

10 September Bharat Bandh

(Report Page 8)



Delhi



West Bengal



Bihar



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WORKING CLASS

OCTOBER 2018
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**Onto 2 Days
Workers General Strike**

BJP Hatao – Modi Hatao

The National Convention of Workers, held in New Delhi on 28 September, gave clarion call of 2 days countrywide workers general strike on 8-9 January, 2019 after more than 3 month long state, district and sectorwise / industrywise conventions; campaign and other demonstrative programmes. This will be third and the biggest workers general strike, supported by the peasants and other sections of the toiling people, during BJP's Modi regime at the Centre. Other two successful general strikes were both on 2 September in 2015 and 2016. And the workers had all India Workers Mahapadav on 9-11 November, 2017, called by the central trade unions and the federations.

Under this anti-worker, anti-people, anti-national authoritarian regime of deception, diversion and division; workers have been under all round aggressive attacks; peasants facing agrarian crisis crying for remunerative prices and loan wavers; agricultural workers asking for minimum wages and social security; and the people are fighting in defence of democracy, rights and livelihood.

This year CITU has the experience of massive ground level response of these basic classes together making peasants-workers Jail Bharo on 9 August an unprecedented success and Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally on 5 September historic. This forward journey created huge confidence and enthusiasm. The consolidation of workers-peasants alliance rejuvenated the people's resistance in 10 September successful Bharat Bandh against skyrocketing price increase of petrol-diesel-LPG, in turn, spiraling prices of all essential commodities. Obviously, this rule of corporate-communal-corrupt-authoritarian regime is not going to change its policies and politics in about six months of its life left. Prior to that, there are 5 States elections immediately after this convention.

Therefore, the campaign, agitation and the call of the strike, emanating from the national Convention of Workers, have to be combined with the call of –

BJP Hatao; Modi Hatao; Desh Bachao

National Convention of Workers

8-9 January - 2 Days General Strike

The National Convention of Workers, held at Mavlankar Auditorium in New Delhi on 28 September, 2018, gave clarion call to all sections of workers and employees of the country, irrespective of their affiliation, to rise up and resort to 2 days Nationwide General Strike on 8-9 January, 2019; and more-than-3-month long pre-strike intensive campaign and demonstrative programmes in protest against Modi government's anti-workers, anti-people and anti-national policies and for their 12 point charter of demands.

The Convention unanimously adopted a Declaration with action programmes to – • Hold state, district, industry, sector level joint conventions during October–November • Organise gate meetings, rallies etc during November–December; • Submit strike notice jointly through demonstrations during 17-22 December 2018; and • 2 days Workers General Strike on 8-9 January, 2019.

The Mavlankar Auditorium was overflowing with the delegates representing crores of workers and employees, from all organised and unorganised sectors of the country, and 10 central trade unions (CTUs) and independent national federations. The convention was presided by the national leaders of 10 CTUs including CITU president K. Hemalata and Ashok Singh (INTUC), Ramendra Kumar (AITUC), S. N. Pathak (HMS), R. K. Sharma (AIUTUC), Probir Banerjee (TUCC), Lata (SEWA), Santosh Rai (AICCTU), K. Natarajan (LPF) and Satrujit Singh (UTUC).

The Convention Declaration was moved by INTUC president G. Sanjeeva Reddy. Supporting the Declaration the convention was addressed by CITU general secretary Tapan Sen and general secretaries, Amarjeet Kaur (AITUC), Harbhajan Singh Sidhu (HMS), Stayawan (AIUTUC), G. R. Shivshankar (TUCC), Rajiv Dimri (AICCTU), Ashok Ghosh (UTUC); and SEWA president Sonia George, LPF jt. general secretary Pechimuthu. NJCS leaders of central government employees and railway federations' leaders, AIRF general secretary Shivgopal Misra and NFIR president Gumnam Singh also addressed the convention. The Declaration was adopted unanimously with rousing slogans reverberating the auditorium.

The Declaration -

Noted the success of the 3 days Mahapadav in Delhi on 9-11 November 2017, as was decided in the last National Convention of Workers, held on 8 August, 2017; 17 January 2018 scheme workers countrywide strike; workers countrywide joint Satyagraha movement during 23 January – 23 February 2018 in defence of hard-won rights, against anti-labour and pro-employer labour codifications, violation of existing labour laws and of ILO Conventions, attacks on workers in both organised and unorganised sectors; and demanding to curb rising prices of essential commodities, decent jobs creation, Rs.18,000 as minimum wage and Rs.6,000 as minimum pension to all, stoppage of all moves to sell PSU shares and privatization, for universal social security coverage to all and for other demands in the workers pending 12 point charter of demands.

The Declaration noted that the Central government is undermining bipartism and tripartism; is not holding annual ILC meetings; appointed Group of Ministers is not holding any dialogue with the trade unions; the labour ministry is putting up only show of tripartism on laws amendments for records which the CTUs have consistently boycotted.

The government has been aggressively pushing anti-worker and pro-employer labour law reforms through four Labour Codes, latest being the Trade Union Act 1926; fixed term employment; allowing child labour below 14 years in 'family establishment'; pro-employer changes in Apprenticeship Act etc.

The government is not implementing ILC recommendations on equal pay and benefits for equal work for the contract workers, minimum wage on 15th ILC recommendations and Supreme Court judgement, scheme workers' statutory status as 'workers'; Supreme Court's judgement on EPS, 1995 on contribution and calculation of pension on actual pay and dearness allowance; and their ruling on construction workers cess fund and its proper utilization and benefits and ignoring trade unions in decision-making mechanism.

The government is aggressively pursuing the neoliberal policy privatizing all strategic PSUs, which the workers of these industries are unitedly fighting back; resulting in lack in job opportunities, job losses, retrenchments, increase in workload, 3% compulsory annual surrender of regular posts in government establishments, massive downsizing etc; aggravating unemployment situation; employment generation virtually turning negative; closure and shut-down of industries; huge job losses in IT sector looming large. Retrenchment of contractual employees has been taking place in banks and telecom sector. Insurance sector is also under such attack.

Price-rise of petroleum products, essential commodities including public transport, electricity, medicines etc is deepening impoverishment of the people; Demonetisation and GST created deep crises; drastic cut in government's expenditure in social sector and welfare schemes is affecting the conditions of workers more so in the unorganized sector. All these are inflicting miseries on the common people for food, health and education. These are also severely damaging the national economy and destroying its indigenous productive and manufacturing capabilities to serve the interest of the MNCs with Indian corporates as their junior partners.

The government has been delaying / obstructing PSUs wage negotiations and bipartite settlements, removal of 7th CPC anomalies, scraping of NPS, review of minimum wage and fitment, restoration of allowances, pension fitment etc for Central government employees (CGEs) and the proposed joint united action of CGEs, including defence and railways, against government's betrayal, which the convention fully supported.

The Convention extended full support to the united struggles of the scheme workers; domestic, migrant and unorganized sector workers; and demanded one rank one pension for all defence employees.

The Convention condemned the conspiratorial and authoritarian attack depriving INTUC from all representations in the tripartite and bipartite forums and committees including international forums.

The Convention extended full solidarity with the fighting farmers in States and national level under their joint forums for implementation of Forest Rights Act, MSP.

The Convention noted corruptions by the BJP led NDA government at the Centre, Rafael deal being the biggest scam, the recruitment exam scam in SSB and other competitive exams.

The Convention strongly denounced the communal and divisive machinations under government's patronage cultivating atmosphere of conflicts in society on non-issues and disrupting the unity of the workers and the toiling people which is vital to carry forward the ongoing struggles based on 12-point charter of demands.

The Convention called for raising strong voice of protest and to condemn BJP government using draconian UAPA, NSA and CBI, NIA, IT to suppress dissent and creating atmosphere of terror and insecurity.

The Declaration called upon the united platform of the working class to squarely defeat this anti-worker, anti-people and anti-national policy regime and heighten their struggle.

Towards A Strong Workers Peasants Alliance

K. Hemalata, President, CITU

Lakhs of the workers, peasants and agricultural workers, who have gathered in the historic 'Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally' near Parliament in the national capital, unanimously decided to strengthen the unity of these three class organisations and intensify joint actions against the anti-people anti-national neoliberal policies. The Rally called upon crores of the workers, peasants and agricultural workers across the country to extend support and solidarity in all possible ways to each others' independent struggles and build strong joint actions.

Thus, the workers will extend active support and solidarity to the joint kisan march on 28-30 November, when thousands of peasants will walk around 100 km to converge in Delhi from various parts of the country. The peasants all over the country will stand in solidarity with the workers in their struggle programmes including countrywide general strike which the Joint National Convention of Trade Unions will finalise on 28 September 2018. The 'Workers Peasants Martyrdom Day', which was being jointly observed for the last three years on 19 January, will be held in much more effective manner in 2019.

The enthusiasm for joint actions of the three major sections of society who produce the wealth of the country was visible from Day One. The announcement, in the CITU general council meeting in March 2018, that AIKS and AIAWU have agreed to join the massive rally planned by CITU was welcomed with thunderous applause. The participation of lakhs of workers in the 'jail bharo' programme called by AIKS on 9 August and the participation in several places of peasants in the night long 'samuhik jagaran' on the night of 14 August called by CITU, kept that enthusiasm alive.

The floods that played havoc in Kerala and parts of Karnataka and later in Assam and other states in the north east, the incessant rains in many parts of the country could not dampen the spirit and determination of these lakhs of toiling people to jointly raise their voice against the policies that have been playing havoc with their lives. This is crisply stated by a tribal peasant from Chattisgarh - 'Our problems are much bigger than this rain; that is why we have come'.

The incessant rains in Delhi created huge difficulties for CITU which decided to organise a camp to receive the participants who were to reach national capital from 2 September evening. Large parts of the maidan turned muddy with big puddles of water making only a third of the place available for erecting the tents. Emergency arrangements had to be made to lessen the hardship for the participants to the maximum extent possible. Despite all the efforts, no space could be provided to many more thousands who had to stay in the railway stations. But the participants understood the difficulties and cooperated in a highly disciplined manner. Not a single person complained. Instead, there was a festive mood in the camp, with songs, short plays etc and people from different states exchanging their experiences of struggles.

It is not only the rains that created difficulties for the participants. In several states the administration and the police tried different methods including threats and intimidation to prevent people from participating in the rally. The police in the BJP ruled Manipur detained the leadership in a police station for two hours for issuing a press statement about sending workers and peasants from the state for the Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally.

Fake and misleading reports were also widely circulated in the social media to prevent workers, particularly the scheme workers, from participating in the rally. In several states the authorities threatened them of disciplinary action or arranged official meetings etc on the same day.

Despite all these, lakhs of workers, peasants and agricultural workers from all over the country reached Delhi. The procession, led by the leadership of the three organisations, started from Ramlila Maidan at 9 O'clock and culminated in a public meeting at Parliament Street. Even by 12.30 pm the tail end of the procession did not reach the venue of the public meeting. Hundreds of people were arriving into Delhi even when the rally was about to conclude. Delhi has not witnessed such a huge rally for decades. There were huge traffic jams. One police man was heard answering somebody who asked the reason for the traffic jams 'I don't know, but they say lakhs of people have descended on Delhi last night!'

The huge participation and the patience shown by the toiling people in facing all the hurdles to reach Delhi and participate in the Rally reflected their anger against their deteriorating conditions because of the policies of the government, which the 'Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally' has raised. The lakhs of people who assembled near Parliament were determined to raise their voice against this. They were determined to fight for the reversal of the policies that were not only against their own personal interests but also against the interests of the nation as a whole.

It was this determination that made them defy the adverse weather, defy the threats and intimidations of authorities and police and face the huge difficulties in travelling thousands of kilometres. The thousands of anganwadi employees, ASHAs, midday meal workers, construction workers, MGNREGA workers, panchayat workers, village chowkidars etc travelled first from their villages to the nearest railway stations and then in jam packed railway compartments to reach Delhi spending 2-3 days one way. They brought their food and many marched carrying their luggage on their heads. Significantly, women workers comprised over half of the total participants in the Rally. While scheme workers particularly anganwadi employees, ASHAs and midday meal workers comprised the largest contingent of women, women MGNREGA workers, beedi workers etc also participated in large numbers.

Another significant feature was the huge participation of industrial workers, from both public and private sectors. Road transport workers and electricity employees also participated in large numbers. State government and central government employees, BSNL, bank and insurance employees and school teachers participated in thousands.

Despite the fact that the thousands who were on the back could not hear the speeches because the police did not allow mikes after a certain point, and also despite large numbers of them not understanding Hindi, the language of most of the speeches, most of the participants sat in the meeting till it was declared to be concluded.

The chairman of the reception committee, Prabhat Patnaik, Tapan Sen, Hannan Mollah and Vijayaraghawan, general secretaries of CITU, AIKS and AIAWU along with other leaders of all the three organisations were on the dais. The presidium comprised Hemalata, Ashok Dhawale and S Thirunavakkarasu, presidents of CITU, AIKS and AIAWU respectively.

Tapan Sen, Hannan Mollah and Vijayaraghawan were the main speakers from their respective organisations. They all strongly criticised the pro-corporate policies of the government and vowed to intensify joint struggles to defeat these policies. Defeat of the BJP led Modi government was necessary for intensification of this struggle.

30 leaders representing the fraternal trade union organisations and the affiliated federations of CITU, and AIKS and AIAWU spoke in the meeting. Amra Ram from AIKS, Brijlal Bharti from AIAWU and Tapan Sen from CITU made concluding remarks. Tapan Sen emphasised the need to take joint campaigns and struggles to the grass root level immediately after going back to their respective places. He said that while defeating Modi government was an immediate necessity that does not ensure reversal of anti-people policies. Sustained joint struggles of the workers and peasants were essential not only for the reversal of the neoliberal policies but also change in the capitalist system of which exploitation is an inherent part.

10 September Hartal

People's Political Opposition to Neoliberal Policies

A. R. Sindhu, Secretary, CITU

10 September 2018 witnessed virtual shut down in States like Kerala (except for exempted flood rehabilitation and relief activities), Karnataka, Punjab, Bihar, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Jammu & Kashmir. In many states including Jharkhand, Odisha, North-East and in northern and southern India, people came out on the streets with spontaneous mass protests like rail roko, rasta roko, demonstrations, dharnas etc. In Tripura and West Bengal there were widespread popular protest actions.

The call for countrywide hartal on 10 September by the Left parties, which was synchronized by the call of most of the country's opposition parties, had actually given voice to the people's anger against the unprecedented price rise of recent months caused primarily by the price rise of petroleum products – petrol, diesel and cooking gas. The massive response showed the people's will to defeat BJP's regime at the Centre.

Fully supporting Left parties call, CITU called upon the working class across the country to ensure total success of the people's general strike. Workers and other toiling sections are worst affected by unprecedented economic burden being imposed by the BJP's Modi government. On one side Modi government has failed to control prices; on the other side workers' wages have remained stagnant, employment opportunities declined, government refuses to implement its promise of remunerative prices on Swaminathan formula and loan waiver to the peasants; but it has waived off loans worth around Rs.4 lakh crore to the big corporates. Instead of addressing the burning issues of the people, BJP and its Modi government are diverting people's attention and spreading hatred and animosities among the people. It is trying to suppress anger and discontent against its policies by using authoritarian measures.

"Massive participation of workers, peasants and agricultural workers in the 'Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally' on 5 September 2018 in the national capital is an expression of the anger of the toiling people against the anti-worker and anti-people policies of the Modi led BJP government," CITU statement, supporting the 10 September *Hartal*, said.

In the national capital Delhi, Left parties' leaders and activists staged demonstration and courted arrest at Parliament Street which was led by CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary Sudhakar Reddy and other Left parties leaders; CITU president Hemalata, general secretary Tapan Sen, vice president J. S. Majumdar; AITUC general secretary Amarjit Kaur and others. Addressing the protesters, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said that today's Bharat Bandh, which is supported by 21 opposition political parties and working people, farmers, workers, students, women, dalits and tribals, will become a massive campaign to oust the anti-people Modi government from power in 2019.

The massive participation of the toiling people in the 10 September Hartal, within four days of the national call marks a qualitative change in the people's resistance movement in India. The

call has come immediately after the massive Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally, the first joint national rally of the basic classes, on 5 September 2018 which was preceded by the successful countrywide 9 August Kisan Mazdoor Jail Bharo programme.

For the first time, since the advent of neoliberalism, the politics and the movement of the basic classes, the working class, agricultural labour and poor peasants have emerged as the focal point and other progressive social movements of youths, students, women, environmentalists, dalits, tribals, minorities, all marginalized sections are joining the stream.

These joint actions of workers and peasants had set the tone of the successful people's 'Hartal' on 10 September. The real issues of the people are slowly influencing the mainstream political discourse. The policies are being debated now. Those who follow or support the same neoliberal policies are forced to take positions against the same policies one way or other. 10 September 2018 marks the people's political opposition to neoliberal policies. This will be further strengthened with consistent and wider struggles of the basic classes as decided by the Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally and by strengthening people's resistance movements and platforms such as Jan Adhikar Jan Ekta Andolan.

World Development Report 2019

The Changing Nature of Work

A. K. Ramesh



Front Page of Draft WDR 2019

The draft of World Development Report (WDR) 2019 of the World Bank has been released. The title of WDR 2019 is "*The Changing Nature of Work.*"

WDR 2013

WDR 2013 had "Jobs" as its title and the conclusions were to uphold neoliberal reforms. That report had stated, "*EPL (Employment Protection Legislation) and minimum wages can shift employment away from young people, women and the less skilled and toward prime age men and the better educated.*" It means that the young, women and the unskilled persons would get jobs only if minimum wages and other labour laws were repealed.

To substantiate their argument, WDR 2013 even referred to OECD report stating, “*The most recent estimates by the OECD found that a 10 percentage point decline in union coverage is associated with an increase in employment of 0.8 percentage points*”. It suggests that if there were no trade union, then there would have been more employment. OECD, however, did not quantify the number of jobs created in the absence of any trade union. WDR 2013 had put forward certain basic ideas on creating a social security system against jobloss.

WDR 2019: The Changing Nature of Work

Draft WDR 2019 pointed out that during 2013 – 2018 many changes have taken place in the structure of work. When technology changed to robotisation, the changes it brought in the job structure were not small. The number of robots operating worldwide is rising rapidly. By 2019, there will be 1.4 million new industrial robots in operation taking total number to 2.6 million worldwide. Foxconn Technology Group, the world’s largest electronics assembler based in Taiwan, cut its workforce by 30 percent when it adopted robots into the production process (from 1.3 million in 2012 to 8,73,467 by the end of 2016). Between 1990 and 2016, 30% of jobs disappeared from the manufacturing sector in USA. Just as robots take over the job of running driverless cars, robots will also take over the jobs of financial analysts. With the advent of artificial intelligence, the rate of job loss has increased.

Sberbank, the largest bank in the Russian Federation, relies on artificial intelligence to make loan decisions in 35 percent of cases anticipating that this will increase to 70 percent in less than five years. Robot lawyers have already substituted 3,000 jobs in Sberbank’s legal department. Efforts are on to reduce the number of back-office employees overall to 1,000 by 2021, down from 59,000 in 2011.

So what the Report tries to convey is that economies are in the midst of a technological shift that brings change to the nature of work. The outcome cannot be predicted with any certainty. They also add that 6% to 55% jobs are in danger in Japan and anything from 1 to 2 million jobs in Bolivia in 2018 are likely to be automated.

Change in Social Security Measures

The Report mainly points out that as the technology is leaping forward at this rate, earlier types social security measures, mainly at the expenses of the owners, will become redundant. The authors wonder as to how the owners will bear such a burden. In the changing scenario, when the very nature of work is undergoing such a sea change and are becoming more and more casual in nature; the owners are demanding further liberalisation of labour laws. Big organisations will not be ready to pay minimum wages anymore. So, in accordance with the changing time, this Report demanded liberalisation of all these laws.

Gig Jobs

The authors of the report will not readily agree to the fact that in the place of regular and permanent employment, what wait for the job seekers are irregular and casual gig jobs. While they agree that worldwide the total freelance working population is estimated at around 84 million; they still hold on to the view that it is only a small percentage of the total workforce. In India, the number of gig jobs is more than one and half crore. It is the class bias of the scribes that underplay this fact.

The Report on gig job states, “*Contrary to the case of formal jobs, but just as in other informal ones in traditional economy - there is no pension, no health or unemployment insurance, no minimum wage, or other workers’ protections*”. Immediately after this, they go on to add that jobs

in the gig economy are taken up voluntarily because they are better than the other available options — the jobs in the informal sector.

Contrary to the Hitherto Held View

Contrary to the views, held by the think tanks of World Bank, the authors of draft WDR 2019 accepts one reality that the multinational corporations in large scale are avoiding paying tax. Almost 60 percent of the total income of multinationals is generated from countries with an effective tax rate of less than five percent. Corporate giants like Microsoft and Apple have parked 95% of their profit in low tax countries. Similarly, digital platform companies though make large profits, pay tax at a very low rate.

The Findings

The Report summarily rejects the view that technology very seriously impacts the jobs. It maintains that threat to jobs from technology is exaggerated! They also hold the view that the role of the manufacturing sector in developing economy is baseless. Same is their views on the “charges made by the politicians” in increasing inequality.

New Social Contract

The Report stated that *“This study provides a blueprint of how to think about a new social contract that addresses two issues: the failure to reduce informality in most developing economies; and the rising anxiety about the inequality of opportunity of the next generation of workers.”* It looks as if whole study is to provide adequate welfare measures for the workers. In a way they agree that the condition of the workers is pathetic throughout the world. They also agree that since 1975, the share of labour has decreased by 71% in developing countries and 73% in developed countries.

New Labour Force for New Technology

Very rapid changes are taking place in the technological developments. Earlier, it took centuries to develop a new technology demanding higher skill. Today it is developing within seconds. The primary school students of today will have to deal with job’s nature, which is still not known. So the Report calls for social intervention for developing the intellectual abilities of the children today. They include a 2010 study of Perry Preschool, a high-quality program for 3-5 year-olds developed in Michigan, the United States in the 1960s. The result shows that for every one dollar invested, the society gained something between seven to twelve dollars. The document, which criticises the political leadership, fails in finding resources for the health and education of the children, very clearly points out the benefits of investment in human capital.

An example cited in this context, which indirectly hits at the Modi government. It says that 49% of the medical personnel who treat the poor section of Madhya Pradesh have no qualification at all. The report also highlights the importance of investment in human capital. They try to convince the political leadership that the investment done today in human capital will increase the productivity of the coming generations. They even moot a suggestion for creating a Human Capital Index for the correct assessment of the same. In this era of scientific advancement, learning is not something confined to childhood, but it should be a lifelong process. If a worker plans to stick to his work, he should continuously improve his skill. The changes that may happen to the structure and the functions of the organisations have become unpredictable.

Changing Organisations

After the liberalisation of trade, integration between the markets has increased and system of vertical growth of the organisations has changed. They have now become a joint venture of different plants on different continents. Apple is collecting their components from 200 different

companies throughout the world. Along with the growth of such superstar organisations, the role of labour steadily goes down. The Report points out that even then some political leadership believes that small and medium industries are the providers of jobs to the people, whereas the real provider of jobs is superstar organisations.

So, Why So Many Barriers before These Job Providers?

This is the real question the report raises. It is held that lot many stringent labour laws strangulate the super stores and that has to be changed. What is suggested is the enabling of the ease of doing business. The laws are to be re-enacted according to their convenience. It is observed that due to these strict labour laws, the productivity is adversely affected and due to the unwanted restrictions in firing the employees, these organisations are not able to leap forward acquiring new technologies. These superstores are not able to provide more jobs to the people mainly because of the hefty retirement package and strict minimum wage stipulations.

So, No More Question of Minimum Wage

So let us do away with this headache of the minimum wage. Also, let us do away with the retirement package. The Report has underlined the argument that these superstar organisations are the real providers of large-scale jobs. So let us avoid creating any hindrance for them. The issue is very simple. But the implementation is very complex. But World Bank still has a solution.

Look at India

What they point to is the advice of Arvind Subramanian, the Economic Advisor to the Government of India. It is nothing but his declaration that the concept of Universal Basic Income will be implemented in two states in this country. Universal Basic Income is a programme by the government to provide a minimum income to the whole population for meeting their basic living needs. It is not a concern to Arvind Subramaniam whether such a scheme has ever been implemented in any other country in the world. And the pundits in World Bank are also equally unconcerned; or else how they can endorse such a scheme, which flopped completely within a few months of implementation in Mongolia?

No More Minimum Wage

Thus after introducing such an impractical program, the Report asks, if the government itself can guarantee such a minimum income, why retain the regulation of minimum wages to drive away these large-scale providers of jobs? Hefty retirement package is given to safeguard the retired life of the workers. If the government can take over this responsibility why bother those superstar companies?

How Can The Resources Be Found?

Nobody needs to worry about the resources for these schemes. The World Bank pundits remind us that earlier when Bismarck declared such welfare schemes, he had put forward the suggestion for levying the carbon tax. The Report also put forward the utopian idea of bringing under the tax net all those companies who make huge profits evading taxes. Also, they propose to bring all digital platform companies who don't pay any tax at all under the tax net. So the idea is very clear. The capitalist is no more ready to bear the burden of minimum wages. So let them say goodbye to it.

Thus, the World Development Report 2019 is putting forward certain very dangerous propositions. It is not the duty of the workers alone to oppose those, It is also the duty of all people political activists to educate the people about the class approach of this Report.

“World Development Report produced by the World Bank almost completely ignores workers’ rights”

Peter Bakvis

The Bank moved forward quickly with its new WDR director to produce a working draft that, in its latest form (it changes from week to week), almost completely ignores workers’ rights, asymmetric power in the labour market and phenomena such as declining labour *share* in national income. It puts forward a policy programme of extensive labour market deregulation, including lower minimum wages, flexible dismissal procedures and UK-style zero-hours contracts. The resulting decline of workers’ incomes would be compensated in part by a “basic level of social insurance” to be financed largely by regressive consumption taxes. The *WDR 2019: The Changing Nature of Work* calls this an upgraded social contract.

The working draft of WDR 2019 examines the changing nature of firms and the impact of digitalization and other technological innovations, and essentially concludes that existing labour market institutions and social protection systems dependent on employer-employee relationships have run their course. Labour regulations “protect the few who hold formal jobs while leaving out most workers” and Bismarckian social security schemes (financed by workers’ and employers’ contributions) are passé because they cover only about one-third of developing-country populations. The draft report does not examine options for incentivizing the formalization of work, despite the considerable efforts the ILO has made toward that goal and the real progress that has taken place in some developing countries to deliver the benefits of formalization: legal protection of workers’ rights, including their right to safe workplaces, and access to social security. Instead, the WDR takes informality as an inevitable state and, worse, implies that it should even be promoted. Nor does it examine how the undermining of labour market institutions through deliberate corporate strategies such as outsourcing and disguised working relations (for example, classifying Uber drivers as independent contractors) can be countered by providing legal protections for these categories of workers. Workers in the platform economy who have engaged in campaigns for recognition of their rights have encountered fierce resistance from their companies. WDR 2019 insinuates support for the latter by agreeing that these workers are not employees but “are emerging as a separate labor category”.

With a few welcome exceptions, described below, any measure that would entail employers assuming obligations such as contributing to workers’ social security is unacceptable because it makes “workers more expensive”. Similarly, “labor regulations of today” are to be rejected because they represent “a high cost for firms”. The WDR draft states that “one of the tools that merits rethinking is minimum wages ... [whose objective] is to ensure a fair remuneration to workers that protects them against ‘abuse’ from employers”. Minimum wages should be reduced and employers should be able to opt out of paying them if, for example, they have *profit-sharing* schemes. Protections against dismissal should also be weakened or eliminated because they create “structural rigidities” for firms and workers.

The deregulatory perspective of the draft WDR 2019 reflects early editions of the *Doing Business* report issued in the mid-2000s, which promoted large-scale elimination of labour regulations because, supposedly, they stifled investment and employment growth. After strong criticism from the labour movement, the ILO and some governments, the World Bank suspended the *Doing Business* labour market flexibility indicator in 2009 and, two years later, began an extensive

review of the economic literature on the claimed link between labour regulations and employment. The overall finding, published in the Bank's *World Development Report 2013: Jobs*, was that the link was practically non-existent: "most estimates of the impacts [of labour regulations] on employment levels tend to be insignificant or modest."

It is disappointing to see the draft WDR 2019 resurrect the myth without even attempting to refute the voluminous evidence on which the WDR 2013's finding was based.

After rejecting social protection financed by employer-employee contributions, the draft discusses various forms of universal basic income (UBI) and negative income taxes but states that the fiscal burden would be "problematic" and that "other taxes would have to be increased dramatically". The report puts forward the need to increase revenues from carbon emissions and undertaxed digital platforms, especially those that use tax havens. While the proposals are welcome, this section of the report is devoid of any quantification of what these taxes would generate in developing countries where social protection coverage is weakest. One suspects that the third option put forward in the WDR 2019 is in effect the default option: regressive value added taxes that finance measures far more modest than a UBI but instead would selectively target basic social assistance to the poorest, as is described in the section on "Reforming Social Insurance".

In WDR 2019's future world of work where firms have been relieved of the burden of contributing to social security and have the flexibility to pay wages as low as they want and fire at will, the report insists that trade unions "would continue to play a role". However, it will not be in "tri-partite" dialogue models (quotation marks in original) because these don't include the informal sector. In addition to bringing informal firms into dialogue structures, the report advocates "new arrangements for expanding workers' voice". The latter would include NGOs that don't necessarily work on labour issues and social media where workers dissatisfied with their employers could express complaints, to be duly compiled by Cambridge Analytica one presumes.

24 Lakh Vacant Posts

In Central and State Government Services

(Compiled from answers to questions in both Houses of the Parliament in 2018; Courtesy Times of India)

- Nearly 24 lakh posts are lying vacant with the central and state governments including 9 lakh teachers in elementary and 1.1 lakh in secondary schools; (*Rajya Sabha, 8 February*)
- 5.4 lakh total vacancies in police forces across the country; (*Lok Sabha, 27 March*)
- Over 5,800 vacancies in courts; (*Lok Sabha, 18 July*)
- Over 1.2 lakh vacant posts in defence and paramilitary forces including 61,000 in paramilitary forces and 62,000 in three defence services (*Rajya Sabha, 14 and 19 March; Lok Sabha 4 April*)
- 2.5 lakh vacant posts among non-gazetted employees in railways; (*Rajya Sabha, 16 March*)
- Over 54,000 vacancies in the postal department; (*Lok Sabha, 28 March*)
- 1.5 lakh vacancies in health centres including 16,000 doctors and rest are nurses and others; (*Rajya Sabha, 6 February*)

Scheme Workers

Partial Victory of Anganwadi Workers

CITU's All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers (AIFAWH) congratulated Anganwadi employees for compelling, through their consistent struggle, Modi government to announce increase in their remuneration. It has also come as a sop on the eve of the 5 States Assembly elections and the Parliament election next year, AIFAWH said in a statement on 11 September.

AIFAWH was responding to the announcement made same morning by Modi government increasing remuneration of Anganwadi workers by Rs.1500, Mini Anganwadi workers by Rs.1250 and Helpers by Rs.750 per month; but sharing the financial burden between the Centre and the States at 60:40 ratio, as is existing in ICDS. It is the result of 4 years long struggle led by AIFAWH independently and under the joint platform of central trade unions and also in Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally on 5 September in which nearly 50,000 Anganwadi employees participated. AIFAWH collected 3 crore signatures of beneficiaries on the long pending demands.

The government has, however, not addressed other long pending related demands, deficiencies and cuts in budget allocations.

With his partial achievement, AIFAWH called upon the Anganwadi employees to prepare with confidence countrywide militant struggle demanding immediate implementation of the 45th ILC recommendations for the scheme workers - statutory right as workers, Rs.18,000 as minimum wage; and pension and other social security; withdrawal of decision on Direct Benefit Transfer and exclusion of beneficiaries in the name of the linking with Aadhar.

Partial Achievement in ASHA Workers Struggle

Prime minister's 11 September announcement recognizing the importance of the ASHA workers services in healthcare system and doubling their incentives were under compelling circumstances due to CITU led countrywide ASHA workers struggles; 5 September Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally; and the incoming 5 States Assemblies and Parliament elections; said CITU's All India Coordination Committee of ASHA Workers (AICCAW) in a statement same day. The insurance schemes, declared by the Prime Minister for ASHA workers, are already government's existing schemes. AICCAW, however, condemned government's piece-rate-charity attitude towards ASHA workers and demanded implementation of 45th ILC recommendation for scheme workers – statutory right as workers, Rs.18,000 as minimum wage and pension and social security; and called upon ASHA workers to prepare for incoming struggles with confidence after partial achievement.

No Wage Increase for Mid Day Meal Workers in PM's Announcement Countrywide Protest

Protesting against denial of any wage increase to mid day meal (MDM) workers in the 11 September prime minister's announcement increasing remuneration of Anganwadi and ASHA workers, Mid Day Meal Workers Federation of CITU gave call of observing countrywide Protest Day by MDM workers on 24 September by organising demonstrations, rallies and meetings

demanding immediate increase in the MDM workers remuneration and implementation of 45th ILC recommendations for the scheme workers.

25 lakh MDM workers, 95% of them poor women, are providing mid day meal to 10 crores of children in about 12 lakh schools. As against that, they get a paltry amount of Rs.1000 per month as remuneration, that too for 10 months in a year.

Road Transport

Road Transport Workers Nationwide Historic Strike

K. K. Divakaran, Secretary, CITU

Road transport workers nationwide strike on 7 August was massive and historic with more than 3 crore workers joining. All India Co-ordination Committee of Road Transport Workers' Organisations (AICCRTWO) - the joint platform of all India transport workers federations of CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, LPF, UTUC, TUCC, AIUTUC, AICCTU; independent state organisations of road transport undertakings; private buses, mini buses, autos, taxis and other light vehicles; goods transport; driving schools, spare parts shops and automobile workshops; petrol pumps; used cars and vehicle owners associations -gave the call for this nationwide road transport strike. In many states workers and associations outside the AICCRTWO also joined the strike. At some places, where there was no strike, protests were organised.

The strike was in pursuance demands for withdrawal of Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill 2017 (MVA Bill), reduction of petrol and diesel prices, protection of state transport undertakings and strengthening these with financial assistance, protection of all stake holders of road transport sector, social security for unorganized road transport workers; and against enhanced transport service charges and third party insurance premium etc.

The strike was total in Kerala, Bihar, Odisha, Pondicherry, Assam and J&K. In Bihar, petrol pump workers also joined the strike. In West Bengal, more than 80% workers went on strike except in Kolkata city. Despite active opposition by ruling TMC government and the party, in 6 districts workers, having allegiance with TMC unions, also joined the strike. In Tamil Nadu, the strike was total in private sector and 60% in STUs (State Transport Undertakings). In Madhya Pradesh, strike was total in 30 districts and partial in rest of the districts. In Haryana and Uttarakhand the STU buses were off the road. In Telangana, the strike was total in STU and 75% in private sector. In Andhra Pradesh, autos, taxis and lorry workers joined strike in 13 districts. Paradeep Port completely stopped functioning till noon due to strike of truck, trailer, tanker and bus workers.

There was partial strike in Tripura, Punjab, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. At Sikar and Jaipur in Rajasthan auto workers were on strike. In Jharkhand, the strike was in 8 districts. In Delhi about 25% autos went on strike. Strike was in 5 districts of Chhattisgarh. The BMS workers also participated in the strike in many states.

There were wide support and solidarity actions by different sections including All India Transport Department Technical Officers Association, Kerala NGO Union and All India Confederation of Goods Vehicle Owners Association expressing solidarity and staging demonstrations. In Bihar, at the call of employees' organisations and advocates association their members stopped plying their own vehicles in solidarity with the striking workers. In Madhya Pradesh, in support of the strike, CITU state committee published and distributed hand bills and posters with contact numbers. Many people from Bhopal, Jabalpur and some other parts of the state contacted and requested for

more handbills and posters. Similar experiences were there in other states. All India Road Transport Workers Federation (AIRTWF) expressed gratitude and thanked to each and all of those who participated and supported the strike.

The road transport industry, serving people of the country in different ways, has been facing serious crises due to government's policy. The workers, owner cum drivers, small owners won't get any benefit / support from the Modi government. The MVA Bill is designed to eliminate many single vehicle owners and workers and handing over the transport industry to Indian and foreign corporates.

Earlier, against the retrograde Road Transport Safety Bill 2014, the transport workers went on countrywide strike, for the first time since independence, on 30 April 2015 which was joined by more than 2 crore workers. After that the government changed it to MVA Bill withdrawing some sections and modifying the penalties provisions in the Safety Bill. But, the main intention of handing over the sector to big corporates remains. Continuous struggles took place against MVA Bill also including 2 strikes on 2 September of 2015 and 2016.

In the present strike, participated by 3 crore workers, was joined by new sections and in new areas. Yet, Modi government has been continuing with its retrograde policies ignoring the protest actions and making attempts to get the Bill passed.

Organising and Campaigning for Strike:

The strike was successfully organised at the initiative of AIRTWF. The workers and small owners joined together to meet the new challenge posed by the BJP government. The strike was successful and had new experiences. This is a fight against the neoliberal policies. Intensive campaign was organised at grassroots by leaders and workers. Lakh of leaflets in regional languages adding sectorwise and region-wise demands were distributed among all workers and their family members. State and district conventions, vehicle jathas, torch light demonstrations were held to popularise the demands. These evoked good response from workers and common people. Workers, associated with independent unions and those having no union, actively participated in the strike in a big way. In Madhya Pradesh, where there is no transport workers union, CITU state committee played prominent role to make it complete strike 30 districts and partial in remaining districts.

Lessons from the Strike:

1. The strike of road transport workers and owners of buses and trucks, united on a common platform, is a landmark in the history of road transport sector that paved way of the MVA Bill not being passed in Rajya Sabha. It helped to unify opposition parties to defeat the anti-worker and anti-people policy of BJP government. Thus united agitations are to be continued with more vigour. United struggles could defeat wrong policy decisions. Such broad united platform of workers and owners for a common cause has to be formed in all states. 2. Instead of ritual of agitation, the united strike changed it as an agitation of the common people with common demands. For this, campaign was organised at grassroot level. 3. The slogan of *Reach to the Unreached* is being implementation with conscious efforts in transport sector. In India, the number of unionised workers in this sector is around 30 lakhs. Yet, as the campaign for strike could reach wide sections of workers and the people, more than 3 crore of workers joined the strike.

(Divakaran is CITU national secretary, general secretary of AIRTWF and convener of AICCRTWO)

Haryana Roadways Workers Strike compelled Management to Revoke Victimisation of Leader

The management of the state road transport corporation, Haryana Roadways, victimised Ramasray Yadav, who works as a mechanic in its Faridabad depot, by way of suspension on charges of alleged ground of creating obstruction for the strike breakers and leading the workers to join the all India transport strike on 7 August, 2018. Ramasray Yadav is one of the national secretaries of All India Road Transport Workers Federation (AIRTWF).

In protest against Ramasray's victimisation, Haryana Roadways Workers Union gave call of immediately a day's strike in Faridabad depot and statewide protest actions. AIRTWF also made representation to the state transport minister and gave call for countrywide solidarity action.

On the day of the strike, discussion between the management and union failed. The union, then, served indefinite statewide strike notice effective from 28 August. The management, immediately thereafter, revoked the suspension order reinstating Yadav back in job and the workers celebrating the victory.

Left-led Transport Unions Victory in APSRTC

AITUC and CITU unions in Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) contesting in alliance in the workers election for recognition 9 August, being held once in 2 years, led to major victory for AITUC, being recognised at state and at lower levels and CITU in 2 regions. INTUC contesting separately could win in 2 regions. Hitherto state level recognised independent union lost.

Port and Dock

Workers Wage Settlement in Major Ports

For the presently 32,000 port and dock workers in major ports, after expiry of the last wage settlement on 31 December, 2016; and after protracted negotiations, a tripartite wage settlement was signed under section 12(3) of Industrial Disputes Act before the RLC(C) at Mumbai on 30 August, 2018 between the Dock Labour Board; the Port Trusts of Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Vishakhapatnam, Cochin, Mormugao, Kandla, Paradip, Tuticorin, New Mangalore, JNPT and Kolkata Dock Labour Board on the one part and six federations of port and dock workers – one of HMS having representation by 5, the other of HMS - 3, CITU (Water Transport Workers Federation of India) - 2 and INTUC, AITUC and BMS – 1 each on the other part.

The settlement is valid for 5 years retrospectively effective from 1 January, 2017. The accrual benefits include Fitment @ 10.6% in the revised basic pay; Annual Increment @ 3%; Stagnation Increment once in two years; Dearness Allowance 100% neutralization; House Rent of basic @ 30% in Mumbai, JNPT, Chennai and Kolkata, excluding Haldia; 20% at Vishakhapatnam, Cochin, New Mangalore and Mormugao; 15% at Kandla, Tuticorin and Haldia; and 10% at Paradip; Arrears payment within 3 months.

Himachal Pradesh

Significant Struggle & Victory of Hotel Workers

After more than five and half months long struggle, facing victimisation, repression and court's order putting restriction on their agitation; the hotel workers of Himachal Pradesh achieved significant victory when a tripartite agreement was signed between the management of Diamond Restaurant and CITU affiliated hotel workers unions on 17 September in presence of the deputy commissioner of Shimla.

It all began on 30 March, when the management of Diamond Restaurant in Shimla summarily dismissed 3 workers and filed false allegation of theft. In protest, the workers under CITU affiliated Diamond Workers Union's banner started agitation from the very next day wearing black badges, holding gate meetings etc demanding reinstatement of the victimised workers.

On 22 April the management the union entered into bilateral agreement. But, later management refused to register the agreement under section 18(1) of I. D. Act and implement the same. At this stage, all hotel workers in Shimla joined the agitation in solidarity led by CITU affiliated Himachal Hotel Mazdoor Lal Jhanda Union. Showing solidarity with the workers of Diamond Restaurant, the workers of other hotels on The Mall held protest rally on 30 May which compelled the restaurants in The Mall to close down and the workers sat on dharna which blocked the traffic on the Vikasnagar-Khalini highway, reported the press.

But, the the management, because of their high political connection with the ruling party, continued aggressively their attack on the workers, suspended 23 workers on 4 June, declared illegal lockout and removed more than 75 workers from job.

The unions encircled the labour department's office demanding action against the management for illegal lockout. In the meantime, management obtained court's injunction restricting any agitation within 500 metres of the hotel. The workers shifted the movement before the deputy commissioner's office. CITU organised a 36 hours Mahapadav on 18-19 June outside the deputy commissioner's office protesting against illegal lockout and victimisation of the workers.

Ultimately, after 182 days of struggle, on 14 September, in presence of the DC, a tripartite settlement was signed. The agreement includes reinstatement of all dismissed workers and payment of 6 months back wages to all workers; workers would resume duties on 17 September and the management would not take any vindictive action against the workmen.

(Inputs: Vinode Virsanta, general secretary of Himachal Hotel Mazdoor Lal Jhanda Union; and the press)

Andaman & Nicobar Islands

In Solidarity with Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally

In solidarity with Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally in New Delhi on 5 September; hundreds of workers in Andaman and Nicobar Islands brought out processions and held public meetings under CITU's banner in several islands including at Port Blair, Rangat Bazar, Baratang and Campbell Bay towns which were addressed by CITU, government employees and BSNLEU leaders.

Andhra Pradesh

Pearl Distillery Company, Workers under Slavery

P. Kalpana

Singarayakonda in Prakasam district is located on Vijayawada - Chennai highway. People travelling on this route get pungent smell just after crossing Munner town. This smell emanates from the Pearl Distillery Company located in Singarayakonda.

Pearl Distillery Company was established in 1997 by a political – industrial family having former Congress MPs and presently MLC of Telugu Desam Party. Around 1500 workers, 1200 of them women, work in this distillery factory. They come to work from many villages in the six mandals around Singarayakonda. Initially the factory worked with 5 lines. Now it has 65 lines. The initial investment was Rs 60 crores. Now it's income has increased to Rs.1200 crores. While the profits of the company surged, the workers are not paid even minimum wages. The minimum wage in the state is Rs 365 per day, but the workers are paid only Rs.230 – Rs.260 a day.

A labour supply contractor has been recruiting workers for the factory since 1997. Initially he was going from village to village on his bicycle to recruit workers. He lived in a rented house. Now, he moves in a car, owns a three-storied buildings on the main road and children studying in foreign countries. But the workers continue to have the same miserable lives.

The workers use to work up to 10 at night. They cook dinner after going home and are able to go to sleep only past midnight. Again, they have to get up by 5 O'clock in the morning, prepare food for the family and leave by 7.30 for work. But, they are compelled to work overtime for 3 hours every day but are paid only a meagre Rs 20 for this.

The women workers clean the bottles, check the labels and pack them in cartons. 41 workers work on a line. Often they get injured while cleaning the bottles. But, they are not taken to the hospital. They are not even provided first aid. They work under CCTV surveillance. They are not allowed to talk to one another. They can't afford to look away from the bottles even for a second. They are not provided with any chairs; they are not allowed to sit.

The workers are given tea once in a day. They have a half an hour lunch break. They have to use the washroom only during this break. They have to do biometric recording even for going to the washroom. They are not allowed to go to the washroom at any other time even when unavoidable. They are compelled to ease themselves at the working place. The workers were in tears narrating their plight during their monthly menstrual periods.

PF is not implemented for most of the workers. Many do not even know whether they are covered or not. A woman worker who has been working since 1997 went on leave to attend her son who had a dog bite. When she came back to work after a few days, she was registered as a new appointee. Many others faced similar situation. Those who side with the management are provided better benefits. Others are abused and ill treated.

Recently the workers formed a union and announced that they would not be working overtime. They started a strike on 28 March which continued for 19 days. The management utilised labour department to break the strike without success. The workers stood united and firm. Ultimately the management had to climb down and assure that the statutory minimum wage would be implemented. But, no action has yet been taken against those who have abused women workers. Around 400 workers were removed from service during the strike. The struggle to ensure implementation of the assurances and for the reinstatement of the workers has to continue. CITU extended all support to the workers in their struggle.

(P. Kalpana is the convener of Prakasam district Coordination Committee of Working Women)

INTERNATIONAL

TUI (Petrochemicals and Energy) **The 3rd Congress - A Grand Success**

Swadesh Dev Roye, Secretary, CITU

The 3rd Congress of the Trade Unions International (Petrochemicals & Energy) [TUI (P&E)], an international apex TU organisation of WFTU, was held on 11-12 September in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, and attended by 160 delegates from different countries including India. 115 delegates from more than 40 countries registered to attend the Congress, but the Government of India refused to grant visa to many countries including Venezuela, Algeria, Pakistan, Iraq, El Salvador, Djibouti and others. Ultimately, 60 International delegates from 30 countries attended the Congress and from India 96 delegates representing CITU, AITUC, AIUTUC and sectoral federations from oil and natural gas, power, coal and pharmaceutical attended the Congress.

Elamaram Kareem, the chairman of the reception committee, welcomed the delegates. Prasanta Nandi Chowdhury, general secretary of Electricity Employees Federation of India (EEFI) and vice president of TUI (P&E) made power point presentation of the main document of the Congress.

A collection of important contributions was also part of the Congress documents which include the key note address of WFTU general secretary George Mavrikos, the write-ups of CITU president Hemalata and of AITUC working president H. Mahadevan; and the theme papers contributed by Sandeep Pai, an Indian research scholar from Canada; Prasanta Nandi Chowdhury, D. D. Ramanandan, Nogen Chutia and Swadesh Dev Roye on subjects - *Energy Transition and the Future of Energy Workers; Working Class on Struggle Path across the World; International Unity and Struggles of the Working Class Against Imperialist Onslaught in Energy Sector; Energy World and Energy Workers; Coal Industries – Challenges and Struggles; Crisis in Upstream Petroleum Industries vis-a-vis Global Economy.*

Tapan Sen, general secretary of CITU and M. M. Mani, Power Minister of the Left Front Government of Kerala also addressed the Congress.

39 delegates participated in the deliberations. The delegates expressed their solidarity with the people of Kerala in the movement of the people and in the resolve of the Left Front Government to rebuild the State and rehabilitate the people, who suffered from the destruction and damage of the recent devastating flood. The general secretary of WFTU and the general secretary of FNIC, France handed over token monetary contribution to the Power Minister of Kerala for the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF).

The Congress adopted resolutions on issues of current importance for the international working class movement. Amendments to the Constitution of the TUI (P & E) were adopted unanimously. The new executive committee was unanimously elected by the Congress with Prasanta Nandi Chowdhury (India) and Eric Sellini (France) as president and general secretary respectively. Other members in the Committee are from Albania, Algeria, Brasil, Cuba, Egypt, Greece, Morocco and South Africa. The Regional Committees will be constituted in Regional Conferences to be followed.

The newly elected general secretary Eric Sellini presented the concluding resolution which

was adopted by the Congress unanimously. The concluding address was delivered by Swadesh Dev Roye in his capacity as the Deputy General Secretary of WFTU and International General Coordinator, of all Trade Unions Internationals (TUIs). Vote of thanks was proposed by K. Jayaprakash, general secretary of KSEB Workers' Association and the general convener of the reception committee.

In the evening of 12 September, a public hall meeting was attended by around 800 workers which was presided over by Elamaram Kareem and addressed by George Mavrikos, Tapan Sen and Eric Sellini, the newly elected general secretary of TUI (P&E). Vote of thanks was proposed by P. V. Latheesh, the general secretary of KSEB Officers' Association.

Despite devastation of the flood in Kerala; the holding of the Congress was a big challenge for the organizing committee, mainly composed of the representatives of Kerala State Electricity Board Workers' Association and Kerala State Electricity Board Officers' Association guided by the Kerala State Committee of CITU.

Grand success of the Congress has been openly acknowledged by the general secretary of WFTU and the international delegates. The motivating decoration of the venue of the Congress and overall arrangements drew the appreciative attention of all delegates. They called it as an historical event. Local leaders and other volunteers were also very happy at the presence of such large number of international delegates from these sectors, the presence of the general secretary of WFTU, the rich deliberation by the delegates and the ideological, political and issues focused, concluded in the resolution and adopted in the Congress.

Concluding Resolution

THE capitalist economy is based on massive exploitation of workers and natural resources; causes confrontation between social classes for rapid profit maximization for the owners and impoverishment for the vast majority; and destruction of the environment. The globalization, within capitalist system, has developed to serve the interests of a tiny minority in the world. Capitalism's existence and functioning are destructive of real economic activity; deprives the rights of the peoples and impose competition among the workers of the whole world.

IN contrast, our priorities have to be - human development, - address the immediate and future needs of the majority of the peoples, - equality in treatment, - access to the rights for all and everywhere in social activities; and carry forward and develop these further.

It is of significant importance to prevent conflicts among the employees and to unite all their energies to build the world of tomorrow and struggle against capitalism.

THE labour unions of TUI chemistry-energy, gathered here in the Congress, commit themselves to the revolutionary work to overtake capitalism by the organizing class struggle and unifying all the workers in chemistry and the energy sectors.

Our perspective is to end the dominance of the capital by intensifying social struggles which is historically effective to modify the political choices of the employers and of the governments. For this, it is necessary to bring together various progressives, labour-unions, political and popular forces into a single movement in all the countries.

THE struggle for increasing purchasing power, employment, working and living conditions of the workers are closely linked to the politics of peace, disarmament and development towards a new international economic order. War suppresses the claims of the workers but neither questions the economic system nor the accumulation of the capital.

IT is necessary to put under citizens' and workers' control the big sectors like energy (Electricity, Gas, Oil), water, health (pharmaceutical industry, access to healthcare, etc.), food, education, accommodation, transport, public services for socialization of production and means

of exchanges. It requires changes in the political agenda of nations as an alternative to open competition, competition between peoples and between workers; and for cooperation, to compensate for natural disparities and to defend democracy.

WITH these objectives and to fight the capital, TUI chemistry-energy labor unions raise the claims for all the workers of all countries to -

1. Set highest possible level of collective guarantees with minimal standards for the employees commensurate to social standards; labor rights; sectorwise national and establishment-wise collective agreements; social standards to include workers' demands related to salaries and working organization (working time, working conditions, hygiene and safety, social welfare, rights and freedom, etc.);
2. Set high level of social welfare measures (employment, health, pension and family), financed exclusively by the contributions stemming from produced wealth and by the implementation of a financial contribution on every imported product, calculated on the difference of the social value of the work between the country of production and the country of the sale;
3. Ban on dismissals, general ban on any subcontracting, full employment, ending of unemployment and vulnerable employment;
4. Decide and implement minimum wage, to be defined in every country, corresponding to the level of hiring of an employee without diploma, neither vocational training, nor experience; limiting upper salary to not more than 5 times of minimum wage; salary to be determined only by qualification; and not by position occupied, ethnicity or religion etc;
5. Ensure equality between women and men in profession and wage with perspective of emancipation and social progress for all;
6. Reduce working time, to be defined in every country, with objective of 32 hours a week; promotional opportunities; retirement at 60 years of age after 37.5 years of contributions; the amount of the pension to be 75% of the salary, calculated over the 10 better years, and must be revalued;.
7. Take into account health, hygiene, safety, industrial risks and environment considering the dangerous nature of some work of our professional field in a system based, essentially not on profit; risk prevention to protect the health and the safety of the workers and the populations;
8. Prevent criminalization of the labor-union activities; TUI chemistry-energy labor union reaffirms freedom, equality and solidarity; against all discriminatory motives with same intensity as the discrimination by sex, gender identity, marital status, social origin, national origin, ethnic and cultural origin, religious beliefs, political or ideological beliefs, labor-union activity, the associative activity, mutualism activity, participation in the strike, physical appearance, sexual orientation, age, health, handicap and the genetic characteristics, etc;

WITH these claims and demands, for workers unity, and to develop favorable balance of power; TUI chemical-energy' labor unions intend to -

- Build movement in all the countries;
- Unionize the mass of workers and strengthen labor unions of the TUI chemistry-energy, as the priority in WFTU's activities in this sector;
- Build solidarity between labor unions by organizing conferences, bilateral meetings, mobilizations by strikes and demonstrations;
- Massive information campaign among workers and the people in pursuance of the claims and for planned actions; and
- TUI chemistry-energy labor union assembled in this Congress decides to organise World day for Strike and Demonstration on common demands of the workers of this sector.

TUI MM

3rd Congress at Cairo

P. K. Das

To combat global capitalist exploitation, there is no alternative to trade union unity throughout the world. But, this is a very difficult task. Distance, language, financial capacity to bear traveling cost, suitable leadership to maintain international relation are major bottlenecks for maintaining international relation. Despite many constraints, WFTU tries its best to unite thousands of trade unions in ten deferent Trade Union Internationals.

Trade Union International Metal and Mining (TUI MM) is an important wing of WFTU. It could establish relation in the countries like Belarus, Sudan, Chile, Galicia, Cuba, Peru, Brazil, Greece, Colombia, India, Venezuela, South Africa, Uruguay, Pakistan, Cyprus, Basque Country, Germany, Egypt, Bahrain, China, UK, Mexico, Argentina and Vietnam. But, due to financial constraints and important local programmes, all countries are unable to participate in all international meets, not even India.

The 3rd Congress of TUI MM was held on 19-21 July in Cairo, a city with 7000 years old civilization in Egypt in Arab world. Organizer of this Congress was General Trade Union of Metal, Engineering and Electricity of Egypt. Total 21 delegates from 14 countries participated in the Congress, took part in the deliberation and explained economic and industry situations in their respective countries. P. K. Das of CITU and general secretary of Steel Workers' Federation of India (SWFI) inaugurated the Congress. Dy. general secretary of WFTU, Valentine Pacho, delivered speech explaining important issues before this Congress. Main theme of this Congress was "Save the World Steel Industry". Almost every speaker expressed serious concern on twin attacks from multinational and super technology that leads to massive manpower reduction. Governments' role against the working class was severely criticized.

In general, it was not possible to frame concrete steps to address very important problems before member countries. This requires far more discussion on philosophical and strategically appropriate line to combat this serious situation before steel industry, working class and class based trade unions. However, TUI MM 3rd Congress resolved some concrete action plans to spread organization in new countries; against privatization; better communication; fund collection; regular and effective co-ordination among the member countries. India was represented by Pannerselvam, K M Srinivas Rao and Kali Sanyal from SWFI and CITU; and two delegates of AITUC from HZL.

CITU is being highly recognized by WFTU for their relentless struggles against pro-capitalist policies of the government through united platform of trade unions. Post of president is being unanimously offered to CITU. The Congress elected P. K. Das from India as president of the TUI MM, Francisco Sousa from Brazil as its general secretary, three secretaries from Belarus, Peru and Cuba and six vice presidents from Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa, Middle East and Russia.

All delegates visited a Steel Plant at Alexandria and meet Hon'ble Minister of Manpower, who was general secretary of the host trade union. They also visited the Pyramid site at night on 21 July.

(P. K. Das is the general secretary of SWFI and national leader of CITU)

ILO on CITU's Complaint on Refusal of Trade Union Registration and Inspection

Amitava Guha

Labour Inspection System has given a good bye by the NDA government since its assuming power in the Centre. In October, 2014 prime minister in a meeting at Vigyan Bhawan had announced government's programme on workers titled as *Srameb Jayate*. He said that in order to end *Inspector Raj*, which stands in the way of industrial development, would be finished. He said that there would be no labour inspection system excepting visit by inspectors on randomly generated list of companies and the inspectors would submit their report within 72 hours of inspection.

CITU protested against such unjust decision as regulations can only be implemented by enforcing proper inspection system. CITU presented this issue to the Committee on Application of Standards (CAS) of ILO. There is a particular Convention on Labour Inspection adopted by ILO – the Convention No. 81. The Government of India had ratified this Convention which binds them to follow all its clauses. Most important clauses in this Convention are that two types of inspections must be conducted by the inspectors, one with prior information to the employer and the other without any such prior notice. This apart, all inspections has to be performed in presence of workers or the union.

CITU also raised the lapses of labour inspection and refusal of giving registration of trade unions in the SEZs. Citing the example of refusal of trade union registration to Reneways India Employees Union saying that the union does not represent 30% of the total workers, CITU challenged that no such law exist in the country and it is illegal to withhold registration by the development commissioner of Visakhapatnam SEZ.

This gross violation of ILO Convention was reported by CITU to the CAS of ILO who in 2015 asked the Government in the labour standard hearing process held in Geneva during the International Labour Conference. The Recommendation of CAS in clear terms asked the Govt. to provide detail information on details of inspections with outcome and details of the inspection status. They also asked the Govt. to furnish whether inspections were made in presence of the workers and their union.

This was not followed to the minimum extent by the Govt. Instead the Central Commissioner of Labour sent a circular that there will be no inspection other than the randomised selection from the computer generated list. This gross violation was again raised before the CAS who again held a hearing in the International Labour Conference held at Geneva in 2017. Here again CAS strongly criticized the Govt. for not following ILO directives. They again made six recommendations for the Govt. to follow.

Seeing that there was no improvement in the action of the Govt., CITU again raised the issue before CAS. CITU again reminded ILO on the issue of refusal of registration to Reneways India Employees Union by Vizag SEZ's development commissioner. In its communication to CITU, Karen Curtis, the Chief, Freedom of Association Branch, International Labour Standards Department has written to CITU the following-

“In accordance with the procedure in force, the contents of your communication have been transmitted to the Government for its observations. Any comments or observations that the Government may make on this matter will be transmitted to your organization for information”

CITU will forward ILO, Geneva more complaints on refusal / delay in giving registration by the labour authorities in different states. *(Amitava Guha is Permanent Invitee in the CITU Secretariat)*

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(BASE 2001=100)**

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GOA	GOA	319	332		BHILWARA	278	280	
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3rd Congress of TUI (MM)

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The Public Meeting



Leaders in Consultation:
(from left) **E. Kareem, Tapan Sen, George Mavrikos, S. Dev Roye**

Delegates in Session



