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6<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

To,  
All the Zonal/Divisional/State/Regional Units

Dear Comrade,

**Re: 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021- Save India Day**

9<sup>th</sup> August is an important day for India and her people. It was on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942 that the Quit India Movement was launched against the British colonial power. Hundreds of thousands of people participated in the mass movement to free their motherland from the clutches of colonial powers. This day assumes all the more importance when India is preparing to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), along with the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) and All India Agricultural Workers Union (AIAWU), has given a call to observe 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021 as Save India Day as a mark of protest against the governments anti people policies. The Joint Trade Union Platform and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha have also given a call form protest Demonstrations.

The Indian economy was already in trouble because of demonetisation and faulty implementation of the GST regime. The pandemic induced lockdown made matters worse. More than a health crisis, India witnessed a humanitarian crisis of huge proportions. Lakhs of workers were left to fend for themselves without any state support. Unemployment and joblessness swelled like never before. Poverty and hunger became the order of the day. It is estimated that 23 crore people were pushed to poverty during this period. Around 1,70,000 people were reported to be losing their jobs every hour in April 2020. The second wave of the pandemic was a nightmarish experience. The entire country was gasping for breath, it seemed. The scale of the crisis should have forced any democratically elected government to sit up and come to the rescue of the people. But the present government saw an opportunity in the crisis.

Taking advantage of the crisis, a savage attack was launched on the lives and livelihoods of the people. A cunningly devious slogan of "Atmanirbhar Bharat" was coined to destroy precisely those institutions which worked as a fulcrum of India's self reliant economic development programme. While massive public investment was the need of the hour, the government launched a drive to disinvest the entire gamut of public sector enterprises in India. Everything including Water, Space, Forests and Rivers are being privatised.

The crisis of the economy is due to lack of aggregate demand. It is but natural that demand will be muted when people do not have adequate purchasing power. The remedy lies in injecting purchasing power in the hands of the people. With increased purchasing power, consumption demand will increase and investment will also increase. The state should come forward and transfer cash to the hands of the poor and marginalized as demanded by the trade union movement in India. And that is exactly what the developed nations of the world including the US are doing today. The vociferous voices of liberalization in India like Sri Uday Kotak (owner of Kotak Mahindra Bank) and Sri T.V. Narendran (Chairman CII) are also advocating the same policies because they are aware that the Indian economy is a demand constrained economy. Unfortunately, blinded as it is because of its pursuit of neoliberalism, the government feels that the crisis can be overcome if the 'animal spirits' of the private investors are somehow rekindled by way of giving them huge bonanza in terms of tax concessions and other benefits. This has resulted into a situation where there is a huge increase in the income and wealth of the rich and super rich while a vast majority of the people are mired in deep poverty. It is interesting to note that the wealth of the billionaires in India increased by 35 per cent during the lockdown period when crores of Indians did not find even one square meal a day. The level of

inequality can be gauged from the fact that the additional wealth generated by the top 11 billionaires of our country during the pandemic was sufficient enough to sustain the NREGS for 10 long years!

The government has been using the crisis to the hilt. While the working people had to bear the brunt of the pandemic induced crisis, they are under attack now from their own elected government. Labour laws have been re-written in favour of the employers. Eight hour working days have been made into 12 hour working days. Whatever limited protection was available to the working class through laws enacted during the colonial period have been snatched away through the newly framed labour codes. The attack on labour is also accompanied by attack on the peasants. While profit making public sectors are being handed over to private capital in the name of disinvestment, peasant based agriculture is being corporatized to hand over the agriculture sector to big capital. The laws have already been passed. Peasants are in struggle for over eight months now.

Public sector insurance industry is also under attack. The government is in a tearing hurry to bring the IPO of LIC. Necessary amendments have already been made in the LIC Act. The government is in the process of estimating the Embedded Value of LIC. The AIEA has been opposing the IPO of LIC as disinvestment is the first step towards privatisation. Our units are in the midst of campaign and struggle against the IPO of LIC. Our apprehensions have been proved right in the case of privatisation of public sector general insurance companies. The government had made a commitment in the floor of Parliament in 2015 that government equity in PSGI companies would remain at not less than 51 per cent. But the GIBNA Bill 2021 recently passed in Lok Sabha gives sweeping powers to the government to bring down government equity below 51 per cent in any PSGI company it likes. The Bill is therefore a clear roadmap for privatisation of PSGI companies. The employees and officers in PSGI industry have gone on a historic strike on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August against this move of the government.

There is no sector that is untouched by the privatisation drive of the government. Defence employees are in struggle against the corporatization of the Ordnance Factory Board. The government has now passed a Bill in Parliament titled 'the Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021' with an intention to ban strikes and agitations of the employees in the defence services. The employees however are waging a heroic battle. The power sector employees are also in struggle against the Electricity Amendment Bill 2021 which aims at privatizing electricity distribution among other things. The government is however resorting to all possible means to disrupt the united resistance of the employees. It is heartening to note that the farmers protesting against the Farm Laws have also taken up the issue of electricity amendment Bill. The struggles developing in various sectors are slowly converging to a wider, broad-based all India struggle against the destructive economic policies of the government.

It is in this context that the CITU, AIKS, AIAWU, the Joint Trade Union Platform and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha have given a call for protest Demonstrations on 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2021 and to mark this day as "Save India Day". Joint demonstrations are being planned across India while maintaining the norms of physical distancing. We call upon our units to join the protest demonstrations wherever possible in solidarity with the call of the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions.

With Greetings,

Comradely Yours



General Secretary