For the success of the
All India General Strike
8th January 2020!

Call of the Mazdoor Ekta Committee
For the success of the

All India General Strike

8\textsuperscript{th} January 2020!

The all India general strike has been called to resolutely oppose the course of enriching the capitalist minority by impoverishing the toiling majority. It has been called to assert the rights that belong to workers, peasants and other toiling people who create the wealth of India.

\textit{Hum Hain Iske Malik! Hindostan Humara!}

Call of the

Mazdoor Ekta Committee
Comrades,

On 30th September, ten central trade union federations jointly organised a National Open Mass Convention of Workers in Delhi. The Convention gave a call to mobilise workers all over India to strike work on 8th January, 2020, to demand our rights and display the combined strength of the working class.

The National Open Mass Convention of Workers was organized by the following central trade union federations: INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF and UTUC.

Thousands of representatives of workers unions from different sectors participated in this convention. They included workers in banks and insurance companies, coal mines, railways, ordnance factories, port and docks, road transport, steel, telecom, metals and machine building sectors. They included ASHA, anganwadi workers, mid-

National Open Mass Convention of workers
New Delhi, Sep 2019
Call of the Mazdoor Ekta Committee
day meal workers and other scheme workers.

Mazdoor Ekta Committee calls upon all workers and working people to organise for the success of the all India general strike. Let us defend our rights which are under attack and advance the struggle for our legitimate claims on the wealth we produce.

Massive demonstration of students and teachers against the privatisation of education, New Delhi, Mar 2018

Comrades,

We workers produce everything that society needs but the capitalists are robbing the fruits of our toil. Let us stake our claim to the wealth we produce!

We workers, peasants and other toiling people produce everything that society needs, from needles to airplanes. We produce all the food and clothing. We construct the houses, factories and office buildings. We risk our lives to extract coal from the bowels of the earth, clean the sewers in the cities and maintain the railway tracks. We run the power plants, ensure electricity and water supply, build and maintain the highways and drive the public buses. We nurse the sick. We teach the children in schools and universities. Yet we have no security of livelihood. Our rights are trampled in the mud.

Crores of workers are growing poorer year after year. Our wages do not keep pace with the soaring prices. We do not know when we may lose our jobs. Crores of daily wage earners do not know if they will remain employed tomorrow.
Crores of peasants are sinking deeper and deeper into debt. Thousands commit suicide every year.

At the other pole, the Tatas, Ambanis, Birlas and other monopoly capitalists are pocketing enormous profits year after year. They are counted among the richest persons in the world.

The Central Government does not fulfill our just demands. It is doing everything possible to fulfill the greed of monopoly capitalists for maximum profits.

For the past 70 years and more, we have been demanding a law to ensure that all workers are paid at least a living wage, which should cover the cost of all essential needs for a worker’s family to lead a dignified human life. Soon after independence in 1947, our rulers claimed that Indian capitalists are too poor to guarantee a living wage. Instead, a Minimum Wage was recommended by the 15th Labour Conference held in 1957, at a level which was just enough to keep body and soul together and come to work every day.

Today, when Indian capitalists are boasting about how rich and big they have become, the Central Government is making the absurd claim that Indian capitalists cannot even afford to pay all workers the Minimum Wage set in 1957, adjusted for the rise in cost of living!
Workers’ wages are being kept as low as possible, so that capitalists can pocket maximum profits and foreign companies will find it attractive to invest in India.

One of the main ways in which average wages are being pushed down is through rampant use of temporary contracts instead of regular jobs. From factory workers to school and college teachers, from workers in the automobile manufacturing factories to drivers of public transport buses, the majority of workers are being forced to work on contract. They are paid much lower wages than regular workers for doing the same work. They have neither job security nor social security.

Women workers are paid much less than their male colleagues.

Regular positions which fall vacant are not being filled in government schools and public health institutions. Lakhs of women and men are being hired on contract at lower than wages paid to permanent workers and deprived of the rights which belong to all workers.

Crores of agricultural workers and daily wage workers in industry and services have no legal protection for any of their rights.
Let us join the General Strike to press for the following demands:

1. **Set the National Minimum wage at Rs 21,000 per month. Adjust this wage periodically for increase in cost of living, by taking into account the consumer price index.**

2. **Abolish contract labour in jobs of perennial nature. Until contract labour is abolished, pay contract workers the same wages as permanent workers who are doing the similar work.**

3. **Recognize scheme workers employed in different government schemes, including anganwadi workers and helpers, ASHAs and others employed in National Health Missions, mid-day meal workers, para teachers, etc. as workers. Pay them minimum wages and social security benefits.**

4. **Strictly implement equal pay for equal work for men and women.**

5. **Immediately fill the vacant posts in all government departments, including railways. Lift the ban on fresh recruitment.**

6. **Guarantee social security and proper working conditions for all workers, including agricultural workers. Ensure minimum pension of Rs 10,000 per month, to be adjusted periodically for increase in cost of living.**
Comrades,

Our peasant brothers and sisters who toil hard to feed the whole country face extreme insecurity of livelihood.

Under the banner of globalisation and liberalisation, successive governments have enacted laws and adopted policies to expand the space for Indian and foreign capitalist companies in agricultural trade. Public crop procurement and the public distribution system have been cut back in the interests of capitalist profiteers.

Peasants are ruined not only when their crops fail due to bad weather. They are ruined even when there is a bumper crop, because the prices they receive fall below their cost of production.

When there is shortage and prices rise, it is not the peasants who benefit. It is the middlemen, headed by the big capitalist companies, who pocket exorbitant profits. For example, onion prices in the cities reached 90 rupees per kg in October 2019. Yet the price paid to the onion growers did not rise to even 10 rupees per kg.

The cost of agricultural production keeps rising because the capital-
For the success of the All India General Strike

ist companies which sell fertilizers, pesticides and other inputs are charging exorbitant prices. Peasants are getting squeezed between rising costs and falling prices of their produce.

Workers are being robbed by the soaring retail prices of food and other essential needs.

Let us join the general strike to press for the following demands:

1. **Establish a public procurement system to purchase agricultural produce at remunerative prices which are announced before the sowing season. The minimum support price must be based on an estimate of the cost of production, including family labour and land rent.**

2. **Waive the loans of peasants and provide institutional credit for the small and marginal peasants.**

3. **Establish a modern universal public distribution system that provides good quality food grains, pulses and all other necessities at affordable prices for all.**

Agitation by farmers of Ramgarh, Rajasthan to protest against scam in crop insurance scheme, Aug 2018
Comrades,

Through long years of struggle, workers in various sectors have gained legal recognition of many of our rights. In the name of simplification, 44 labour laws are being replaced by four Labour Codes, with the aim of depriving workers of their hard won rights and fulfilling the greed of Indian and foreign capitalists.

Rights that have been won by coal miners, construction workers and others through years of persistent struggle are being withdrawn.

The Trade Unions Act is being amended to make it extremely difficult for workers to form unions of their choice.

In the automobile, chemicals and other industries which have grown rapidly over the past 10 to 20 years, workers who are forming unions to fight for their rights are being brutally attacked. Union leaders have been thrown out of their jobs. Some have been imprisoned for life.

Women workers face sexual harassment at the work place. They are not even free to walk in the streets without the

Demonstration in New Delhi to demand release of jailed Maruti-Suzuki workers, Mar 2017
danger of physical attacks. The Constitution proclaims equal rights for women, and their liberation from all forms of oppression. However, there is no real guarantee for the rights of women, which are violated on a daily basis.

Instead of fulfilling the longstanding demand of workers for strict implementation of labour laws, the Central Government wants to allow capitalists to “self-certify” that they are being implemented.

Capitalists can now super-exploit young skilled workers as “apprentices” and “trainees”, without having to hire them at the end of their training period. Fixed term employment has been allowed in various sectors including the garment export sector, as another way to deprive workers of job security and super-exploit them.

Laws are being amended to further expand the use of contract labour instead of providing regular employment. Contractors who hire less than 50 workers are to be exempted from the purview of labour laws. This means that a factory with 500 workers can be run entirely on contract labour, by using a number of contractors, each employing less than 50 workers.
Factories with less than 40 workers on their payroll are to be removed from the purview of the Factories Act, which means no labour law will apply to them.

We workers must give a fitting response to these attacks on our rights.

**Let us strike work on 8th January to demand:**

1. **Stop all anti-worker and pro employer amendments to labour laws and strictly implement existing labour laws.**

2. **Do not amend the Trade Unions Act in favour of the capitalist class; register all trade unions within 45 days of filing of application.**

3. **Immediately revoke all amendments and notifications that expand the use of contract labour such as “fixed term employment”, National Employability Enhancement Mission (NEEM), and the amendment to the Apprentices Act.**

4. **Do no deprive construction workers, beedi workers, dock workers, journalists, coal mine workers, etc. of the rights they have won through decades of struggle.**

5. **Provide maternity leave and crèche facilities to all women workers. Guarantee protection of women from sexual harassment.**
Comrade workers,

Privatisation has been promoted by successive governments as a program to allegedly increase efficiency and benefit all sections of society. However, life experience has exposed that it is a program for monopoly capitalists to loot public property and pocket maximum private profits, at the expense of workers and society at large.

All over the country, we workers and people at large have been opposing the handing over of public assets to private capitalists. We have repeatedly asserted that no government has the right to hand over what belongs to society to capitalist profiteers.

Without any regard for our views, the Central Government has announced that it will raise over one lakh crore rupees through the sale of public sector units. This target includes profit making public sector companies such as Indian Oil Corporation, National Thermal Power Corporation, Power Grid, Oil India, Gas Authority of India Limited, National Aluminum Company, Bharat Petro-Chemicals Limited, Engineers India Limited, Bharat Earth Movers and Air India.

Indian Railways is being privatised, despite promises to the contrary made by PM Modi, and former PM Manmohan Singh earlier.

Public property is being sold to private companies and all sectors are being opened up to foreign companies. Let us fight to halt privatisation and the growing domination of foreign capital!

BPCL workers demonstrate against the privatisation of public sector oil companies, Oct 2019
Corporation of India, railway workshops producing engines and coaches, as well as the operation of trains on selected profitable routes are being handed over to private profiteers.

Ordinance factories and the others engaged in production for the defence sector are to be privatized.

Ports and docks and six more international airports are being privatized.

BSNL and MTNL are being deliberately ruined, as part of preparing conditions to justify their privatisation. Nearly 80,000 workers have been asked to take “voluntary retirement”.

Public sector banks are being forcibly merged. In the course of these mergers, many branches are being closed down, particularly in the rural areas, declaring them to be "not profitable". The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has been used to legalise the loot of the money of banks by corporate loan defaulters. Public sector banks are being deliberately liquidated to open the way to big Indian and foreign private banks to dominate the vital banking sector.

Education, health care, water supply, sanitation, electricity supply, public transport, and all other public services have been opened up to Indian and foreign capitalists to make maximum profits.
Privatisation of education, health, water supply and sanitation means that people will have to pay more for these services. It will deprive crores of poor people of any access to such services.

Privatisation of road and rail transport will lead to many regions being deprived of services because they are not profitable for the capitalist owners. It means a decline in passenger safety and higher risk of accidents, due to increasing use of untrained and cheap contract labour.

Alongside the privatisation of public goods and services, the Central Government is also expanding the scope for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the name of liberalisation. Complete foreign ownership is being allowed even in strategic sectors like defence production and railways.

The biggest Indian and foreign capitalist trading monopolies are establishing their stranglehold over wholesale and retail trade. The expansion of e-commerce is leading to the domination of trade by American multinationals including Amazon and Wal-Mart. It is driving lakhs of small traders out of businesses.

Global multinational giants, including Monsanto, are establishing their domination over agricul-

Roadways workers agitation against privatisation of bus routes in Haryana, Jun 2018
tural trade, driving the peasantry to ruin.

Our forefathers fought and sacrificed to end the plunder of our land and labour by foreign capitalists. The present day rulers of our country are opening its doors to allow foreign capital to penetrate our economy and dominate vital sectors including agricultural trade and defence production.

Privatisation and liberalisation are therefore not only anti-worker, anti-peasant and anti-social, but also anti-national.

Let us unite to press for the following demands:

1. **Halt the privatisation of railways, defence production, coal, power, steel, petroleum, Air India, airports, port and docks and other public sector units.**

2. **Halt the privatisation of education and health.** Establish and develop a system of modern, top quality universal public education and health care.

3. **Ban foreign direct investment in strategic sectors.**
Comrades,

Working class families make up more than half of the entire population. Workers and peasants together constitute the overwhelming majority. The capitalist class is only a tiny minority. To maintain its rule, the capitalist class is deliberately inciting us against one another on the basis of religion, caste and language.

Various tactics of “Divide and Rule” are being used to prevent us, the toiling majority, from uniting against our common exploiters.

Islamophobia, fear of Muslims, is being spread through films, television and other media. People of Islamic faith are falsely being accused of being terrorists. They are being portrayed as “anti-national” and as “agents of Pakistan”.

In the name of creating a National Register of Citizens, the Central Government has launched a campaign to identify and deport “foreigners”. Muslims are being threatened with being branded as “illegal immigrants” unless they provide documentary proof that their parents and grandparents have lived here for many decades.

We workers may believe in various religions but have no differences amongst us on that basis. Our common enemy is the capitalist class, headed by the Tatas, Am-

Massive protest in New Delhi to demand punishment to those guilty of demolition of Babri Masjid, Dec 2017
Call of the Mazdoor Ekta Committee

banis, Birlas and other monopoly houses.

A major barrier to the unity of the working class is the rivalry between different political parties and between the trade union federations affiliated to them. The fact that 10 central federations have come together is a step forward towards overcoming this barrier.

We need to further strengthen the fighting unity of the working class.

Let us build and strengthen workers’ unity committees, in factories, industrial townships and residential areas. Let us develop such committees as organs to provide united leadership to our common struggle against the capitalist class.

Comrades,

Why are the capitalists, who are a tiny minority in society, growing richer all the time, while the toiling majority of people remain poor and become more and more insecure? It is because the capitalists own the principal means of production as their private property. It is because they control political power.

The entire state machinery – that is, the Cabinet, the Parliament, the judiciary, bureaucracy and security forces, defend the capitalist system. It is a system in
For the success of the All India General Strike

which the motive of production is to maximize the profits of those who own capital and not to fulfill the needs of those who work.

The political leaders of our country keep telling us to work even harder so that the Tatas, Ambanis, Birlas and other capitalist monopoly houses accumulate their wealth at the fastest possible rate. They claim that some of this wealth will trickle down to us, the working people, sometime in the future. This is a monstrous lie. The truth is that the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor is an objective law of the capitalist system.

Prime Minister Modi’s slogan of “development for all” is a cruel fraud. Development and progress will benefit only a minority of capitalists as long as the principal means of production remain their private property. Hence we need to step up our struggle with the aim of dislodging the capitalist class from power, establishing workers’ and peasants’ rule and replacing capitalism by socialism.

We must demand and fight for a constitution which guarantees workers’ rights, women’s rights, the right to conscience and all human rights. Human rights include the right to work and to a secure livelihood, right to food, shelter and all other requirements for a dignified human existence.

Let us escalate our struggle to dismantle the capitalist system. Let us build a new India in which we the toilers will rule!
We must fight for a political system in which decision making power is in the hands of the people. We must take over the principal means of production from the hands of the capitalist class and bring them under social control. We must reorient the economy to fulfill human needs instead of fulfilling capitalist greed.

Come comrades, let us close the factories and workplaces and come onto the streets on 8th January, 2020, to advance the struggle for our rights!

**Workers and peasants want red flag on the Red Fort!**

**Workers' unity Zindabad!**

**Inquilab Zindabad!**
For more information, please contact:

**Delhi Office: Mazdoor Ekta Committee**
E-392 Sanjay Colony, Okhla
Phase-II, New Delhi – 110020
Email: post.mecdelhi@gmail.com
Mobile: +91 9810167911
Whatsapp: +91 09868811998

**Maharashtra Office: Kamgar Ekta Committee,**
59, Ambedkar Sadan, N.M. Joshi Marg
Mumbai 400013
Phone: +91 22 23082008

**Tamilnadu Office: Thozhilalar Ottrumai Iyakkam**
4/795 Anna Nagar, Kottivakkam
Chennai 600 041
Mobile: +91 7598069667