

# STATE BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

## (BENGAL CIRCLE)

(Registered under Trade Unions Act 1921-Regd. No. 6908)

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To All Member (Please Circulate)

## MAY DAY - 2015

May 1st, International Workers' Day, commemorates the historic struggle of working people throughout the world. As workers, we must recognize and observe May Day not only for its historical significance, but also as a time to organize around issues of vital importance of today for the working-class. The working class is under extreme oppression, are being exploited and deprived of the basic constitutional rights. Karl Marx had observed "...But out of the death of slavery a new vigorous life sprang. The first fruit of the Civil War was an agitation for the 8-hour day – a movement which ran with express speed from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California."

The May Day is not just another day in our calendar to be spent as a mere holiday. It is a day to remember the sacrifices of the ordinary men and women who made extraordinary efforts to decrement the working hours to 8 hours a day instead of the sunrise-to-sunset working policy. We constitute the foundation of our society, we work hand in hand to build our nation, to contribute towards its prosperity and well being. What greater satisfaction can a worker have, than to cherish the work of his own hands, the fruit of his labour. A satisfied workforce contributes whole heartedly towards the goal of the organization. May Day thus not only commemorates the struggles of the past in demand for a better work environment but also a reminder to the society that the massive working class cannot be suppressed. It is that evolving fire which wounds as well as heals. If it can build it can also rise against injustice.

The May Day is all the more relevant in this era when the trade unions of our country are under attack from the capitalist forces. The members of the working class are being constantly oppressed in the name of growth, profit and liberalisation. When the rebel has surrendered to the dogmatic doctrine of double digit GDP, the need of the hour is to rise, awake and move on until the goal of regulated working hours is reached.

We shall work with dignity and self-esteem and we shall endeavour to live our lives with head high. We shall respect and also expect the same in return. Our reticence should not be misconstrued as our weakness. Remember, there is always a lull before a raging storm.

Comrades, we are human beings. While we have our duties to our esteemed organisation, it is also expected that there should be a work-life balance. Sadly, the same is not happening. Our workplace needs us, at the same time we also have responsibilities to our families. We need to spend quality time with our near and dear ones and the time to pursue our passion. We need entertainment, time to reflect on our actions, time to play with our children, time to be by the sides of our parents and time to exalt ourselves intellectually.

The recent labour law reforms ushered in by the central Govt as part of the Industrial Dispute Act, already implemented in Rajasthan' will allow companies to retrench up to 300 employees without seeking government permission. At present, it is restricted to 100. It has also for the first time introduced a time limit of three years for raising industrial disputes. The modifications also make it tougher to register labour unions. It is crystal clear that welfare is compromised to accommodate corporate greed and competition.


In the banking sector, too, there is deep resentment and frustration amongst employees and officials. Thus, in the current wage revision talks, the demand for Regulated working hour and 5 day week assumed prime importance. IBA has agreed to introduce 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday off, thus the demand has been partially realised. But we are still a long way off from regulated working hours. The time has now come to stand tall and stand united. Unity is the only defence against divisiveness and dogmas of domination. When we are under repeated assaults from the reactionaries, we should not be dispersed out of fear. We must have the courage to stand up for our rights and protest against any unwarranted attack on our basic dignity and rights. We must not give up, come what may. Individualism must give way to collective pro-activism. Trade union movement has withstood the ravages of time. Let us carry on the spirit of the epic Hay Market protest – fight injustice, intolerance and subjugation with swords of intellect, perseverance and organised action.

March on Comrades to demand for our right to work with dignity; our right to be respected; our right to be treated like a human being and our right to not to become a machine in the network of crony capitalists.

Long live Workers' Solidarity.

Long Live our Struggle.

With revolutionary greetings,

  
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