



2nd International Tea Day (ITD)

National Convention of Tea Workers and Small Tea Growers

Gudalur, December 17, 2006

Thousands of workers and small tea growers, among them a large number of women, from Gudalur, Nilgiris, Valparai, Wayanadu and Peermade marched along the streets of Gudalur chanting slogans demanding higher wages for workers and better prices for small tea growers. The rally was inaugurated by Samir Roy, Secretary, HMS. Besides trade union and small grower leaders from the region, Ashok Ghosh, national Secretary, UTUC;; Vazhoor Soman, All India Plantation Workers' Federation; Biplab Shaw, United Forum of Small Tea Growers' Association of West Bengal, West Bengal; Nara Kumar Gogoi, All Assam Small Tea Growers Association, Assam; Satyajit Bordoloi Assam Small Tea Growers Cooperative, Society, Dibrugarh, Assam; Alex Kozhimala, All Kerala Small Tea Growers Association, Peermedu, Kerala were among those lead the march.

The rally culminated at Morning Star School grounds, Gudalur, where various trade union leaders, small grower representatives and the Ooty MLA addressed the gathering. Among others, the assembly was addressed by Shri Gopalan, MLA, Ooty; Suresh, CITU; Ashok Ghosh, UTUC; Samir Roy, HMS; P T John, NTUI; Vazhoor Soman, AITUC; S. Manikkam, Plantation Labour Association, HMS, Alex Kozhimala, All Kerala Small Tea Growers Association; Satyajit Bordoloi, All Assam Small Tea Producers Cooperative Society; Partha Pratim Paul, United Forum of Small Tea Growers, West Bengal; J John, Executive Director, Centre for Education & Communication, New Delhi; M S Selvaraj, Vivasaya Thozhilalar Munnetra Sangam (VTMS), Gudalur;

Dravidamani, Integral Plantation Workers Union; K M A Subrahmaniam, Plantation Workers Union Congress and S Balan, Nilgiri District Estate Workers Union.

Messages received from Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State for Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India and Shri Ramachandran, Minister, Khadi and Village Industries, Government of Tamil Nadu were read out by the Chairperson of the assembly, J B S Subrahmaniam.

Trade Unions and Small Tea Grower organizations signed the action plan and memorandum of demands.

Action Plan, Tea Workers:

National Convention, Gudalur, Tamil Nadu

17 December 2006

In line with the New Delhi Declaration, 2005, Kandy Declaration 2006 and action plan agreed upon at the international level at the Kandy conference, we workers and small growers of India, attending the National Convention of workers and small tea growers declare to undertake the following programme towards our struggle for living wages and decent working conditions for workers and fair price for small tea growers.

Workers

- 1 Tea plantation workers will observe a one day mass hunger strike for right to life in front of all the tea board centers in the respective states on the budget day in March 2007
- 2 Workers in the closed and abandoned plantations in the country will jointly organize a week long 'satyagraha' in front of parliament and assembly for their demands of right to life and employment along with the MPs and MLAs from the tea growing areas in March 2007
- 3 National wide signature campaign on the charter of demands by the workers will be submitted to the president, prime minister of India and respective chief ministers of the tea growing states on May Day.
- 4 A National Consultation on Alternatives in the management of closed tea gardens and trade in tea, including workers' control over gardens and formation of cooperatives, will be organized
- 5 A campaign of right to life for the workers will be initiated in schools and colleges through the participation of students
- 6 Lobbying with the elected representatives in the assembly and parliament to make legislation to stop casualisation and contractualisation of work in tea sector
- 7 A 'Right to Housing' campaign will be initiated nationally by workers to reaffirm their housing rights. Each worker will send 50 grams of soil from their land/workplace to the respective state governments.
- 8 A campaign will be launched for the formation of a separate ministry for plantation at the Union and State levels
- 9 A campaign for an international commodity agreement for tea to regulate the supply and price of tea in the international market

Nilgiri District Estate Workers Union, (INTUC), Gudalur

All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)

United Trades Union Congress (UTUC)

Hind Mazdur Sabha (HMS)

New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI)

Defence Committee for Plantation Workers Rights, West Bengal,

West Bengal Chai Mazdoor Sabha, (HMS), West Bengal

Plantation Working Class Union (PWCU)

Indian National Trade Union Congress, Gudalur, Tamil Nadu

All India Federation of Plantation Workers Union, Valparai, Tamil Nadu

Integral Plantation Workers Union (IPWU), Pandalur

Plantation Workers Union Congress, (PWUC), Pandalur

Anaimalai Diraveda Thozhilalar Muuetra Sangam, Valparai, Anna Thotta
Thozhilalar Sangham, Valparai, Tamil Nadu

Vivasaya Thozhilalar Munnetra Sangam, Gudalur

Plantation Working Class Union, Wayanadu, Kerala

Plantation Labour Association (AITUC), Gudalur, Tamil Nadu

Nilgiri Estate Workers Union (CITU), Gudalur

Dooars Cha Bagan Workers Union (UTUC)

Darjeeling Cha Bagan Workers Union (UTUC)

Dinajpur Cha Bagan Workers Union (UTUC)

Centre for Education and Communication, New Delhi

Small Tea Growers

- 1 Small tea growers will observe a one day mass hunger strike for right to life in front of all the tea board centers in the respective states on the budget day in March 2007
- 2 National wide signature campaign on the charter of demands by small tea growers will be submitted to the president, prime minister of India and respective chief ministers of the tea growing states on May Day.
- 3 A National Consultation on Alternatives in the management and trade including the formation of cooperatives, will be organized
- 4 A campaign of right to life for the small tea growers will be initiated in schools and colleges through the participation of students
- 5 A 'pinch of soil' struggle campaign will be initiated nationally by small tea growers on their land rights. Each small tea grower will send 50 grams of soil from their land to the respective state governments.
- 6 A national federation of small tea growers association will be formed
- 7 A campaign will be launched for the formation of a separate ministry for plantation at the Union and State levels
- 8 A campaign for an international commodity agreement for tea to regulate the supply and price of tea in the international market

United Forum of Small Tea Growers' Association of West Bengal, West Bengal

All Assam Small Tea Growers Association, Assam

Wayandu Tea Producers Marketing and Processing Cooperative Society,
Wayanadu

Assam Small Tea Growers Cooperative, Society, Dibrugarh, Assam

All Kerala Small Tea Growers Association, Peeremedu P. O. Idukki

Small and Tiny Tea Growers Association, Nilgiri, Tamil Nadu

Sree Madurai Small Tea Growers Association, Gudalur, Tamil Nadu

Centre for Education and Communication, New Delhi

Gudalur, Tamil Nadu

17/12/2006