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RESPONSIBILITY OF WORKING CLASS

May 1st is the strike day of the world working class, day for inspection of our forces and a springboard of new struggles. AISGEF salute all those who gave their lives to have rights at work and in life, with salaries that meet our needs, fixed daily time work, leisure, social security, to live in a world without exploitation, in a world without wars, refugees. The working class across the world are on warpath to protect their hard won rights, to improve their conditions, to defeat the attacks of imperialists-led, international finance driven neoliberal capitalist order on their lives and livelihoods, particularly in the wake of its systemic crisis globally and emancipate themselves from all exploitation. The imperialist interventions and wars in various part of the world are continuing. Imperialist forces are trying to capture the right of the people to democratically choose their governments without any external interference.

The inequalities under neo liberalism is widening with the richest one per cent cornering more than half of global wealth produced by the working class. This wealth is amassed by increasing exploitation of the working people, cronyism, evading taxes and grabbing public properties and natural resources .The right wing forces, are seeking earnest effort to divide the working class and toiling people on the basis of nationalities, religion, region, race, caste, gender.

The international finance and imperialism serve the interests of big corporates and business houses by disrupting unity of the toiling people through various means and weaken their struggle against neoliberal policies. The capitalist system is responsible for the prevalence and aggravation of unemployment, poverty, destitution, illiteracy, ill health, lack of housing and other basic necessities for the vast majority of people.

The consciousness level of the workers on the role of the working class in uprooting the capitalist system and to prepare it for the ultimate struggle to end all exploitation must be developed. Fight against imperialism is an integral part of the class struggle against exploitation. The working class across the globe should unite and strengthen the struggle against the exploitative capitalist system with more determined class orientation.

In our country, the neoliberal attacks on the life and livelihood of working people and toiling masses are being continued by the NDA regime. The influences of divisive communal and casteist forces are growing. The Sangh Parivar is trying to exert its authority over almost all the institutions of the government and various social institutions and authoritarianism, and intolerance in society, are also increasing. People promoting rational and scientific thought are being physically attacked and killed. Any dissent and opposition to the policies, views and ideology of the Sangh Parivar is branded as 'anti-national' and being sought to be suppressed through physical attacks, abuse and threats.

Unemployment, joblessness, impoverishment, agrarian crisis, rural distress and continuing farmers' suicides, and the obscene widening of inequalities under the neoliberal order are escalating in India under the Modi rule. The union government is acting totally against the national interests by handing over the nation's wealth – lands, forests, water bodies, mines and public sector undertakings including those in the strategic sector - to big corporates.

The independent foreign policy is totally discarded and India becomes a junior strategic partner of US imperialism. The working class should resist imposition of slavery on the working people and stoutly defend their rights.

The entire working class in the country should effectively face these challenges and intensify the struggles against neo liberalism, against divisive communal and casteist forces and against authoritarianism. Strengthening and widening of the unity of all sections of toiling people in the platform of united struggle is the need of the hour.

The BJP led union Government is trying to communalise all aspects of society. It endangers the unity of the workers and the people in general. It seriously hampers developing, sustaining and strengthening of united struggles of the working class and people against the neoliberal policies. The fight against the neoliberal policies and fight against communalism need to be integrated by forging the widest unity of the working class. Unity of the working class achieved through united struggles on their demands will be a powerful weapon to fight communalism.

The unity of the workers, poor peasants and agricultural workers to fight the neoliberal order and the capitalist system that subjects all of them in to intense exploitation should be developed. Development of such massive struggles alone can lead to a comprehensive change in the correlation of class forces in favour of the working class.

Strengthening unity and intensifying the struggle to defeat neoliberal policies and for alternative pro-worker, pro-people policies and being vigilant and defeat the machinations of communal and casteist forces to disrupt unity, are the responsibilities of the working class. □

Resist Communal Politics & Uphold Class Politics

Pinarayi Vijayan

We live in times which demand working class to conduct sustained and united struggles against the anti-labour policies of the NDA government, which is following the same neo-liberal policies of the erstwhile UPA regime. The neo-liberal policies adopted and implemented by successive governments since 1991 have ruined the living standards of the toiling masses of this country and the ear-splitting voice of the common man is seldom heard by the ruling class.

In our country, lakhs of workers in different sectors have come out in big agitations and struggles over the last few years. Thousands of coal workers held joint protest demonstrations against the government's decision to allow commercial coal mining by private players. The defence employees struck work protesting against the introduction of FDI in the defence sector, and the permission for privatisation of the sector, against our national interests. The railway employees held a massive rally in Delhi against railway privatisation. Innumerable struggles are taking place all over the country on the local demands of the workers. Even the BMS, which is part of the Sangh Parivar, has had to participate in joint strikes as the attack on workers' rights have intensified under this regime.

Earlier, we had made concrete demands with regard to State Government Employees, including withdrawal of the National Pension

Scheme as per the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) and extending the existing Defined Benefit Pension to all the employees irrespective of their date of recruitment. We had sought to fill up all the vacancies by regular appointments and countermand contractual appointment system and rescind privatisation. A major demand was the regularisation of all temporary, casual, contractual and outsourced employees.

We had asked for ensuring strict enforcement of labour laws and sought



changes in the labour laws in favour of the workers and employees. We had also sought implementation of the 7th pay commission in a just and fair manner. However, the Central Government is neither willing to act on our demands, nor increasing financial assistance to the State Governments.

The workers and employees are made to suffer due to the IMF-World Bank dictated unjust economic policies of the government. The living standards of the common people in general and the workers and employees in particular are deteriorating continuously and drastically.

Skyrocketing prices of essential commodities, formidable growth of unemployment, cheap labour exploitation and meagre consolidated wages etc, render the common man helpless. Growing attacks on trade union and democratic rights of the workers and employees, disinvestment of public sector undertakings, raising the ceiling of FDI in banking and insurance sectors and allowing FDI in pension funds and multi-brand retail trade etc., are the serious concerns of the entire working class in the country. Daily rise in fuel and cooking gas prices does not worry the

government. Spiraling price rise is making the lives of ordinary people like us miserable. No efforts are being made to universalise public distribution system and to put an end to speculation in the markets.

In the past 26 years governments run by both Congress and BJP sold off Rs. 2.8 lakh crore worth of national assets. In a span of two years debt of corporates to the tune of 75,000 crore was written off. Disinvestment in strategic areas is on the increase.

Under the Central government and various state governments, lakhs of posts are kept vacant causing unbearable workload on the existing employees and furthering the formidable growth of unemployment. Defying the concept of welfare state and the notion that the state should be a model employer, the governments are resorting to employ contract workers even in perennial nature of works. The hire and fire method is on the increase. This has led to cheap labour exploitation that very low wages are paid to the contract workers which is totally against the concomitant right under Article 14 of the Constitution as it denies equal pay for those who are doing equal work with equal qualification.



Though India is one of the founder members of International Labour Organization (ILO), even while under the British regime, the various conventions of ILO particularly conferring some inalienable rights on the workers are not ratified by the Government of India. The right to form trade unions of their own choice, the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike are not so far given statutory effect.

Under the neo-liberal regime, the hard earned social securities are under serious attack. The pension under the defined benefit pension scheme is replaced by privatisation of pension fund through the obnoxious Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act. The hard earned future savings of the working class are inhumanly diverted into the speculative trade in the stock markets. Rubbing salt on the wounds, even pension fund is handed over for the gambling of the corporate insurance companies.

We are reeling under the dire consequences of globalisation. Even in a country like India - that mentions socialism right in the preamble of the Constitution itself - inequality is on the rise. According to the 'World Inequality Report 2018,' 1% of Indians enjoy over 55% of the total national income. The policies that are administered by national governments only ensure the free flow of our country's wealth into a few hands. Some amends can be made by taxing the top rich groups and by taking strict action against the defaulters. The revenue generated through such measures can be used for uplifting our poorer sections. Instead of resorting to these measures, what the Government does is that, it reduces corporate tax on the one hand and on the other, they are writing off the huge loans taken by these corporates from the public sector banks. As a result, the country as a whole gets pauperised.

By ensuring that workers right to collective bargaining is upheld, their incomes can also be raised. It is not that our ruling classes do

not know all this. But, they enact the policies that reflect their class interests. It is those policies which reflect their class interest that increase inequalities. What is needed is to change such policies. However, they are least interested in making the required changes.

Among various sections, unrest has become the order of the day due to the disastrous policies of the union government. We have seen the unprecedented agrarian rally protesting against the policies that harm the farming sector to the core. It

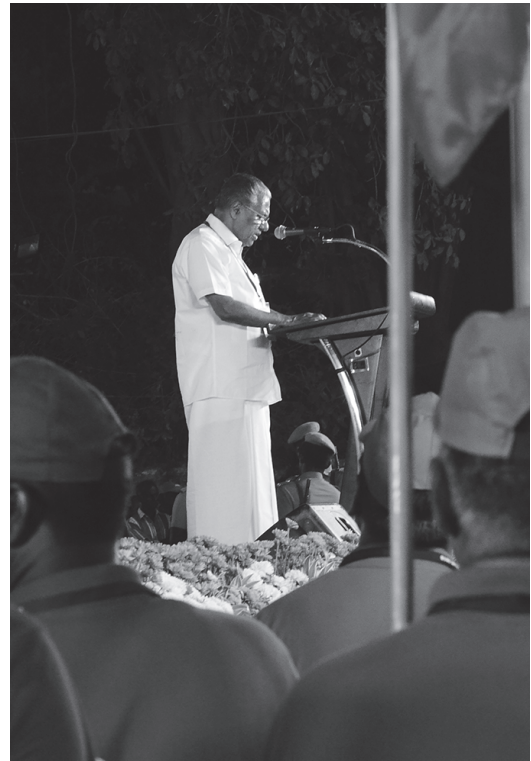
assumes significance against the backdrop that one lakh fifty thousand farmers had committed suicide in a span of 10 years in India. Needless to say that for every tragic suicide, there will be one hundred more who are in similar indebted situation. The number of the share of indebted farming households rose from 25.9% in 1992 to 45.9% in 2013. The indebtedness, non remunerative prices of produces, removal of subsidies, hike in the price of fertilizers, pesticides etc. drove the farmers to suicide. What triggered off the situation was nothing other than the detrimental policies of the centre.

In India, working class solidarities are on the rise. Imperialism has always sought to wreck working class solidarities through communal agendas. Communal outfits that stand shoulder to shoulder with imperialist interests also use such tactics. It was British Colonialism that first sought to break working class unity in our country, through communal tactics. If one looks at our history, it is evident that, when our independence struggle was at its peak, they sought to defuse it by polarising workers on communal lines. It resulted in much bloodshed and even in the division of our country. Ultimately, it even led to the killing of Mahatma Gandhi, who was an ardent advocate of religious harmony. It has always been the working class movements that have been in the forefront of the struggle for human rights and values; be it against colonialism back then, or against globalisation today.

The revolutionary working class movement is resisting communal politics by raising the slogan of class politics. The emergence of a strong working class movement upholding a class conscience is something that cannot be digested by the forces that promote casteist, communal and corporate agendas. Communal forces that operate as the agents of imperialism try to disrupt workers' unity, by using caste and religion. This weakens the collective bargaining power of the working class, ultimately helping the corporate interests. However, events from around the world point to the fact that the working class is uniting against such nefarious designs. We have to be cautious when goes who are at the helm of affairs seek to disrupt the working class unity of communal lines. Minorities are in struggle for human rights and values; be it against colonialism back then, or against globalisation today.

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It was the Left that initially cautioned against the policies of neo-liberalism and globalisation. It warned against the possible distress that such policies can cause in India. The Left had maintained that such policies will result in the impoverishment of our people



and the flourishing of corporate entities in a big way.

Neo-liberalism which is being implemented in India since 1991 has completed more than a quarter of a century. It was amidst the corporate celebrations commemorating the opening up of the Indian economy that we had our national strikes in September, in 2015 and in 2016. During last November, hundreds of thousands of workers under the aegis national Trade Unions came together in Delhi as part of the 'Mahapadav'. Workers from all around the country participated in this historic struggle.

Both the UPA and the NDA governments as well as employers dealt these workers movements with an iron hand. Despite that, the participation in these strikes has swelled with each passing year. The increased vigour of the ruling classes in implementing the policies of neo-liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation are countered by the working classes through their higher participation in strikes and movements. After the BJP came to power at the Centre, the country is

witnessing the acceleration of the neo-liberal policies. Besides, the society is rigorously being injected with Hindutwa. This is the twin major agenda of the present BJP government. While the BJP government functions as the guardian of corporate interests, it results in economic slowdown which intensifies unemployment and increases loss of employment.

According to the new 'Hire and Fire Policy', the length of an employee's service tenure does not become a hindrance in she or he being terminated from her or his job. Those who lose their jobs through such termination will have no legal recourse either. Job security, which is a right of a worker, is becoming non-existent.

The UPA 1 was forced to implement the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, by the Left. It was a major breakthrough in providing employment in the rural areas, particularly to the women. However, the UPA 2 did not take it forward. And now, the NDA has completely neglected it. There is no additional allotment for the scheme, as compared to last year. Even the meagre allocation earmarked in the budget for the last year has not been released fully. In times of an economic slowdown, the government should invest in the social sector for the welfare of the people. However, this government is only interested in investing in PR and advertisements.

A Government that promised to bring back black money slashed in foreign banks has allowed people like Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi to escape with our legitimate money. Instead of bringing back our money deposited in foreign banks, the Government allowed a free flow of Indian money to foreign pockets.

Despite such troubled economic circumstances, Kerala is going ahead with alternative policies that will ensure social security, protect environment and ensure sustainable development. We have been able to revitalise our public sector and ensure that they earn profits. We provide social security

pensions at rates that are unmatched anywhere else in the country.

In several parts of the country, communal conflicts have become a regular feature. In the BJP ruled states, communal conflicts are on the rise year after year. In UP alone, in 2017 there were 44 deaths due to incidents of communal violence. We have seen the attacks on minorities and dalits on a day to day basis. People are not free to eat what they want to and to choose who their partners should be.

Even the livelihoods of people are affected due to bizarre laws and communal diktats. Not even small children are spared in these incidents of blind communal hatred and violence. While our peaceful life as a society is affected due to all this, the complete anti worker policy of our government disrupts our jobs and incomes. It is our duty to expose the faults of those who are responsible for all this. We should be able to array large sections of people together with us, in exposing and resisting them.

Recent bye-election results point to the fact that people are coming out strongly against this anti people government. Even in states and constituencies that have traditionally been strongholds of the BJP, they have lost their footing. The results of Gorakhpur and Phulpur are examples. In Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan also, the BJP has not been able to replicate their past performance. When they lose out in their traditional areas, they are trying to woo people in other areas with their false promises. But, people cannot be fooled all the time. They are bearing the brunt of the anti-people policies of this government and they are bound to react when the opportunity comes. It is our task to guide them towards the progressive strand of politics, towards a democratic form of society, where the rights of all sections are respected and upheld.

Farmers have come out against the complete apathy towards their misery. We have seen their successful movements in Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Academic community has come out against the



imposition of communal and undemocratic ideas on them. We have seen it in universities throughout the country. Even the cultural arena has responded strongly against the communal polarisation of our society.

Realising the impending doom that is about to fall on the BJP Government, even their allies are deserting them. TDP has left the alliance. Shiv Sena and LJP have come out openly against them. Senior BJP leaders like Yashwant Sinha have become severe critics of this government. Their credentials of the so called secularism are being questioned. Their lack of achievements is being ridiculed. Their disdain for democratic principles and institutions are also being discussed.

In these circumstances, we should not forget the role of the Congress Party, in bringing these communal elements to power in our country. We have seen how they countered Acharya Narendra Dev's candidature in Faizabad in the 1950's. We have seen how they used the slogan of Ram Rajya and how Ayodhya was made the symbolic centre from where their campaigns began. Even recently, the Congress chief started his various election campaigns with temple visits. We have seen how a Congress Government presided over with silence and inaction, when the Babri Masjid was razed to ground. Recently, they have been supplying all their seasoned leaders to the BJP camp, right from PCC Presidents to Chief Ministers.

Through their soft right approaches throughout post independence, the Congress party has only strengthened the right wing elements in the country.

We cannot resist the fascistic communal agenda without a proper understanding of it. It is only the Left that is exposing the nefarious designs of the Hindutwa camp and taking out mass movements against it. We have seen service organisations that make up this Federation, class organisations and other mass organisations, leading the struggle against the communal and neo-liberal designs that are wreaking havoc with the lives of our workers, farmers, students and so on.

It is because the Left has consistently carried out campaigns against the Right wing's ideology - their relentless attack on our democratic institutions and socialistic ideals - that widespread public anger has been generated against the powers that be. It is our responsibility to carry this struggle forward, arraying all democratic and progressive forces together with us. State Employees should invariably pay serious attention to organise and unify the workers on a strong and sound class basis - against any caste and communal lenience - and thereby protect the interests of the common people, the workers and employees, and prevent the national wealth from being siphoned off by the profit mongering corporates. □

(From the inaugural speech of the public rally at Chennai)



Historious Struggle & Struggles in History

AK Padmanabhan

The XVI Conference of the All India State Government Employees' Federation is being conducted in the absence of great leaders like Sukomal Sen and R. Muthusundaram. Com. Sen was the organising leader of the state government employees all over India, the working class of India and the workers the world over. He was historian of Indian and International workers class movement. He was a Parliamentarian raising the people's voice in the Rajyasabha. Com. Muthusundaram was an uncomparable organiser and leader of the state government employees as the general secretary and chairman of the TNGEA and AISGEF. But, even in the absence of these legends, I am sure that the organisation will withstand.

In every part of India, the working class is facing fight from opponents. Seventy one years of independent India, we are continuing the fight. For the last two centuries we were in the path of fight. As a result of those victorious fights, we win with the passing of the Trade Union Act in 1926, under the British Rule, itself. Indian working class continued fight with a double barrelled gun, one against the British Rulers and the other against the employers.

Thousands of lives were sacrificed for freedom. That type of concerted attack upon working class continues till day. The new generation might not be aware of this fact. The generation of our forefathers and the new generation at present have a gap of the history

as they know it. This gap shall be merged together through a process of learning the history of the working class.

From 1991 till today we are continuing with such similar struggles of two fold fights – one against the rulers of India and the other against corporates. No exception in government or coalitions in continuing the neo liberal policies. We have to carry forward the struggle that we have initiated and developed from 1991 onwards, because it is the historical struggles and struggle in the history of our nation.

On 9,10 and 11 of November 2017, we witnessed the Maha Dharma in New Delhi, as part of the fights, which was an example of such collective mass agitations against the hardened rivals. The present government is not a government listening to the sounds made by the workers, particularly the weaker sections. Every section of the working people is on the street at present. Farmers and peasantry are organising long marches at different states including in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat etc., not for any new right but for their mere lively hood.

Attacks against Dalits are increasing every day in those states of fascist rule. United struggles shall be victorious struggles. For the coming days, struggles shall see higher rate of collective masses from all sources of workers. With other sources of striking forces of the country, we also should be in the path of collective struggles. Adequate formulations for this purpose shall be designed and decided by the AISGEF Conference.

International developments show that the economic crisis of 2008-17 is its highest peak of the crisis. It is so deep in Europe and America. The workers are at struggle in these countries for their trade union rights in the past and the present. The workers movement is on struggle but the attack upon them also is continuing in a neo liberal way. It is the planned systematic of the crony capital upon the working class. The rightward forces are the fools in the hands of the ruling class.

The first issue is communal and religious clashes. Offences against women, Dalits and children can be cited as another type of attack. We want to rally our workers and employees against such divisive forces. Workers should strike against all kind of communal forces and they shall be isolated. Mobilisation and deficiency shall be strengthened against any kind of fundamentalism. There is also an attempt to disrupt and dissolve the social harmony among the working class.

Women especially working women are at a higher level of threat. A 70% of rural working class is women. They are the downtrodden in the society. Interests of women in the country are facing challenges. We had to accept the fact that women's issues are an integral part of the issues of workers and fight for it. Socialisation of women beyond barriers of society such as caste, race and religion shall be continued.

We are not an organisation of women or men. But we are the organisation of the working class at large. Right to pension, trade union rights, freedom of employment etc. are part of such class rights of workers. But you can observe a systematic effort to divide employees on pension basis – as those having and not having the defined benefit pension.

We are the part of the sovereign either central or the states. All the member organisations affiliated with the AISGEF shall take upon themselves seriously the role and cause of the people and issued with regard them. Attend the needs and feelings of the ordinary people. As in the case of Kerala, all organisations are united to put forward the quality services and responsive governance to people. Fight against corruption, mal administration and such other issues in governance. Take it as a part of responsibility to act for the needs of all classes of people.

Strengthen the AISGEF to make it into a powerful organisation to undertake challenges against the working class and rallying them to a harmonious future is the need of the hour.□



Women's Emancipation: Need of the Hour

Prof. C.T. Chandra

Women's issues in the national background have many differences and diversities. With respect to that we need many changes in or attitude and approach. India is a classical example of unity in diversity. Tolerance is its basic characteristics. It is in danger since 2014 under the NDA and the right wing parties holding power.

What is happening in the USA? Students, women, youth etc. are all conducting strikes. In many other countries, the situation is also the same. But the right wing parties are trying to divide people in to groups. Much discontent of the people is capitalised by these forces to perpetrate in to the masses.

Who are national and anti national? It is a debatable sociological matter. 60 years of Congress rule has ended. BJP and alliance told that the Congress rule is done with. They are going to mould a Congress free India. Modi will do wonders. People had lots of

expectations on the future of India. Nothing happened for four years. People lost their hopes at all.

See the long march of Kisan Sabha, in Maharashtra. 6000 peasants committed suicide. A 45% increase in farmer suicides in four years. Peasants investment increased by 30%. Their indebtedness increased considerably. No utterance is made by Modi. The neo liberal policies imposed by the NDA regime absolutely endorsed the opportunities to the Corporates and crony capitalists only.

Various sectors of people including women, youth, students and employees are facing with these unrest and discontent. Economic, cultural, sociological, demographical issues are looking down at the people. Women are highly vulnerable in this regard. Men-women ratio has become considerably abnormal. Census data show sharp reduction. Baba Ramdev and Patanjali renders a medical

prescription for ensuring a male child. Sharp and agitating decline in the number of female child can be visible especially in the age group from neo natal to six.

Among the Dalits and backward communities, the matter of juvenile care is in the worst. Maternity and paternity care is absolutely worse. Population index also in the worst. Child marriage, Haryana, the state ruled by BJP is worst in the female sex ration and highest in child marriage rate in India. In Gujarat, female sex ratio has declined to 600/1000. Abuse of girls is also the highest. Molestation and kidnapping of girls is in the increasing rate. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan denies education to marginalised. Drops out ratio is schooling is very high and child marriage is also high.

Regarding the financial capability and property rights of women, the existing situation is alarming. Continuously varying welfare policies and patriarchal measures of resource distribution deny women from their own family share. Specifically we can say that “now women shall be liberated without the control upon property and body.”

2008 World Empowerment Report say that more and women are getting educated and entering in to labour market. But women are found in vulnerable jobs only. Job and asset necessitates for personal capacitization. Percentage of employment of male-female or gender based group gap is very visible. Formal employment is considerable deprived to women. Unorganised jobs are opened for them. Even paid employment is not in a position to help them escape poverty. Women are receiving 20% less salary than men. This is because of the lack of collective bargaining. Job security is also denied to women due to different reasons. Shorter and interrupted works also affect the income of women.

The International Labour Organisation seeks salary protection for delivered women. If a women worker is not paid the same rate of salary when she came over to function after

giving birth to a child, that itself is an inhuman, humiliating treatment. Motherhood itself becomes a reason for declining income. In informal sector, lack of bargaining power is the main difficulty of the working class for breaking the class barriers.

Women happen to be embarked in career. Equality in work, decision making, power holding position etc. is also denied to women. Women holding posts of Chairperson or CEO of Companies, is only 2.7%; Board Members, 7.5% and so on. China is the only country which exceeds the global average of women contribution to GDP, whereas India has only 17.5%, close to that of Pakistan. In labour participation of women, India is positioned 27.5%. The global average contribution of women to GDP is 37%, whereas everywhere in the world family responsibilities carried upon by the women is increased. In women safety, India is at 131st level among world countries. Regarding the skill report, the matrimonial property of women not at all is recognised in India. Women oriented jobs are still fixed as beauty making and child care. Regarding work place safety of women, India has been listed 107th. Women participation in the Parliament is lesser forever, because they think women shall live in India as in the XVIII century.

No scientific outlook for women. Women consume less food, sometimes, no food at all, less weight, mal nutrition, less nutritious food etc. are demarcated for women only. These “Manu Vadi” Parliamentarians are speaking those ridiculous words because there was no collective protest from Indian common folk. It is evident from the determination of Hadiya’s case. Encounter deaths, Romeo watch, honour killing, Khap Panchayats etc. are still continuing in the country even after the well claimed decentralisation of power. Hence it can be concluded that the present day nation is facing a situation.

Dalits vandalised; Education commercialised; Women commoditised; And ultimately, Democracy criminalised.□

XVI National Conference of AISGEF - A Mile Stone

Ajayan K. Menon

The XVIth National Conference of AISGEF was held at R Muthusundaram Hall, in Sukomal Sen Nagar, at Chennai from 5th to 8th April 2018, at Chennai. 1150 delegates and observers from the nook and corner of the country took part in the 4 day conference. Amidst slogans pledging to carry forward the united struggles of working class Com A Sreekumar, General Secretary, AISGEF unfurled the AISGEF flag. Floral tributes were paid to martyrs who have laid down their lives in the struggle for equality, democracy and emancipation.

Having elected the Presidium, Manjul Kumar Das, Assistant General Secretary placed the Condolence Resolution which recalled the contribution of founding member and senior Vice Chairman Sukoml Sen, Chairman R muthusundaram and other AISGEF leaders who passed away during this period. This was followed by a rousing Welcome Address by the Chairman of the Reception Committee T R Rengarajan MP. In his speech he pointed out that the challenge of the times, was the need to counter the fragmentation of the working people in the name of identity and build their unity based on struggles of the weakest, most marginalised groups and communities.

The Conference was inaugurated by A K Padmanabhan, Vice President CITU. In his inaugural address he recalled the long history of the AISGEF and the state employees movement in the country and requested to keep its history and heritage alive and intact.



He said we need to fight the forces of competition and capitalism which foster illusions of individual success and achievement as opposed to the experience of the movement, which shows that social change comes with collective strength, organisation and struggle. K K N Kutty, General Secretary, CCGEW, C J Nandakumar BEFI, P Abhimanyu BSNLEU, N L Sreedharan, TNGPA and K Rajendran STFI also greeted the conference. TUI PS General Secretary Pierpaolo Leonardi sent a message greeting the conference..

Sri. V B Venkitsh Athreya, famous Economist and social scientist made a special lecturer on "Challenges facing the economic growth of India". A Women's session was also conducted as part of the conference which was inaugurated by Prof. Chandra, famous social scientist. Smt M Girija, AIEA also greeted the meetinmg. Sri Gopalkrishna Gandhi IAS, former Governor of West Bengal made a special address on the subject "Threats to secular India" .

After the election of the Steering Committee, the Minutes Committee and the Credentials Committee, the the General Secretary, placed the Geneal Secretary's report on major international and national developments and organisational issues for discussion. The report noted that the global economic crisis has exacerbated poverty, inflation, unemployment, and inequality, all of which have severely affected the working class. The report pointed out that the hard won rights of the working class ,are snached away from them for the sake of finance capital. Taking an overview of the national situation, the report noted that the policies of the NDA government have led to the worst forms of crony capitalism and corruption. The report also highlighted that the sanghparivar forces are implimenting dangerous communal agenda, to divide the working class.

A detailed discussion were made on the report. Summing up the discussion, General Secretary called upon delegates to deepen their understanding and analysis of the





Subhash Lamba

Chairman



A. Sreekumar

General Secretary

contemporary challenges facing working class in general and state employees in particular. The General Secretary's report and the Accounts which were placed by the Treasurer, V Jaisingh, were passed unanimously by the delegates.

The Conference paid rich tribute to its outgoing office bearers those who led the organisation through a most challenging phase and retired from service. The conference thanked them for their tireless efforts in the organisational activities.

The conference unanimously elected Subhash Lamba as Chairman and A Sree kumar as General Secretary, and Biejoy Sarkar Sinha (West Bengal) and M. Anbarasu (Tamilnadu) as Assistant General Secretaries. Vice Chairmen and secretaries were also elected.

The conference concluded with a mass rally in which thousands of employees participated. The public meeting was inaugurated by Com Pinarai Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala. He calls for militant, unrelenting struggles against the neo liberal policies

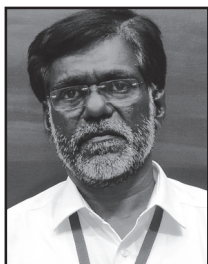
unleashed by the Union Government. He took serious note of ongoing communal onslaught and casteist polarization, and dwelt at length about the various incidents that happened in the country which indicate an orchestrated effort by BJP and RSS, with Modi at the helm. It was emphasized that the working class has to unite this fascist communal agenda and communalism. Justice D Hariparantharaman, and TK Rengarajan M P also addressed the rally.

General Secretary thanked all the delegates for their cooperation and emphasised to carry forward the fighting tradition of AISGEF by uniting the entire state employees and intensify the struggles against the neoliberal policies. He also congratulated the reception committee for making very good arrangements for carrying out the business of the conference smoothly and without any hitch.



Biejoy Sarkar Sinha

Asst. General Secretary



M. Anbarasu

Asst. General Secretary

The 16th conference of AISGEF concluded with great enthusiasm and determination to take the united struggles of the working class to newer heights to force a change in the policy trajectory. The conference affirmed that discontent was growing against the impact of the neoliberal policies and people were looking for alternatives which is a mile stone in the history of AISGEF. □

JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND SECULARISM

Gopal Krishna Gandhi

In India, the basic values of the Constitution are the national values of the country. With relevant aspects of the professional background, as an administrator, civil servant, it is the service of the highest order in the society. Personification of government and the government servant is a very relevant experience. The personality of the government servant is the personality of the government. The policy, the speeches, the decisions are identified by the people through the civil servants. There was no public faith on politics and institution of government as in earlier period. Core of the government, the power of the government belongs to the category of state employees and servants. Not in the sense of servitude, but in the sense of services, government servants are the reach out of the government to the people. Even the pension is in a sense deferred salary to be paid to the servants of the states as gratitude towards their sincere service.

Government is the backbone of the country, the symbol of the belief of the Republic of India. Government servants are the architects of the state. The three pillars of the state are accountable to the people at large. The preamble of the Constitution teaches the people certain values such as;

“secularism that means the state shall be departed from any particular religion and the state shall treat all the religions as equal.” But a larger number of religious believers in India are of the idea of that their religion is important. Government has nothing to do with the religion. Individuals may have their own beliefs.

All the fundamentalism in the name of religion is equally wrong. Do not distin-

guish or justify one fundamentalism with other communalism.

“Equality in status and opportunity, equality before the law and equal protection by the law” is another concept envisaged in the Constitution, where as minorities and Dalits in India are continuously denied the constitutionally mandated equality.

“Justice either in socio-economic or political or cultural aspects shall be ensured to the people without any kind of discrimination or discretionary reasons.” A larger per cent of Indian citizens including workers and farmers are facing with hardships of injustice. Regarding CGHS, the matter of family pension and personal pension, the reduction in rates of family and personal pensions is itself injustice.

In Tamil Nadu Periyar considered that all over the world, there is a class struggle but in India there is another larger struggle that is caste struggle. Those who have no belief in any religion also shall have equal space in the society and state. How can a person who believes in one religion act as a person without faith and fraternity to another religion?

While, India shall be secular there shall be a secular state also in India. A theocratic state shall be a cruel state, a totalitarian state. A democratic state cannot be an authoritarian state. Permanent service security, service pension etc. shall be the security ensured and rendered by the state. The security shall be secular in the sense, accountable and responsive to the people at large. Hence the civil servants shall be rallied along with the secularism, equitability and justiciability in the society and the social cause.□



Prevention of Atrocities The Apex Court Overreaches & Betrays the Constitution

Prof. A. Suhruth Kumar

Much consternation among the Dalits and Adivasis across the country happened and in this regard the apex court vastly and widely over reaches the Constitutional limits and jurisprudential mandates. While deciding a Petition on whether the Appellant deserved anticipatory bail, the Court cherry picks data and uses dubious reasoning to effectively gut the prevention of Atrocities Act. The directions issued by the court create unheard and unprecedented procedures in law to protect the privileged and afflict them the afflicted. Actually by this decision, the judiciary call for an extra judicial trial before the actual trial, even before a complaint is registered and acted upon.

Historical background:

By the historical introduction of the Constitution itself, un-touchability and its

practice was placed as a crime against the Constitution. In order to provide enforcement to this rule of law, principles envisaged under Article 17, the Untouchability (Offence) Act, 1955, was introduced in India. However, the enactment was renamed as Protection of Civil rights Act, during 1976. The objective of the law itself was very limited to protect certain defined rights in public life of a private individual. Its procedural complexity, whereas, weakened the law in real practice. Due to its ineffectiveness, a new law was promulgated in 1989 as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The objective and reason of the said act, despite various measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of the SC and ST, they remain vulnerable. They are denied a number of civil rights. They are subjected to various offences, indignities, humiliations and harassments. A special legislation to check

and deter crimes against these communities by non SC and ST therefore has become necessary.

In the present instance, the subject matter was originated from a Petition filed by one Bhaskar Karbas Gaikwad, a Store Keeper in Pharmacy College under the Department of Technical education, Maharashtra, to remove certain adverse remarks in his annual Confidential Report. Subhash Kashinath Mahajan, Director of Technical Education Department, approached the court with an anticipatory bail application. The observations and directions of the apex court are pronounced in appeal of the Mumbai Court decision in the case Subhash Kashinath Mahajan Vs Maharashtra.

He said decision has been pronounced by the Court in a socio-cultural atmosphere of increasing the disturbing trend of certain atrocities where SC/ST people were made to eat non-edible substances like human excreta, physical attacks on them, gang rape on SC/ST women and abuse of their children all over India, especially in states ruled by NDA and allies.

Justices A K Goel and U U Lalit on 20th March, 2018, observed that in several Prevention of Atrocities (PoA) cases, innocent citizens are named accused and black mailing, wreak of vengeance and vested interests are not intended by the legislature while enacting it. The Court observed that false complaints to implicate innocent people have often been filed to promote caste hatred and perpetrate casteism. They expressed their concern that working of the SC/ST Act should not result in perpetrating casteism which can be used to spoil the inter religion integration and damage the constitutional values.

Subsequently, the Court opined that crimes containing allegations against public servants accused of hostility towards the lower castes, can only be taken with written permission from their appointing authority. For private citizens accused of similar offences, arrests

can be made only after the Senior Superintendent of Police concerned allow arrests.

The court also stated that there was no complete bar against granting anticipatory bail if there is no prima facie case or if upon investigation the case registered under the PoA is found to be mala fide or motivated in bad faith. Reiterating the acknowledged abuse of law, the Court issued the above said guidelines. On close analysis, it can be seen that the findings are on flimsy factual footing and without serious data.

Factual Circumstances and Data Support;

The ‘amicus curiae’ in the relevant case cited only the latest NCRB Data Report in this context which shows that 75% of cases resulted in acquittal or in withdrawal of charges. But the Court never established how this amounts to abuse or sort of special treatment to PoA law. Judges’ anxiety is to prevent arrests under this law even after the ban in anticipatory bail is upheld as valid and constitutional.

The available NCRB data itself, whereas, disclose that even in the presence of PoA laws and rules, the crimes against SC has been increased by 5.5% in one year period. (In 2015 the number of registered cases was 38670 and in 2016, 40801.) In cases against ST 4.7% increase registered for this period. (Number of cases is 6568, in 2016.) The number of cases charge sheeted is only 77% and conviction is only 15.4%. Interestingly the above data shows that 2150 cases with true facts, but with insufficient evidence. 2150 cases are false and 869 cases are mistake of facts. That means the resultant data of abuse of law is not because of the afflicted victims but due to the incapability or negligence of the authorities, investigating, registering and charge sheeting the cases or otherwise it discloses the bias of such authority towards the upper class wrongdoers in atrocity cases.

Attitude of the Justice Administrators:



All political parties in the ruling and opposition demand to recall the top court judgment. The government itself stated that it entails wide ramifications and implications resulting in dilution of the stringent provisions of the 1989 Act. The Union Government expressed their attitude through the latest amendment in the law made in 2015 in order to add actions like tonsuring of head, moustache or similar, which are derogatory to the dignity of members of the SC / ST communities, will be treated as atrocities. Opposition parties urged for a consideration of the review Petition. But the apex court expressed their attitude and it is not amenable to those needs. They do not find any urgency in considering the matter. Even the Supreme Court refused to stay the Gujarat High Court to grant bail to two builders accused of land grabbing and atrocities against Dalits, by an order dated 20th March, 2018, with respect to the Supreme Court order in this regard. But the Supreme Court Bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Mishra, comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar, DY Chandrachud, issued notice to Gujarat State Government in order to file statement. That denotes the immediate after effect of the apex court decision in concerned area of offence.

This is not for the first time the same Bench of the Supreme Court with particular Judges has chosen an entirely unrelated and arbitrary manner determination upon their own notions. The Bench of Justice Goel and Lalit tried to gut Section 498 A of the IPC in a similar manner imposing extra legal procedures on the ground false complaints and alleged misuse of the law. An Appeal against the decision is still pending. At the same time, the Court never consider the fact of higher level misuse of Section 420 IPC, to settle essentially civil claims or kidnapping charges used to break up inter caste marriages in the country. Here we should see the real representation of afflicted communities in the higher judiciary to identify the attitudinal base of the judgments. Less than 15% Judges in the Supreme and High Courts are women and 5% of them are Dalits. Nothing more than this can be expected from a different class oriented judicial set up. Here we can express our solidarity and committed concern with the affected SC and ST people. This can be treated as the reason behind the resolution unanimously passed by the XVI National Conference of the All India State Government Employees Federation held in Chennai from 5th to 9th April, 2018, in this regard. □



GDP

The True Face of the Global Recovery

**C.P. Chandrasekhar &
Jayati Ghosh**

The global economy, the soothsayers would have it, is riding the back of a recovery. Growth is seen as having consolidated in the US, picked up remarkably in Europe, and returned, after a minor blip, in China and India. Encouraged by these signs, the IMF in January estimated global growth in 2017 at 3.7 per cent, which was marginally above previous projections, and forecast growth at 3.8 per cent in 2018 and 2019. A key driver here is the effect that the Trump administration's tax cuts and promise of increases in infrastructure spending are expected to have on demand and output expansion in the US. Tight labour market conditions in the US, with unemployment at just 4.1 per cent, and prospects of inflation are seen as validating this judgement.

More significantly, the IMF buoyed optimistic sentiments by pointing to a dispersed recovery. To quote: "Some 120 economies, accounting for three quarters of world GDP, have seen a pickup in growth in year-on-year terms in 2017, the broadest synchronized global growth upsurge since 2010. Among advanced economies, growth in the third quarter of 2017 was higher than projected in the fall, notably in Germany, Japan, Korea, and the United States. Key emerging market and developing economies, including Brazil, China, and South Africa, also posted third-quarter growth stronger than the fall forecasts." All indications are that the April World Economic Outlook will only endorse this assessment that the current recovery restores growth to where it was after governments

opted for fiscal expansion in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, only to abandon it after 2010. Growth slowed then, and did not respond to monetary policy measures such as liquidity infusion and near-zero interest rates. But, finally, now monetary policy seems to be working.

However, while signs of a pickup in GDP growth are visible, this assessment may be overly optimistic. If we take the G20 as a group, combined evidence from which must reflect the synchronised upturn, the recovery from a late 2016 low has taken the year-on-year quarterly growth rate to a level in the fourth quarter of 2017 that is not very much higher than that touched in the fourth quarter of 2013, and much lower than the peak recorded at the end of the immediate post-crisis recovery in 2010.

The record with respect to the United States is also similar. In fact, more sharply so. That is, the recovery in the US often referred to does not even return the quarterly growth rate to its previous post-crisis high. The year-on-year growth rate in the last quarter of 2017, was more than 1 percentage point below that recorded in the first quarter of 2015. What is more striking about the official evidence on the US economy is the sharp fall in the unemployment rate, from close to 10 per cent in the middle of the crisis to 4.1 per cent at the end of 2017. In fact, this rate is below even the 5 per cent that prevailed in January 2008, when the effects of the crisis had not yet been felt. However, the labour force participation rate, or those 16 years and above reporting themselves as available for and seeking work, had fallen from 66.2 per cent in January 2008 to 62.7 per cent in December 2017. This significant fall reflects the ‘discouraged worker effect’, where those unable to find work for long just drop out of the labour force.

The fall, by reducing the size of the labour force relative to trend, and shrinking the denominator on which the unemployment

ratio is calculated, results in an under-estimation of unemployment. According to one estimate, if the labour force participation rate in December 2017 was the same as in January 2008, the corresponding unemployment rate would have been 6.1 per cent. Partly for this reason and partly because jobs being created in the post-crisis period are casual and precarious, nominal wage growth has been relatively flat, despite the ‘tightening’ of the labour market as reflected in the low unemployment rate, and way below its pre-crisis high (Chart 3). The net effect of this, when combined with cheap imports from abroad and subdued oil prices, is that the US inflation rate remains below the Fed’s target. According to calculations by the Economic Policy Institute, “Until nominal wages are rising by 3.5 to 4 percent, there is no threat that price inflation will begin to significantly exceed the Fed’s 2 percent inflation target.”

In sum, celebrations over the US recovery, which is seen as leading the



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synchronised global upturn are a bit premature. The recovery is not yet robust; nor is there reason to believe that, even if it persists, it would be restore pre-crisis growth rates and resolve the problems inherited from the crisis. This prognosis is supported also by an analysis of the factors that stimulate the recovery, despite the fact that governments in advanced countries and most emerging markets are resolutely sticking to a conservative fiscal agenda, and refusing to return to the proactive fiscal policies adopted in the immediate aftermath of the crisis.

One important stimulus for the recovery has been debt-financed private expenditure. Even before the process of deleveraging to wind down the large debt accumulated prior to the 2008 crisis could be completed, it was reversed, leading to a renewed rise in the volume of debt. Outstanding private debt rose significantly to stand at 1.3 times its first quarter 2010 level in the fourth quarter of 2017. Between mid-2007 and end- 2013,





household debt balances fell at the rate of 0.5 per cent per annum; but between the first quarter of 2014 and the fourth quarter of 2017, they grew at the rate of 0.8 per cent per annum. The corresponding figures for growth of the outstanding debt of nonfinancial businesses were 0.3 and 1.5 per cent. Strikingly, the revolving debt of households (largely credit card debt) rose by \$120 billion or by 13 per cent between January 2016 and February 2018, to touch a record \$1,031 billion.

This suggests that even the modest and hesitant recovery now being observed has been riding on a credit bubble similar to the kind that led up to the crisis of 2008-09. This has been driven by the cheap liquidity infused into the system by the easy money and low interest rate policies adopted by developed country central banks as a panacea for the crisis. Financial institutions burdened with liquidity were willing to lend, to avoid being penalised with low interest rates on deposits with the central bank. It was also

facilitated by the return of borrowers to the debt market, encouraged by the boom in equity and real estate markets.

The boom has hugely inflated the ratio of net worth to disposable incomes in the households and non-profit organizations sector. That ratio stood at a high of 623 per cent before the crisis, in the last quarter of 2007, fell to 506 per cent in the depth of the crisis in the first quarter of 2009, and has since risen, slowly at first and rapidly after 2012 to touch 679 per cent in the last quarter of 2017 – significantly higher than it was before the onset of the 2008 crisis. This inflation in the value of household net worth appears to have once again encouraged debt financed spending by the private sector through the wealth effect. It is this debt financed expenditure that underpins the still weak recovery visible 10 years after the crisis first broke. But, as the experience of a decade ago demonstrated, growth of this kind is clearly unsustainable. Capitalism relies on it because it has no other options at hand. □