due process of law, advisory of labour enforcement authorities and courts orders to winds; resorted to arbitrary actions, victimisation of the workers and unions leaders and repressive measures with the assistance of police and hired goons.

Facing these attacks, the workers are valiantly fighting with determination, unity and resistance. There is wave of sympathy, support and joint solidarity actions by the trade union movement in Tamilnadu. CITU Working Committee in its recently held meeting at Vishakhapatnam on 1-3 November specially adopted a resolution greeting these valiant workers fighting for their basic trade union rights and calling for nationwide solidarity and support.

Strike in Yamaha

Yamaha, the Japanese two wheeler giant, in its plant at Vallam in this industrial belt, has 805 permanent and 1500 plus temporary workers. Helped by CITU, these workers formed a union – the India Yamaha Motor Thozhilalar Sangam (IYMTS) - in June 2018, got it registered, adopted resolution to affiliate the Union with CITU and raised demands with the management. The charter of demands was admitted in conciliation under due process of law. First tripartite conciliation meeting was held on 20 September, 2018. Union's office bearers attended; but the management did not attend.

As the two office bearers of the union, who attended conciliation meeting, turned up for duty next day, on 21 September, the security guards prevented their entry and told them that their services were terminated.

Protesting against this high handed action of the management, around 700 workers, already on duty inside the plant, en massé demanded of the management to allow their union's leaders to join duty. As the management did not respond, the agitated workers began a sit-in inside the plant and resorted to indefinite strike on single demand of revocation of termination from company's employment the workers who are the union's office bearers.

Till filing this report, the sit-in strike is continuing despite management's threats and intimidation sending hired goons to the houses of the striking workers; and obtaining an interim order from Madras high court on vacating the plant and restricting agitation beyond 200 metres from it. On the pretext of court's order, police acted as strike breakers, used force against the

workers and began a reign of terror. Workers defended themselves against such attacks and resisted their forced removal from plant premises even climbing on nearby mobile phone tower. Police filed false criminal cases against more than 12 workers and three of them were arrested.

On 4 October, DLC held conciliation meeting and advised both - the union to call off the strike and the management to allow the two terminated workers to resume duties. Though the union agreed, but management refused to sign the minutes. Hence, the strike continues.

Strike in Royal Enfield

Most of the companies in Sriperumbudur – Oragadam industrial belt have been dealing with labour issues through 'Works Committees' disallowing formation of trade unions. However, being unhappy about this arrangement in favour of the employers and about meagre wages and bonus, about 6000 workers of the oldest multinational two wheelers Royal Enfield producers, now Eicher Motors Ltd, in its manufacturing plant in Oragadam industrial area formed a union, the Royal Enfield Employees Union, in April, 2018, supported by CITU.

The union placed charter of demands on wages, bonus etc. The management immediately resorted to victimization of the activists who took initiative in forming the union. Four workers were summarily dismissed from service, against which a dispute was raised which was admitted in conciliation. During pendency of this conciliation, 120 more workers were dismissed from services on 24 September. This attack on the union and their leading functionaries and workers infuriated all workers. They resorted to indefinite strike against these mass dismissals.

On conciliation officer's advisory, the workers returned to work on 27 September. But, the management refused to allow all workers to resume duties and announced to allow them to join duties in phases. This was firmly rejected by all workers together which compelled the management to rescind their decision.

However, on 30 September, when the workers reported to resume work, the management attempted to confiscate their phones against the provision in the registered standing order of the company. Further, the management consistently refused to attend any conciliation meeting. Under these circumstances, the workers decided to continue the strike.

The struggle in Royal Enfield became more serious when the workers, on the advisory of the conciliation officer, returned to work on 5 October. As before, the management repeated its earlier stand asking the workers to deposit their cell phones and sign a 'good conduct' undertaking. Securing such undertakings of 'good conduct' is a common practice in multinational companies in the area like Foxconn, Comstar, Pricol etc.

Such arbitrary actions of the management on 5 October prompted the workers to continue the strike. Management called police. At management's instance, the police arrested more than 300 workers. This agitated all workers who assembled near the factory gate despite management securing court's order restricting the workers assembly within 100 meters of the factory.

Those who assembled near the factory gate included several women workers. These diploma holder women workers have not received their letters of appointment as probationers. The management has plan to recruit them as 'Fixed Term Employees'.

Intense agitation, strikes and protests by Royal Enfield workers prompted the state labour minister to hold a tripartite meeting on 8 October. However, this has not changed anything on the ground.

Strike in MSI

In **Myong Shin Automative India Ltd (MSI)**, an automobile component maker and supplier to Hyundai Motors, there are 600 workers including 150 permanent workers. On expiry of a so called wage agreement on 31 March, 2016, fresh demands were raised for new wage agreement

by the so called 'works committee'. This time, however, there was no agreement. The situation worsened further as management unilaterally increased workload and initiated vindictive disciplinary actions against some leading activists. Industrial dispute was raised, conciliation also failed and the matter was referred to labour court for adjudication.

At this juncture, workers approached local leaders of CITU, which has visible presence in the area and, guided by them, formed 'MSI Thozhilalar Sangam' as a branch of CITU affiliated General Workers Union in November, 2017. This union raised disputes and the workers went on a day's strike on 31 January, 2018.

Since the formation of union, the management adopted several unfair labour practices. Around 13 workers were suspended for leading 31 January strike. Management is attempting to force reduction in wage and increment rates in the new wage agreement.

Under these circumstances, the union served a strike notice on 9 August, 2018 and, accordingly, the workers resorted to indefinite strike from 6 September. The management remained adamant and continued to employ outside workers in production despite Madras high court's order against it. The strike is still continuing.

Surging Solidarity Movement

At the joint call of central trade unions, other state federations and unions for support and solidarity with the striking automobile workers; more than 4000 workers from other manufacturing units in the industrial area staged a massive demonstration in front Yamaha plant in the last week of September; and thousands of workers went on statewide supportive movement on 16 October. Decided by CITU state committee, its units and unions staged statewide demonstrations in front of Yamaha showrooms on 2 November. During these demonstrations CITU leaders were arrested in Chennai and Vellore.

On 16 October, unions in 20 manufacturing units served strike notice in support of these strikes. Leaders from all class and mass organizations are regularly visiting and greeting Yamaha workers with financial and material help. CITU state leaders A. Soundararajan, S. Kannan and L. Muthukumar have been regularly guiding striking workers from the beginning. R. Karumalaiyan from CITU national centre also visited and greeted the striking workers.

From the Declaration of National Convention of Workers

Outsourcing of Defence Production

Most dubious is outsourcing of more than 50% products including weapons and critical equipments, so long being produced by the Ordnance establishments. More than 250 items manufactured by Ordnance factories have been notified as non-core. Orders are placed to private players for supply of some of these items. Government is determined to close down 5 Ordnance factories manufacturing items used by our soldiers and officers and it would render thousands of workers jobless including 1600 female tailors. Defence PSUs and shipyards are also being subjected to discrimination in respect of work orders while private corporates are being patronized by the Government in defence procurement deals.

Attack on Road Transport

Attempts are being made by many State governments to dismantle public sector road transport by issuing route permits to private parties. The Central government intends to get the new Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill 2017 hastily passed in the parliament which will allow wholesale privatisation of road transport on the one hand and impose draconian measures on the road transport workers including those in private sector.

The convention salutes the road transport workers of Maharashtra who demonstrated excellent communication skill, rock hard determination, commitment and unity while observing 4 days statewide general strike to press for their genuine demands despite use of all oppressive measures by the Government and also by some black sheep.

The convention also notes the widely participated countrywide strike by road transport workers on 7 August 2018 against the Motor Vehicles Amendment Bill. The convention condemns the State governments, including the State governments of Haryana and Rajasthan, and Central government's anti people and anti worker moves in the transport sector.

Attack on PSBs and NPAs

Public Sector Banks (PSBs) are under attack through various legislative and executive measures ultimately privatizing and extending undue favour to the same private corporate crooks whose default of paying back the loan has put the banking sector in severe difficulties. Instead of addressing the problems of NPA and fixing the corporate defaulters, the Government is going ahead with its scheme of merger of banks which in reality lead to closure of numerous branches resulting in job losses and narrowing of the outreach of the PSBs. NPA's have crossed Rs.13 lakh crores. After Lalit Modi and Vijaya Mallaya, now Neerav Modi and Mehul Choksi have also dodged the Indian system and ran away with the loot of Indian people's money.

The government brought FRDI Bill, but it was withdrawn after determined opposition by the bank unions. But, now, the government has come out with Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code Law.

Social Security Code: Dismantling of Existing Social Security Structures

Latest being the 'Social Security Code' for dismantling existing statutory social security infrastructures under EPFO, CMPF and ESI and other statutes, abolishing all welfare related cess and usurping the huge accumulated social security fund of more than Rs.24 lakh crore and making it available for share market speculation camouflaging under fraudulent 'universalisation of social security'. The proposed Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH) is a very dangerous move on the occupational safety and health including the welfare of the factory and service sector workers.

Amending Trade Union Act

The latest amendment being the Trade Union Act, 1926 in which the Government intends to change the definition of the central level and state level trade unions by amending Section 28A and 29 with intention to interfere in the functioning of trade unions and dictate in the internal matters of unions and to facilitate "hire and fire" under different names and derecognize the Central and State pro-worker trade unions.

Solidarity with the Peasants

The National Convention of Workers extended full solidarity with the fighting farmers in various States as well as under the joint national forums of peasants' organizations, including the struggle of STs for implementation of Forest Rights Act, 2006. It is the same set of pro-corporate, pro-landlord policies which have created a severe crisis in agriculture, biggest livelihood provider in the economy leading to continuing increase in spite of suicides. The promised Minimum Support Prices one and half times the cost of production to farmers was not accomplished rather further fraud is committed on the farming community with the kind of announcements made on MSP for their crops.

Government's Communal and Authoritarian Measures

National Convention strong denounced the communal and divisive machinations on the society being carried on with the active patronage of the Government machinery. Communal forces are cultivating an atmosphere of conflicts within the society on non-issues. It is disrupting the unity of the workers and the toiling people in general, so vital to carry forward the ongoing struggles based on our 12-point Charter of Demands.

The BJP Governments are using draconian UAPA, NSA as well as the agencies of CBI, NIA, IT to harass and suppress any dissenting opinions. The peace loving secular people in the country are facing a stark situation of terror and insecurity all around.

INDUSTRIES & SECTORS

Construction

9th Conference of CFWI

The 9th national conference of the Construction Workers Federation of India (CFWI) was held at Sholapur in Maharashtra on 26-28 October, 2018 attended by 416 delegates, including 44 women, from 21 states. The conference was inaugurated by CITU general secretary Tapan Sen, who guided the conference remaining present throughout. The conference was greeted and addressed by CITU national secretary E. Kareem, MP and CITU national secretary and WFTU deputy general secretary Swadesh Dev Roye.

The CFWI general secretary Debanjan Chakravorty presented report and future tasks. 36 delegates from 21 states and 3 union territories participated in the discussion. After reply the report, tasks and accounts were adopted unanimously.

A special session discussed on report on working women issues presented by Malathi Chittibabu. 19 delegates from 14 states discussed on this report and expressed their experience. The discussion was summed up by the general secretary.

The Conference adopted resolutions in support of 8-9 January workers national general strike, in solidarity with Haryana transport workers strike and against communal and divisive forces. The conference gave clarion call to defeat BJP and its allies in elections to save India. The conference adopted movemental tasks - to make 8-9 January, 2019 workers general strike successful and – work for defeat BJP and allies and victory of Left and democratic parties in the next Parliamentary election; and 9 points tasks on organisation.

The conference unanimously elected 135 members national working committee and 48 office bearers with Sukhbir Singh as President and V. Sashikumar as General Secretary.

The conference ended with a huge rally of workers at Sholapur addressed by Tapan Sen, CITU Maharashtra state leader Adam Master and newly elected president of CFWI Sukhbir Singh.

Railways

CITU-led AILRSA Delegation met Chairman of Railway Board

A delegation of All India Loco Running Staff Association (AILRSA), led by CITU general secretary Tapan Sen and national secretary E. Kareem, MP; met the Chairman of the Railway Board, Ashwani Lohani, at Rail Bhavan in New Delhi on 8 October, submitted memorandum and held discussion on the inordinate delay in resolving two issues concerning the loco running staff depriving them of their legitimate claims of running allowance - Kilometrage Allowance (KMA) - and parity in pension. Lohani assured that the issues will be attended to and resolved shortly.

AILRSA has been agitating demanding KMA @ 30% of actual pay, after pay fixation as on 1 January, 2016 on the basis of 7th CPC recommendation and to be made retrospectively effective from 1 July 2017, the date of implementation of 7th CPC recommended TA rates. The Railway Board notified KMA @ 30% on minimum pay instead of actual pay.

Deviating from Government's notification and nodal ministry's order; the Railway Board has been discriminating in payment of pension between pre and post 1 January, 2016 retirees and other employees. AILRSA has been demanding removal of such discrimination and demanding pension parity.

STATES

Haryana

Road Transport Workers Historic Strike

18 days historic strike of the workers of state public sector Haryana Roadways, with massive support of all other sections of workers and employees in the state and trade unions' countrywide solidarity and international support; concluded on 3 November morning at the intervention of Punjab-Haryana High Court in a PIL case putting the BJP's state government in back foot.

High Court's Intervention

In an interim order on 2 November, 2018 the High Court stayed all punitive and vindictive actions - including arrests, suspensions, dismissals and disciplinary actions, all proceedings under ESMA - of the government against the striking road transport and supporting workers and employees; directed the government that all employees shall be allowed to join duties immediately; directed both the parties to hold bilateral discussion on the transport workers demands; and fixed next date of hearing on 14 November.

The Strike

Haryana Roadways workers resorted to time-bound extending strikes beginning on 16 October, 2018 against government's privatisation attempt by hiring 720 private buses in the fleet of Roadways buses under 'kilometre scheme'. The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Haryana Roadways workers unions decided to continue the struggle against government's any attempt of privatisation when the strike was called off on 3 November at the intervention and open assurance of the High Court.

Government's Repression

During 18 days strike, BJP government in Haryana resorted to repressive policies to suppress the movement of road transport workers including filing 1489 cases and arresting 241 workers under ESMA; filing cases and arresting 418 workers and employees under sections 107 and 151 of IPC; more than 400 workers were dismissed including about 350 contract workers; suspended 406 workers. Further, the government filed cases against scores of transport and supporting workers under several other sections of IPC including sections 147, 148, 186, 332, 353, 341, 427, 307 and 120B and on charges of obstructing national highway; arrested several other workers and employees and sent them to jail. Union offices of AIRTWF, AITUC, INTUC in some places were sealed.

Statewide Solidarity & Support

Despite this oppression, the transport workers and other supporting workers and employees continued their determined strike and struggle. In this struggle, Sarb Karamchari Sangh Haryana played significant role. Under its banner, government employees and teachers went on mass casual leave on 26 October and resorted to two days massive statewide strike on 30 and 31 October, 2018. Even on government's record about 2.5 lakh employees and teachers were on these 2 days strike.

18 days road transport workers strike received unprecedented support of the people in general in the state including vast number of elected members of rural and urban local bodies. Leaders of striking roadways workers, Sarb Karamchari Sangh, CITU and Kisan Sabha carried on vigorous campaign against roadways privatisation and government's repression. Vast number of rural masses came in tractors and trolleys and joined the massive dharnas of striking employees in several district headquarters.

The rising tide of protest created pressure on the government. It is being widely discussed that at the instance of the government, the PIL was filed before Haryana-Punjab High Court for a way out.

Also considering the incoming festivals and people's difficulties, the JAC of striking transport workers decided to call off the strike and informed the court accordingly on the assurances given by the court as stated above. But the struggling workers and their organisations are determined to carry on the struggle to force the government to withdraw all private buses under kilometre scheme, deploy new Roadways own buses and give employment to the unemployed.

Countrywide & International Support

CITU strongly protested against the repressive actions of the state government and gave countrywide call for protest and sending protest letters to Haryana chief minister. In response, thousands of protest letters poured to chief minister's office. Many states organised solidarity programmes. In Punjab, Haryana chief minister's effigy was burnt at several places.

10 central trade unions issued joint statement condemning the repression and victimisations; demanded immediate release of all arrested employees, withdrawal of all cases against them; withdrawal of all terminations, suspensions; to stop all steps to privatise the public road transport operation and immediately start bipartite negotiations with the JAC.

All India Road Transport Workers' Federation (AIRTWF) extended full support, its leaders participated in the agitation and greeted the striking workers, its state units and unions expressed solidarity. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana RTC workers made financial contribution which was handed over to the JAC by AIRTWF dy. general secretary R. Lakshmaiah.

World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), representing more than 95 million workers in 130 countries, issued statement from Athens on 25 October greeting and expressing solidarity with Haryana Roadways workers for their successful strike and heroic struggle against privatization facing government's repression.

Municipal Workers Successful Strike

Sarb Karamchari Sangh led Nagar Palika Karamchari Sangh Haryana of municipal workers began their 3 days notified statewide strike on 3 October, 2018 in protest against State Government not implementing 24 May, 2018 agreement, arrived at after 16 days indefinite strike then. The Union announced strike's further escalation to indefinite strike in case Government failed to address their demands within 3 days.

Very next day, on 4 October, at the instance of the Chief Minister and department's minister, the CM's Principal Secretary with other officials held discussion with the leaders of the Union and of Sarb Karamchari Sangh and entered into an agreement mainly on implementation of earlier agreement with further improvement on wage and regularisation. The Government assured to issue implementation order soon. On that basis the strike was called off on that day.

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS (GENERAL) FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS
(BASE 2001=100)**

State	Centre	Aug 2018	Sept 2018	State	Centre	Aug 2018	Sept 2018
AP	GUNTUR	284	282	MHR	MUMBAI	297	295
	VIJAYWADA	285	285		NAGPUR	361	366
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	289	291		NASIK	334	336
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	271	271		PUNE	314	317
	GUWAHATI	260	261		SHOLAPUR	309	313
	LABAC SILCHAR	263	264	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	318	319
	MARIANI JORHAT	253	253		ROURKELA	310	311
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	252	251	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	311	302
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	323	320	PUN	AMRITSAR	321	321
CHD	CHANDIGARH	303	304		JALANDHAR	303	303
CHS	BHILAI	322	324		LUDHIANA	286	287
DLI	DELHI	286	287	RJN	AJMER	279	280
GOA	GOA	332	325		BHILWARA	281	280
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	274	276		JAIPUR	287	291
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Yamaha Workers on Strike



MSI Workers on Strike



Royal Enfield Workers on Strike



Other Workers Solidarity Rally before Yamaha



Leaders being arrested

Haryana Road Transport Workers Historic Strike

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