

ALL INDIA INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
LIC BUILDING SECRETARIAT ROAD HYDERABAD

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To all the Zonal/Divisional/State/Regional Units:

Dear Comrades,

Worker - Peasant Demands Day on 18th April, 2007

Agricultural sector, for any country, particularly in the Indian context, has an impact on the overall well being of the country's economy and welfare of the people as no other sector has. This is because of various factors. For one, it is agricultural sector that is crucial for food security for the people. It is again this sector which provides employment to a large number of people.

For long years now agriculture is languishing due to continuing neglect. Implementation of neoliberal reforms in different sectors, has switched focus in the direction of profits and growth, rather than on meeting the real challenges in the economy and of its sustained and equitable development. While the government and the neoliberal pundits have been wallowing on growth rates and profitability, they have altogether forgotten about the vulnerable sections of the economy and the people.

The continuing setback, in agriculture, which has the biggest bearing on the economic health of the country and the welfare of the largest chunk of the people, should not get overlooked.

It does not seem to prick the conscience of those in power that hundreds of agriculturists committed suicide last year and the number keeps on increasing. The reason is simple enough. Agriculture cannot any longer feed them and their families, let alone feeding the population as a whole. Agriculture is simply not viable given the policy direction of the government and its agencies that have hooked themselves to the neoliberal bandwagon. The drop in agricultural growth rates is thus immediately explained.

The workers in the organized sector too are facing crisis in their lives. As inflation rages, real wages get depressed. The prices of all essentials of life have been skyrocketing. Consumption levels have been seriously eroded. Even existing benefits like pension have come under the axe. If their living conditions while in employment are becoming exceedingly difficult, their post retirement life appears bleak.

If this is the condition of the organized sections of workers, the life of the unorganized needs no elucidation. Exploitation of all kinds reminiscent of the nineteenth century industrialized countries is being practiced, with the government unwilling to rectify the situation in any manner. Long standing labour law rights secured after great struggles and sacrifices are being annulled or simply not being implemented. Security of service, let alone improvement in wages and working conditions is beyond the realm of possibility. Organizing unions is becoming increasingly difficult even as India is said to join the league of great democracies.

As for the unemployed youth, there appears a bleak future despite all the talk about increasing GDP growth and all that. The country is witnessing a classical example of 'jobless' growth.

The absence of employment avenues has to be juxtaposed with the prohibitive cost of education, with the neoliberal government privatizing education as well, as it has done in respect of all else like health care, sanitation, drinking water and such other essential services. After spending enormously on education, the youth of the country poised to become a superpower soon, or has it become one already – face a terribly uncertain feature.

And, what about those who do not have access to primary education, and basic health care? What about the women who are discriminated and brutalized in diverse ways and whose maternity requirements go uncared? What about the undernourished children, to whose number India is an enormous contributor?

Indian democracy is put to shame and ridicule when a section of our own people, Dalits and other oppressed remain discriminated in ever so many ways. After 60 years of independence, they remain segregated and discriminated against making a mockery of our democratic credentials.

In these circumstances, what is important today is sensitizing every section of the people about the problems of the other sections. Without this unified perspective nothing can be achieved and no struggle would attain the full potential and attain the intended results.

While there has to be an allround unity in struggle among all oppressed sections of the people, the organized worker and the unorganized, the unemployed youth, educated and not so educated, the students, the women who remain exploited in ever so many forms and the Dalits and all other oppressed sections of the people, a beginning must be made somewhere. And, that beginning would sow the seed for an allround unity in struggle that alone can save the situation.

It is in this background that the CITU, AIKS (Kisan Sabha) and AIAWU (Agricultural Workers' Union) have jointly given a call for observation of Worker - Peasant Demands Day on 18th April, 2007 throughout the country. This is for the first time that such a call has been given in the country with a view to building a worker-peasant alliance to face the onslaught of the anti people policies of the rulers in a broad-based manner.

State and District level conventions will be organized by the three organizations as a preparation for the Worker – Peasant Demands Day.

Fraternal trade unions have been requested to involve in the convention and preparations for the Demands Day.

AIIEA being supporter of the cause of the worker-peasant alliance to unitedly fight against the anti people neo liberal policies, we call for insurance employees also to join in the conventions and the Worker – Peasant Demands Day on 18th April, 2007 in a big way and help make these programmes successful.

We also enclose herewith the list of ten demands to be highlighted in the campaign, as issued by CITU, AIKS and AIAWU, for your information.

With greetings,

Comradely yours,

General Secretary.