

# ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION

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To All Affiliates (Please Circulate)

## May Day signifies the struggle of Working Class Time to rethink, rejuvenate and resurge!!

The historic May Day is an occasion to recollect, remember, respect and commemorate the fight and struggles of the working class and people against the exploitation and onslaught on their rights. This day has brought a new dimension in the lives of working class across the globe and realised the dream of "Dignity & Respect" of Working Class. The oppressed and subjugated working class, who were treated as bonded labour were made to toil for 10-14 hours a day, decided to revolt and retort. The sparks, undercurrents flowing here and there for years foregathered, ignited a colossal movement that changed the course of history on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1886. We are all are how the working class resorted to strike in Chicago, which was given the sobriquet "Haymarket Affair", demanding restriction of work to **8 Hours a Day**, which left an indelible mark to introduce a "**8 Hours a Day**" norm and is befittingly observed as **International Workers' Day**.

2. Comrades, the attack on the working class was always there and continues even today. While the threat during yester years were mechanisation, oppression, suppression, gender bias, denial of reasonable wages, denial of minimum comfort required for a decent living, the situation is no different today. Today's working class is haunted with similar, but mutated and more serious threats. The demon of Artificial Intelligence, ill-thought out policies and programmes of Government and employers, squeezing of human resource in the garb of profit maximization, enslaving the work-force to work for unending hours, without weekly-offs, denial of Trade Union rights etc. In our banking industry too, officers are forced to work beyond reasonable hours, work on holidays, thus disconnecting from their social and family life. Recruitment has drastically curtailed resulting in increase of per capita workload and the officers are under severe stress and strain. Work life balance has been drastically shattered due to work pressure and stress at office culminating unexpected and untimely loss of lives. The **officers'** associations in many affiliates were formed nearly 50 years ago, when the officers were subjugated and tormented. The wheel seems to have turned a full circle. Remembering May Day becomes more relevant from this perspective. Today, there is a need to fight as the labour force did 133 years ago.

3. We, AIBOC, being the world's largest organisation of supervisory cadre, is alive to the issues. We remain resolute - To oppose atrocities perpetrated on the working class; To oppose privatisation; To oppose Mergers & Amalgamations; To oppose disowning the Public Sector Enterprises by Government; To ensure Work-Life-Balance; To ensure existence of Public Sector Undertakings in the interest of common man of the country.

4. Government has been attempting to consolidate existing 44 labour and related laws into 4 Codes i.e. Wages, Social Security, Industrial Relations and Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions. The need of balance is pro-capitalists, dilutes the stringency and allows easy-closure of establishments, encourages hire and fire policies. It is skewed in favour of employers than the very employees who run them. Similarly, we have another challenge – protecting the interest of labour in unorganised sector, which is huge population in the nation. This is a vulnerable area, where illiterate, semi-literate, women

and the deprived society of India are being squeezed. AIBOC, being the torch bearer in the working-class movement, trade union fraternity looks upon us to lead in ameliorating the hardship of our comrades in unorganised sector.

5. Banking industry continues to be on hazy path. This has a huge consequence on the welfare, the working environment of officers and the very existence of public sector banks. Corporates are waiting to take over the PSBs and old generation private banks; Government is pursuing a policy of annihilating trusted public sector banks; every attempt is being made to show PSBs in poor light with the hidden intention of privatising them, to handover to greedy corporates. Laws are being amended to make the illegal legal, to legitimise corporate loot of public money and national resources, expenditure on social welfare. The central government is pampering the national and multinational corporations and big houses with bonanzas-tax concessions, bank loan defaulters and exemptions from laws of the land including labour laws. The vast majority of workers and the peasants who produce wealth expending their sweat and blood are being pushed into slavery and penury; they are denuded of their lands, their jobs, their rights and their livelihoods. While Government is using PSBs for its advantage, it has not shown any inclination to recognise and accept our demands, be it wage revision, pension revision or to stop misplaced reforms.

6. On this occasion, to secure the interest of the working class in general and bank officers in particular, we strongly demand Government to initiate following pro-working-class measures.


- a. Though India is one of the founder member of International Labor Organisation (ILO), it is embarrassing to note that our country is yet to ratify the Conventions which recognise trade union rights. We demand that Government should ratify ILO Conventions No.87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise) and No.98 (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention) without further loss of time. It is worth to note that majority of countries – developed, developing and underdeveloped have ratified, but not India, the largest democracy in the world.
- b. Another urgent necessity is a law restraining the employers from forcing its employees, irrespective of cadre, to work beyond stipulated hours. This will foster the social relationship and a healthy society.
- c. There is also a law needed to examine death of personnel from the perspective of “death due to over-working”, “burning out”. There is a law elsewhere in the world which provides for examining whether a death is on account of overworking. Ailments like Cardiac disease, stroke etc. are more often the consequences of stress and strain obtaining in working environment. This sort of a penal action would not only be deterrence in exploitation of personnel, but will also lead to augmentation of human resources, resulting in creation of more and more required employment.

7. On this historical day, let us take a pledge, to be united and work for a better work environment. Let us espouse the cause of officers' fraternity, of a common man, the farmer, and the less privileged society. Let us take every measure to guard the fabric of public sector banks and guard them jealously.

We call upon all our Affiliates/ State Units to celebrate May Day befittingly to demonstrate that we are determined to hold the mantle and to protect the interest of human capital of the country as also the Nation.

With revolutionary greetings,

Comradely yours,



(Soumya Datta)  
General Secretary