



ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION

(Registered under the Trade Unions Act 1926, Registration No: 3427/Delhi)

State Bank Buildings, St. Mark's Road, Bangalore – 560 001

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Date:

TO ALL AFFILIATES/MEMBERS:

MAY DAY

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY

CALLING FOR WORKING CLASS UNITY AND SOLIDARITY.

We are observing yet another 'May Day' today, being the day of working class unity and solidarity. It is a day to remember the struggles, campaigns launched by the trade unions against the hegemony of the capitalist class, whose prime objective was to make profits through exploitation of the working class. The struggles launched against the attack of the capitalists were met with brutal offensives and many leaders, trade unionists lost their lives for the cause of the labour. It is the day to remember and pay our homage to the martyrs who laid down their lives for defending the trade union rights of the workers. Trade unions the world over have played an important role in emancipation of mankind from the clutches of the colonial rulers, the socio-economic transformation of the country. This is emphatically supported by the statement of Mr. Clarence Darrow:

“With all the faults, trade unions have done more for humanity than any other organisation of men that ever existed. They have done more for decency, for honesty, for education, for the betterment of race, for the development of character of men than any other association of men”.

2. This sums up the immeasurable contributions made by the trade union movement all over the world. The day is a reminder to all of us, the need to stand united, the need to fight unitedly all the attempts to exploit the labour and the need to continue the struggle in a sustained manner particularly in the wake of the globalization process which is causing havoc all over the world. The market oriented policies of deregulation and liberalization have exposed even the so called strong economy of USA and the gap between the haves and have nots has been widening. The illadvised economic policies implemented by the WTO have led to increase in poverty, joblosses, unemployment, denial of social security benefits to the working class.

3. In our country, where we have opened the doors to the global operators the process of globalization has led to wide disparities between the rich and the poor. The great paradox of globalization is that the list of billionaires from India is growing every year, against this, the number of poor people is increasing day by day. Today we have the largest number of poor in the world with 43% people living below the poverty line. The luminosity of shining India is directly proportional to the intensified exploitation of the labour, the poor and suffering India.

4. Our policy makers have turned a blind eye to the fact that the neo-liberal economic reforms trajectory, advancing imperialist globalization seeks the maximization of profits through intensified exploitation often bordering at plunder, heaping misery on the vast mass of working class, both globally and domestically. The aggravation of the incidence of poverty both absolute and relative is thus, its direct consequence. The adverse impact of these consequences could be observed in the following unpleasant developments.

5. Social Security benefits like pension, provident fund, free access to medical facilities etc, are hard won rights of the working class, secured through decades of struggle in the twentieth century. These gains are now being reversed through privatization of pension funds, provident funds and cuts in subsidies and welfare benefits. The neoliberal austerity measures being implemented across the world today specifically target the social security benefits, in order to pass on the burden of the economic crisis to the working people.

6. In India, the overwhelming majority of the 46 crore strong work force a large number of them women, is outside the cover of any social security. The National commission for the unorganized Sector(NCEUS) estimated that 93% of the total work force was employed in the unorganized sector in 2004-2005. The situation has not improved since then as NSS 2009-10 data clearly show. This vast mass of people comprising of the informal sector workers, contractual labourers, self employed persons, agricultural workers and small peasants, are not eligible to any pension, provident fund or health rights. The pension schemes for senior citizens, widows or disabled persons are so restrictive that the bulk of these vulnerable sections do not benefit from them.

7. The existing social security cover for the organised sector employees both in the public and private sectors is under threat. The interest rate for the employees' Provident fund has once again been slashed from 9.5% to 8.6% affecting millions of workers and employees. The PERDA Bill seeks to privatize pension funds allow FDI in the sector and facilitate investment of pension funds in the speculative stock market.

8. Bulk of the rural poor in India is outside any social security coverage. Despite repeated demands, the Govt. has refused to enact legislation to ensure comprehensive social security for the agricultural workers who are the most exploited. The paltry budgetary allocations for the social security schemes constrain the capacity of the central and state governments to expand the coverage of social security.

9. We demand that, the government should abandon its anti-people approach and make adequate financial allocations to ensure universal coverage of minimum social security benefits comprising of:

- Old age pension above 60 years and extended benefits for senior citizens.

- Widow Pension

- Maternity benefits

- Life and accidental coverage

- Disability allowance

- A public Health System that is adequately financed and accessible to all.

10. These social security benefits should be extended to all sections of the toiling people, the informal sector workers, contractual labourers, self-employed persons, agricultural workers and small peasants.

11. We express our deep concern over the increasing contractorisation of workers in various sectors of the economy which has resulted in a manifold increase in the exploitation of workers by keeping wage cost down and denying workers their minimum rights.

12. In the name of making industries competitive and attracting investments the Central Govt. has permitted the gross violation of the Contract Labour

(Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970, by the Private and Public Sector. The Act prohibits employment of contract workers in jobs of a permanent nature but in practice this is what is happening and has become widespread not only in the manufacturing and service sectors but also in Govt. services. In the unorganized sector the practice is rampant.

13. We have been demanding amendments to the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970, to ensure regularization of contract workers in perennial nature of jobs and to end the collusion of employers and enforcement authorities so as to ensure proper implementation of the law. We have also been demanding that contract workers should be paid wages equal to that of a regular worker with other social security benefits so as to end the cruel exploitation prevalent now.

14. The Banking Sector especially the Public Sector Banks, are passing through a very rough patch of their existence. There are attempts to privatize the Public Sector banks and hand over them to the Private Corporate bodies. The Corporates are being allowed to start their own Banks. The travesty is that the Corporate bodies have been responsible for the whopping NPAs in the Public Sector Banks. Government has embarked upon a policy of disinvestment, sell out and privatization of Public Sector Banks, notwithstanding the fact that, our Banking Sector survived the onslaught of the global recession in 2008, due to the fact the Banks were in the Public Sector and were under strict regulatory control of the R.B.I. This needs to be stoutly protested by us.

15. The government has been making attempts to deunionise the officers through its anti-employee and anti-union stand which finds a reflection in the

Khandewal Committee recommendations. The committee Report is a body blow to our collective bargaining, our wages and service conditions. The Report has cast its shadow on the impending 10th bipartite wage Revision which we have to achieve come what may.

16. Hence it is time for us to take a pledge to continue our struggles and campaign through an united action. The need of the hour is unity and solidarity of all the officers under the banner of AIBOC and fight all the ill-effects of economic reforms and ensure the emergence of India as a truly egalitarian society where workers, labourer, peasants live with self respect and dignity.

17. Let us all enliven the spirit of May day by continuing our struggles and campaigns to save the Public Sector Banks, defend our trade union rights and involve whole heartedly in the nation building process by standing upto our slogan:

"Nation First, Institution Next and Individual Last".

With greetings



(G.D.NADAF)
GENERAL SECRETARY