

All India Convention Against Repression

SPONSORED BY
INDIAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (IFTU)

REPORT & RESOLUTIONS

OF THE CONVENTION HELD ON
5, 6 & 7th September, 1985
Shankar Lal Hall, Mal Road, Delhi

ALL INDIA PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
MOVEMENT AGAINST REPRESSION

REPORT

Hail the All India Convention Against Repression !

It was 5th, 6th, 7th September, 1985. The capital of India witnessed one of the rarest events of the recent history—A Convention Against Repression. An all India Trade Union Organisation-Indian Federation of Trade Unions sponsored an All India Convention Against Repression. For the first time a trade union centre has come forward to take up such a campaign not on economic, financial issues concerning the workers (narrow economism) which has become the main *modus operandi* of the other established central trade unions. The Convention represented all sections of the people from almost all the states. More than 650 delegates & fraternal delegates from all cross-sections of the toiling people gathered on one platform to discuss the most agitating and concerned topic of the current political situation in the country—repression in India is now a growing phenomenon. Every section of the toiling people is now affected by the ever-intensifying repression. The state now increasingly depends on its armed wing. The deployment of police, paramilitary forces and the armed forces is increasing and has *reached menacing proportions*. It has been increasing from the days of Naga, Mizo peoples' struggles. The North-East witnessed one of the worst forms of repression let loose by the Indian state. As the economic and political crisis intensifies, the dependence on brute force also increases. Every issue is now taken as 'law and order' and repression is let loose. Every political party in power be it in the states or centre is now depending on this brute force. There is no exception to this rule. On the other hand the ruling class parties are also depending on the policy of divide and rule. Casteism, Communalism, Regionalism and separatism is now the other weapon to rule the people. The parties in power having failed to solve the basic problems of the people are now concerned about this 'order' and are determined to maintain it even at the cost of the whole people. Thus

new draconian laws have emerged to maintain this 'order' which is crumbling every day. This utter disorder is of their own making.

The repression has assumed alarming proportions in Andhra Pradesh particularly. The growth of democratic movement of one sort is sought to be crushed by means of brute force throwing away all the norms of democracy. Political activists interested in changing the society, and even the activists of the civil rights organisations are done away with in the name of encounters. Hundreds have been killed by the previous congress Govt. in the state and now under the Telugu Desam.

In this background of growing repression and increasing assaults on the people by the states, with the rapid succession of anti-people's statutes, with the increasing draconian laws and the repeated use of armed forces, it became imperative on all those concerned to come together, discuss and launch a movement. This movement is the need of the hour, while continuing the movement on basic issues.

The National Committee of the Indian Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) decided to come forward to take this task ahead. It has decided to launch all India campaigns on three issues—

- (1) State Repression, with repression in Andhra in particular.
- (2) Communal situation with particular reference to Punjab.
- (3) On the Bhopal gas killings.

IFTU took initiative to launch a massive country wide campaign to focus these issues. On the question of repression, IFTU decided to hold conventions in the states which culminate in an All India Convention. For the last 4 months IFTU has done extensive propaganda through wall posters, leaflets, cultural programmes at factory and local levels among workers, peasants, employees, students and intellectuals to bring home to the widest sections of the people, the extent and magnitude of repression by the state as well the urgency of the task of combating it.

The Andhra Pradesh Convention against Repression held

at Hyderabad on 17 th June 1985 was the first state level convention, which gathered besides workers and peasants, a large number of delegates from other sections of people including employees organisations, cultural organisations, and civil liberties organisations as well as individuals, actively supporting people's movements. It was inaugurated by Tapan Bose and addressed by Anil Sadgopal among others. The convention elected an Action Committee Against Repression (ACAR) under the chairman ship of Shri Kaloji Narayan Rao.

The Maharastra convention held at Bombay on 27 th August was sponsored by a joint committee of a number of working class, civil liberties, women and student organisations and cultural organisations. It was addressed by A. R. Desai, Pushpa Mehta of UTUC, Com Meena of IFTU among others.

IFTU, West Bengal sponsored the 'Convention against repression on Democratic movements and against lockouts closures and retrenchments.' The Convention held on 30th August 1985 vehemently condemned the brutal repression particularly in Andhra Pradesh. 300 men and women workers from the Ranigunj coal mines participated in the day long deliberations along with workers from jute, textile and engineering industries, employees associations, civil liberties organisations. The representatives of Indian Peoples Front, cultural activists and artists also participated. All the deliberations reflected the urge to come together in a common effort to oppose the anti-people's legislations, repressive measures and stressed that whether the Party forming the government was Congress (I) or Telugu Desam or CPM, it was on behalf of the ruling classes that the state machinery was used on the toiling and oppressed masses. Com. Neeta Murthy and Com. Madhusudhan Raj addressed the Convention.

On 31st August 1985, the Progressive Democratic Students Union (PDSU) of Bihar held similar convention. Delegates from All Bihar Students Association, Indian People's Front and cultural organisations attended the convention, which was addressed by com Phani Bagchi, Com. Neeta Murthy and Com. Madhusudhan Raj.

All India Convention at Delhi

Delegates belonging to about 94 organisations and several unions, along with PUCL, PUDR, APDR, AFDR, etc attended the All India Convention held at Shankerlal Hall(Delhi University) on 5th, 6th & 7th September 1985. Organisations representing various democratic movements of workers, students, peasants, government employees, civil liberties and democratic rights for the first time came onto a common platform to focus the attention of the whole country on the question of repression particularly state repression. The Convention became the champion of the concern of people of all states and all sections of the toiling masses.

A Reception Committee of 33 prominent citizens of Delhi was formed with Shri Inder Mohan (President, Delhi PUCL) as the Chairman and Com. O K Yadav as Secretary. With the active guidance and help rendered by the Reception Committee all arrangements to conduct the 3 day Convention were completed in time. Com. P.K. Murthy, Secretary IFTU, headed the Preparatory Committee which made the convention possible.

A series of sensitive and eloquent paintings by Shri. Haripal Tyagi as well as several poster exhibitions prepared by delegates from different states and organisations depicted the extent and dimensions of the problem of repression facing mass movements of the toilers and the oppressed. The slogans and banners also reflected the urge for unity in the struggle and confidence in the victory of the exploited classes. The photographs lent by Amnesty International showed that the repression as well as the resistance were common to all the oppressed masses of the third world countries.

Tragic events before the convention :

Murder of Dr. Ramanatham and continuation of 'Encounter' Killings in A. P.

It was 3rd September and news about the brutal killing of Dr. Ramanatham, Vice-President of APCLC, by the police in

Warangal town came out. It was a pre-planned, cold-blooded murder of this civil rights activist. He was murdered in broad day light just in front of his clinic by a procession of policemen. The reason for his murder was obvious—to stifle the voice Against Repression.

And a few days before, an activist of CPI(ML) was killed in so-called encounter in Karimnagar district. He was an active organiser of the landless poor and the poor peasants, against the tyrannical feudal landlords of Karimnagar.

Then on the eve of the convention news poured that 5 activists of CPI(ML) (PEOPLE'S WAR) were similarly done away in Vizag.

Attacks on Civil Liberties Organisations : PUCL, PUDR branded as Terrorist & CIA, APCLC branded as extremist :

As a part of the growing Repression on the people, a systematic and planned tirade was let loose on Civil Liberties Organisations and leaders. PUCL, PUDR which had published a fact finding report on the November Delhi riots, came under heavy fire from the ruling party in the centre. A planned move to isolate these organisations from the masses was enumerated, which actually did not materialise. Moves to stifle the voices of civil liberties and democratic rights movement failed. A tirade was also let loose on APCLC by the Telugu Desam government. It was branded as an extremist organisation. Thus an atmosphere of muzzling the voices of protest against repression was sought to be created throughout the country (remember such an attack in Tamilnadu by the AIADMK Government).

All these failed to materialise with the tremendous success of the Convention Against Repression. Thus the Governments in the centre and the states created an atmosphere which made all like-minded organisations and individuals to close their ranks, unite and launch a common united movement against repression. The IFTU sponsored convention, at this time, received tremendous response and thus it became the platform of launching this Movement Against Repression. (MAR)

Welcome Address :

Let us unite against Repression

Over 650 delegates from 94 organisations—organisations of workers, peasants, students, employees, activists of civil liberties and democratic rights movement, people's cultural activists, journalists, writers, artistes, professors, advocates and other intellectuals active in the struggle for civil liberties and democratic rights as well as basic movements of the oppressed, were welcomed by Shri Inder Mohan, President of the Reception Committee. In his address Shri Inder Mohan attacked the anti-Terrorist Act as an instrument to crush the people's movements brought under the pretext of combating terrorism and stressed the necessity of united struggle by workers, peasants and intellectuals against the growing repression.

Inaugural Session : Launches the Struggle against Repression.

Baba Nagarjun, in this inaugural address, stressed that all the talk on the part of the Government about nation's security is only a cover behind which preparations are made to let loose repression on the masses. The toilers have understood this deceit and raised the banner of Revolution.

The proceedings of the Inaugural session began with election of a presidium consisting of Shri Inder Mohan, Com. Phani Bagchi, President IFTU, Com. O.K. Yadav, Com. N.V. Krishniah, President of IFTU, A.P., Com. Sunil Chatterjee, Member IFTU National Committee, Shri Shamsul Islam of Nishanth Natya Manch and Shri Tapan Bose of Nagrik Rahat and Punaravas Committee, Bhopal. A steering committee comprising of Com. Madhusudhan Raj, General Secretary IFTU, Com. Hemu Upadhyaya, Member N.C., IFTU and Com. P.K. Murthy, Secretary IFTU, was also elected.

Homage to Martyrs :

After paying homage to the martyrs of the struggle, the proceedings began. Dr. Rajni Kothari, President PUCL, Com. K. D. Sethi, former President IFTU, K. G. Kannabiran, President

APCLC, Shri. Guru sharan Singh of Amritsar Natak Kala Kendra, all stressed that the situation in the country was such that the task of moving on from separate protests to building an effective united struggle, had become a priority. Murders in the name of encounters, of revolutionaries leading the struggles of the toiling masses, torture and police atrocities on the organised masses struggling for their rights, police camps and repressive legislations and now murderous assaults on the activists of civil liberties movement had created a very dangerous atmosphere and a serious threat to the people's rights. The killings in Andhra are a fresh example of NTR Government's determination to escalate the repression and crush the genuine mass movements. All the speakers in the inaugural session congratulated IFTU for having boldly taken this step and urged upon all organisations and individuals to unite to launch the Movement Against Repression (MAR).

Com. Phani Bagchi outlined the grave economic and political crisis in the country; the growing struggles and the use of state terrorism as a weapon by the ruling classes whether represented by Congress (I) or Telugu Desam or CPM. History has shown that ultimately no amount of repression can deter the struggle and the victory of the Revolutionary forces.

Brutal Repression in Andhra Pradesh

The programme sheet circulated divided the sessions under different subjects. The first session was to focus on the brutal repression in Andhra Pradesh. Com. N. V. Krishnaiah chaired the session. Shri. Kodandaram Reddy, Secretary APCLC, Com. Pradeep of IFTU (A.P.), Com. Somachari, President Rythu Cooli Sangham, Com. B. S. Ramulu of RYL spoke on behalf of RSU, RCS and RYL, Com. Ambedkar President of PDSU (A. P.), Com. Narayana Swamy of Revolutionary Writers Association all spoke of the repression unleashed on the struggling peasants, workers & students, landless masses and on those who supported their right to organise and struggle.

Com. Madhusudhan Raj, traced the history of the struggles of the toilers and the legislative and other measures imposed by

the A. P. Government—the host of anti-people laws with the attempts of introducing the Anti-terrorist Bill as the latest combined with brutal tortures, police camps, ‘encounter Killings’, suppression of news, the ban on investigation into police atrocities that have made life in the areas under Disturbed Areas Act a nightmare for the poor. The girijans, Adivasis, the landless labourers in the Godavari Valley and Karimnagar are waging a relentless struggle to survive—against the oppression of the feudal landlords. They formed the democratic Association—the Rythu Coolie Sangham to conduct and lead their struggle for better living and working conditions. After getting nothing from the successive Governments, they joined together and began to assert their rights. They demanded better wages, better living conditions and land. By their strength of association, they were able to put into practice their democratic rights, could implement what they demanded. Having seen the utter laxity of the Government regarding land reforms, occupied land and distributed among themselves. All these associations brought the wrath of the feudal lords who sent their goondas to annihilate the struggling masses but the associations successfully resisted these assaults. The Government declared this a Disturbance—a law and order problem and stepped in to suppress this genuine democratic movement by use of brute force. But the poor continue to resist. Self-defence is a universally accepted right, the girijans and the landless peasants are asserting this right as against the brutal assaults by the big landlords and the state. People are now defending their rights, their lives, their increased wages, properties, against assaults on women folk and land. Over 3 lakh acres of land is now under the occupation of the girijans and the landless poor. Many have sacrificed their lives to defend hard-earned land and will continue to do so even in the face of the growing repression. The struggle against repression also grows. But the real answer to brute force is to build up class struggles on the local levels while defending their rights and hard earned victories. He stressed the need to build a strong movement against repression throughout the country in solidarity with democratic movement of the girijans and peasantry in Andhra.

A Resolution condemning the brutal repression in Andhra was passed by the house. (Resolutions are attached).

The Second Session :

Chaired by Com. Neeta Murthy on Repression in Punjab, Bihar, Bengal had a large number of speakers. Com. Darshan Singh Khatkar and Sardara Singh from Punjab and Com. Gurusharan Singh, Kulwinder Singh of Punjab Students Union, Darshan Pal of Marxist Vichar Manch, Com Sukhdev Singh, G.S. of Navjawan Bharat Sabha who placed before the convention the picture of Punjab under police & military raj, with punitive actions against innocent villagers by the army, harassment and torture of activists of mass organisations like Kirti Kisan Union and curbs on the right to speak, move freely or organise placed on people's organisations under the name of fighting terrorism. All the speakers vehemently condemned terrorism. All the speakers welcomed the initiative of IFTU in sponsoring the convention and urged unity of all democratic forces in the face of repression.

On the repression in Bihar, Swapan Mukherjee of the Indian People's Front, Narendra Kumar of PDSU, Bihar, a representative Mazdoor Kisan Jan Jagran of Hazaribagh, Com. Sukhlal a peasant activist from Samastipur, Meghnath from Kutku Doob Chatra mukti sangham of Palamau described the struggles of the Adivasi and other landless poor against the landlords, contractors. The state machinery was used to ruthlessly suppress the struggles for minimum wages, land and against feudal exploitation. The police in league with the landlords murdered peasant activists and instituted false cases, imprisoned and tortured the poor who were struggling for survival. The students in Patna too had to bear the brunt of police repression. The need for united action against repression was stressed by all the speakers.

Shri Govind Mukhoty, President of PUDR stressed that there was no opposition worth the name in Parliament and the Government was determined to silence the voice of civil liberties

democratic rights activists by murder in some places and slanderous attacks in others. It was necessary to extend the struggle for democratic rights and take it to grass roots level. The facts put before the House by Shri Srikant Modak of Lok Adhikar Sangh, Gujarat, and Com. Sunil Chatterjee of West Bengal showed that the question of repression by the state was common to the whole country. And that the state machinery was used to crush the struggles of the masses irrespective of whether the Party in power was Congress (I) or Telugu Desam or CPM as they were all acting on behalf of the same ruling classes. Firing on workers, goonda attacks and false police cases on union activists, repeated use of section 144 to curb the struggles of workers as well as of university students or striking doctors were common in the left-front-ruled state of West Bengal. In Gujarat, the political parties of the ruling classes deliberately raked up the issue of reservation for their own ends and used the ensuing agitation to attack minorities and oppressed sections as well as to introduce anti-people legislations.

The following session on Lockouts, Closures, Retrenchments and Repression on Other Movements was chaired by Com. Sunil Chatterjee. In the past few years, as a result of the growing economic crisis, lockouts and closures are increasing, automation is being introduced to keep up the falling rate of profit. The working class fighting against unemployment, retrenchment etc was the butt of anti-labour legislations like NSA, ESMA, Anti-Terrorist Act as well the guns and lathies of the Government which sought to prevent it from using its right to strike or of uniting its ranks against the employers. The working class in order to overthrow the exploitative system has to close its ranks and organise for struggle and to that end has to be in the forefront of the struggle for democratic rights. Shri Nilamber Pandey of the Delhi University Employees' Association, the delegates from Bhumiheen Kisan Sangharsh Samithi (U. P.),

L. A. Prasad of All India Federation of Postal Employees, All India Non-Gazetted Policemen's Federation, Kisan Conference Jammu and Kashmir, Ghulam Rasool of Low-Paid Employees Federation (J&K), Com. Bhagwat of Haryana, all stressed the role of the toiling masses in the Struggle.

Com. Kolla Venkaiah, veteran leader of A. P., spoke of the political and social repression in A.P. and the growth of the consciousness of the toiling masses and the growth in their struggles after Naxalbari.

In the next session chaired by Shri Inder Mohan on Repression on Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights Associations, Shri Shukla, from Lok Adhikar Sangh, Gujarat, Shri V. M. Tarkunde of PUCL, Shri Jagmohan Singh of AFDR, Punjab, Shri Rajni Kothari of PUCL, Shri Sanjay Mitra of APDR West Bengal, Kaloji Narayan Rao of Action Committee Against Repression (A.P.), Shri Kannabiran APCLC, described the attack by the government on the Civil Liberties movement as a new phase of state repression and emphasised the need for a concerted effort to fight repression on the people's movements as well as on the Civil Liberties movements which exposed the repression on democratic movements of the masses as well as on political activists working among them. Many of the speakers said that IFTU had shown the trade unions the way to take the lead on political issues and not get bogged down in economism and routinism. Shri Pankaj Dutt of Nagpur, Shri Daniel Latifi, Advocate, Supreme Court, traced the social roots of oppression while Ms. Khan, Advocate, Supreme Court, spoke of repression on women through legislations.

Shri Ramanujam of OCDR, Tamilnadu, stressed that all those who had come to the convention were already aware of repression and that from awareness one should pass to resolute struggle, for the Civil Liberties Organisations of the masses.

Nandita Haksar of PUDR pointed out that the struggle against repressive laws and for democratic rights cannot be complete without a struggle against laws that strengthen the oppression of women like religious and family laws and that if large numbers of women are to participate in the democratic struggle there must be a concrete programme for fighting repression against women.

The representative of the Progressive Democratic Front stressed that the working class alone can lead the struggle for democratic rights and against state repression.

Repression against the press and media was the agenda of the following session which was chaired by Shri Tapan Bose. Hiranmoy Karlekar, a Journalist from the Indian Express maintained that at the moment, it was the regional and small town press rather than the metropolitan press that ran the risk of reprisals for outspokenness. Shri Bharat Dogra spoke of the press not reflecting sufficiently the mass movements of the people. Shri Tapan Bose stressed that the most powerful media—the T. V. and Radio were completely in the control of the central government and out of the reach of all opposition parties or groups and the people.

Throughout the three day convention, a number of resolutions were passed on different issues such as repression in Punjab, West Bengal, Bihar, on Assam, on Nagaland and North Eastern states, on civil liberties movement, on lockouts and closures, on Press and Media, on the recent killing of 6 political activists and Dr. Ramanatham of APCLC, on repressive laws, on repression against women, against article 311 of the constitution.

A Resolution was passed to form an All—India Preparatory Committee for the **Movement Against Repression** representing the organisations (including civil liberties organisations) and individuals who have participated in the convention, with T. Madhusudhan Raj as Convenor. The convention also elected a Delhi based Action Committee consisting of Shri Inder Mohan as Convenor, O. K. Yadav as working secretary,

Shri Tapan Bose, Smitu Kothari, Swapan Mukherjee, Shri Islam and Nandita Haksar. to coordinate the activities of the Preparatory Committee for the Movement Against Repression. It was also resolved to observe September 3rd, the day on which Dr. Ramanatham was murdered, every year as Civil Liberties Day. The House resolved to organise demonstrations on 3rd October at Taluka, District and state levels against growing repression. These demonstrations would be preceded by a mass signature campaign and memoranda against repression.

The last session of the convention, repression on cultural movement was chaired by Shamsul Islam. Various cultural groups—Arunodaya of A.P, Nishant of Delhi, Disha from Haryana, Amritsar Nataka Kala Kendra from Punjab, Arunodaya from West Bengal, Nav Nirman from Maharashtra, Chetna from M.P., Jana Natya Mandali from A.P., Sama Chhanda from West Bengal, Hazaribagh cultural group from Bihar, Bihani Natya Manch, Navajanvadi Sanskritik Manch, and a number of poets, writers and artists through songs, poems, drama, folk dances, and speeches placed in a vivid manner before the convention the picture of the revolutionary struggles of the toiling masses, the politics of the working class as well as the question of repression on cultural groups. The delegates were able to see the potential of the cultural movement as a powerful weapon in the struggle.

All the cultural groups expressed the determination to carry on the struggle against repression and for furthering the democratic and revolutionary struggles of the toilers and progressive intellectuals.

The convention ended with slogans against repression and for the unity of the toilers with progressive intellectuals and other oppressed sections in the struggle. The delegates dispersed after the singing of the Internationale.

During the three days that the convention lasted, the need for a united struggle against repression and the solidarity of the different oppressed sections was highlighted through the speeches of the delegates as well as through poems, slogans, songs, and

folk dances, plays, that enthused the participants of the convention.

1. LONG LIVE THE
MOVEMENT AGAINST REPRESSION !
2. LONG LIVE THE PEOPLES' STRUGGLES !
3. DOWN WITH POLICE REPRESSION !
4. BUILD MOVEMENT AGAINST
REPRESSION (MAR)
5. STRENGTHEN THE
ALL INDIA PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
TO BUILD A STRONG
MOVEMENT AGAINST REPRESSION

Movement Against Repression
(M A R)

All India Convention Against Repression

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REPORT OF THE CONVENTION HELD ON

5, 6 & 7th September, 1985
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ALL INDIA PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
MOVEMENT AGAINST REPRESSION

All India Convention Against Repression

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RESOLUTIONS

ADOPTED BY THE CONVENTION

HELD ON

5, 6 & 7th September, 1985

Shankar Lal Hall, Mal Road, Delhi

**ALL INDIA PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
MOVEMENT AGAINST REPRESSION**

Resolutions Adopted at the All India Convention Against Repression

**held on 5, 6 & 7th September 1985
at Shankar Lal Hall, Mal Road,
Delhi University, Delhi**

Resolution No. 1

ON STATE REPRESSION IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Even while an All India Convention Against State Repression is being held in Delhi, the Police of Andhra Pradesh did not stop their brutalities on the people. In a span of just three days, seven people were killed by the Police, six in staged encounters (one activist of CPI (ML)—Ramaswamy in Karimnagar, and five in East Godavari District), and one even without the cover of encounter. And this killing is not of a political activist but of a civil liberties leader and a well known paediatrician. The murder of Dr. Ramanathan in Warangal town in broad day light by the Police, shows the extent to which the police repression in the state has reached. His murder has once again shown beyond doubt that the TDP Government is not going to allow any democratic activity and any attempt at asserting this right would be met with violence. This has been the experience under the previous Government and also the present TDP Government. This assertion of a right to a better life is more pronounced in the rural areas and consequently the intense concentration of state repression in these areas. Workers, students and employees who have time and again resorted to struggles were, and are, met with repression.

Simultaneous with these incidents is the statement of the Home Minister of A P seeking two more CRP battallions from the Centre with a view to suppress the 'naxalite' movement. That the government is going to intensify its onslaught is evident from the above and from the government's attempt at introducing Anti-Terrorist Act.

It is also clear that all these measures are basically intended to curb with brutal force the democratic struggles of the people, particularly of the rural poor.

The All India Convention Against Repression takes serious note of this increasing state barbarity on the people and resolves to resist this repression. The Convention strongly feels this repression can be checked only by building a broad-based movement of all the democratic forces and the Convention pledges to take initiative in this direction.

Resolution No. 2

ON REPRESSION IN PUNJAB

The Punjab problem is nothing but the creation of the Congress (I) and the Akali Dal, particularly the former. Instead of finding a political solution to the problem, the Centre has been extending its divide and rule policy resulting in communal riots and violence. The Centre has promulgated Disturbed Areas Act and various other anti-democratic Acts. These Acts have also been used to attempt to suppress struggles of workers and peasants for their just demands. Many activists have been arrested and tortured. While condemning communal terrorism on one hand, this house resolves that

- 1) The army be withdrawn from Punjab.
- 2) Anti-democratic Acts such as the Disturbed Areas Act, The Prevention of Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act, The Terrorist Affected Areas Act etc. be immediately withdrawn.

Resolution No. 3

ON REPRESSION IN GUJARAT

In Gujarat, casteist and communal forces have again attempted, through the anti-reservation agitation, to crush the rights of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Communities and minorities. The ruling party—the Congress (I), used the reservation policy as a political gimmick first by

increasing the reservation quotas of Socially & Economically backward classes before the elections and then by withdrawing the same increased quota after the elections. The opposition Parties also sided with the casteist and communal forces and hepled in spreading rumours and creating communal tensions and voilence. The judiciary too aided the casteist and communal forces. The police and army resorted to intense repression in the form of arrests, tortures and killings of mainly the backward communities. At a later stage, muslims became the main target of the State repression. On the pretext of stopping the communal carnage, the government introduced new repressive legislation. This house resolves that :

- 1) All repressive laws such as the Anti-Goonda Act, The Prevention of Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act be immediately withdrawn.
- 2) All false case against SC/ST/BC and Muslims be withdrawn and all such detained persons be released immediately.
- 3) Proper and legal compensation be paid to all affected persons

Resolution No. 4

ON NAGALAND AND MIZORAM

For the people of Nagaland and Mizoram, the Indian State, perhaps, means the personification of brutality. Since the year 1956, when the govt. of India declared the whole of Nagaland and Mizoram as Disturbed, it simultaneously declared a war against the people of these states struggling for self-determination. The struggle for self-determination dates back to the period under the colonial rule. Though, prior to 1947, the leaders of the Congress Party expressed support to the struggle for self-determination, it unleashed the reign of terror to suppress the struggle after it assumed power in 1947. The brutality unleashed on the people of Nagaland and Mizoram has very few parallels in the history of our country. Under the direct boots of the armed forces, there is'nt a single family which has not lost a member. Tortures, rape and killings of

activists by the armed para-military forces have become very common in the States. This Convention strongly condemns the brutality being perpetrated on the peoples of Nagaland and Mizoram and supports their just struggle for self determination. It demands.

- (1) withdrawal of all black laws.
- (2) withdrawal of the army and other para-military forces.

Resolution No. 5

ON REPRESSION IN BIHAR

State repression in Bihar has intensified and taken a new form in the last few years. On the one hand, the police and CRPF continue to harass people particularly peasant activists by arresting, torturing, raping, killing and implicating in false cases. On the other hand landlords have organised themselves into armies such as the Bhumi Sena, Brahman Sena, Rajput Sena etc. in order to suppress the rising peasant movement. They also use casteist politics to divide the peasantry particularly during election time. Instances of burning alive of harijans are rampant, the noted areas being at Belchi, Pipra, Parasbigha, Dohiya and Ganni. In regions like Champaran, Palamu and Purnea the landlords are a law unto themselves while in other regions, particularly the mining areas like Dhanbad, the landlord mafia combine has established total control over the local administrative and judicial machinery.

Repression on the students' movement, particularly on the Progressive and Democratic Students' Union is being intensified. In the last two years alone, over 5000 students were arrested under the EXAMINATION SECURITY MAINTENANCE ACT alone.

This house resolves that

1. All black laws be withdrawn.
2. All police and CRPF camps be withdrawn immediately.

Resolution No. 6

ON REPRESSION IN WEST BENGAL

In West Bengal, the repression on all sections of the people has become a widespread phenomenon particularly in the last eight years. The repression let loose by the Left Front govt. led by CPI (M) includes firings, lathi-charges, murdering in police custody, custodial rape and torture of women, frequent and vindictive use of Sec. 107 and 144 of Criminal Procedure Code, implication of activists in consecutive false cases multiplied with the deployment of gangsters, strike-breakers, mafia gangs of CPM. Both in urban and rural areas the left front government has invented its own characteristic form of repression. Recent instances of state repression include firing on dock workers, brutal repression on refugees taking shelter at Marichjhapi of Sunderbans area, repeated physical attacks on Calcutta University medical students and junior doctors, and lastly, the series of attempts of the state police in connivance with the Central Industrial Security Force of the Central government to crush the coal miners struggle.

This house resolves that :

- 1) A judicial inquiry be instituted into cases of torture, rape and death in police custody, and
- 2) All anti democratic Acts be withdrawn.

Resolution No. 7

ON REPRESSION IN ASSAM

Since last five years, the State of Assam has been witnessing a series of assaults by the State on the people struggling for defending their cultural entity and against backwardness & poverty. In the name of containing 'Secessionism' in Assam, the ruling party at the centre imposed a host of repressive laws bringing the entire state of Assam under the heels of the armed forces. Since then, thousands have been put behind bars, detained illegally for days together and many killed. Even Elections were held under conditions of severe repression. The house resolves that continuation of the various black laws be withdrawn & also the armed forces be withdrawn.

Resolution No. 8

LOCKOUTS, CLOSURES AND RETRENCHMENT

In the last few years, over 100,000 factories have been closed and more than 80,000 have been declared 'sick'. Not only is there no fresh recruitment of workers, but infact more and more workers are being retrenched. This is the result of of the industrial policy of the govt. and the attempts of the ruling classes to shift the burden of the economic crisis onto the working class. The bias of the state is very evident when we see the various laws passed with regard to industrial relations. Lockouts are not brought under the purview of the ESMA but 'strikes' are banned. Lockouts and closures are invariably instruments in the hands the management to subvert the struggles of tho workers. The policy of retrenching workers is also on the increase and is intended to disrupt the assertion of right to organised struggle of the workers. Apart from the phenomena of lockouts, closures and retrenchments, laws such as the National Security Act, are basically meant to crush the the democratic movement of workers. Added to this is the recent Supreme Court judgment upholding Article 311 of the Constitution which empowers the State to arbitrarily dismiss any government employee. It is not that this judgment would affect only the govt. employees, but would obviously be extended to cover even the public sector employees. This house resolves that :

- (1) Lockouts & closures be banned.
- (2) Employment be provided to retrenched workers.
- (3) ESMA, NSA and Article 311 be repealed.

Resolution No. 9

ON REPRESSION ON WOMEN

The state has definite bias against women which is reflected both in its policies relating to media, health, education and also personal laws that are unfair to women, and also in its repression on peoples' movements, when women are the first targets of torture and police rapes. This house demands:

1. Abolition of all personal laws.
2. Removal of gender bias from all state policies relating to media, health, education and employment.
3. Speedy punishment of all guilty of crimes against women;
4. Guaranteeing of democratic rights of women; and
5. Equal wages for equal work.

Resolution No. 10

ON REPRESSION ON PRESS AND MEDIA

The Constitution of India apparently guarantees freedom of speech, but it does not guarantee the right to freedom of access to information and consequently freedom of press remains a myth in this country. While the right of the owners of the newspapers is protected by their right to property, the journalists' right to investigate is constantly curtailed by various black laws like the Disturbed Areas Act, Official Secrets Act, NSA and P.D. Act, Anti-Terrorist Act etc. The authorities at district and state level constantly prevent press men from going to such areas where atrocities have been committed. Recently, in the Kondapur village, where five activists of the CPI (ML) were killed in so-called encounter by the police, no press man was allowed to go and investigate. In Bhopal, where more than ten thousand people were killed by a poisonous gas from Union Carbide, the State government through an executive order prevented the medical practitioners from disclosing information to the press. Very often, the press men are manhandled and intimidated by the police for investigating into cases of atrocities.

In addition the state also exercises the control through release of newsprint quota and advertisements. Particularly smaller newspapers who have to depend on government advertisements for their survival are very often manipulated by the state through a carrot-and-stick policy.

The press is also vulnerable to the pressures of the big industry and big landlord lobby. It is well known that the Birla

lobby had got a reporter of the Anand Bazar group of Calcutta thrown out of his job for reporting on the pollution created by the Birla Rayon plant in Nagda.

The most important forms of mass-media-the radio and television are completely controlled by the govt. of India. Even the state govts. are not allowed to have their own radio and television centres. This power is utilised mostly for the propaganda of the party in power. Through its absolute monopoly over the mass media, the Central govt. continues to distort and misinform the people about the real situation. The radio and the TV are used mainly for this purpose.

By extending the colonial law of film censorship, the Central Government till date wields almost absolute control over the film media. While the Central Board of film censors, over the last two decades, have become very liberal about sex and violence, it has remained very strict on political issues. Films, particularly documentary films which are critical of the government and the present political system suffer heavily at the hands of censors. For example, K. Abbas's film - *A tale of four cities* was delayed by two years by the Censor Board. Gautam Ghosh's *Hungry Autumn* was held up for eight months. Satyajit Ray's documentary on Sikkim, made during the emergency has never seen the light of the day. The Convention therefore demands that the Constitution must guarantee the citizens' right to freedom of access to information. The journalists right to investigate needs to be similarly guaranteed. Any interference by the police or the administration in the working of the Press should be made a cognisable offence.

The monopoly control of the Central Govt. on Radio and T.V. must end. Opposition parties and peoples' forums must be given their equal and due share of broadcasting time.

Pre-censorship of cinema must end.

Resolution No. 11

REPRESSION ON CIVIL LIBERTIES ACTIVISTS

These days are witness to the increase in the assault on civil rights organisations in the country. This is so, primarily because suppression of civil & democratic rights itself is on the

increase. The civil rights organisations in the various parts of the country have been playing a vital role in exposing and mobilising people on the issues of curtailment of basic democratic rights. Through the method of sending investigation teams to areas where atrocities have been committed, these organisations have been able to bring to light the real facts of such cases. Civil rights organisations have not merely been confining themselves to publishing reports on such cases, but have also actively brought the articulate sections of the society onto the streets to protest against repression.

It is in this context of the growth of civil liberties organisations that the state is now attempting-through various dubious means, to muzzle this growth of Civil Liberties movement. It is in the context of increasing credibility and popularity of these organisations among the people that the state is resorting to repression on them. And this assault is generally taking certain distinct forms such as, prohibiting investigating teams; malpropoganda to tarnish the image of the organisations; implicating activists in false cases and lastly resorting to physical attacks. In many parts of the country it is now becoming very difficult to go into the areas of repression and investigate the issues there. For instance in A P, the A.P.C.L.C. is prevented from investigating into many of the encounter killings. The malpropoganda that is being unleashed against civil rights organizations is taking ridiculous forms. For instance in Delhi PUCL & PUDR are stigmatised as foreign agents and are accused of aiding and abetting the terrorists. The state has also gone to the extent of issuing political pamphlets under the banner of police administration against APCLC in Andhra, branding it as a Naxalite organisation. Of late we see that many a civil rights activist is implicated in false cases with a view to prevent him from carrying on his normal activity. For instance, in Punjab, AFDR activists were booked under conspiracy case. In Andhra as many as 14 activists were implicated in false cases. And lastly, starting from the instance in Tirupattur where a PUCL fact-finding team was assaulted by hired goondas to the attack on the General Secretary of APCLC, the state has now gone to the extent of even murdering in broad day light Dr. A. Ramanatham, leader of the Civil rights organisation.

This pattern of repression on Civil Liberties Movement brings to the fore the important issue of the defending the civil liberties organisations. This Convention while condemning the repression on Civil Liberties Movement resolves to fight not only for Civil Liberties but for the defence of civil liberties organisations as well. It demands :- (1) Withdrawal of all false cases foisted on civil rights activists, (2) Judicial enquiry into the murder of Dr. Ramanatham.

Resolution No. 12

ON REPRESSIVE LAWS

The Indian state has always been dinning into the ears of the people, that we have the most democratic constitution in the world. We are hold and reminded time and again that the Constitution guarantees several rights to the people—Freedom of Speech, Expression, Association etc. etc. In the very preamble of the Constitution we are given to believe that we have a Sovereign Socialist Democratic Republic. Thus the constitution is made the most sacrosanct document that every citizen should abide by.

But, a rational and reasonable examination of the Constitution would lead us to the conclusion that the Constitution is the most deceptive and undemocratic piece of document and basically serves a repressive state. It is this 'democratic' constitution that permits the State to promulgate repressive laws. While on the one hand certain fundamental rights are apparently guaranteed, the same are taken away on the other hand by various articles in the constitution and through Black Laws.

Since 1947, various repressive laws have been enacted by the State, and history has, over the last thirty six years, vindicated that they are primarily intended to curb political dissent and peoples' struggle. The victims of the Preventive Detention Act introduced by the "Socialist" Nehru were communists and other political opponents. During the period of Indira Gandhi, a host of repressive laws were enacted with the same express purpose of stifling political dissent. The Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was enacted in the year 1971 in the background of a resurgence of democratic

struggles in the country. It has been the atrocious practice of the party in power to dole out propaganda that such Acts would not be used against political dissenters, but in reality the axe of such laws was aimed against the people. Who can forget that it is under the draconian piece of law that thousands of political activists opposed to the ruling party were put behind bars in 1975. After the emergency, when MISA was repealed, under the Janata regime mini MISAs were promulgated in many states. And in 1980, the Congress (I) govt. again introduced a similar piece of legislation in the form of the National Security Act. The recent amendment to this Act has empowered the state to detain any person for a period of 2 years and this can be extended indefinitely if the state wishes so. The notorious Suppression of Disturbances Act which is now in vogue in almost the entire north-east and in parts of Andhra. This act is so draconian that it not only suspends any normal democratic activity of people, but empowers an officer not below the rank of an Sub-Inspector to shoot to kill even on mere suspicion. Not content with these black laws, the state introduced the ESMA in 1980, which seeks to curb the basic right of the workers to 'strike'. The Act gives such wide powers to the state that it can declare any service as "Essential" and thereby prohibit the workers right to strike. It empowers the authorities to arrest any worker without a warrant. These apart, we have the "Special Armed Forces Act, The Special Courts Act" etc. that are invoked against the people of the North-East and Punjab. In addition to this arsenal of repressive laws it has at its disposal, the introduction of the Anti-Terrorist Act in 1985 is the blackest piece of repressive legislations. If a person is arrested under this Act, it is on the accused to prove his innocence. Through this Act, the state is empowered not only to suspend any normal political activity, but can take away anybody's life if it decides to. It can summarily send anyone to the gallows. The entire state of Punjab is reeling under this blackest law the country ever had.

Thus repressive laws have historically been a part of the State and are a legacy of the colonial past. Almost all these laws have their roots in the laws promulgated under the colonial rule to suppress the nationalist movement. But

there is also another side to this and that is the struggle against repressive laws. The people of India have a history of struggle against repressive laws. The struggle against state repression also means the struggle against repressive laws. Since the Constitution itself permits the promulgation of such laws, the fight against the latter is necessarily a fight against the undemocratic Constitution.

This Convention while resolving to build a movement against these repressive laws, demands that :

All the repressive laws should be repealed forthwith.

Resolution No. 13

ON REPRESSION ON THE CULTURAL MOVEMENT

The people's cultural movement which propogates aims at building up people's culture to counter the culture of the ruling classes, is today facing severe state repression. This repression has taken the forms of preventing the organisations from giving performances, intimidating cultural activists and foisting false cases on them. Particularly intense is this repression where the peoples' struggle has gained momentum.

In the 'disturbed areas' of Andhra, in the state of Punjab, in West Bengal and Bihar, in Kerala and Tamilnadu we witness a deliberate attempt by the State to suppress the free activity of the cultural organisations. While condemning the repression on the cultural movement, the Convention demands that there should be no interference of the State on the activities of people's cultural organisations.

FORMATION OF PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE MOVEMENT AGAINST REPRESSION

Resolution adopted by the Convention on 7th September, 1985

This convention notes with serious concern the brutal murder of Dr. Ramanadham, Vice-President, APCLC by the Andhra police in Warangal. It is now clear that the party in power in the State will go to any extreme to curb the legitimate activities of civil rights organisations. Dr. Ramanadham, who was an active leader of the APCLC was chased from his clinic in Warangal town by a procession of policemen and gunned down in broad daylight. While condemning this wanton killing, the convention calls upon all democracy-loving people to come forward in protest against this murder and demands a judicial enquiry be instituted into this incident.

The All India Convention Against Repression takes serious note of the growing violence on the democratic struggles of the people by the TDP Govt. in Andhra Pradesh. Despite protests by various sections of the people against the brutal gunning down of political activists in 'Encounters', encounter killings are continuing unabated. The recent gunning down of one activist, Ramaswamy of the CPI (ML) in Karimnagar district and five activists of the CPI (ML) (PW) in Visakhapatnam shows the TDP Govt's policy of using brute force through its armed wing against political opponents. This Convention strongly condemns these cold-blooded killings in the name of 'encounters' and calls upon all democratic forces to protest against these murders.

The convention also resolved to :

1. Observe September 3rd of every year as Civil Liberties Day. It requests all the Civil Rights Organisations in the country to endorse 3rd September of every year as Civil Liberties Day.
2. To organise demonstrations on the 3rd of October, 1985 at the Taluka, District and State levels in protest against

the growing state repression. This should be preceded by a massive signature campaign and memoranda against repression. This memoranda should be addressed to President of India and the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and these should be submitted to local authorities. Copies of these memoranda should be sent to the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) and the Action Committee at Delhi and the Press.

3. Take this issue at the International Court of Justice located at the Hague and to the Human Rights Commission, United Nations, Geneva.
4. This convention elects a Preparatory Committee for the *Movement Against Repression* consisting of individuals and organisations (75 organisations including Civil Liberties Organisations and 16 individuals) who have participated in this Convention, of which T. Madhusudhan Raj will be the Convenor.
5. This Convention also elects an Action Committee consisting of (1) Inder Mohan as Provisional Convenor (2) O. K. Yadav as Working Secretary (3) Tapan Bose (4) Smithu Kothari (5) Swapan Mukherjee (6) Shamsul Islam (7) Sudesh Vaidya (8) Nandita Haksar to coordinate the activities of the Preparatory Committee for the Movement against Repression.

(Phani Bagchi)

President

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7-9-1985