

STATE BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

(BENGAL CIRCLE)

(Registered under Trade Unions Act 1926-Regd. No. 6908)

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To All Members (Please Circulate)

We reproduce hereunder the Circular No. 44 dated 24.06.2019 issued by the General Secretary, All India State Bank Officers' Federation, the contents of which are self-explicit.

With revolutionary greetings,

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay
(General Secretary)

To all our Affiliates / Members:

CALL OF THE FEDERATION MEMORABLE CELEBRATION OF GOLDEN JUBILEE OF 17 DAYS INDEFINITE STRIKE OF 1969 BY OFFICERS IN SBI BY SBIOA(K) AT BANGALORE ON 16TH JUNE 2019 "MASSIVE WALKATHON"

It was pure euphoria all around when more than 1500 comrades of SBIOA (K) attired in specially designed T-Shirts to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the 17 days Indefinite Strike, assembled at Freedom Park, Bangalore to march to the venue. The walkathon attracted public attention as traditional folk artists also accompanied the members and their performance added a colourful dimension to the event. Exemplary discipline was exhibited by the members of SBIOA(K) during the march which was interspersed with continuous slogans and dances of folk artists. The march thus attracted the spectators, who had gathered on both sides of the road to witness the unique procession. The march was led by office bearers of SBIOA (K) as well as leaders of yesteryears. Com.L.V. Subramaniam, who led the historic indefinite strike in SBI in the year 1969, was at the forefront of the procession as usual displaying the energy and vitality of a 20 year old. The procession reached the venue of the function at 10.00 a.m. and the entire hall was packed to the capacity with jubilant members of the Circle Association as well a large contingent of veterans.

The program commenced with the flag hoisting by the leaders of the Circle Association along with the former leaders at 10.30 a.m. A short skit was enacted by the members of SBIOA(K) depicting the situation prevailing at the time of joint indefinite strike of 2006 called by both Staff Federation and Officers' Federation before the commencement of the proceedings. Thereafter, the guests were invited to the dais by Com V.N.Nagesh, President SBIOA(K) and Com.S.K.Srinivas, General Secretary SBIOA(K) and greeted with bouquets. A memento was also offered to each of the distinguished guests, which included Dr. L.Hanumanthaiah, the Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha and also a former employee of State Bank of India and a very popular political personality in the State of Karnataka, Shri Abhijit Majumdar, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Bangalore Circle, Shri. Muralidharan, General Manager, N.W-II State Bank of India, Bangalore Circle, Dr. Sapna, Dean, Presidency Law University, Bangalore, Com. G. Subramanyam, Chairman, AISBOF and the undersigned. The proceedings commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by all the guests and Com. L.V.Subramaniam, who had successfully led the historic indefinite strike in the year 1969 as the General Secretary of the Federation.

Com.S.K.Srinivas, the General Secretary extended a warm welcome to all the dignitaries as well to all the former leaders, who were also present in the function and to the all members who had come in large numbers to take part in the program. In his address, he highlighted the significance of the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Indefinite Strike. He also gave a brief introduction of the dignitaries, who were present on the dais and their contribution to the society at large. He also appreciated the spontaneous response received from the members of the Circle Association as well as from the senior comrades to the call given by the Association for conduct of the Golden Jubilee celebration of the historic Indefinite Strike in a befitting manner. He appreciated the efforts of the members in joining the Walkathon in

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massive numbers generating visibility and drawing the attention of the general public with sparkling cultural performances and slogans. He also narrated some of the incidences which were revealed to him by the senior comrades as to how difficult it was during the material period to organize members to join the strike. He also referred to the various benefits that have accrued through these struggles by the past leaders for the information of the members, who were present in the function.

Dr.L.Hanumanthaiah, the Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, from Karnataka speaking on the occasion recollected his past days in the State Bank of India and remembered all his colleagues who worked with him and also mentioned some of them who were present in the function. He acknowledged the contribution made by State Bank of India and his earlier days in the bank, which had given him the opportunity to broaden the sphere of his activities and to take up political activities and to reach the current position. He referred to the historic struggle of 17 days strike by the officers of State Bank of India in the year 1969 and its journey subsequently clinching several benefits for the members of the association through continuous dialogue with the Management from time to time. He also recalled how the Public Sector employees in Bangalore went on a long strike and also the strike conducted by the various unions over the last several years. He opined that whenever the Management refuses to listen to the grievances of the members of the union and the association, strikes take place. It is a democratic set up in Public Sector undertakings that will shape the industrial relationship. There has to be willingness to hold the dialogue with the workers and that is the essence of industrial democracy which alone can pave way for better industrial relations in the institutions. He also appreciated the leadership of the Association for holding the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the historic strike and for acknowledging the contribution of all the veterans who had contributed to the success of the unions and associations in the banking industry. He wished the program all success.

Dr. Sapna, the Dean of the Presidency University School of Law Bangalore in her address covered the background of the trade union movement across the world. She also referred to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its contribution to the development of workers union in the various parts of the globe. She made a reference to the provisions of the Article 19 of the constitution which guarantees the workers the trade union rights and the right to agitate in furtherance of their issues. An individual worker is not strong enough to espouse his cause with the management. His voice is not heard and hence the Constitution under article 19 provides a right to workers to get organized and take up the issues of the workers through collective bargaining. The provision in the constitution ensuring the right for formation of the unions by the employees will also empower them the right to strike when their grievances are not heard by management. The unions are entitled to bargaining rights and advancing their cause through agitation strike etc., she acknowledged and appreciated the SBIOA(K) for giving her an opportunity to attend the function and to present her views on the occasion.

Com. G. Subramanyam, Chairman AISBOF, appreciated the efforts of the Circle Association in organizing such a wonderful program which provided an opportunity for the younger members, who joined the institution much later, as to how the Federation has continuously struggled to clinch various benefits to the officer's fraternity. He also referred to the current dilemma prevailing in the bank due to undue pressures created on the staff to certain business which was not the bank's core business and the suffocation that was being created in the bank. The pent-up feeling may ultimately create a situation for yet another struggle by the Federation, he declared.

Shri Abhijit Majumdar, the Chief General Manager, SBI, Bangalore Circle, speaking on the occasion thanked the organizers for providing an opportunity for his participation in the function. He also referred to the earlier working conditions of the officers and the onerous responsibilities which were cast upon officers who had work in the bank without even getting the casual leave etc., He was happy that the subsequent events saw several benefits flowing to officers through the efforts of the Officers' Association and Federation. He also referred to the excellent relationship that was now prevailing in the bank between the Association and the Management. He wished the program all success.

The undersigned during his address recollected some of the incidences that were narrated to him in different parts of the country by all those who had participated in the historic struggle. He explained how the supervisory cadre was suffering under suffocation created due to the adamant attitude of the Management placing the entire burden of running the institution on the supervisory cadre. The officers were subjugated and tormented due to the oppressive working conditions prevalent at the material period, which resulted in angst and frustration. It was the seething anger that paved the way for the success of the historic strike. It was a tremendous struggle and a colossal sacrifice by our senior comrades, who valiantly led the battle amidst all odds and constraints. The 17 days strike clinched the right to bargain by State Bank of India Supervisory cadre. This eventually gave the negotiating rights to the officers.

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He also explained about the state of current bipartite talks between IBA and the unions. He made it very clear that the AIBOC was not compromising on the question of the unconditional mandate by the Managements covering all sections of the Officers cadre that is Scale I to Scale VII. He categorically stated that the AIBOC was committed to ensure that the negotiations has to be covering all scales of the officers in the Bank as was being done thus far. Hence, in case the IBA failed to secure the full mandate, the Confederation has no option but to boycott the negotiations, he declared. He urged upon all present to prepare themselves for a protracted struggle to achieve the aspirations of the officers fraternity. He lauded SBIOA(K) for organizing the unique program, which gave the Federation wide visibility.

It was a memorable occasion for all those who were present on the occasion to witness the honoring of the veterans, who had participated in the historic 17 days indefinite strike led by Com.L.V.Subramaniam, Com.T.N.Ramachandran, and Com.N.P. Madaiah by the dignitaries who were present on the dais as well as by the entire team of office-Bearers of the Circle Association.

Com.V.N.Nagesh, the President in his presidential address recalled the sacrifices made by our senior comrades in building a strong trade union movement in the banking industry and desired that the younger generation should draw inspiration from these developments and take the movement to greater heights in the days to come.

Com.Ravi Kusbi, the Vice-President SBIOA(K) proposed the vote of thanks. The program concluded with the rendition of the National Anthem.

On behalf of the Federation, we congratulate SBIOA(K) for organizing the unique program, which was a stupendous success. The Golden Jubilee of our indefinite strike of 1969 will continue to inspire us for many more years to come as the present scenario in the banking industry in strikingly similar to that of the 1960s. Let us consolidate ourselves and rededicate ourselves to serve our membership.

With greetings,



(SOMYA DATTA)
GENERAL SECRETARY

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