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To

All the Zonal/Divisional/Regional/State Units,

**MAY DAY 2018 - INSTENSIFY THE STRUGGLE**

All India Insurance Employees' Association extends a warm May Day greetings to all Insurance employees and other workers and toilers of our country.

We celebrate this May Day in the background of rising inequities and social and economic unrest and war mongering by imperialist countries. Though it is stated that world has come out of the economic crisis of 2008, the ground realities are totally different from what is projected by IMF and World Bank. Thomas Piketty, eminent economist says that democracy has become a puppet in the hands of a few rich people and what exist in many western democracies is plutocracy and not democracy. He says that all the political parties in these countries are working to suppress social anger and resentment of the common people. Most of the political parties are fundamentally opposed to the interest of the working class. As a result the working class is not in a position to influence the policies of the ruling classes. Cut in social welfare measures, wage cuts and transfer of wealth to the corporates through various methods like stimulus packages and tax relaxations have led to increased inequities in all countries.

Neoliberalism has increased inequities and today the half of global wealth is under the control of the richest 1% of the world. There is increase in unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, ill health, lack of basic facilities like housing etc. In spite of these acute problems, the right wing forces across the world are increasing their influence and workers across the world are divided on the basis of religion, race, gender, caste and nationalities. The right wing forces serve the interests of the corporate classes and this division of the workers by right wing forces actually helps corporate classes. According to Dave Renton (author of *Fascism, Theory and Practice*) ***“the right wing ideology thrives on bitterness and alienation, both of which capitalism nourishes with regular doses of unemployment and crisis.*”**

Under the BJP led NDA Government, there is an aggressive implementation of neo-liberal agenda combined with ruthless polarisation of people on religious and caste basis. People of India today are **“under the twin onslaught of neoliberalism and rabid communalism”**. The economic policies adopted by the BJP are resulting into rising unemployment, waning agricultural and industrial output, stagnating credit growth etc. Public Sector Units are privatized. Public sector defense companies and even those units which are in strategic sector are also privatized. FDI up to 100% is allowed in all key sectors compromising national interests. Public services are handed over to private entities. Public resources like lands, forests, water bodies, mines are given away to private concerns. Strategic agreement with USA facilitates access to our defense establishments. India has become a junior partner to USA. The govt. has revealed that bad loans of all 42 Scheduled Commercial Banks had risen to a staggering Rs.8.85 lakh crore by end December 2017 and over Rs.2.72 lakh crore had been written off by the 21 public sector banks since the Modi Govt took over. A serious attempt is made to weaken the public sector banking through FRDI bill and efforts are made to disinvest the remaining three public sector general insurance companies after the disinvestment of New India Assurance Company. In this background the public sector insurance maintained its growth in the financial year 2017-18.

LIC of India continued its spectacular performance and remained the market maker in life sector while the PSGI kept its domination in non-life sector. The overall market share of LIC is around 70% in premium income and more than 75% in number of policies.

In the name of ease of doing business, labour laws are being amended with the intention of weakening trade unions. Labour Ministry issued a gazette notification that allows employers to hire workers on a “contract of employment for a fixed term”. The Govt proposed four labour codes which will take away most of the existing rights and benefits of the workers. The decline in agriculture and manufacturing sector led to huge job cuts and job losses. Service sector comprising IT, ITES and tourism etc. is showing some growth but growth is not on expected lines to create new jobs and employment. The latest CMIE estimates that joblessness had increased to 7.25% in the first fortnight of April this year. In fact, the labour force shrank from about 44 crore to 42 crore. This indicates a very dismal employment scenario prevailing in the country.

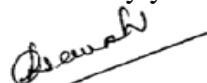
Attacks on dalits, women and minorities have increased in recent times. The recent incidents of sexual harassment and rapes of teenage girls and young children demonstrate the wretched social conditions prevailing in the country. The Una and Kathua incidents shamed the conscience of the Nation. Intolerance and hatred for particular sections of the society has reached to gigantic proportions. According to Reporters without Borders (RSF), India's ranking in the Press Freedom Index has fallen two places to 138. Any investigative reporting that annoys the ruling party or any criticism of Hindutva, elicits a torrent of online insults and calls for the death of the reporter or writer responsible.

A columnist of the *New York Times* writes: **A century on, if socialism isn't eradicated, and our immunity to it is still in doubt.** The anxiety expressed in these statements is not without foundation. Struggles for creation of society on alternate policies are growing across the world. There were huge struggles across Europe and USA. In our country also, workers, peasants, dalits, students are coming in a big way into the struggles. Struggles against attacks on life and living of common people and for assertion of constitutional and democratic rights are increasing. Lakhs of workers, youth and farmers participated in struggles like Maha padav, the Yuv Hunkar and in the long march of farmers from Nasik to Mumbai. The Maharashtra Government has to accede to the demands of the farmers and this shows the strength of struggles and movements. The need of the hour today is to expand these struggles and movements by involving all sections of people. This is essential for the working class to protect their hard won rights and benefits and also to protect the democratic and secular character of our country. Here we have to remember that rights of workers flows from the existence of vibrant secular democracy. In the circumstances, the insurance employees should be prepared to unleash struggle to realise the long pending demand for one final option for pension, wage revision and recruitment in class III & IV cadres in LIC.

So let us on this May Day reaffirm our resolve to fight the challenges confronting the working class and common people of this country. Let us resist the attacks of neo liberalism and the attempts to divide the people in the name of religion, caste, race and other identities. Let us work for expanding the unity of the working class and broaden the unity of farmers and workers of this country. Let us on this May Day take a pledge to protect the democratic and secular character of our country. Let us strengthen the public sector insurance industry.

With greetings,

Comradely yours,

  
General Secretary.