
EAST CENTRAL ZONE INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
Jeevan Deep Buildings (1st Floor), Exhibition Road, Patna-800001

Circular No.05/2008

Date: 29.04.2008

To,

All members,

MAY DAY LONG LIVE!

May 1- International Workers' Day or May Day- is a day of tremendous significance and import for the international working class movement. The significance derives as much from the horrendous crimes perpetrated by the capitalists against hapless workers, as from the exemplary courage displayed by workers in facing up to the capitalists' menace. The May Day, in fact, would continue to remain significant as long as exploitation of man by man remains the *sine qua non* of capitalist development.

To go back in time for a moment, early in 1883, when the American Economy was in the throes of a depression the capitalists promptly shifted the burdens onto the workers by resorting to a 15% wage cut. As the depression deepened with each passing day, attack of myriad forms was mounted on the working class. Unbelievably long hours of work became the general rule. Wages were a pittance. If workers dared to protest, they were ruthlessly suppressed-often with the help of private goons like the Pinkerton Gang. As the intensity of exploitation kept increasing the dissension and disenchantment amongst the workers kept multiplying. On May 1, 1886, the American Workers went on a strike on the demand of an eight-hour working day. As the workers went on strike the American sky was reverberating with the 8-hour song through which the workers gave vent to their feelings.

“We mean to make things over
We're tired of toil for naught
But bare enough to live on;
never
An hour for thought.

“We want to feel the sunshine;
we want to smell the flowers
We're sure that God willed it
And we mean to have eight!

“We're summoning our forces from
shipyard, shop and mill
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest
Eight hours for what we will.”

The valiant struggle of the American workers in general and those of Chicago in particular-led by Spies, Schwab, Parson, Fischer, Fielden, Lingg, Oscar Neebe and others- ultimately brought the eight hour working day for the workers. But not before scores of activities were brutally killed by the capitalists army of marauders; certainly not

before such stalwarts of the movement as Parsons, Spies, Fischer and Engel were sent to the gallows.

In December 1888 from the Conference of the American Federation of Labour held at St.Louis, it was decided that from May 1, 1890 May Day would be observed by the working class throughout the U.S.A. The first Congress of the Second International in Paris in 1889 called upon the working class throughout the world to observe May 1 as the May Day. The Zurich Congress of the Second International in 1893 declared that May Day should be observed not only to voice the demand for an eight hour working day, but it should be turned into a day for mobilizing the working class to destroy class divisions by bringing about social change. Since that time May Day is being observed every year by the working class with the avowed objective of destroying capitalism and ushering in a social change in favour of the toiling people.

At a time when capitalism under the rubric neo-liberal globalisation is attempting to ride roughshod over the lives and living of the toiling people across the globe, the call of the May Day has become ever more relevant. The unabashed implementation of the neo-liberal economic policies in India has pushed a vast swathe of our population into absolute penury and wretchedness. Agriculture is in a shambles; industry in doldrums. Such basic social infrastructures as education and health have become prohibitively expensive. While a tiny miniscule of the super rich wallow in the luxury of high growth a vast majority of our population including the peasants and workers finds it extremely difficult to make both ends meet. We should endeavour on the eve of this May Day to mobilise these sections. While mobilizing the down trodden we should never loose sight of the lurking danger for the nationalized insurance industry in the form of the FDI hike.

While we are conscious of the fact that broader unity is the call of the time, we are equally conscious of the threats to broader unity. Of all the threats, communalism by far is the deadliest. Just as communalism worked to divide the people and help imperialism when India was a colony, today communalism is an instrument of the reactionary sections of the society. We must therefore launch an uncompromising struggle against communal mobilization of all hues.

Today, as we begin our preparations for May Day 2008 we take note with justifiable pride the winds of change blowing across the globe. Venezuela, Ecuador, Spain, Brazil, Chile, Nicaragua and a host of other countries have put the world on notice-**“Beware, Workers of the World are Uniting”!**

Let’s take a pledge to mobilise ever-broader sections of the working people and usher in the change that is legitimately hours!

With Revolutionary May Day Greetings,

Comradely Yours

General Secretary