

THE FEDERATION OF BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS

(REGD.No.7364)

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"SAVE PUBLIC SECTOR-MARCH TO PARLIAMENT" **JOINT FORUM OF PUBLIC SECTOR OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION**

Dear Comrades,

We reproduce, hereunder, the contents of Circular No. 2014/90 of date on the captioned subject issued by Com. Harvinder Singh, General Secretary, AIBOC for your information, circulation & implementation.

QUOTE:

"9th December, 2014 was another milestone in the history of Trade Union Movement ! Yet another history was created when the representatives of lakhs of Bankers, middle level managers, engineers, and other professionals resolved to defend the Public Sector. More than a thousand professionals from the All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC); All India Engineers Power Federation (AIPEF); National Confederation of Officers' Associations of Central Public Sector Undertakings (NCOA); Sanchar Nigam and MTNL Executive Associations (SNEA and MEA) gathered at Jantar Mantar and March begin to Parliament till the Parliament Street Police Station, where they were stopped. These organizations had assembled under the banner of Joint Forum of Public Sector Officers' Associations, formed a couple of months back and invited other similar fraternal organizations to join the forum.

Shri K. Ashok Rao, Convenor of the Joint Forum in his introductory delivery, welcomed the gathering and remarked that 'March to Parliament' was a symbolic expression. It means we are addressing the real owners of Public Sector – the people of India through their representatives. Shri Rao read the Memorandum that was later submitted to the Prime Minister's Office. He elaborated on the concerns contained in the Memorandum:

1. The public sector enterprises/public utilities and services have built the basic infrastructure and provided goods and services to the rural and marginalized section, either through cross-subsidy or at a loss. Without the Public Sector, there is a serious danger that only the elite will have access to goods and services.
2. In every sector, **"Profits are being privatized, and losses nationalized"**. This is putting a strain on the Public Sector and is unsustainable.
3. To meet short term fiscal deficit, public enterprises are being disinvested, their reserves are being drained and advance dividends extracted, thereby emasculating them and rendering them unable to withstand competition.
4. Enterprises like BSNL/ MTNL, Air India are examples of policy driven destruction. There is a need for an impartial enquiry into the systematic and methodical destruction. Those responsible should be brought to book.
5. India could withstand the capital market storm on the strength of its robust Public Sector Banks. Instead the banks are being weakened with norms like Basel III. Privatization, under the garb of capital adequacy, is being imposed, while loot of the banks, in the form of Non Performing Assets (NPA), is willfully ignored.

6. Unbundling has not resolved any of the problems in the power sector. Privatization has compounded financial losses and created a fuel shortage crisis. Unbundling wire and current would result in further losses, increase in tariffs and endless litigation.

Shri Rao pointed out that the Annexures to the Budget documents FY 2013 – 14 showed that the taxes forgone was Rs. 5.2 lakh Crores. These were all the rebates, concessions, subsidies and write offs given in Direct and Indirect taxes. Against this the entire revenue released since 1991 till May 2014 by way of disinvestment in PSU shares was a mere Rs. 1.2 lakh Crores. This showed the hollowness in the arguments of fiscal crisis and need for disinvestment.

Shri Rao said that the Joint Forum was ready to share with the Government rich collective experience of those who have in-depth understanding of the working of these organizations. He said the Joint Forum was ready and willing to co-operate and work with the Government for the betterment of the nation. What we were seeking is a right of participation in decision making.

Speaking on the occasion, Com. Y. Sudarshan, President of AIBOC congratulated the huge congregation who had assembled from all over the country. He traced the history and significance of the Public Sector Undertakings, the temples of modern India, and highlighted their strategic role as growth engines and change agents of the Free India. He also said that India was a mixed economy where the Public Sector and the Private Sector played a complimentary role and co-existed side by side for the all round comprehensive development of the largest democracy in the world. India with its huge population and problems of unemployment and problem of agriculture sector which depend on the vagaries of monsoon needs a sound foundation of the Public Sector. He spoke about the historic efforts of the AIBOC in consolidation of the financial sector Trade union movement. He also spoke about the progressive role played by the Public Sector Banks in the areas of industrial development, infrastructure growth, generation of employment, financial inclusion and reaching out to the nook and corners of the country. The Public Sector Banks withstood the financial tsunami and the economic crisis of 2008 and 2011 because of its public sector character, conservative policies and more importantly because of the Trade Unions like the AIBOC, other constituents of UFBU, etc, which was acknowledged by economists world over. He urged upon the government to protect the public sector and appealed to the entire public of the country to standby the Trade Unions in ensuring this pious goal.

Shri Shailendra Dubey, Chairman of AIPEF, said that the reforms since 2003 has not resolved the financial crisis in the sector, instead it has made it worse. The consumers have not benefited either. Citing the example of the privatization in Delhi, he said tariffs of electricity have increased by around 250% since privatization. Despite that the private DISCOMS had filed a petition to the Central Electricity Regulatory Authority (CERC) that they were unable to pay the Generators. Shri Dubey explained how the Franchisees were given power at subsidized rates by state owned utilities. Despite that the Franchisees were not passing on the money to Generators collected from the consumers. In Agra and Aurangabad Franchisees had not paid the state owned power companies and in the case of Aurangabad the Regulator had cancelled the Franchise. Shri Dubey said that just the previous day, at the same venue thousands of power sector engineers and employees had held a rally against further privatization by amending the law that would split the wire and content. Shri Dubey assured the gathering of the commitment of AIPEF to the Joint Forum.

Shri Baby Thomas, Secretary General-NCOA, and Shri V.K. Tomar, President-MEA explained that despite disinvesting the PSUs, there was nothing positive in the Government's policy. The revenue realized from disinvestment was not being used to revive sick units or create new assets. The efforts of the Government were only to wind-up or privatize the PSUs. Both Shri Thomas and Shri Tomar assured the commitment and support of NCOA/MEA to the Joint Forum.

Shri Arvind Dahiya, Assistant General Secretary-BSNL, explained in detail the manner in which the previous government has driven BSNL into losses. He said that the present Government has given

assurances of revival of BSNL and MTNL but nothing concrete has been done so far. Shri Dahiya assured the support of SNEA to the Joint Forum.

Shri Virjesh Upadhyaya, General Secretary of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) said the BMS was opposed to the policies of privatization. He said that these policies were neither in the interest of the employees nor the public. Shri Upadhyaya said that forming the Joint Forum was a step in the right direction and would get the support of BMS.

Shri A.K. Padmanabhan, President of CITU congratulated the Associations that had come together to form the Joint Forum. He said that such a formation was the need of the hour. Shri Padmanabhan pointed out that the entire Trade Union movement from BMS to CITU was united in opposing the pro- private sector and anti-people policies.

Shri Suneet Chopra, Jt. Secretary of All India Agricultural Workers Union, said that the major concern of their union was the life and death of farmers. He said the policies of the Government were leading farmers to commit suicide. Shri Chopra said that the Joint Forum through its struggles would make a difference between life and death for the farmers.

Shri Sita Ram Yechuri, Shri D. Raja, Shri Tapan Sen and Shri Rajesh, all Members of Parliament, in their addresses, welcomed the formation of the Joint Forum and pledged to support the forum and its constituents both inside and outside the Parliament.

Com. Harvinder Singh, General Secretary, AIBOC thanked the participant constituents and their members for their cooperation in conducting Regional seminars and meetings which have culminated into this 'March to Parliament'. Then he called upon the gathering to start March to Parliament. It was a momentous occasion when huge gathering started moving towards Parliament under the banner of the Joint forum followed by banners of individual organizations, expressing their anguish by chanting slogans. Police authorities stopped the March in front of Parliament Street Police station and permitted few representatives for submitting the Memorandum to Prime Minister. After the demonstration, Com. Harvinder Singh and Com. Baby Thomas were escorted in a Police Jeep to Prime Minister's office, where they submitted the memorandum on behalf of the Joint forum.

Comrades, foundation has been laid to fight against the anti people, anti working class and anti national policies of the Government by officers of the Public Sector Banks/undertakings. Path is not easy. Developments of approval of Insurance Bill, bringing down the stake of Government in PSBs and privatization of power by the cabinet by write and content only go to prove that Government do not care at all for the opinion of General Public. We know that struggle ahead is not easy. But there is no other way except to intensify the same. We call upon our affiliates and state committees to organize/join any programme organized to counter such steps taken by the Government.

UNQUOTE

With revolutionary greetings,

Comradely yours,



(HARVINDER SINGH)
GENERAL SECRETARY