

MOUVEMENT COMMUNISTE & KOLEKTIVNĚ PROTI KAPITALU

WORKERS AUTONOMY STRIKES IN INDIA:

MARUTI SUZUKI STRIKE AT MANESAR (JUNE,
SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2011)



NOTE TO THE READER

We thank Mr. G. Bouvin who, as the editor responsible, makes it possible for us to legally publish and distribute this publication. We wish to point out that Mr. G. Bouvin is not responsible for the political content of the articles and, more generally, for the programmatic positions defended in our press.

PRESENTATION

This document is simultaneously published in three languages: Czech, English and French. This is not because we are such efficient translators but because it is the result of a common work by speakers of these three languages since its very conception. It is a work jointly performed by comrades from KpK, MC and others. We hope that this first step of common political work will be confirmed and amplified in a way which tends towards the unification and centralization of communists.

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INTRODUCTION

India is a “continent” whose least well known feature is its working class and the struggles it engages in. Therefore this pamphlet has the aim of lifting the veil on the situation and the potential for workers’ autonomy that it contains, starting from the example of a significant strike which took place three times (June, September and October 2011). As a result of this strike in the car assembly plant of Maruti Suzuki in Manesar (the second biggest in the group in India, opened in 2007), the workers achieved a semi-victory, that is to say the partial officialisation of their independent base union, the MSEU (Maruti Suzuki Employees Union), by the company bosses, and the satisfaction of some demands.

The strike, begun by the workers for the recognition of the MSEU, hid other demands (increase in wages, permanent jobs for the casual workers, reduction of the pace of work, the end of managerial arrogance, etc.) by synthesising them into a fight for “dignity”. It made a good example for the other factories in the group and the auto sector in the whole Gurgaon area, unleashing a series of strikes in the sector on 7 October, tipping the balance in favour of the strikers.

The three strikes in the Suzuki factory in Manesar were in effect not isolated: the workers in the auto industry (manufacturers and subcontractors) have shown a certain combativity, as we can see by the number of conflicts that have hit the industry since 2009.

However, this strike shows several interesting characteristics:

- A strike in three stages in June, September and October,
- A strike, where after 33 days of lock-out, the workers reoccupied the factory, thus consolidating their unity,
- A strike which was semi-victorious,
- A strike with a single objective, the recognition of the base union, which allowed its limits to be shown,
- A strike in which a significant number of casually employed workers actively participated (70% in the factory didn’t have a permanent position),
- A strike where the bosses’ and the police repression was weaker than in other similar strikes,
- A strike, finally, in which the new generation of workers (18-25 years old) surged forwards and has since continued to express its potential.

This pamphlet would obviously not have been possible without the struggle of the workers themselves, nor without their accounts directly obtained by us or by others. But it would also not have been possible without the tenacious work carried out since 2005 by the comrades who put out Gurgaon Workers News¹, from whom we’ve got the chronology and various descriptions of events included in the text.

Therefore the text consists of:

- An introduction to the town of Gurgaon and Manesar,
- Some information about the Maruti Suzuki workplace,
- A detailed chronology,
- An overview of the unions in India,
- Some early analyses,
- A critique of “base” or “rank-and-file” trade unionism,
- An attempt at a conclusion,
- Some useful appendices.

¹ See the site <http://gurgaonworkersnews.wordpress.com/>

GURGAON AND MANESAR

Gurgaon, situated in Haryana State and adjoining Delhi², was in 1989 a small town of 12,500 inhabitants. Today its ever-growing population³ is 1,500,000 inhabitants, on an area of 600 km², with 300,000 industrial workers⁴ and as many again in services.

The foundations of the new industrial zones were laid in 1989, but the initial kick-off was in 1981, when Maruti Suzuki began the construction of its first assembly plant, opened in 1983. It's in 1997, when GE Capital⁵ set up shop, that the big Indian or foreign companies began to follow, into various areas of activity⁶. Today we can find, for example: cars (Maruti Suzuki, Honda Hero, etc.), electronics and telecommunications (Motorola, Alcatel Lucent, Nokia, etc.), IT (Microsoft, IBM, etc.), textiles (Orient Craft, etc.), food processing, pharmaceuticals, call centres, company headquarters, etc.



Everything is side by side and mixed together: 17-storey towers for the middle class professionals, hovels, shopping centres and traditional small shops, street sellers, people, and yet more people. A perpetual murmur of diverse means of transport, people and commodities⁷.

² The centre of Gurgaon is 32 km from the centre of Delhi. See the maps of Gurgaon and Manesar in the appendix.

³ 850,000 inhabitants in 2001.

⁴ Here we're talking about the official employees of big companies. It doesn't take account of the black economy.

⁵ The financial division of General Electric.

⁶ For an exhaustive list of companies see the GWN site: <http://gurgaonworkersnews.wordpress.com/list-of-companies-situated-in-gurgaon/>.

⁷ Because the two Maruti Suzuki factories of Gurgaon and Manesar are not linked to the rail network, cars are sent out by closed articulated lorries which move at the speed of a funeral, thanks to the 500 trips per day taken on already saturated roads and motorways.

Gurgaon has only been linked to Delhi by a metro line since 2010, so the fact that the railway station is outside the centre and there is no municipal bus company explains the proliferation of private collective means of transport, like the ancient bus originally belonging to the Delhi municipality and the innumerable Piaggio taxis, designed to transport nine people but which often carry fifteen!

A city of the “Indian miracle”, according to the bourgeoisie, Gurgaon is presented as the jewel of shining India, a symbol of capitalist success promising a better life for all thanks to development. At first sight, the office blocks and shopping centres reflect this pipe dream and even the facades of textile factories resemble three-star hotels.

Behind the facade, behind the walls of the factory and in the small streets, thousands of workers produce the cars and scooters for the middle classes, which end up in the traffic jams on the new NH8 motorway, between Delhi and Gurgaon. Thousands of young people coming from the middle class waste their time, their energy and their aspirations as students by working the night shift in call centres, selling loans to workers in the US or prepayment of electricity bills to poor people in the UK. Right next door, thousands of migrant workers uprooted by the agrarian crisis in the neighbouring provinces stitch and sew for export, putting themselves into competition with their brothers and sisters in Bangladesh or Vietnam.

The state and private companies such as DLF (Delhi Lease and Finance, the biggest property developer in India, specialising in construction in new development zones) impose the political and material framework for the rapid development of the city. The flux of investment into the industries of Gurgaon leads to an explosion in the price of land and buildings, accompanied by an omnipresent architectural arrogance which gives a Dubai-like feel to the area. The thousands of migrant workers attracted by the development of factories, searching for work in various industries, enter as temp workers into the factories or as agents in call centres. While the development of industrial and retail zones is planned, when it comes to housing for the workers, that’s left to private initiative. So we have the presence of villages on the municipal territory of Gurgaon, sometimes next to but often far away from the places of production.

A village is where one or a few farmers have given up agriculture and transformed their land into “lots” for workers, but continue to live there in modernised houses. The quality of these village lodgings is often Spartan (3m x 3m) for exorbitant rents and often with deplorable sanitary conditions.

Most of the work of producing metal parts for cars, for level 3 and 4 suppliers, is carried out in workshops (down to micro-enterprises) in Faridabad, an industrial town situated around 25 km to the east of Gurgaon. The policy of recruiting mostly migrant workers, without local roots, has been used by the bosses as a strategy to undermine the power of workers in the case of a conflict. The textile sector in Gurgaon is oriented towards export. There are several companies like Orient Craft, which have a few factories around Gurgaon and employ 20,000 workers. This industry is strongly dependent on subcontracting⁸.

According to the Prime Minister of Haryana, Gurgaon is the largest call centre “hub” in India and therefore the world. The fact is that around 150,000 to 200,000 young people work in them, mostly making calls for American clients and companies with large offices in the UK, such as American Express, Citibank, Dell, IBM. Call centres are often next to car or textile factories.

In terms of struggles, those of the Gurgaon workers acquired notoriety when the police attacked a demonstration of workers from Honda Hero, in July 2005. Before that, there had been numerous conflicts at Maruti Suzuki, mostly in reaction to attempts by the company to reduce the number of workers on permanent contracts. Since 2006, it has been primarily the temp

⁸ Without getting into a detailed description of the history of the textile industry in India, the main thing which has happened since 1982 has been the dismantling of the big productive units which employed more than 5000 workers and which carried out the whole chain of production, from the processing of cotton up to making clothes, into multiple units. Whether they are automated (cotton processing) or individualised with numerous subcontractors, the company only carries out the final fabrication.

workers who have taken the initiative in struggle, often without being represented by an official union. After the experience of the lock-out and the brutal repression at Honda Hero, most of the struggles have been unofficial actions of short duration. In May 2006, straight after a five-day strike at Honda Hero led by 3000 temps, the machines were moved to the factory of the subcontractor, Shivam Autotech⁹. And there were similar situations at Delphi.

Manesar, officially IMT (Industrial Model Township), is a subdivision of Gurgaon, situated at its extreme south-east (see the maps in the appendix) and is around 15 km² in area. The development of this zone was designated in 1992 but the first infrastructure, factories and offices only appeared in 2000.

It is a “new town” of 200,000 inhabitants, next to the Delhi-Mumbai motorway, where roads have been marked out but nothing has been constructed, which gives it a strangely heterogeneous aspect, with the horizontal factories and the vertical office blocks and the absence of trees.

MARUTI SUZUKI

An overview

Suzuki (Suzuki Motor Corp) was one of the first foreign companies to set itself up in India in association with the Indian government, via a joint-venture, in February 1981, under the name of Maruti Udyog Limited. Production of the first car, in the Gurgaon factory, began in 1983. In September 2007 the company was renamed Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL), reflecting the total disengagement of the Indian government through the sale of its share to Indian investment companies. Suzuki Motor Corp kept hold of 54.2% of the capital.

Production in 2010: 780,000 vehicles including 50,000 for export. Total production in India: 2,600,000 vehicles.

MSIL makes up 44.9% of the Indian market and in February 2012 announced that it had made its ten millionth vehicle. In 2011, it had a turnover of 361 billion Rupees¹⁰.

Employment contracts

At Maruti Suzuki, like elsewhere in India, there are several types of employment contract:

- Permanent staff, corresponding for the most part to skilled employees.
- Apprentices, who are taken on for a period of three years (on wages less than permanent staff) and who, at the end of these three years, “hopefully” become permanent.
- Trainees, who have alternating contracts (with wages even lower than those of the apprentices) during their studies, without any guarantee of a job.
- Temporary workers, who are employed in the factory via another company and who do either specific tasks (canteen, cleaning, transport) or all the least skilled jobs in production. The difference with Europe is in the nature of the temp agencies. Next to “normal” companies like Tirupati, there exists a swarm of small companies which often have no company name and which are led by the “recruiters”. This term designates the managers of a temp “company” which take on, on the corner of the street or in “nomadic” offices, reserve workers by offering them work on a day by day basis (often without a contract as in construction, public works or warehouse work) or for even shorter periods. Most of the recruiters are known for their own particular ways of controlling the workforce which they put at the disposal of the big companies.

⁹ Shivam Autotech is the new name for Munjal Showa, founded in 1999, subsidiary of Honda Hero, making transmissions and moulded parts.

¹⁰ There are about 55 Rupees to the US Dollar.

The plants

The table below gives a list of Maruti Suzuki plants.

Sites	Address	Name (opening date)	Area (km ²)	Production ¹¹	Units/ year (2010)	Employees 2011			
						Perm nent	Appr ent.	Train ee	Tem ps
Gurgaon	Palam Gurgaon Road	Maruti Suzuki India Limited (1983)	0.8	Cars	480,000	3,000	1,400	600	1,900
Gurgaon	Palam Gurgaon Road	K engine plant (2008)	0.35	Engines	500,000 (2007)	1,200 (*)			
Gurgaon	Village Kherki Dhula, Badshahapur, N.H.-8, Link Road,	Suzuki Motorcycle India Private Limited (1997)	0.25	Motorbikes and scooters	350,000	1,400 (*)			
Manesar	Plot no.1, Phase 3A IMT Manesar	Maruti Suzuki India Limited Plant A (2007)	0.8	Cars	300,000	1,000	800	400	1,200
Manesar	Plot no.1, Phase 3A IMT Manesar	Maruti Suzuki India Limited Plant B (2011)	0.8	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Manesar	Plot no.1, Phase 3A IMT Manesar	R & D center (2010)	0.2	_____	_____	800	?	?	?
Manesar	Plot No - 26 B Sector 3 IMT,	Suzuki Powertrain India Limited (2007)	0.4	Diesel engines Trans- missions	300,000	500	750	250	600
Manesar	Plot No - 26 B Sector 3 IMT	Suzuki castings (2007)	0.2	Moulded parts		200	200	?	400

(*) = total staff. Detail not known.

CHRONOLOGY

The first occupation: 4 June to 17 June 2011

3 June

Eleven representatives of MSEU (Maruti Suzuki Employees Union) from the Manesar plant, including Shiv Kumar, its secretary, meet officials from the Ministry of Labour of the State of Haryana in Chandigarh in order to carry out the formalities of registering the union. The same

¹¹ In so far as cars are concerned, the Gurgaon factory produces the models: 800, Alto, WagonR, Estilo, Omni, Gypsy, Ertiga and Eeco and Manesar produces: A-star, Swift, Swift DZire, SX4 and Ritz.

day, the Minister of Labour informs the management of Maruti Suzuki that this has happened. The management begins making the workers sign blank pieces of paper, in favour of the company union (the MUKU¹²) to try to sabotage the formation of the new union.

4 June

The start of the 13-day first occupation. The representatives of the MSEU try to get back some of the already-signed blank papers. The management sacks eleven MSEU members. In the afternoon the workers begin a strike with an occupation inside the factory.

5 June

The management seal off the gates of the factory and put a line of security guards in front of them, with aim of preventing any contact between the workers still inside and those on the outside – that is, the workers, their sympathisers and the media.

In Delhi, the police violently charge massive demonstrations of the anti-corruption movement organised by the partisans of Guru Ramdev¹³.

6 June

There has to be a demonstration in front of the factory gates so that food brought by families and friends can get to the workers. The police are deployed inside and outside the Manesar area. They take away the tents that the protesters have set up.

8 June

The principal unions AITUC, CITU, HMS, INTUC and UTUC¹⁴ form an action committee to show their support for the strike. In fact this translates into a rally in a park in Gurgaon, but, clearly, no concrete action.

9 June

The action committee mobilises 50 to 60 workers in Gurgaon, while 1,000 to 2,000 workers answer the call from the MSEU to gather in front of the factory gates at Manesar.

10 June

The strike is declared illegal by the government of Haryana. Two lorry loads of additional police arrive on the scene. Under this pressure, 250 workers decide to stop the occupation. Because of the lack of storage space and as a consequence of the strike, 200 to 250 suppliers of the factory have to reduce or stop their production through lack of deliveries.

12 June

The Maruti Suzuki management proposed taking back five of the eleven sacked workers, but the MSEU refused, arguing “*all, or none!*” The main unions announced a legal solidarity strike for two hours on 14 June 2011.

13 June

The management announces that it can accept an independent union for the Manesar factory but only under the aegis of the Works Committee¹⁵, which will be responsible for the review of wages and other questions of a general nature – hedging their bets.

14 June

The secretary of the AITUC in Haryana, D.L. Sachdev, first announced that the two-hour solidarity strike had begun and at the same time announced its end because of the opening of negotiations.

16 June

The management tells the media that they want to try to “revive” the production lines of the Gurgaon factory for the models which have been moved to Manesar.

¹² Maruti Udyog Kamgar Union is the company union of Maruti Suzuki of Gurgaon affiliated to HMS (Hind Mazdoor Sabha).

¹³ Guru Ramdev (born in 1971), organiser of an anti-corruption movement.

¹⁴ See below for the names and an analysis of the unions in India.

¹⁵ According to labour legislation in India, it's on the level of the workplace that the boss can concede the creation of this organ of class collaboration.

17 June

End of the first occupation. The conflict is settled with the help of the principle national unions and the MUKU. Maruti Suzuki promises to transform the sackings into suspensions. The delegates accept that the hours on strike will not be paid. Maruti Suzuki announces that the occupation cost them \$US 93 million.

Maruti Suzuki appeals to external auditors and to the Brahmakumaris¹⁶. They are given the task of organising sessions with the workers, in which they were encouraged to talk about their problems. After the lock-out at Denso¹⁷, in 2010, this “spiritual” organisation was given the mission of managing “tensions in industrial relations”.

The resistance: 18 June to 28 August

18 to 25 June

According to sources close to the management, the production of cars at Manesar during this period was only 1100 vehicles per day compared to 1200 normally. The workers indicated that most of the supervisors (members of low-level management) who had previously been very authoritarian were now treating them with a certain amount of fear.

16 June

For the first time in 11 years the MUKU organises elections for delegates. The Manesar workers boycott this charade. Only a dozen or so vote.

26 June

The demand to register the MSEU is rejected by the authorities of the State of Haryana for formal reasons (illegal strike, faulty signatures).

27 July

A group of workers taken on by local recruiters complain about the amount of work and demand more staff. The boss of the workshop injures one of the workers. His colleagues support him and the supervisor has to apologise in front of the workers.

28 July

The police enter the factory, take four workers to the station and the management announce six suspensions. In reaction, all the workers in the factory down tools and gather together. The company has to “show” that the four workers have not been arrested. It orders that no bus is sent out to pick up the second shift. The workers arrive by their own means, but they are refused entry. The workers refuse to leave the factory. After a short period of paralysis, the management allows the second shift to come in.

From 8 to 17 August

Although the management have promised to rescind the suspensions if “*everything returns to normal in the factory*”, they refuse to carry this out. Instead, the company continues to take on new workers coming from the technical training institute in Kanpur and other technical institutes from the nearby provinces¹⁸. An order is given to fence in all the surrounding grassy areas which have been occupied by the workers. The supervisors start to use an authoritarian tone towards the workers again.

From 23 to 24 August

¹⁶ The Brahmakumaris are a sect of Hindu inspiration, founded in 1936, and present in a few countries. It is the “spiritual” side of the bosses’ attempts after the strike to understand its causes and to identify the leaders.

¹⁷ Denso is a Japanese equipment manufacturer for the car industry which has a factory in Gautam Buddh Nagar, in Uttar Pradesh, close to the south-east suburbs of New Delhi and in three other places including Gurgaon, which supplies Maruti Suzuki and where there was a strike in February 2010.

¹⁸ These are the schools which train to a level equivalent to a high school diploma with a technical specialisation (*Bac technique* in France, or Level 2 or 3 BTEC in the UK).

Four more workers are suspended. The company complains about the loss of production and blames a slow pace of work and sabotage. On 24 August, the production of 1230 cars was planned but only 437 were assembled. And only 96 met the required level of quality. During the night, when the factory only has a few hundred workers and supervisors working overtime, a force of 300 to 400 police in riot gear enter the factory and set themselves up there.

The lock-out and the strikes: 29 August to 30 September

29 August

The management refuses to let any workers into the factory without signing a “good conduct bond”. Only 18 workers sign. An aluminium wall 500 metres long is put in place on the service road, surrounding the factory on the inside, blocking any view from inside to outside. Posters announce the sacking of eleven workers and the suspension of ten others.

30 August

The company claims to have started “production” in the most highly automated areas (welding, stamping, painting) and announces that it has found 200 potential workers from technical institutes who will be given jobs on a contractual basis in the next 2-3 days. 12 more workers sacked and 16 more suspended, all are supposed to have had documents for registration of the MSEU.

31 August

The company has recruited 120 workers trained at the technical institute, who are brought to the factory in the morning with the objective “*of reinforcing the workforce for assembly operations*”. In addition, 50 engineers from the Gurgaon factory and 290 supervisors are working in the Manesar factory. The company claims to have 500 trained and experienced people available for production. Only 36 workers have signed the “good conduct” agreement so far.

1 September

More than 3,000 members of 35 unions from the region gather in front of the Manesar factory to express their solidarity with the protesting workers. The unions threaten to stop work the following week if the management refuses to negotiate.

2 September

Some recruiters and middle managers of Maruti Suzuki have surrounded 150 workers in the village of Aliyar, close to the factory, in sector 8 of Manesar. The workers are threatened and some hit. The police arrive and arrest the Maruti Suzuki workers who are defending themselves against the thugs. At the same time, the employers’ association ASSOCHAM demands that the Haryana government “*take firm measures against those who try to calumny the name of Gurgaon, which has become the destination of numerous Indian and global companies*”¹⁹ The company claims to have produced 125 Swift cars in the two plants, Manesar A and B¹⁹, on that day. The normal production of Manesar A is around 1200 cars (150 SX4, 300 to 400 A Star, 650 to 750 Swift).

3 September

Some 70 students from the universities of Delhi visit the Maruti Suzuki workers. Towards the evening, the workers have to move their tents (which they’ve reinstalled) to the other side of the road, because the management have obtained a court injunction against any demonstration within 100 metres of the factory²⁰. The company states that the production workforce remains at around 800 people (90 engineers from Gurgaon, 290 supervisors and 425 new manual workers). The new workers have to stay inside the factory, day and night. This manpower is supposed to have produced 150 Swift cars.

5 September

¹⁹ The construction of the second assembly plant (Plant B), situated behind Plant A, began in 2009. Its opening was accelerated because of the strike in Plant A. The management said that part of the casual workers from Plant A would be transferred there and would become permanent staff.

²⁰ This judicial measure is very common during strikes in India.

The MSEU publishes a statement: “*Production was completely stopped at the beginning of last week, and in the last 2 or 3 days, 8 to 10 cars have been produced in the factory. These are defective, sloppily produced, models. The company states that, so far, 63 permanent workers have signed the “good conduct” agreement*”.

11 September

The MSEU meets representatives from thirty unions in the region and reiterates its legal demand to create a union, and the withdrawal of the legal complaints filed and the suspensions of 57 workers. In its turn, Maruti Suzuki announced: “*Starting on Tuesday, the company will begin to take on skilled technicians, who will be on the permanent lists, to replace the present workers who refuse to sign the agreement*”.

12 September

Wildcat strike at the supplier Munjal Showa²¹ in Manesar, which spreads to the factories of Gurgaon and Haridwar. The 1200 workers are employed as temporary staff and are not in unions. They produce around 60,000 shock absorbers per day. They demand permanent contracts and an end to the moves from one factory to another imposed by the company. Production in the motorbike factories of Honda and Hero Honda is threatened due to lack of supplies.

13 September

The unofficial strike at Munjal Showa is over. The management agrees to grant permanent status to 125 named workers, and promises that workers will automatically get this after three years of training. The management complain about “*the negative influence of the Maruti Suzuki workers*”. AITUC, CITU, HMS and eleven members of independent unions relaunch the “Action Committee”. In Gurgaon, almost 1500 union members and students demonstrate in favour of the Maruti Suzuki workers. The management claim to have 1100 workers at Manesar, after having taken on 100 additional workers from technical institutes that day.

14 September

Strike at Suzuki Powertrain Ltd, Suzuki Castings, in Manesar, and at Suzuki Motorcycles in Gurgaon (Kherki Dhaura area) in solidarity with the workers of Maruti Suzuki in Manesar. They also make their own demands. More than 4000 workers are involved. To support the negotiations at the Gurgaon factory they mention the “potential for a hunger strike the next week”. Around 350 workers hired through a contractor for loading and unloading at the Maruti Manesar plant also go on strike and demand a driver instead of a helper grade. Maruti Suzuki announces that a car factory will be set up in Gujarat State.

15 September

Negotiations at Suzuki Powertrain and Suzuki Motorcycles. Skirmishes break out at the factory gates at Maruti Suzuki, Manesar, when the company tries to bring in three busloads of temps. Four strikers are injured and then arrested. The media say that 11 guards are injured.

16 September

Maruti Suzuki announces the closure of the Gurgaon factory because of lack of parts from Suzuki Powertrain. The HMS union negotiates an end to the strike at Suzuki Powertrain. The workers at Suzuki castings have also ended their strike. The Gurgaon factory has to start working again on 18 September. While waiting, the “Action Committee” calls for a demonstration in Gurgaon. After the arrest of the president of the local branch of the AITUC, the demonstration is postponed.

17 September

Strike in the morning at the Honda Manesar factory, with the aim of freeing the representative of AITUC ; at 14.00 he is freed under caution. At the stock exchange the analysts downgrade their instructions on the Maruti Suzuki shares from “sell” to “hold”.

²¹ Munjal Showa is an Indian equipment manufacturer (subsidiary of the Japanese Hero – which is a subsidiary of Honda) which specialises in suspension and shock absorbers for cars. It has three factories and employs 1200 workers.

18 September

The police arrest three leaders of the MSEU on trumped up charges as they leave the negotiations with management and State officials.

19 September

The three leaders of the MSEU are freed. Meeting of the worried company bosses (Maruti Suzuki, Bony, Polymers, Honda, Rico Auto) to discuss the continuing conflict. Maruti Suzuki announces that it is going to ask 350 trainees to return to work in the next three days and claims to have produced 600 Swifts between Gurgaon and Manesar (no figure available for Manesar). The leader of the HMS union says that the workers are prepared to sign the “good conduct” agreement, but confirms that the sackings and suspensions will remain.

20 September

Maruti Suzuki suspends five more workers for taking part in the scuffles which took place at the factory gates.

21 September

After going beyond the average level of production for the Swift, the company makes provision for starting production of the SX4 and the Star A model at the Manesar factory. It says that it’s recruited more than 100 regular workers. 104 workers from the Manesar factory have signed the “good conduct” agreement since the conflict started.

22 September

Day of solidarity: a union branch on the Japanese railways²² protests against the arrest of the union leaders of Maruti Suzuki. Around a dozen unions demonstrate in various parts of India. More than 100 people protest in front of the offices of *Haryana Rajyan Bal Bhawan* (the Haryana government social protection organisation) and in front of the Maruti Suzuki showroom on Connaught Place, in New Delhi. While this is going on the media announce that the total staff of Manesar consists of more than 1300 workers.

23 September

Maruti Suzuki sends text messages to permanent workers on their phones, demanding that they return to work. The workers’ families in their villages of origin are also contacted to “convince” their sons and husbands to return to their posts.

24 September

Maruti Suzuki claims to have produced a total of 700 Swifts, including 400 at Manesar, but no other models. 116 workers have signed the “good conduct” agreement.

26 September

The management announces that a total of 1400 are working at the Manesar factory, of which close to 800 are recently taken on.

27 September

With discussions stalled, the workers accept that the MUKU should be the negotiator. The latter announces a “hunger strike” for 28 September, if the management doesn’t make some gesture. The AITUC indicates that it will press for an immediate return to work if the company agrees to take back half of the 62 workers that it sacked for “indiscipline and insubordination” against a suspension. *The Economic Times* states that the total number of workers at work has risen to 1500, while two models out of three are in production at Manesar.

30 September

Agreement and end of the lock-out and the protest camp. The workers sign the “good conduct” agreement; 18 trainees are taken back; 15 sacking are transformed into suspensions; a total of 44 permanent workers remain suspended. The workers accept that the hours on strike should not be paid and, what’s more, that there can be a penalty of a day on half-wages. Maruti Suzuki states that the 33 days of lock-out have caused a loss of \$US 150 million (including 22,000 cars).

²² Equally surprising is that a train drivers’ union branch from the town of Chiba, for the JR East company, sent the management of Suzuki in Japan a message of protest. <http://radicalnotes.com/journal/2011/09/14/>

The second occupation: 7 to 14 October

3 October

The first day of work after the lock-out (of the first occupation) the management refuses entry to 1200 temp workers who participated in the demonstration and the occupation. Inside the factory, the management decides to transfer a large number of workers from one job to another, which provokes strong discontent. They also suspend the company bus service, which picks up the workers living far from the factory.

From 3 to 7 October

For financial reasons and because they are really frustrated, around 100 temp workers decide to get their pay no matter what. Those who remain put pressure on the company and their colleagues inside the factory. The recruiters try to stop the temps getting to the factory gates by threatening them with violence.

7 October

The workers inside the factories of Maruti Suzuki in Manesar, Suzuki Powertrain, Suzuki Castings and Suzuki Motorcycles occupy their factories in solidarity with the temp workers subjected to the lock-out.

The workers of Auto, Omax, Lumax DT, HiLex, Lumax, Endurance and Technology, Degania Medical Device, FCC Rico and Satyam Auto go on strike in solidarity, a total of more than 10,000 workers.

There are around 2,000 workers in Maruti Suzuki factory in Manesar. This comprises around 700 regular workers as well as workers recently taken on in the course of the 33-day lock-out.

8 October

The company uses the media to state that the workers are indulging in *“in several random acts of violence and damaged property inside the factory premises.”* *“The agitating workers attacked co-workers, supervisors and executives in multiple incidents of violence.”* They claim to have “rescued” 350 workers from the factory with the help of the police.

9 October

Maruti Suzuki dismisses 10 workers, terminates five trainees, suspends 10 and “rescues” another 100 employees from the plant. There are still around 1500 workers inside and over 1000 workers outside the factory. The new hires inside fraternise with the factory strikers.

Armed labour contractors (from Tirupati Enterprises) attack striking workers outside the Suzuki Motorcycle plant. At least three workers are injured. The police let the attackers off.

10 October

Occupations at Powertrain, Motorcycles and Maruti Suzuki continue. Maruti officials announce, that they *“will need the police to evict the workers”*. The police are overstretched due to election time in Haryana, another district in Haryana. “Private bouncers” are hired to keep people out of the industrial area of Manesar – comrades on the spot say that the “atmosphere is tense”. The Haryana labour department issues a “breach of settlement” notice on striking workers.

11 October

Because of the lack of supply of diesel engines and transmissions from Suzuki Powertrain, the production at Maruti’s Gurgaon plant falls to 1000 units against a normal daily production of 2800 units. The local class of landlords and village hierarchy mobilises against the strike: village councils in four villages around Manesar write to the state authorities to “find a quick resolution to the strike”. There are more physical threats from local contractors and village leaders towards striking workers.

12 October

Production at Maruti Suzuki in Gurgaon falls to 600 units.

13 October

The management announce that they will shut down the Gurgaon plant due to lack of parts after five days of striking at Suzuki Powertrain. Some models (M800, Omni, Ecco and Gypsy) do not need parts from Suzuki Powertrain, but their production volume accounts only for a small share.

Maruti Suzuki suppliers in turn start to shut down their plants, for example, Sona Koyo²³. At a gate meeting the leaders of the main trade unions announce that they will bring the whole of Gurgaon to a stand-still if the police touch the workers inside the factory.

14 October

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh observes regarding Maruti, *“Labour unrest is a matter of serious concerns, we need to address it efficiently.”* 18 workers at Powertrain and 10 at the Motorcycle plant are dismissed in the morning. One official of the MSEU union is arrested in his house at 2 a.m. Raids also take place on the houses of other MSEU representatives. More cops enter Manesar, they take down the workers’ food-kitchen, which had supplied around 4000 workers at Powertrain and Maruti Suzuki plant. There are said to be around 1500 to 2500 cops inside the Maruti factory now, they shut down access to water, canteen and toilets. Late at night workers decide to leave the factory and continue the strike outside. Maruti complains that some *“robots have been damaged and machine settings altered”*. Earlier in the day, according to the media, over 100 analysts, investors and fund managers of Maruti Suzuki participated in a conference call with Sonu Gujjar, president of Maruti Suzuki Employees Union, to *“talk about the situation”*. No leaders of the main trade unions are around.

15 October

Workers at Suzuki Powertrain and Suzuki Motorcycles decide to end their occupation and continue the strike outside. The MSEU publishes a communiqué saying that they will maintain the unity between temp workers and permanents and that they call on all trade unions to show support. The AITUC says: *“We will observe a day of solidarity on 17 October”*.

The second occupation camp: 16 October to 21 October

16 October

Maruti workers decide to celebrate Diwali as a day of mourning if demands are not met. Maruti announces that *“Production has started in a limited way at the company’s plant in Manesar. To start with, the weld shop has been made operational.”* Production in Gurgaon resumes, although only for those models which do not need parts from Suzuki Powertrain. Meanwhile, in nearby NOIDA several hundred workers at the solar-panel and optical disc factory of the multinational Moser Baer go on strike and demand higher wages.

17 October

Talks at Maruti between management and union reps fail. The trade union “day of solidarity” takes place: an afternoon (and after work) rally in Gurgaon, several thousand union members from Gurgaon factories and students attend.

18 October

The company claims that now 400 workers are working in the Manesar plant and that 1700 cars have been produced in Gurgaon. A two-hour work stoppage announced by the main trade unions was called off, because *“management entered negotiations again”*.

19 October

Maruti announces that the workforce in Manesar is now 600 and that they have rolled out 200 cars. Suzuki also claims that production has been started at Powertrain, but the president of the Suzuki Powertrain India Employee Union says that no work is going on at the plant apart from cleaning.

20 October

A dozen unions in Kolkata announce solidarity rallies for the Maruti workers. A campaign by Labourstart²⁴ sends more than 4200 letters to local management in less than 24 hours, complaining about the repression.

21 October

²³ Sona Koyo is an Indian car equipment manufacturer (partner of the Japanese groups) making steering systems. It has 16 factories in India, 3 in Germany and one in the USA.

²⁴ Labourstart is an international trade union information site: www.labourstart.org/

Agreement in Manesar: the management agrees to take back 64 permanent workers, but another 33 will remain suspended (30 from Maruti, 3 from Powertrain). The 1200 workers hired through contractors are supposed to be taken back on. The bus service is supposed to be provided again. Instead of recognising MSEU the company will set up a “grievance committee” and “labour welfare committee” with *“equal representation from the management and the workers. The presence of a Labour Officer from the state government will be a key comforting factor”*. Strikes at Suzuki Powertrain and Suzuki Motorcycles are also called off.

The negotiations lasted 42 hours in the course of which three workers’ representatives were held (with their mobile phones confiscated) under threat of “pending arrests” and being sacked if they left the negotiations. The three representatives agreed to resign in return for substantial compensation. The meeting comprised representatives from the ministry of labour of the State of Haryana, and the police, as well as those from Maruti Suzuki.

22 October

Production begins again at Manesar.

THE UNIONS

Here we are not concerned with drawing up an exhaustive table of the unions in India but with providing a few significant facts which help us understand the emergence of base unions²⁵.

The unions are closely linked to political parties, so that each party has its own union. The splits and conflicts within the parties are mirrored in the unions. The latter were born from successive splits in the first Indian union confederation founded in 1920, the AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress), and partly dominated by the Stalinists. Thus, the INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress) was founded by activists of the Congress Party in 1947 after a long internal opposition, particularly during the Second World War where, in the name of anti-fascism and defence of the USSR, the CPI (Communist Party of India) took over from the AITUC, opposed strikes and abandoned the struggle against the British.

Activists close to the Socialist Party founded the HMS in 1948; those of the RSP²⁶, the UTUC (United Trade Union Congress) in 1949; then, those close to the BJP²⁷ founded the BMS (Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh) in 1955. In 1969, following the 1964 split between pro-USSR Stalinists and pro-China Stalinists within the CPI, the CITU (Centre of Indian Trade Unions) split from the AITUC.

In the same way, in 1969 the UTUC split into two in Bengal²⁸ and gave birth to the UTUC Lenin Sarani (Lenin street, where their office was in Kolkata) close to the Socialist Unity Centre of India, a Stalinist Maoist party founded in 1948. But a party can also conquer a union, as happened with the split in the Congress Party which gave rise to the NCP (Nationalist Congress party) in 1999. This took over the NFITU (National Front of Indian Trade Unions) founded in 1969, in 2008.

Finally, after the change in economic policy in 1990/91 (abandonment of the statist orthodoxy inspired by the USSR and the passage to “economic liberalisation”), the arrival of foreign companies and the emergence in their factories of a new working class favoured the creation of local unions, some of which regrouped in 2006 into the NTUI (New Trade Unions of India) which does not see itself as a national confederation. There are also city-level groupings like the Shramik Ekta Maha Sangh (SEMS) in the metal industry of Pune (Maharashtra). The present tendency is towards the creation of “effective” unions: some of which are paid by their

²⁵ The list of the main national unions and their number of members is given in the appendix.

²⁶ RSP: Revolutionary Socialist Party, founded in 1940. Opposed to Stalinism but not to the defence of the USSR, it is a “centrist” party, implanted in Bengal and Kerala, which participates in elections.

²⁷ BJP: Barathya Janata Party, “Party of the Indian People”. Founded in 1980, but with roots in a previous party founded in 1951, it is the Hindu nationalist party, principal competitor of the Congress Party.

²⁸ Bengal at the time of British colonisation comprised present-day Bangladesh and the present-day Indian state of West Bengal. For brevity we refer to West Bengal as Bengal.

members and the workers on the basis of the results that they obtain during negotiations with the management on the level of each workplace.

However much it may benefit from a dense code of labour law (of which most articles are never applied, like, for example, the minimum wage) we should remember that India has not ratified the ILO convention on collective bargaining and the freedom to organise and that there is therefore no “right to strike”. The labour code is rather a collection of methods for preventing and legally combating strikes. The situation of the unions is very different between sectors, principally between the public sector, the railways and other businesses belonging to the state on one side and the industrial private sector on the other.

In effect, in the private sector:

- There is a difference between registration and recognition of a union (and it is the central state which recognises the confederations).
- Even a registered union (that is to say one recognised as a union by the ministry of labour in each state) has no legal right to any activity in workplaces.
- The recognition of a union is not obligatory, it depends on the good will of the boss. In the case where there is an agreement to recognise the union, in general a rule is put in place (approved by both sides) which authorises the union to carry on activities in the workplace, a local branch and representatives (authorised to not have to work during their union activities).
- When a union is registered, it has a right that some of its members (but not all: no more than 1% of the staff of the workplace; no less than 5, no more than 100) have a “protected” status during conflicts and strikes.
- For factories with more than 100 staff there is a sort of Workplace Committee which consists of representatives of the employees and the employer, with the aim of assuring and preserving good intentions between the social partners (that is, a means of restraining union initiatives).
- The registration of a union renders its leaders and its members immune from any judicial prosecution for criminal conspiracy, or more general judicial proceedings, during strikes. It is the only “legal” advantage of registering a union.

This situation shows that from the legal point of view, in the private sector, India is paradoxically in advance for the bosses over the Western countries, in the sense that contractual negotiations only take place on the level of the workplace. In the face of this lack of social democracy in India, why is it that the unions (that is to say, the national confederations) are so lacking in combativity?

The reason for this is (apart from the basic nature of all unions in all countries²⁹) the extreme politicisation of the unions, or more precisely their role as pure transmission belts for the political parties. In line with changes in political options, alliances, being in power then being in opposition and *vice-versa*, on the level of the federal state as at the regional level, the unions align themselves with or oppose themselves to strikes or, on the other hand, call them without taking any account of the balance of forces. At this sort of game, the Stalinists really can claim first place thanks to their zigzags between 1936 and 1948³⁰, according to the needs of the USSR. Then, after their return to legality in 1952, they discretely supported the Congress Party, the real fraternal party of the USSR.

As for the pro-Maoist split of 1964, which gave birth to the CPI (M), once they came to power in the states of Bengal (1967-2011) and Kerala (1967-2011), as managers of the state they opposed strikes and peasant movements. Later on, during the fights of the poor peasants against

²⁹ See Mouvement Communiste Letter no. 11 “Unions and Political Struggle”.

³⁰ Just like with the CP of the USA and with the same damage done to combative workers lost in the Stalinist organisation.

the implantation of factories and power stations in Bengal, which meant their expropriation from the land, the CPI (M) repressed them.

The unions which are close to the Congress Party (INTUC) or the BJP (BMS) group together, on one side, the more moderate workers, attached by clientelist links to obtain some improvements in their conditions, and, on the other side, workers in state companies and the civil service. For example, the BMS, created in 1955 with almost no members, is today the biggest national union with 8.5 million members, mostly amongst bank employees, civil servants and teachers. This union, which is linked to the Hindu nationalist BJP, professes the rejection of class conflict and the recognition of a community of interests between bosses and workers, or the state and its employees. Its success is explained by the progressive rejection of the corruption of the INTUC, whose habits, without going as far as the practices of some American unions, very much resemble them – control of hiring, rackets etc. – in the ports or the mines.

But when the workers expressed for the first time elements of workers' autonomy between 1974 and 1982 during numerous "wildcat" strikes, they found themselves faced with the bosses and the forces of police or para-police repression and, from behind, the unions. Following the defeat of these first workers' efforts, particularly that of the textile strike in Maharashtra (May 1981-January 1983)³¹, along with repression (thousands of sackings), the bosses proceeded with a complete reorganisation of production, carving up factories, relocating them, closing them here and there, burying the parts which had been bases for workers' initiatives.

This defeat and the consequent restructuring prepared the economic change of direction of 1990/91. The first eminently palpable and serious consequence was the accelerated casualisation of the new working class which emerged in the newly-built factories – 80% of the workforce there was non-permanent! The union confederations which were folded around their solid positions in the civil service or certain state enterprises, revealed themselves to be incapable of organising these new workers, all the more so given the confederations' corruption and their opposition to or outright sabotage of struggles. It is therefore quite understandable that workers spontaneously created their own so-called base unions.

SOME INITIAL ANALYSES

Some quotes

"When we went home finally after a long stint occupying the factory, we saw how fast the world is changing on television, there are hundreds and thousands of people like us, working people, young people, out on the streets, occupying so many cities, New York, London, Rome..., we realized that we are not alone...that makes us feel very happy...that is why you see so many of us smiling here...we are angry, but we are not beaten, we are out here, and we will not give in now easily...the whole world is watching the whole world."

(Maruti worker after the end of the second occupation)

"Indisciplined workers inside the plant can cause an even greater loss"

(Maruti Suzuki chairman R.C. Bhargava, after the decision for a lock-out)

"But we are not donkeys. We cannot work like slaves. The problem is the immense pressure. They are extracting the work of 5,000 from half that number. We cannot go to the washroom during any other time, and in case we do, we have to give an unconditional apology letter. We are giving our best to the company, but what are we getting in turn? The production capacity of Maruti has gone up from 10 lakh [1,000,000] units to 12.7 lakh units in during the last two years, but our salary has not gone up at all. Where is the incentive for hard work?"

(Maruti worker)

³¹ For more details on this strike, see Gérard Heuzé, Lajpat Rai Jagga and Max Zins, *Les conflits du travail en Inde et au Sri Lanka*, Karthala, Paris 1993, and Rajni, Bakshi, *The Long Haul: The Bombay Textile Workers Strike of 1982-83*, BUILD Documentation Centre, 1986.

“A process of healing had to begin, and it was clear from the amount of feedback we received from that exercise that we had been somewhat cut off from how they [the workers] were feeling.”

(Maruti official after the first occupation and the decision to engage Brahmakumaris spiritual organisation for “re-conciliation”)

“My wife and I talked it over. We decided we’re young enough to fight this. What do we have to lose? If we win, we don’t have to be slaves any anymore. If we lose, I’ll find work somewhere else.”

(Maruti worker on strike after second occupation)

“Global investors are watching this very closely. India’s low-cost manufacturing growth story is built upon labour stability.”

(Stock-market trader SMC Global Securities)

“We would not call it a strike as there is no labour union at Munjal Showa. It is a fallout of whatever is happening at Maruti’s plant. The protesting workers from Maruti’s plant joined people here at our plant last evening.”

(C.M. Midha, general manager at Munjal Showa after wildcat strike at his factory)

“These hands have worked so hard that had I put them to use in my family farm in Hisar, my folks would have been very happy. We have delivered 2 lakh cars when the management wanted it, working overtime and breathlessly and we have been taken for granted.” Asked why he does not go back home to work on his farm, he shoots back: “I wanted to be something else.”

(Maruti worker)

“We are on strike in support of the Manesar workers. Once they are issues are resolved then we will raise our demands. Our workers are paid less than what the company pays the Manesar workers. We want the same pay for all workers.”

(Powertrain Union official, 21st of October)

“When you look at this entire situation, then we admit that there is a need for us to bring in adaptability in a young population that is very, very young. I think definitely, it must be somewhere more from the side of the young inexperienced workers and I think it is typically a question of capability to adjust and adapt and have some respect for law”

(Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Managing Executive Officer, after the start of the second occupation)

“Once a problem starts, it does not just go away.”

(Maruti chairman R.C. Bhargava after the lock-out started)

Hard conditions

To understand what happened, we have to be clear about the conditions of life of the workers in the car industry, in the factory and outside. In the big factories, 80% of the workforce is casual, that is to say, that only 20% have a permanent contract. This often reflects the distinction skilled (permanent)/ unskilled (temp), like at Honda Hero but not at Maruti Suzuki where the same job can be taken by a permanent worker or a temp. This translates into a wage differential which can be double! Between 8,500 and 17,000 Rupees, in a situation where a worker’s “accommodation” (a room 4m x 4m in size, a corner kitchen and shared sanitation) in a village in Manesar costs 3200 Rupees per month.

Secondly, the workers work 6 days out of 7 and don’t have paid holidays. Even at Maruti Suzuki, up until the strike, if a worker took a day of holiday they deducted from his pay the equivalent of three days of attendance bonus.

At Maruti Suzuki, in Manesar, the working class is young, 18-25 years old, and most of them, particularly the temps, come from the surrounding countryside (50-70 km away) of Haryana, the Punjab, and Rajasthan. Many of them are still attached to their villages of origin and the more insecurely employed ones return to help with the harvest.

When the assembly plant opened in Manesar in 2007, Maruti Suzuki took on young skilled workers coming from various technical institutes in Northern India. The majority of them today are aged between 18 and 25. Originally from the hinterland of Haryana or Uttar Pradesh, they now live in the dormitory villages around, or in, Manesar and Gurgaon, and often share rooms.

Around 1000 are permanent workers, 800 are apprentices, 400 are trainees (but work full time in a production situation identical to that of the other workers) and 1200 are temp workers, taken on by subcontractors, making up a staff of 3400 for Plant A.

The permanent staff earns around 13,000 to 17,000 Rupees per month, the trainees get around 8,000 Rupees, the 1600 temporary workers and apprentices around 4,000 Rupees. The wage of permanent workers is composed of a base salary of around 5,000 Rupees (the minimum wage in Haryana) to which is added from 8,000 to 12,000 Rupees coming from various bonuses (regular attendance etc.). The young permanent workers in fact earn a lot less than their equivalents from the Gurgaon plant around 20 km away or the neighbouring motorbike factory of Honda in Manesar, whose permanent workers are on about 30,000 Rupees.

The pre-existing organisation

As things appear in the chronology, the strike for recognition of the base union seems to surge forth out of nowhere. In fact, before the strike, a group of permanent workers (fifteen or so) had been constituted. They came from the technical institutes, and were present in several workshops, to form themselves into a “pre-union”, to rally the other workers in various parts of the factory, to organise links, to prepare the strike and to set up a strike fund to pay for food.

The demands were for higher wages, holidays, improving the company bus service and hiring of some of the casual workers as permanent. There was also dissatisfaction amongst the oldest workers (the factory opened in 2007) at seeing their job situation blocked, despite the promises of the management. All this was crystallised in the creation of an independent base union, because since the defeat of the 2005 strike at Maruti Suzuki in Gurgaon, it was the MUKU, the scab union, which was supposed to represent the workers.

The Gurgaon plant was opened in 1983. In 2000/2001, the Gurgaon workers were subjected to a long lock-out of several weeks, which resembled that at Manesar in 2011. At the time, the company used the defeat of the workers to put in place a regime of voluntary redundancies and replaced around half the permanent workers with temps. Today at Gurgaon, the majority are temps, and the consequent difference in wages (or the class division) was managed by the MUKU union. The young workers of Manesar did not feel represented by this union and hoped to find a solution to their problems by forming their own union.

New anger, new aspirations

The young workers had two concrete desires: “to earn more money and work less” and the suppression of the disciplinary regime of the factory. They compared their wages to those of other car factories. They complained that the boss reduced their bonuses for being slightly late or for taking a day’s leave (up to 2200 Rupees reduction in wages for one day of leave). They expressed their discontent over the amount of work, which left them no time to breathe. The break period wasn’t enough for them to walk the 400 metres to the canteen to have their meal. And they needed permission from the supervisor to go to the toilet.

They were angry at waiting in vain for a real contract. But these aspirations (more money, less work) – were not their main motivation. This was to form an association of the 150,000 other workers of the Manesar industrial zone, because they had common problems and identical aspirations. Above all they demanded the recognition of their union, and following that, the reintegration of suspended and sacked representatives. They fought and endured enormous loss of income for a piece of paper that they considered as a symbol of their unity, as a thorn in the

flesh of the regime of the hated factory, as a hope of founding, consolidating their gains and delegating their collective power to an organ representing them.

The context

The strike didn't suddenly appear from nowhere either. On the contrary, the automobile industry in India has seen a succession of strikes since 2009, as the following list shows.

- Mahindra (Nashik, Maharashtra), May 2009 and March 2010;
- Sunbeam Auto (Gurgaon, Haryana), May 2009;
- Bosch Chassis (Pune, Maharashtra), July 2009;
- Honda Motorcycle (Manesar, Haryana), August 2009;
- Rico Auto (Gurgaon, Haryana), August 2009, accompanied by a one-day strike of the whole of the car industry in Gurgaon;
- Pricol (Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu), September 2009;
- Volvo (Hoskote, Karnataka), August 2010;
- MRF Tyres (Chennai, Tamil Nadu), October 2010 and June 2011;
- General Motors (Halol, Gujarat), March 2011;
- Bosch (Bangalore, Karnataka), September 2011;
- Dunlop (Hooghly, Bengal), October 2011;
- Caparo (Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu), December 2011;
- Dunlop (Ambattur, Tamil Nadu), February 2012;
- Hyundai (Chennai, Tamil Nadu) April and December 2011-January 2012; etc.

It is in this context that the strike broke out against all obstacles to gain recognition for the base union. It went on to develop in three stages.

The stages of the strike

The first occupation

Following attempts by the management to not recognise the MSEU and to sack 11 members of the union, the workers occupied the factory on 4 June. It was not only the permanent staff (and the minority amongst them who had prepared the strike) but also the temps, who did the final pieces of work on the cars, and who demanded the same pay as the lorry drivers who transport the vehicles which are ready to be delivered.

After 13 days the occupation ended with the proposal from the management to recognise a “workplace council” instead of a union, while penalising the workers with reductions in wages equivalent to two days wages for each day on strike. Maruti Suzuki promised to transform the sackings into suspensions.

The resistance

Starting on 17 June, the conflict continued clandestinely with successive actions and reactions. At the end of June, the state authorities refused the request for registration of the union on grounds of a technicality. In reaction, the workers refused to take part in the election of representatives of the company union, the MUKU. The management put fences around the grassy areas of the factory that the workers had taken over during the occupation, with a view to a lock-out.

On 28 July, the police arrested four workers at their places of work. As a protest, all the workers stopped work. During this period, four were suspended and almost 40 temps were sent home. The workers replied with strikes rippling through the plant.

The Lock-out /the protest camp

The management decided to go on the offensive, betting on the declining strength of the workers, and 400 cops invaded the factory on 28 August. This was to demand that each worker signed a “good conduct” agreement. Only twenty or so signed. The others set up a protest camp in front of the factory.

The enemies watched each other: during the lock-out, the bosses began to recruit workers to replace the strikers while the workers continued the resistance by reducing the pace of work. There followed a “war” of communiqués where the management stated that more and more workers were at work and that more and more cars were being produced.

Starting from 14 September, the strike went beyond the framework of the factory: several thousand workers at Suzuki Powertrain, Suzuki Castings and Suzuki Motorcycles in Manesar went on strike. The workers of Suzuki Powertrain put forward their own demands (higher wages, regularisation of casual workers), but also called for the end of the “good conduct” agreement, the lock-out and the ending of suspensions at Maruti Suzuki.

Skirmishes continued around the arrests, on 18 September, and the freeing the next day, of three leaders of the MSEU. The lock-out continued until 30 September, when the main unions advised the workers to sign the “good conduct” agreement in exchange for some gestures from the management: the reemployment of 18 trainees and the reconversion of 44 sackings into suspensions. The two parties declared themselves committed to the harmonisation of labour relations.

The second occupation

But the management didn't want to admit defeat, and so, to divide the workers, they attacked the temps. On 3 October they refused entry to around 1200 of them who'd participated in the protest camp.

On 7 October, the workers decided to reoccupy the factory, supported by the workers of Suzuki Powertrain, Suzuki Castings and Suzuki Motorcycles who had followed the same course and had responded with a stoppage when the management tried to divide the temps and the permanent staff. They demanded the rehiring of the temps and the provision of a bus service, which had been removed since the beginning of October. There were short solidarity strikes in eight other factories (principally car factories) in the industrial zone. At least half the workers who had been taken on during the lock-out and who were then inside the Maruti Suzuki factory, joined the protest camp in support of the temp workers still outside the factory.

The divisions between permanent and casual workers crumbled. The occupation of the Suzuki Powertrain, Suzuki Motorcycles and Maruti Suzuki factories continued on 10 October, despite the pressure put on the workers outside the factory: the strikers were physically threatened by local recruiters and village leaders. There were arrests: someone from the MSEU office was arrested at home at 2 a.m. There were police raids on the homes of other representatives of the MSEU. On 14 October, the police operation was reinforced.

The Suzuki Powertrain and Suzuki Motorcycles workers decided to end their occupation and continue the strike outside their factories. The strike seemed to stop spreading. The negotiations got underway and ended with an agreement on 21 October: the management agreed to take back 64 permanent workers, but 33 others remained suspended (30 from Maruti Suzuki, 3 from Suzuki Powertrain). For the permanent workers, with the 43 sackings and 62 suspensions by the management of Maruti Suzuki throughout the strike, the final balance sheet stood at 33 suspensions (and we should say that this means several dozen workers had not been paid for two months) to which can be added 3 forced and 27 voluntary departures. 250 temps left the factory and the 1200 temps taken on by recruiters are supposed to be taken back. The bus service was supposed to start again.

How the strike was conducted

At first sight, the objective of the strike launched in June was the recognition of the base union and the refusal of the first sackings. The strike was organised by 30 workers (including the 15 right at the start) representing most of the workshops. There were daily general assemblies, outside or inside the factory depending on how the strike was going. But the 30 had separate meetings, and proposed decisions to discuss and to accept, or not accept, to the assembly. We have to note that even if there was a certain osmosis between the 30 and the rest of the assembly, these 30 were never subjected to a formal election during the strike to replace them and to get more strikers to participate in running the strike.

During the negotiations to recognise the union, at the end of the third strike (in October), the management made the negotiations take place somewhere far away (30 km from the factory), and, once they were there, posed as a precondition that the three representatives of the workers should resign, in exchange for exceptional bonuses by Indian standards. Following this, 27 other workers also agreed to leave under the same conditions. It is not a question properly speaking of “treason” on the part of the leaders of the MSEU but the result of a lack of experience on the part of the strikers as much as the “leaders” of the strike. In effect, it would have been necessary for the workers to impose the holding of negotiations in the factory itself under their control. Nevertheless, 400 strikers decided to keep the new union. But this was not able to find a second wind at the beginning of this year and no general assembly of members had taken place for three months.

THE LIMITS OF BASE UNIONISM

Given the specificities of the unions in India that we’ve already mentioned, it is not surprising that the first time that an autonomous defensive organisation is created and decided by the workers themselves it should take the form of what might be called a “rank-and-file union” or “base union”, that is to say one which is outside of any link with the pre-existing union apparatus of whatever sort. The will to immediately control all actions, a certain refusal of delegation, first of all pushes the workers to constitute a good honest union. The definite inexperience, the lack of reference to some of the struggles of the past for the new generations of workers naturally opens the way to base unionism.

The bosses’ repression, the refusal to adjust in the early days to these new unions, can only comfort the workers in their attachment to the organs which they have created, and for which they have often paid a high price, and their will to maintain them at any cost, including against the attempts at recuperation by the national unions³².

For all that, is it a stage which is not only obligatory but definitive (not possible to go beyond it)?

Our response is obviously negative. It rests on an understanding of what a union is and what workers’ autonomy is.

“In the present period marked by the recognition and integration of the unions into the state, since at least the end of the Second World War (and well before in France), it has not been possible to have permanent organs for the defence of workers’ interests. If numerous autonomous struggles have aimed at the formation of independent organs, these no longer have any chance of survival in this state. They are presented with a simple alternative. Either to be an autonomous organisation which goes beyond its original limits, at the price of becoming in a minority, that is to place itself essentially on the political plain, or to devote itself to enriching the social democratic institutions of capital by confining itself to the defence of the immediate interests of the workers. In reality there is also a third outcome which, in fact, is the one most often produced: the pure and simple disappearance of the autonomous organisation at the end of a proletarian political cycle, accelerated or not by repression. This is the Italian case of 1968-1978.

³² As AITUC tried to do with MSEU at the beginning of September 2011.

*We can understand very well then that the question of workers' autonomy cannot in any way be reduced to a banal matter of techniques and forms of organisation. It is not enough to proffer magic slogans of committees, coordinations, Cobas or some other revolutionary union to change the game. Throughout the history of the workers' movement, there have been all kinds of combinations: workers' parties with or without unions, unions more or less politicised with or without a party, councils or militias with or without a party and/or a union. No organisational alchemy has been shown to be a sufficient guarantee of victory. During struggle the class engenders such organs ad hoc. The dynamic of the movement, if it is not interrupted, always tends to their unification, to their fusion in the service of the maximal concentration of available forces.'*³³

Certainly, in a country like India, where social democracy is only very limited, base unionism has more chance of being repressed and destroyed than it has of being integrated and becoming a "normal" union which takes up one of the various offers available and enters into the framework of the already existing state unions. But these are not the only possibilities. Pushed by the necessity of avoiding an outburst of conflict with the workers, the bosses will try to integrate these new unions, to corrupt them, to empty them of their content. And this has already happened, as can be seen with the example of what happened at Honda Hero, where GWN wrote this about the base union³⁴:

'Just to give the example of the union at Honda HMSI in Gurgaon. No one will deny the 'genuine character' of the union, it has been fought for with blood, it has not been established as a company union, no one will approach them with betrayal. Since it has been recognised in 2005, wages of the permanent workers – the union members – have quadrupled: before May 2005 permanent workers used to get around 6,900 Rs, current wages are around 30,000 Rs plus, including incentives and bonuses. At the same time permanent workers have become a minority in the plant. In 2005 there were 1,200 permanent, 1,600 trainees, 1,000 workers hired through contractors and 400 apprentices. Today there are 1,800 permanent workers and 6,500 workers hired through contractors in production departments, plus around 1,500 workers hired through contractors for cleaning, canteen, driving etc.. The temporary workers in production get around 6,800 Rs per month, less than a quarter of their permanent work-mates. The permanent workers have retained mainly supervisory positions. As part of the union-management wage agreements the permanent workers' wages contain a large share of productivity bonus. The company wants to make them 'benefit' from the increased work load which has been imposed on the shoulders of the temporary work-force. The actual material power of the union has decreased; they compensate the decline by making themselves important managers of the wage hierarchy – not as 'one act of sell out', but as result of trade union's essential character within the wider process of re-structuring of class relations. On this background we will also have to reflect on the 'glorious defeats' of recent struggles for union recognition, e.g. at Rico or Denso.'

So therefore, even the most honest militants, the most combative, can be swallowed by an intelligent management, which at the same time will never stop using suspensions and sackings of workers identified as combative, whether as individuals or small groups³⁵. Subtly, progressively, the militants become disconnected from the reality which gave them birth, all the more so as this material reality itself evolves on the initiative of the boss. But, it could be objected, this means that the militants didn't put the necessary safeguards in place: keeping the militants in production, refusing delegation, rotating tasks etc., as has been practised in other places and times³⁶. These measures are certainly necessary, but far from sufficient.

What's more, we also need to add that the union at Honda Hero has since affiliated to the AITUC. In the same way, that of Suzuki Powertrain is affiliated to the HMS. This is the

³³ Mouvement Communiste, Letter no.11.

³⁴ See no. 37 of GWN.

³⁵ As happened at Suzuki Powertrain in mid-April 2012. At the start, three union militants, the organisers of the strikes, were sacked. In reaction, 500 workers went on strike, but the union refused to support the sacked workers and the strike collapsed, even though the Gurgaon section of HMS called a rally in support of the sacked workers. Following this, during the negotiations on wages, the union accepted that increases had to be linked to productivity. Around 500 workers circulated a petition protesting against this agreement. But those loyal to the union, in the name of "workers' unity", prevented the petition from being presented to the management.

³⁶ We are thinking here of the classist unions in Argentina, in 1970-1976, in the car factories of Córdoba and other cities. See "Document de travail n°5" on Argentina.

recognition by base unions, even ones coming out of struggles, of their real weakness which is linked to their local vision of class conflict. From this comes the necessity of finding a shortcut, the “protective” affiliation to the national confederations. Obviously, there is a price to pay sooner or later, in the loss of independence and the rise through the apparatus.

Let’s remember once more a major fact, objectively characterising the situation of the working class in India in large modern industry³⁷: 80% of workers are non-permanent (apprentices, trainees, temps), which reflects, but not all the time, the level of skill and qualification. Until the need to abolish this separation is put forward in struggle as the absolute condition of future success, the door remains wide open to the bosses’ policies of division. And there’s the rub. The natural tendency of a union is the stabilisation of the balance of forces with the boss and this is easier to obtain with the permanent workforce than with the casual one. Even when there are no legal obstacles to unions organising permanent and casual workers, the fact is that very, very few base unions organise the latter. This is obviously sawing through the branch which they are trying to sit on, and when the division permanent/casual coincides with the division skilled/ unskilled, then the situation of the unions resembles that of the American craft unions of the AFL at the beginning of the twentieth century, and condemns them to sterility.

Most of the base unions appearing in recent years, principally in the auto industry, are the product of dissatisfaction felt by young workers, coming out of the technical institutes, skilled and permanent, caught between the old conditions of wages which are disappearing (wages of more than 30,000 Rupees per month) and the permanent threat of falling into more insecure forms of work. This type of union, in our view, cannot have a stable existence.

For all that, taking account of the present situation, it is not a matter of contemptuously waving aside the base unions which have appeared and will continue to appear. It is necessary to support them by showing their limits, while not holding back critiques of the way they are going. It’s a question of contributing to their overcoming, their absorption into the autonomous organs.

These autonomous organs produced by defensive struggles are only capable of making a qualitative leap by considering, confirming and recognising the political dimension of the workers’ struggle to constitute means of struggle which are adequate to the struggle against Capital. The workers learn the critique of the system which oppresses them by fighting it inch by inch, in their places of exploitation, to defend themselves against such or such a particular aspect of the capitalist system.

In the course of their struggle, they are led to provide themselves with various instruments, theoretical and practical, to refine their comprehension of the enemy and the social relations which overwhelm them. Consciousness, better said, the elements of self-awareness, are thus born from so-called everyday or elementary struggles. These elements of consciousness most often remain scattered, not expressed, and still less translated into organisation, neither in India, nor elsewhere at the present time.

Nevertheless, we must identify all traces of this in everyday struggle and develop them as far as possible.

AN ATTEMPT AT A CONCLUSION

On the strike

As we’ve shown, the Maruti Suzuki strike was not an isolated phenomenon in the last few years in India, particularly when we are talking about the automobile sector. Nevertheless, it expresses some rather rare aspects, which are not usually concentrated in a single strike.

First of all, its duration

The strike took place in three stages in June, September and October, without necessarily being a “limited” strike where the workers come up against the same problems every time,

³⁷ We mustn’t ignore the fact that the majority of the millions of workers are in the grey economy.

without understanding them and without going beyond them, and end up in inevitable defeat. On the contrary, each stage of the strike served to increase the potentialities of workers for the next one. The proof of this is in the reoccupation of the factory after 33 days of lock-out.

Its final results

Even if the strike was not a total defeat for the boss, and conversely not a total victory for the workers, beyond the achievement of the demands (which, what's more, were hidden or summarised in union recognition), it is rather the will to struggle and the organisation of the strike which represent its success. We can always criticise certain aspects of this organisation, notably a certain practical separation between the 30 recognised organisers and the strikers' assemble. It remains no less the case that for a strike of that scale able to last, in the general conditions of India and particularly those at Maruti Suzuki in Manesar, it should be a real strike where the strikers actively participate, rather than being passive consumers leaving everything up to 30 "enlightened leaders".

Its principal objective and, as always, its principal limit

The strike started out with one objective, summing up all the other demands, the recognition of the base union, and it remained focused on this. This is the paradox of the strike. All the subterranean power of the workers only surfaced around an objective which is completely transitory in relation to the duration of the class struggle. This is an objective which, if it synthesised at one point the hatred against the despotism of the factory and the aspiration for respect and dignity, risks becoming a new "prison" for the workers if it is not gone beyond.

Finally, its exceptional participation

The participation of the workers and above all of a significant number (around 1200 out of 2400) of casual labourers (70% of workers in the factory did not have permanent contracts) showed that the overcoming in struggle of this main division of the working class in India is possible, not as an abstract pious wish, but as a tangible reality.

In this strike the repression from the bosses and the police was weaker than in other similar strikes, which shows that its enemies understood very well not only the power of the strike itself, if we can reduce it to just its place of origin, but more than that, its capacity to be an example not only to other Maruti Suzuki factories in Manesar, but also in Gurgaon and to all the car factories in the region.

Here we are thinking not only of the solidarity strikes of 14 September, or the demonstrations on the 1 and 22 September (the second clearly representing an attempt at recuperation by the national unions), but above all those of 7 and 10 October which transformed themselves into continuing strikes. Because it is here that the solidarity was fully realised. The "best" solidarity is not based on compassion, or the defence of "champions" seen as representing the whole of the class (often against their will), but rather the solidarity which expresses itself, first of all, by fighting for its own objectives and, then, by expressing the community of struggles with the others, and their necessary centralisation.

Even if there was no trace of that centralisation during the October strikes, the simultaneous outbreak of strikes in all the Maruti Suzuki factories, showed that things were moving in that direction. What was proved is that beyond direct individual contacts between workers in different factories, the exemplary nature of a strike, whatever its limits might be, has an impact which consolidates the links between workers in different factories. This is one of the most precious lessons that workers must cultivate, with the next confrontation in mind.

On the general situation

Meeting the workers of Maruti Suzuki in Manesar in particular, in front of the factory at the change-over of the shifts, gives the inevitable impression of a power which is flexing its muscles, even if it's still underground.

So, what to make of this situation? Comparisons don't necessarily mean anything, but the situation resembles, all things being equal, that of Fiat Mirafiori at the pivot of 1968/1969 (that is before the struggles in the spring of 1969) so much it's hard to tell them apart.

Starting with the factory

The buildings of Plant A extend over a whole kilometre. At the end, after a right angle bend in the road and next to it is the PowerTrain factory which is 600 metres long. The surrounding walls are white and isolate the interior from the exterior³⁸. To return to Plant A, in the middle of its facade is Gate 2 where the workers come out and wait for the forty buses which take them to their homes, far from the factory. In front of this, next to the wall of another factory or close to the bus stop, are the street sellers offering food and drink. Everything livens up at the time of the leaving and entry of the two shifts and then everything falls into silence under the heat. The factory has vomited out its workers and swallowed some more. The cycle of Capital can continue. Certainly Manesar does not resemble Mirafiori in its dimensions. The increase in the productivity of labour over the last forty years has diminished the staff by ten times for sure. But the power which emanates from the buildings, as you hear the murmur of production, is the same.

Continuing with the conditions of work and survival

As much as Maruti Suzuki is a modern factory, which is to say that the general organisation, machines, processes are the same as those implanted in Japan or any other country, the methods of management, from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom, can differ in line with the general climate of social relations of the country where they are implanted.

Practically, because the factory is considered as "new", that is to say with a new working class, the management and the supervisors consider that the gloves are off and that they can push the intensity and pace of work to the limit. In this sense, up until the strike, the question to be asked (as at Fiat in May 1969) was not "Why has it exploded now?", but "Why didn't it explode sooner?" The young workers from the countryside (in fact chased out by lack of any perspective of a job) or from the technical institutes who awaited the glories of work in a factory only discovered there, after a few years, noise, fatigue and pain, or to put it another way, exploitation.

And as if that is not enough, the conditions of life outside the factory don't offer any compensation. For those who return to their villages, the travel time scarcely leaves any place for anything other than the reproduction of labour power. As for those who live in the villages of Manesar, part from high rent, there is the question of "free" time. When work takes up six days out of seven and you live in a village close to the factory and therefore far from the "centre" of Manesar and its places of consumption, what is there to do? There is no available leisure activity. As for going to Delhi, it is two hours minimum to go and the same to return. Manesar, in the shadow of the factory, is only an open-air prison.

If we have tried to describe the conditions of survival of the workers in and outside the factory, it is not so we can pity the class which suffers, but to see how these conditions can give rise to the class which struggles. The impression given by the young workers, 18 to 25 years old, who were entering and leaving the factory, is of a potential to change things that the factory has not crushed. The will to understand the situation so as to change it is something which can be felt immediately.

When a worker told us "*the strike was the permanent staff, the casual workers need to get fully involved*", we understood that the principal obstacle to the unification of the class has been identified and that it has to be overcome. When other workers asked us about the conditions of work and life in Europe and in France, and we explained that we earn ten times more than them but that sometimes the cost of living is twelve times more, the response after reflection went: "*the workers in the India and in the Western countries must unite*". We felt that consciousness was breaking through. How to help it surface?

³⁸ Curiously, it was after the strikes of 2011 that the wall was built.

We think that the situation corresponds to that of the organisation preliminary to the constitution of autonomous organs of struggle to be deployed, or, at least, that it contains the premises for this. Therefore for the comrades in place it is a question of aiding the formation of these organs, by a patient everyday work of discussion, enquiry and analysis, to be started according to the old *operaist* method that a worker's enquiry should be carried out by the workers themselves.

This is the meaning of the proposal that we have made to the comrades we met in India, which can be found in the appendix.

APPENDICES

OPEN LETTER

Open letter from afar to comrades in India

We went to India some weeks ago and we met many comrades of various tendencies in a friendly and open-minded way. We also met workers in some plants.

The situation of the working class in India, mainly in the automotive industry, shows that a new generation of workers is rising and expressing discontent, not only inside but also outside the factories. Before the Maruti Suzuki strike (from June to October 2011), other strikes took place, successful or not, with both contract workers and sometimes casual workers, taking part.

We feel that the conditions – both objective and subjective – are ripe for something to happen. There is a hidden potential strength close to emergence. And militants must contribute to the birth of the first stage of workers self-organisation.

Obviously we are writing this letter from a long way away, so we don't expect you to just follow our recipe - the intention is to open discussion. But if we were militants in India, this would be our proposal.

It is necessary to know more about factory organisation (along with Suzuki operations).

It is necessary to discuss to the greatest possible extent with workers from Suzuki to check that common political goals are both understood and shared.

So, a kind of workers' inquiry must be launched.

This has to be made visible to other workers, not only to those working for local sub-contractors, but to the workers of the whole Delhi area.

In order to do this, we need “human resources” and basic organisation. This implies clearly advocating for workers autonomy. It does not mean political merger or hiding political differences. But those to which this letter is addressed share, from our point of view, a common will to dedicate their political energy towards working class self-organization, giving it the highest priority.

We are not against any attempt by workers to organise themselves to fight for their interests, even into rank and file unions, but we are very cautious about the evolution of such unions (here we are thinking about what happened at Honda, but not only that). This is a practical point produced by class struggle itself. So a basic point of agreement or disagreement.

There is already an existing medium: FMS (Faridabad Masdour Samashar). It must become the common political paper. It must be extensively distributed among workers. It must become a tool for workers.

Class struggle never stops, but it often has lower phases and slightly higher ones. We think that now could be the beginning of a higher phase of struggle in the Delhi area, and maybe even other industrial centres across India.

This is an occasion not to be missed. It won't come again quickly. Taking on the responsibility of this situation is the purpose of this open letter.

Mouvement Communiste/Kolektivně proti kapitálu, April 2012

About workers' inquiry

This method was used in Italy, starting in the early 1960's, by a specific political current, *Operaismo*.

It was needed to understand Capital's organisation and Class composition.

A knowledge of the organisation of capital means understanding the production process, not only within factories but also geographically, understanding productive units and their links between factories. The goal is to identify weak points and bottlenecks but above all, capital's logic and means.

A knowledge of class composition allows the analysis of differences in working class structure between jobs and skill levels, not from a static sociological perspective but from the potentialities and dynamics of struggle. Class composition analysis is intended to discover the underground forces that trigger workers' struggles and workers' organisations.

To bring out those key elements, *Operaismo* brightens up an old method, the workers' inquiry, in reference to a short questionnaire written by Marx in April 1880.

Workers' inquiry is both a means of knowledge and a tool for the use and profit of workers themselves. Workers' inquiry can be a success only if it gets rid of the static method of bourgeois sociology through common research within factories with workers or, best of all, directly by workers themselves.

MEMBERSHIP FIGURES FOR THE MAIN UNIONS

Initials	Name	Regions	Leading Party	Date when founded	Membership ³⁹		
					1989	2002	2010
BMS	Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (India Worker union)	General	BJP	1955	3,117,324	6,215,000	8,500,000
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Congress	General	Congress	1947	2,706,451	3,892,000	4,000,000
CITU	Centre of Indian Trade Unions	Bengal, Kerala, Tripura	CPI (M)	1969	1,798,093	3,222,000	3,200,000
HMS	Hind Mazdoor Sabha (Workers Assembly of India)	General	SP	1948	1,477,472	3,342,000	3,400,000
AITUC	All India Trade Union Congress	General	CPI	1920	923,517	2,677,000	2,700,000
UTUC(LS)	United Trade Union Congress - Lenin Sarani	Bengal	SUCI	1969	802,806	1 368,000	1,400,000
UTUC	United Trade Union Congress	General	RSP	1949	539,523	383 946	?
NFITU	National Front of Indian Trade Unions	Maharashtra, Bihar	NCP	1969	529,782	?	600,000

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³⁹ Sources: 1989, document of the BMS; 2002, statistics of the ministry of labour; 2010, various estimates.

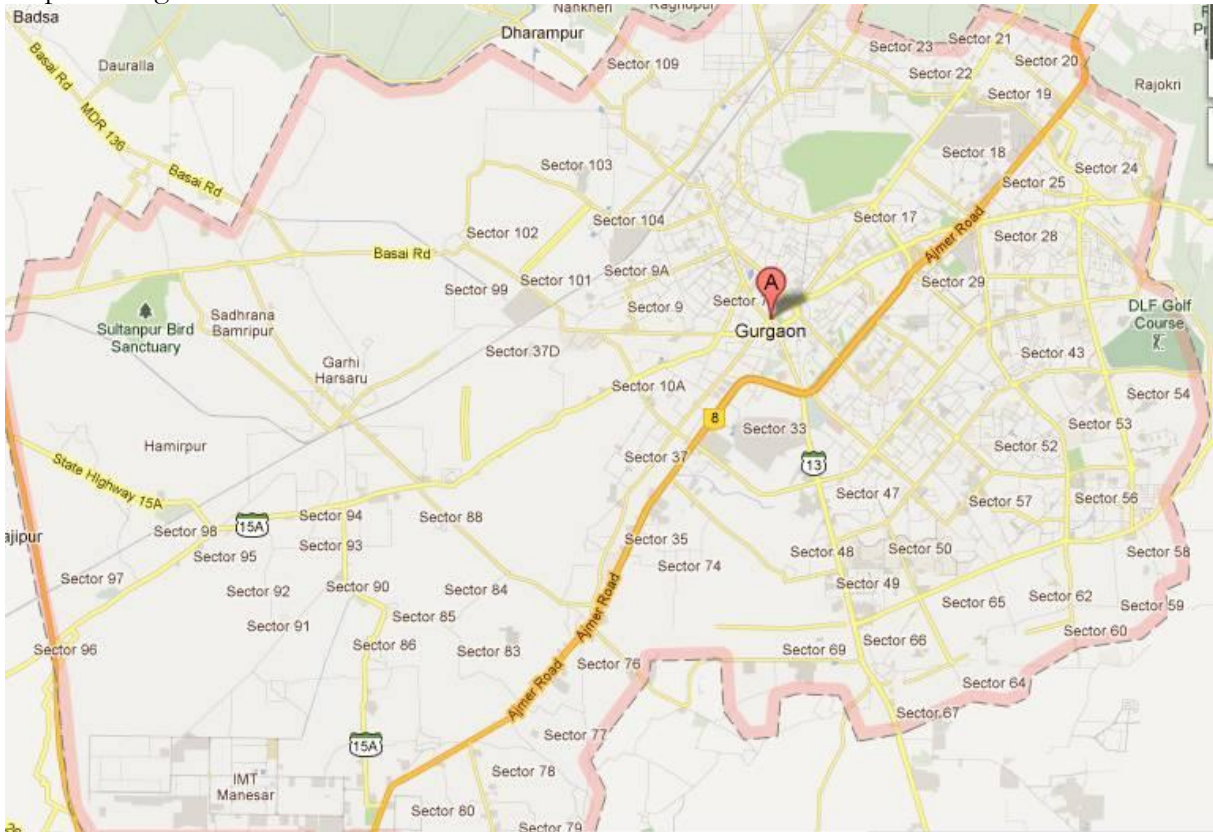
MAPS

Map of India

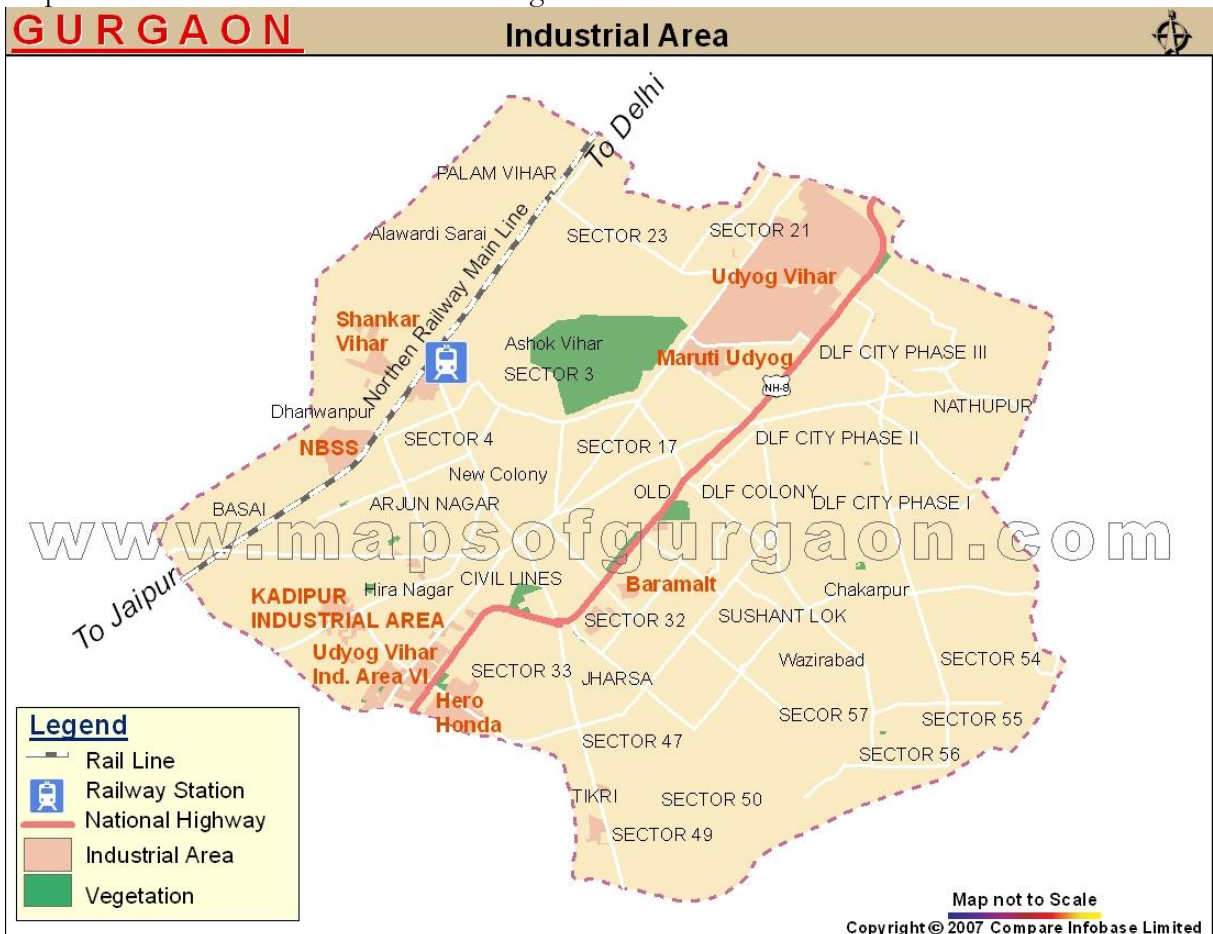




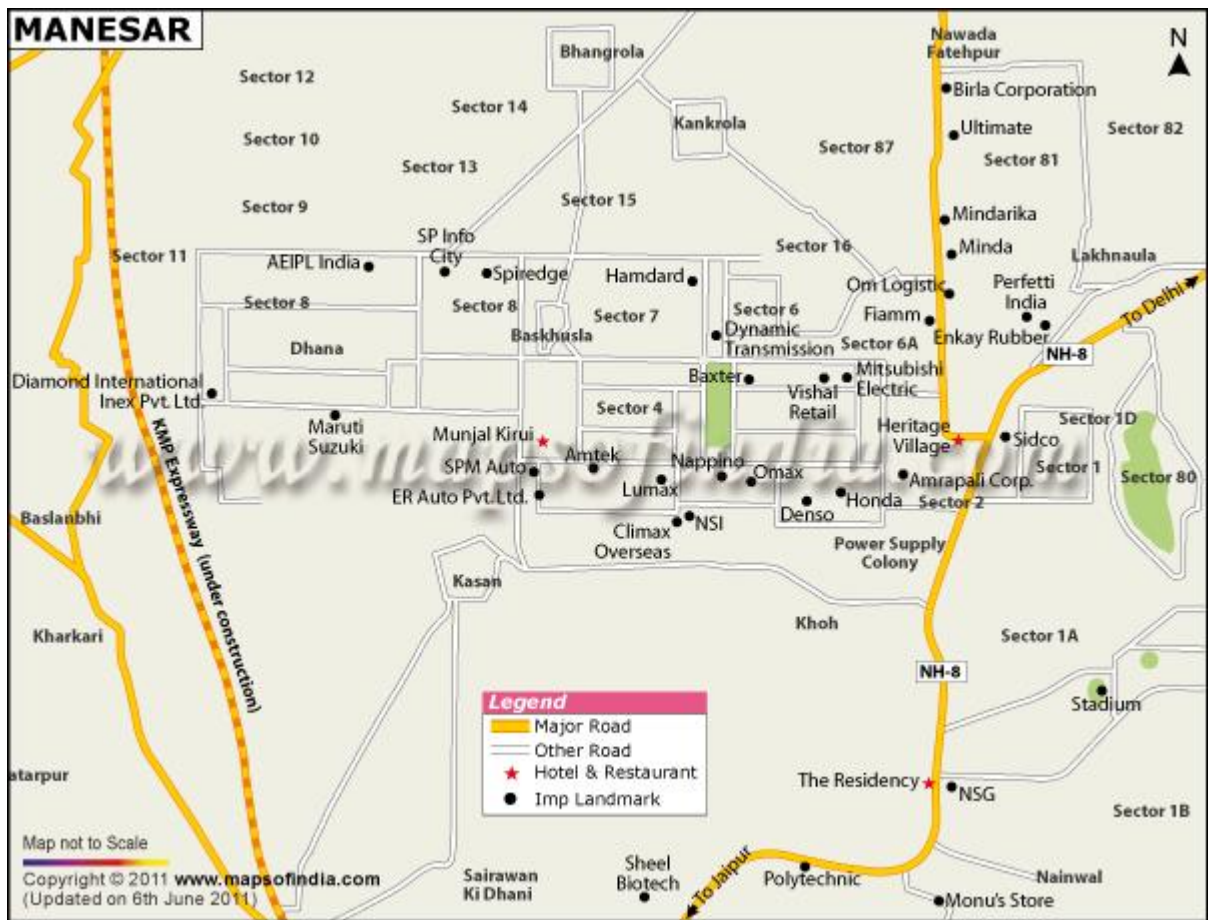
Map of Gurgaon



Map of the industrial zones of central Gurgaon



Map of Manesar



LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

CURRENT ISSUE

# 1	Workers autonomy strikes in China	February 2011	£ 1
# 2	Tunisia: emergency state restructuring after an incomplete attempt at democratic insurrection	June 2011	£ 1
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“By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they [the workers] would certainly disqualified themselves from the initiating of any larger movement”

Karl MARX,
Wages, Prices and Profit, 1865