

INDIA

4th and 5th of April : Mobilisation in Defense of the Maruti 13 Throughout India and Internationally

Who are we ?

● The International Workers Committee Against War, Exploitation, for a Workers' International (IWC) was set up at the World Conference held in Mumbai (India) on Novembre 19, 20 and 21 gathering delegates from 28 countries.

● The IWC was set up on the basis of the Mumbai Manifesto against war, exploitation and precarious labour which was endorsed by labour activist and trade union and political organisations officers from 46 countries (*)

● Its continuations committee is composed of labour activists from all political/ trade union backgrounds:

Innocent Assogba (Benin),
Alan Benjamin (USA),
Colia Clark (USA),
Constantin Cretan (Romania),
Berthony Dupont (Haiti),
Ney Ferreira (Brazil),
Daniel Gluckstein (France),
Rubina Jamil (Pakistan),
Apo Leung (China),
Gloria Gracida (Mexico),
M.A. Patil (India),
Mandlenkosi Phangwa (Azania),
Klaus Schüller (Germany),
Jung Sikhwa (Korea),
John Sweeney (Great Britain),
Mark Vassilev (Russia),
Nambiath Vasudevan (India).

(*) Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Azania, Belarus, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Korea, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, USA, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

The response to the appeal issued by MSWU to observe protest on April 4 and 5 nationally and internationally was overwhelming. There was universal condemnation of the Gurgaon court order against Maruti workers without evidence.

Unions in Manesar/Gurgaon where Maruti- Susuki factory is located had launched protest against court order from March 18. Thousands of workers from 43 factories had boycotted food against the life term awarded to 13 Maruti comrades.

In a significant development the government recognised 11 trade union centres of India comprising INTUC, AITUC, HMS, AICCTU, UTUC etc. came out strongly in support of Maruti workers and issued a call to protest against the anti worker court order nationally on April 5.

Protest demonstrations took place on April 4 and 5 in many Indian cities and factory areas. There were demonstrations in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, UP, Kolkata, Chennai, Kurnool, Mumbai, Pune, Kerala.

International solidarity call was issued by IWC and by NTUI in India with trade unions centres CGT of France, Zenroren of Japan, KCTU of Korea in addition to a call from SEIU of the USA.

Maruti workers received support from NUMSA of South Africa as well as San Francisco Labour Council linked to AFL-CIO as well as Unite Here!

In Pakistan, the APTUF strongly expressed its solidarity.

Before the verdict on March 18 and after many signatories to the Mumbai conference being part of IWC had registered their protest before the Indian embassy/consulate in Washington, Moscow,

Budapest, Paris, London, Johannesburg etc.

The 508 page order of the Gurgaon Sessions Court found 117 workers of the 148 imprisoned from July 18, 2012 not guilty. They were acquitted. But these workers lost jobs as they were wrongly jailed. The original charges against all the 148 were same and similar.

How can one understand in those conditions the sentencing of 31 among them? Only because they are office bearers of the Trade union.

Company's witnesses brought false evidence during trial and the court found merit in those charges against union office bearers just in order to convict them.

Judgment merely ignored the fact that some of the arrested and jailed workers were not on duty on day of the incident when fire engulfed the factory building in which one of the Managers was charred to death. No consideration was given to the horrible working conditions prevailed in the factory and ill treatment meted out to workers. The incident involving a dalit worker being subjected to caste

abuse by the supervisor during tea break on July 18, 2012 leading to the unrest did not find any consideration in deciding the quantum of punishment of life imprisonment to dalit worker Jiyalal. Court order dismissed the presence of bouncers engaged by the management to intimidate workers. No conclusive evidence is available in the order as to who set fire to the building and how the HR manager was charred to death.

Trade unions believed from the beginning that Maruti case was a classic example of class offensive by the Indian ruling class for boosting foreign as well as domestic investment and for the so called industrial development of India.

Gurgaon is one of the three automobile production hubs in India, the other two being Chennai and Pune. Suzuki was the first to invest in Gurgaon. Presently it has almost 50% of the share in auto market. 45% of all Suzuki profit comes from Indian plants. These business considerations made it imperative for the owners of capital to have union free atmosphere to perpetuate exploitation and reap maximum profit. The state government Haryana under Congress rule⁽¹⁾ in 2012 and under BJP's⁽²⁾ "sab ka saath sab ka vikas" (with

all for development for all) now served only the interests of the exploiters.

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The protest actions of April 4 and 5 provided strength to Maruti comrades in jail and outside. Their morale rose many notches higher when they found the protest taking place in different parts of the world. In over 34 locations in India and in as many as 12 cities outside

India solidarity actions took place in their support gave them a feeling that ultimate victory would come to them.

The world working class has assured their support in the future struggle of Maruti workers – in the courts and in the streets.

Mumbai, April 9th, 2017
Nambiath Vasudevan
Chairman of the Trade Union Solidarity
Committee of Mumbai

(1) Traditional party of the Indian bourgeoisie
 (2) The BJP is the Hindu reactionary party today in the power at the central level in India and in number of regional States of this country

Statement from the Mumbai Conference Continuations Committee

There is now circulating worldwide an appeal in the name of the International Liaison Committee calling for a world open conference against war and exploitation to take place in Algiers from October 5th to October 8th 2017.

Indeed, several of those who launched that appeal were members of the coordinating committee of the ILC – just as many of us who endorse this statement. But those who have signed are precisely those who split the ILC, broke down its activity as a broad unity functioning body in 2015. They arbitrarily classified the members of the coordinating committee between those who, in their point of view, were entitled to speak in the name of the ILC and those who were not. They refused a meeting of all the members of the ILC which had been elected in 2010 at the Algiers Conference, meeting, which was proposed in a letter dated March 19th 2016 by the following comrades, all members of the coordinating committee of the ILC: **Alan Benjamin** (USA), **Nancy Wohlforth** (USA), **Nambiath Vasudevan** (India), **Rubina Jamil** (Pakistan), **Daniel Gluckstein** (France).

That letter was sent to all the members of the coordinating committee. Some of them chose to give a negative answer to the appeal of representatives of the Indian labour movement to hold, in Mumbai, a world conference against war, exploitation and precarious labour.

Further, from the start, the same group denounced the Mumbai Conference as "an operation", repeatedly stated that a conference against war and exploitation could have a meaning only if it was located in one of the main imperialist countries, showing its contempt for the world struggle of the working class, in countries dominated by imperialism as well as in imperialist countries themselves, and especially its contempt for the struggle of the Indian working class.

Once the Mumbai Conference had taken place with the participation of a broad Indian delegation representative of the main sections of the Indian working class and delegates from 27 other countries, as it was no longer possible to deny its scope and its meaning, that same group resorted to slanders characterising the Mumbai Conference as an operation carried by anti-working class groups to isolate struggle against precarious labour from the struggle against exploitation and war.

Those slanders are documented in comrade Millind Ranade's letter in which, as comrade Alan Benjamin from the United States explains, he did "a masterful job explaining the centrality of this extreme form of exploitation that is mushrooming in India and the world over" We, who have taken part in organising the Mumbai Conference, from the very start, called for the broadest unity in the preparation of the Mumbai Conference and deplored all manoeuvres opposed to achieving that unity.

It is in the same spirit that we intend to enforce the conclusions of the Mumbai Conference.

We are ready to answer positively to any initiative on the same basis.

It is clear that the Algiers initiative, taken by those who, a few months ago, regarded a world conference against war and exploitation as impossible at least if it did not take place in a major imperialist country - an initiative taken immediately after the Mumbai Conference, with no reference to it, with no move to associate the forces which organised the Mumbai Conference, without disowning the slanders against the Mumbai Conference - is not in that framework.

It is a fact that, after the ILC conference held in Algiers in 2010 and in spite of the explosion of the ILC, the continuation of the aims which united the different forces coope-

rating in the ILC, has been the Mumbai Conference which included many of the forces which were part of the ILC. No one can ignore that fact.

We repeat: we are in favour of broad united international initiatives against war and exploitation for the class independence of the labour organisations and for workers' democracy and free discussion. That was clearly demonstrated by the Mumbai Conference itself. Such initiative can in no case be based on slanders and devices, attacks against the positive achievements of the Mumbai Conference.

That is why we have reached the conclusion, under the circumstances, for our part, as members of the Continuation Committee that we cannot be associated one way or another with the Algiers initiative.

We are convinced that such a position will be shared by all those who have in common the understanding that this initiative is in fact organised to counter the international positive consequences of the Mumbai Conference for working class unity, independence and struggle, far more than being a genuine step towards strengthening that trend.

March 15th, 2017
Innocent Assogha (Benin),
Alan Benjamin (USA),
Colia Clark (USA),
Constantin Cretan (Romania),
Berthony Dupont (Haiti),
Ney Ferreira (Brazil),
Daniel Gluckstein (France),
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