

ALL INDIA INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
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To

All the Zonal/Divisional/State/Regional Units

Dear Comrades,

_May Day 2016.

We are happy to extend warm greetings to insurance employees and to all the working people of the world on the occasion of May Day. May Day is international solidarity day of working people and it signifies struggle, sacrifice and unity of the workers. May Day is a day of resolve and determination to fight the neoliberal and divisive forces that are inimical to the unity and well being of the workers.

The May Day 2016 is being celebrated in the background of continuing financial crisis. There is an ominous feeling all around the world and The *Financial Times* gives an expression to this feeling when it says “*a sense of unease and foreboding seemed to settle on all the world’s power centres and all the big players seem uncertain—even fearful.*” Significantly the *FT* continues to write that the “*biggest common factor*” in the world situation today is a “*a bubbling anti-elite sentiment, combining anxiety about inequality and rage about corruption that is visible in countries as different as France, Brazil, China and the US.*” This observation by the corporate media reflects a growing recognition that the coming period will be one of immense social upheavals.

The financial crisis has become a permanent feature of economy and the intervals that were there between one crisis and another were so short that they can hardly be called as intervals. This pattern of permanent crisis indicates the unstableness of the world capitalism. The ruling classes tried to hide this ugly face of capitalism under sheath of distortions, lies and duplicity. The crisis has led to a vast increase in economic and social inequality across the world. During the past year, the wealth of the world’s billionaires surged past \$7 trillion and the top 1 percent now controls half of the world’s wealth. The economic crisis is intensifying geopolitical conflicts. The Middle East is in the midst of civil war and war is being waged in Syria under the guise of a new “war on terror.” There is remilitarisation of Eastern Europe as part of the US and NATO’s campaign against Russia. In East Asia, the pivot of Asia policy of US is bringing Japan and China into conflict over the South China Sea. In Africa, imperialist forces are planning operations in Libya, Nigeria and other countries. Germany is trying to re-emerge as strong power and wants to control Europe in order to control the world. This war mongering by imperial powers is accompanied by attacks on democratic rights and there is a growing influence of right-wing political movements across the world. In Germany the influx of refugees from Middle East has been used to promote extreme nationalism. France is in a state of emergency and important constitutional rights are suspended after terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino. Fundamentalist forces are emerging as front runner for US president ship. But people across the world want peace and harmony. There is a growing anger among the people against war mongering, social and economic inequality and attack on trade union and democratic rights. This May Day should inspire us to continue our struggle in opposition to capitalism and imperialism.

For us in India, the promise of ‘Acche Din’ by Modi Govt remains a distant dream. The slogans of ‘Make in India’ and ‘Start up India’ are not working. Exports are declining. Manufacturing sector is not performing well and no new jobs are created. Agrarian crisis has intensified and the country is reeling under severe drought conditions. Farmer’s suicides are continuing. The alliance of socio-religious fundamentalists and economic market fundamentalists is playing havoc with the lives of the people. India ranks 5th in the global dollar billionaires list while in Human Development Report, its rank is at 133- way behind countries like Srilanka, Bangladesh and Vietnam.

With failure on economic front, the Indian ruling establishment conveniently took rescue in their tested strategy of polarising the society on emotive issues like religion, patriotism and nationalism. Usually university level politics is left to the student groups and we find a plethora of groups believing in diverse ideologies co-existing in Universities. But BJP is so obsessed about taking control of academic campuses and today they have made a mess of it. Today there is severe unrest in the student community of FTII Pune, IIT Chennai, Central University Hyderabad and JNU Delhi apart from many other institutions of higher learning.

This attack on institutions is accompanied by attack on individuals who speak against Govt or who express their opinions freely. The murders of Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare and M M Kalburgi, or the self-announced “death of the writer” by Perumal Murugan shows how fundamentalist forces are trying to silence the voice of dissent. No arm of the State and Media is defending fundamental rights of the people. A message is being sent out to the people of the country that they will be protected if only they submit to the Hindu majoritarian agenda. In the year of the 125th birth anniversary of Dr Ambedkar it is our duty to safeguard the rights guaranteed by the constitution. We have to remember that in defending this we are defending the very idea of citizenship guaranteed by the fundamental rights of the Constitution of India.

We in insurance industry have secured a wonderful wage revision due to our sustained struggle and after the wage revision many other improvements and benefits have flown to the employees including the recent increase in the quantum of housing loan. We have to realise another option for pension and also have to secure improvements for the existing pension scheme. We have to understand that the Govt is trying to destabilise the nationalised insurance industry and already steps are being taken for the disinvestment of shares in the public sector general insurance companies. The Govt may also attempt for privatisation of LIC. These are the challenges insurance employees have to confront in the days to come and we should continue our campaign for protection of the nationalised insurance industry.

Workers all over the world today understand the social and political forces that are undermining their lives. Capitalism is under an existential crisis and to come out of the crisis, capital is attacking the democratic and labour rights of the workers. The success of the working class depend on its ability to organise itself on the global scale and struggle against neoliberal policies. In India some positive developments have come up with the call for all India strike on 2nd September 2016 by the central trade unions. Let us on this May Day resolve to make this all India strike a grand success and thwart the attempts of the Govt to suppress the fundamental rights of the people and workers.

MAY DAY ZINDABAD - LONG LIVE WORKERS UNITY.

Comradely yours



General Secretary.