

HMKP MERGED WITH HMS

The matter of merger of Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat (“HMKP”) with Hind Mazdoor Sabha (“HMS”) was under discussion for long time. This issue was also discussed number of times in the working committee meeting of HMS and in every meeting the members welcomed this proposal of HMKP enthusiastically, but for one or other reason this merger was delayed. In the Working Committee meeting of HMS held in New Delhi on 31.07.2010, everything was finalized and it was decided to hold merger conference in Mumbai on 23rd October, 2010. In the W.C. meeting, President of HMS, Com. Thampan Thomas, tendered his resignation for paving way for Com. Sharad Rao, President of HMKP, to become the President of HMS after the merger. With this background and after several rounds of discussions between the top leadership of HMS and HMKP, the detailed programme of merger conference was chalked out.

In the morning of 23rd October, 2010 a get-together of senior national leaders of HMKP and HMS was held in Jagdish Ajmera Sabha Gruha of WREU at Grant Road (West) in which around 300 senior national leaders were present. On this occasion, a meeting was held which was presided over by Com. Thampan Thomas, President, HMS. Com. Thampan Thomas, President/HMS, Com. Umraomal Purohit, General Secretary/HMS, Com. Girish Kumar Pandey, General Secretary/HMKP, Com. Sharad Rao, President, HMKP, Com. Shiva Gopal Mishra, General Secretary/AIRF, Dr. Shanti Patel, Vice President/HMS addressed the meeting. They welcomed merger of HMKP into HMS and thanked all those who have taken initiative and pain for this great event. They stated that the merger will strengthen HMS and sizably increase its presence in all the sectors, especially transport, coal, cement, textile, etc. Com. Umraomal Purohit and Com. Sharad Rao assured that they will work together to have a good impact on the Indian trade union movement, which will be a pathway to all other trade unions for coming together for formation of a national trade union centre in this country. On this occasion, Hon’ble Rajendra Sachchar, Justice, Supreme Court of India (Retd.), was a special invitee, who appreciated the merger and blessed HMS. After the get-together and meeting, WREU hosted ‘Sneh Bhojan’ to all the participants.

Prior to starting of the merger conference, a Press Conference was held in Kamgar Kalyan Krida Kendra, near Elphinstone Road Railway Station, Mumbai at 1.00 P.M. to 2.00 P.M., which was jointly addressed by Com. Umraomal Purohit and Com Sharad Rao. Both the leaders highlighted the importance of the merger, its benefits to the working class and future course of action. The Press Statement jointly issued by Com. Umraomal Purohit and Com Sharad Rao is reproduced below:-

PRESS STATEMENT

“To achieve the goal of consolidation for the workers union and workers movement, the HMKP in its General Council Meeting held on Friday, the 22nd October, 2010 at Dhuru Hall, Dadar (West), Mumbai - 400 028, unanimously resolved to dissolve HMKP

and merge with likeminded central trade union viz. HIND MAZDOOR SABHA. This has paved way for HMKP merging with HMS today at massive convention at Kamgar Kreedha Kendra, Elphinstone, Senapati Bapat Marg, Mumbai, in presence of Shri Sharadchandraji Pawar, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Govt. of India, Shri Rajendra Sachchar, Chief Justice, Delhi High Court (Retd.) and Shri Surendra Mohan, a prominent socialist leader.

The HIND MAZDOOR SABHA was formed in 1948 by socialists under the leadership of Jaiprakash Narayan and Ashok Mehta. After the split in Socialist Party in 1958 HIND MAZDOOR PANCHAYAT was formed by Madhu Limaye and George Fernandes, but in 1979 the HMP merged with HIND MAZDOOR SABHA in the convention held at Mumbai. This unity did not last long and the split occurred again in 1983. Hind Mazdoor Panchayat was renamed as HIND MAZDOOR KISAN PANCHAYAT in the Conference held at Bangalore. After Com. George Fernandes became minister in NDA Government from 28th November, 2003, the HMKP was working under the leadership of Com. Lalchand Mahato and Com. Sharad Rao.

From the year 2008, i.e. for last two and half years the HMKP leaders and activists came to a decision to dissolve HMKP and merge it with Hind Mazdoor Sabha forever , to strengthen the trade union unity and movement. In the Biennial National Convention held in March 2009, at Mumbai, decision was taken to merge HMKP with HMS. Thereafter continuous interactions, consultations and discussions took place between HMS and HMKP. It is now decided to merge Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat with Hind Mazdoor Sabha, in the Merger Convention to be held today at this venue.

We are confident that the strengthened Hind Mazdoor Sabha would continue to work for trade union unity and working class struggle to fight against the ills like high inflation, loss of jobs that occurred owing to recession, tardy implementation of industrial relations legislations and growing un-employment resulting from jobless growth, which have exposed the working class to unbearable economic hardships. Even in respect of the social security of workers in the un-organized sectors of the economy there is utter confusion though it was legislated by Parliament in December, 2008. On decasualization also, the Union Government keeps dragging its feet because it is itself the largest employer of the casual/contract workers in the country whose constitution pledges itself to socialism in its preamble. Disinvestment of the public sector units is a sure means of altering the character under terms of service of their permanent employees who have to work under private contractors.

The biggest hurdle before the workers movement in India is its division and fragmentation which often prevents united action by the workers organization, therefore the need of the hour is the unification and consolidation of the trade union movement, which we believe, will surely go a long way in safe guarding interest of labour in this country.

The Hind Mazdoor Sabha has been an effective voice for Indian workers for over six decades and provided an independent, free and democratic trade unionism in the

country.

As a result of this historic merger the Hind Mazdoor Sabha will have affiliated membership of more than 80 lacs in the country and we are confident that it will be Main Central Trade Union in India after verification which may be held any time in 2012 or thereafter, by the Government of India.”

Thereafter, the merger conference commenced in a gaily decorated pandal at Kamgar Kalyan Krida Kendra, Mumbai. In the beginning, Com. Umraomal Purohit and Com Sharad Rao garlanded the statue of Hutatma Babu Genu, who had laid his life in Swadeshi Movement, Com. Hanumant Tate, President of State HMS and Com. Shankarrao Salvi, President of HMKP/Maharashtra welcomed all the dignitaries present on dais by offering them bouquet and Shawl. Com. Girishkumar Pandey, General Secretary/HMKP and Chairman of the Reception Committee while delivering welcome address, narrated the need and necessity of merger. Com. Sharad Rao, President/HMKP read out the merger document named as “Mumbai Declaration” which read as follows:-

MUMBAI DECLARATION

“This historic conference greatly appreciate the decision of Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat to dissolve itself and merge with the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), which was found in 1948 to unite all democratic trade unions under the leadership of Shri Jayprakash Narayan, R.S. Ruikar, Ashok Mehta, V.B. Karnik, P. D’Mello, Maniben Kara and others. HMS and HMKP had set the achievement of democratic socialism as its objective and it is this common vision of the two organizations, the HMKP and HMS, which have brought about this unification. The conference congratulates the HMKP and HMS for this historic decision.

The HMS and HMKP have always striven for the unity of the working class and fervently hope that this development will accelerate that process. The working class has been facing terrible onslaught by the proprietors of the countries’ economy and government. The gravity of the situation underlines the urgent need for such unity. The high inflation in food articles and other essential goods has placed unbearable burdens on the common people, while the economic situation fraught with growing unemployment. The Government has been dolling out favours after favours to the India inc., at great cost to the working class. The workers in the un-organized sectors of the economy, in particular, have been put under the greatest possible strain. It has been imperative for all trade union centers to come together to fight back these oppressive policies of the government.

The conference reiterates and resolves to further strengthen the HMS and the determined struggle of the working class for the creation of a just society where there is

no exploitation. It also pledges itself to widening and deepening our democratic polity which is the backbone of the legitimate rights of the working class”.

Com. Umraomal Purohit, President of HMS, while supporting and welcoming the merger, stated that in our country out of 40 crores workforce, only 3.5 crores workers are unionized and unfortunately they are divided into 66,000 unions under 15 National Centres, and 91% workers are still un-organized.

He further pointed out that in most of the countries, only one National Center functions, in which all trade unionists belonging to different political parties and following different ideologies are working unitedly for the interest of working class and succeeded in influencing the labour policy of their country and Government is taking them in confidence before preparing political and social policies. He added that due to multiplicity of the trade Unions in India, Government is taking undue advantage. He informed that after merger now membership of HMS has reached to 80 lakhs and now has secured first position amongst the Central Trade Unions and he was sure that Government will take note of it.

Shri Sharad Pawar, Union Agricultural Minister, was the Chief Guest. He while addressing the merger conference opined that “Farmers should get decent rates for their agricultural product and poor workers should also get agricultural products in such a rate, which they can afford.” He further pointed out that once upon a time, all type of industries were present in Mumbai, but time has changed now. Textile industry is almost closed down and service sector like IT, Insurance, etc. are booming. In such circumstance, if factories and industries are closed, then it will lead to increase in unemployment. He stated that in India, 60% population depends upon employment in agricultural sector. He assured that Government is trying to safeguard interest of farmers and workers through Food Grains Security Act, which will be shortly placed in Parliament. He further said that with HMKP’s merger with HMS, HMS became a strong center of workers and achieved first position in Trade Union Movement. It is really a historical moment and will encourage other trade unions to joint this unity for the interest of working class. He stated that he is sure that HMS will fight against those who are dividing trade union movement on the name of religions, state, language and party politics.

Com. Umraomal Purohit informed that Com. Thampan Thomas, President of HMS, has tendered his resignation in last Working Committee, without any condition, for this merger and while accepting his resignation he put on record that Com. Thampan Thomas has influentially worked for HMS for last several years. Thereafter, Com. Umraomal Purohit proposed the name of Com. Sharad Rao for the post of President of HMS and his proposal was unanimously accepted by thousands of delegates present in said Conference. He also proposed name of Com. Thampan Thomas for the post Vice President of HMS. This was also accepted by the delegates.

Com. Thampan Thomas handed over the reins of President of HMS to Com. Sharad Rao. Com. Umraomal Purohit, General Secretary, HMS offered garlands of flowers and

welcome to Com. Sharad Rao as President of HMS and he also offered garlands of flowers to Com. Thampan Thomas.

The said conference has been addressed by honourable Shri Rajendra Sachchar, Retired Chief Justice, Supreme Court, Shri N. Suzuki, General Secretary, ITUC-AP, Com. P. Chidambaram, Com. Surendra Mohan, Com. Lalchand Mahato, Com. S.R. Kulkarni. Dr. Shanti Patel, Com. Champa Verma, Com. Noor Ahmed and Shiv Gopal Mishra, General Secretary, AIRF and Com. Mahendra Sharma from ITF.

On this occasion, HMKP published a colorful "Souvenir" and HMS has published History of HMS in Marathi namely "HMS CHI SATH VARSHACHI VATCHAL" translation of English Book "60 years of HMS (1948 – 2008)" written by Com. Umraomal Purohit, General Secretary, HMS and translated by Com. Suryakant Bagal, General Secretary HMS, Maharashtra Council.

The entire merger Conference was anchored by Com. J.R. Bhosale, Treasurer/HMS/AIRF & General Secretary/WREU. Vote of thanks was given by Com. Mahabal Shetty, Treasurer of HMKP.

The historic conference, which was a step ahead towards workers unity, was attended by more than 10,000 workers coming from all corners of country. The Railwaymen under the banner of WREU/AIRF enthusiastically participated in the Conference. HMS ZINDABAD : WORKERS' UNITY ZINDABAD.