

After successful two decades of AIBOA we are entering shortly into its Silver Jubilee year. With 100% membership under one banner of AIBOA our duty and responsibility towards AIBOA is many fold. It should be our sincere endeavour to strengthen the membership and grow with its spirit of struggle, when attacks from all sides are enormously growing. It should be our endeavour to strengthen AIBOA from all points of view. In this backdrop we are producing the stride of AIBOA, which we intend that every representative must know and understand honestly. The mission of this literature is to create more Trade Union awareness among us and percolate this at all level. Lets all take vow on this juvenile occasion to educate, unite, strengthen all our members at all level. Lets also take vow to work for the education of comrades, family welfare, health and safe guard our comrades from oppression, suppression, discrimination and disparity.

EXTRACT: AIBOA CENTRAL OFFICE

▪ AIBOA - HISTORY AND CHALLENGING PERSPECTIVES:

In its chequered history of many battles through sacrifices by countless warriors, AIBEA never compromised or gave up even momentarily its objective of rendering lead and initiatives to every section of Bank employees. It is a point of history that from Bank level to the Pillai committee AIBEA not only represented officers' case logically but also offered its hand of co-operation to government and Bankers to run the Industry effectively realising the need for co-ordinating officers and employees in a service Industry like Banking for realisation of common objectives of nationalisation of the Industry transparency of operations, focus for credit to needy sector and so on and so forth and from these tasks the need for consolidation of the intertwined movement from all sides was practiced as an objective from the early day of AIBEA. AIBOA is the legacy of this mighty AIBEA.

AIBOA took its birth from the conscious decision of Baroda General Council of AIBEA in 1979. A new direction to Bank employees' movement was enjoined on it, due very much to nationalisation of Banks the task was given for implementation in all Banks and States. Even though it is a fact that many stalwarts of AIBEA in yester years like Com. Romesh Chakraborti, Com. K.K.Mundal, Com. Tarakeshwar, com. P.L.Syal, Com. V.K.Krishnamoorthy, Com. P.K.Porwal, Com. A. Sundar Rao Com. H.N.Puri, Com.Roshan Lal Malhotra and the legendanary figure Com.H.L.Parwana were themselves officers and executives, who were one of those who founded AIBEA and contributed to its growth and consolidation. It is a fact that the decision to form AIBOA took a colossal time of 10 years after nationalisation and a far-fetched national debate of very slow and negative dimensions, which delayed the process of AIBOA formation.

▪ THE BACK GROUND:

The act of nationalisation by the Government of 14 major commercial Banks, whether by political expediency of the rulers on that day or otherwise, increased the faith of Bankmen in the banner of AIBEA to lend a clinching blow in opposing private ownership and to involve bankmen in national reconstruction in the 1970's. Madam Indira Gandhi had a high praise for the views of Com.Prabhat Kar on Banking and when nationalisation came, a new dimension was envisaged to the Banking operations. With it also came workers' participation, which after

initial enthusiasm could not very much fit in to project the common minimum needs of the industry to maintain the objectives of nationalisation.

This is the essential background when at the time of nationalisation around 1970; AIBEA should have hastened the officers' movement. This was absolutely necessary so as to utilise the process of nationalisation to revamp private banks saddled with bad debts. Today we talk of NPA and overnight provisioning norms without any capacity to intervene with the result mindless mergers are being pushed through by the Government. But even at the time of nationalisation editorials of leading dailies talked of huge bad debts by Private Banks and declared that nationalisation of these banks really saved them. With rapid expansion from 1970 onwards due to nationalisation, all active cadres baptised in struggles of 60's and 70's joined parallel officers' outfits for want of AIBOA which was a late starter and came nearly at the time RBI put lid on expansion of Banks and recruitments thinned out.

The second need was that with government ownership wage bargaining will prove to be tough. This realisation itself made AIBEA state and reiterate its principled position on collective bargaining. Till in the last revision when joint bargaining council of the type of JCM was brought by IBA through joint negotiations with all participating Unions and even after this wage revision with IBA, Bankmen could continue under bipartite system between unions and IBA instead of tripartite forums or third party arbitration. Similarly since nationalisation, Government went ahead with rationalisation of pay structure of officers and appointed Pillai Committee to suggest ways and means to achieve uniformity and this development hastened the process-per force of the officers in different banks to come together to form organisations and to present their case before the committee. Here also in the absence of clarity on the part of AICOBBO who rushed to the committee after its final meeting, AIBEA appeared before it and argued the case for differentials for officers pointing out their role-play and nature of duties. However the standardisation visualised in 1974 came in 1979 in the meantime, the delay caused one wage revision for officers, a factor of relative terms declining of officers' wages and differentials in the Industry.

AIBEA even though it had conceptual clarity in 1970's that officers' interests if not properly codified will not only lead to resentment which in a public sector system recently nationalised is not in its own interest or the need of the industry to expand and service the social sectors, could not in context implement its decision in a professional manner to develop officers movement closely on the heels of nationalisation. Despite a long debate since 1970 by leaders like Com.H.L.Parwana and Com.Prabhat Kar who could see through the womb of time and the further dimensions of an expanding industry and the pivotal placement of officers, the matter which was debated at length in 1973 Madras Conference of AIBEA could not result in a definite decision. This delay from 1969 to 1979 Baroda General Council caused by bank-wise unions leadership who felt loss of their kingdom if bifurcation were to take place, forced AIBOA to miss the bus by a decade atleast and enabled management oriented unions to spring up and management immediately recognised them to deny any breathing air even to AIBOA which was formed after 1981. While Government through Pillai Committee defaulted wage revision of Officers in the only one increase from 1970 to 1979, we organisationally delayed the AIBOA formation by one decade, both affecting AIBOA in the spread in the Industry.

The delay resulted not only in AICOBBOO gaining foothold but denied Officers' Wage revision between 1974 to 1980 when PCR was finally implemented, leading to erosion of one wage agreement for officers.

The delay of one decade is very crucial in the sense the sway held by bank-wise union leaders who prevented AIBOA formation within AIBEA led not only serious consequence of delay in catching the young cadres who migrated to other unions till 1981 or even afterwards but also indicated the looseness of organisation to implement AIBEA decisions with precise timing which always characterised our growth and success. The same dichotomy of tailing to bank-wise unions and getting dictated by bank-wise approach even today grips the AIBOA with one view prescribing an independent approach on every issue by AIBOA and another view to carbon-copy AIBEA in everything that AIBOA thinks or does. This trend is also caused by weakness of our movement to be over viewed by Bank-wise tendencies despite all leaders publicly pronouncing AIBOA is an imperative historical necessity and at the same time putting in little inputs to accomplish this task. Due to long delay in formation, AIBOA suffered with either one section of AIBEA unions not falling in line with accepted philosophy of AIBEA to found and promote AIBOA and another set of unions forming units and holding on to their hegemony in the name of unity etc. Rendering AIBOA unions as closely held units not to be in the Officers' arena proved to be congenital disease. Altogether plagued by this sectorial approach, AIBOA founded in 1981 started its limping in its strides but all the same survived since Com.Prabhat Kar after formation of AIBOA in 1981 lost no time in bringing it up to the centre stage by wresting Negotiating Status with IBA and Government in 1984 just after 3 years of inception of AIBOA.

While from 1970 AIBEA was itself divided into two camps of all cadre unions refusing to bifurcate and those waiting to organise officers in a distinct forum, what finally clinched the issue is the stand of the Bankers refusing to negotiate with award staff on officers' issues and taking advantage of the issue of composite union's representative character for officers and the resultant Andhra Bank struggle and arbitration never pursued thereafter and the incapability of composite unions to decisively intervene in officers' matters and the consolidation of AICOBBOO to increasingly settle matters with Banks and at Industry level. Further the need for a distinct forum for officers felt and debated endlessly within AIBEA was rendered an imperative legal necessity as AIBEA unions' right to represent officers was denied slowly and steadily after Andhra Bank struggle. It is a matter of fact that this organisational and legal need is not even today felt seriously by all the unions concerned to ensure competitive sustaining levels of AIBOA in the officers' arena.

▪ **THE GENESIS OF AIBOA**

AIBOA took its birth on 14th February 1981 at its foundation conference at Nagpur. Witnessed by over 800 Delegates and Observers, Officers and award staff, greeted and blessed by TU leaders like Com.A.B.Bardhan, Com. Garg Com.Prabhat Kar and others the conference gave a great hope to Bank Officers towards a new dimension to their role. The Presidium consisting of Com.P.K.Sengupta, Com.S.K.Lamba, Com.Prabhat Kar and Com.P.S.Sundaresan conducted the proceedings of the Conference attended by delegates from 30 Banks heralded the birth of AIBOA at Nagpur on 14.02.1981. AIBEA heightened in its consciousness by the betrayal of AICOBBOO in 1979 struggle on wage freeze and reduced DA for mula and chartered by the longest ever All India 74 days strike in Andhra Bank on Officers right to be in a composite

union which was left to be arbitrated by the then Labour Minister, took steps to usher in AIBOA as an independent platform for Bank officers with constant and continuous co-ordination with AIBEA to promote healthy industrial relations atmosphere and to protect Bank officers' interest against all Government attempts to buracucratise the industry and its workforce.

No sooner AIBOA was formed, Com.Prabhat Kar its Founder President moved Govt. Of India for its negotiating status. His voice was so powerful that the Finance Ministry understood that Officers settlement without AIBOA impossible and government directed IBA to invite AIBOA for official talks on 27.10.1984. A new History was created for Bank officers and their first signed settlement was arrived at 29.08.85 after three rounds of discussions on 27.10. 1984, 26.12.1984 and 04.03.85 with AIBOA.

▪ **AIBOA WINS LAURELS**

AIBOA gaining Negotiating Status with IBA brought the first ever-negotiated settlement for Bank Officers in the Industry in 1985 after a combined strike threat in 1985 by AIBOA and AIBEA. AIBEA supported AIBOA demands and unsettled the settled accord with AIBOC with Finance Minister of the day Shri V.P.Singh observing that " a clash of two giants would spell disaster". A new height was scaled in officers' movement achieving regular-minuted settlements for officers, AIBOA's initiatives duly supported in direct action by AIBEA decisively settled the collective bargaining right for Bank officers. What AICOBBOO could not achieve for decades between 1970 or 1985 AIBOA could secure with AIBEA in 1985 just within 4 years of its birth. The struggle of AIBEA and AIBOA and call for strike on 29.08.85 with the settlement between IBA and AIBOA increasing the package by 30 crores over what was agreed earlier creating a new history in Bank officers movement.

While 1981-1985 was a period when AIBOA tried to make up for delay in formation and moved with poise and positive direction, IBA which could not impose active-service during Com.Prabhat Kar's life time who was the doyen of the Industry itself, lost no time in imposing this theory precluding and preventing Com.P.K.Menon AIBOA's duly elected General Secretary from participating in the negotiations. As it was expected AIBOC which split in 1985 and with IBA's help demolished LVS and his AICOBBOO and openly advocated Active Service policy of IBA. It is a matter of irony that Shri R.N.Godbole himself today is a victim of this IBA's policy though at that time AIBOC went out of the way to help IBA implement this. Even here against this anti-trade-union policy AIBOA despite its restricted strength and priorities and the fact that it was too nascent an organisation to fight such a big TU issue, did well to focus the issue at national level. While it can be a matter of opinion that whether at such a stage of nascent AIBOA such an issue could have been forced, it is a tragedy on record that a vital right of Trade Union nature was vetoed by an administrative fiat of IBA and again the " Hamelietian Dilemma" amongst AIBEA and AIBOA on this struggle ultimately had a telling effect on the image and intervening capacity of bank employees movement.

Undeterred by this set back AIBOA matched step by step all the machinations of Government and IBA and went ahead to keep AIBOC at bay and its defiance even as a minority organisation having 20% membership not to sign to bipartite settlement in 1989 after the settlement was offered after two rounds of discussions in February '89 and March '89 on the issue of pension proved its capacity to pursue the vital long term interests of Bankmen without

compromise or any fear about JAC. It is only this extreme step by AIBOA to opt out of Bipartite talks could focus the issue of pension and keep it alive enabling AIBEA and AIBOA to achieve it in 1993. AIBOA's clarity and relentless campaigns ultimately ensured the much-cherished goal of AIBEA from its inception in 1946 to ensure "cradle to grave" security to Bank men and this demand was realised by us in 1993. AIBOA's image got brightened after this notable victory and now all unions that were against pension are urging with each other to get more option. That AIBEA could achieve pension before its 50th Year of Golden Jubilee is very much due to joint efforts of AIBOA and AIBEA as against all other unions in the Industry.

AIBOA has utilised the bargaining capacity and negotiating status earned by it to further the collective bargaining and interest of Bank officers. It's leading role to clinch early wage revision in 1995, wrest back computer increment to Bank officers and secure a good wage revision after securing pension before wage settlement of 23.06.95 is today acclaimed by all in the Industry. In fact AIBOA's clear demand made the bankers call a meeting of bank officers unions on 5.1.95 and make the first initial offer to AIBOA in the absence of AIBOC for the first time in the Industry. That within a decade from the first settlement in 1985 to 1995 when AIBOA could force the settlements on its terms even forcing a defiant AIBOC to fall in line abandoning its demand for Pay Commission or interim relief, is indicative of AIBOA's role play and capacity given the freedom to operate within the whirlpool of 'wage politics' which in a capitalist economy cannot be dismissed as economism. Even in socialist system when things deteriorated unions and workers have by their demands and politics could change the course of thinking and the policies in Govt., and unions could win economic and political battles. AIBOA in its limited spectrum has thus proved that it can force the issue even at the discomfiture of the major union but without losing sight of its role for general good and officers' interests. AIBOC, which opted out of joint talks and preferred informal talks had to sign the settlement jointly with AIBOA on 23.06.95 and today sits in Joint Negotiations in a reversal of its earlier negative stand.

▪ **THE DISTINCT APPROACH IN STRUGGLE FOR RELATIVITY**

The recent events have also brought out the capacity of AIBOA to swim through troubled waters with equanimity and objective approach. AIBOA is the only officers' organisation to extend support to workmen unions on relativity linkage to basic pay and has steadfastly asked for extension of cascading effect. While other officers unions declared strike to thwart workmen unions AIBOA informed Government that to the extent of cascading effect it will not make any demand to IBA and Govt., and declared that till workmen settle their disputes AIBOA shall not interfere with the Government and IBA as it would be a very negative precedent of an alien trend. It has also counselled and cautioned Officer unions to await workmen settlement before making any negative attempt to delay or deny their settlement. Committee or no committee AIBOA called for negotiated settlement of workmen disputes and called upon IBA to extend cascading effect to workmen on higher basic pay refusing to bring IBA's argument that workmen settled conveyance allowance in place of basic pay rise. The coming period will once again put AIBOA on acid-test on its credentials to protect officers' interests as during award struggle it faced the situation of workmen's agitation citing officers' settlement and yet took a pragmatic and fair stand unlike other unions which took a technical stand of "No Reopening" or equal rise for officers justifying the distortion in Basic pay.

▪ **BANKING REFORMS - THE NEW SCENERIO**

Banking reforms are today being pushed in at break-neck speed. Change of Government does not mean necessarily to represent a change in reform speed or content. New Banks at the rate of one for 2 Districts mean alongside RRBs, the new District Banks will cut into PSBs stocks-in-trade severely. With already new urban Banks stabilised at every Cosmo and state centre the new district banks will render PSBs redundant in entirety. On a rough estimate within one year of operations the new district banks will mop up nearly 10000 crores accounting for nearly 15 to 25% of 13% deposit growth registered by the industry today. The challenge of new urban Banks and this together will leave the PSB high and dry within a period of 3 to 5 years. Do we have the alternative to prevent this? And mind you out of 13% industry increase of deposits, 5 to 7% comes out of interest on existing deposits, leaving the real growth at less than 8% year.

RBI today is a total failure. It is encouraging concomitant to Govt. Policy NBFCS and private banks despite failure of private banks in the country. It is effecting mindless merger of banks and keeps this option open to threaten safety and security of employees. It has engineered a new situation of declaring banks "dead" by its overnight imposition of provisioning norms and has no initiative to offer to prevent some of the worst dimensions that occurred in 1986, due to RBI allowing Banks to play with PSUs money on assured returns. Tribunals are malfunctioning and list of defaulters of more than one crore is lying with dust instead of RBI in the chambers of Chairmen of Banks. Some banks further accentuate this man-made crisis by declaring manipulated profits through treasury operations of investment departments away from traditional banking operations. RBI through MoUs on Banks, deregulation of interest rates, imposing forex risk on banks is holding to ransom category B and C Banks without any social auditing to compensate these banks. Fresh dose of disinvestments awaits many profits making Banks after SBI and OBC.

AIBOA and AIBEA have a definite role to navigate reforms and revival strategies and should offer a viable practical alternate blue print. Encouraging competitiveness presupposes PSBs being revamped with smaller entities and autonomous units with regulatory framework firmly placed and a committed workforce to work for revival without traditional demand push attitudes.

▪ **ORGANISATIONAL CONSTRAINTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES**

AIBOA has organisational weaknesses. Its body politic is divided vertically with one set of unions on all cadre background claiming theirs as role model and another spectrum asking AIBOA to cut loose in the task of fulfilling its primary objective of servicing officers' interest.

However the right choice is to strengthen the bonds of close fraternity to help mutually both AIBOA and AIBEA through constant interaction and establishing forums to ensure consensus approach through dialogue and trust and build up assiduously preserving piloting and pushing up AIBOA's right to fight for officers interest in a fast changing scenario of the industry. The mindset of dogmatic perceptions that " only a particular role-model" will be fitting to the apex is a negative appraisal forgetting the vast spectrum of national dimensions and challenges.

AIBOA in the heels of 50 years of AIBEA is completing its 15 years plagued by a powerful management monolith. It has fought discriminations and its fight against SBI as a first class

arrangement keeping entire commercial sector as II class citizens is a classic example of the struggle for uniformity of service conditions over the entire commercial bank sector and is very significant in today's' clamour for Bank-wise settlements by Bank management.

This stand of AIBOA has exposed the unruly behaviour of some unions to cut into the vitals of collective bargaining and is a significant response to the challenge of bank-wise settlements being propounded in the industry today by profit making banks and SBI in particular. AIBOA is clear that unless you pitch up your priority for uniformity in all banks, the present subtle way of taking SBI move on and on to higher compensatory package can not be fought back, not to talk of stopping bank wise settlements in the industry.

In the GOLDEN JUBILEE celebrations, AIBOA is joyously participating with a view to regenerate its energies for the future - It is conscious that its growth is halting, its unions are habituated to spoon feeding exercises and lack of independent initiatives for furtherance of co-ordinated moves as well as pursuit of officers' interest have pushed it to a state of having limited identity of its own amongst officers

But it is simultaneously conscious that it has vital strength of 5 majority units in PSUs, a substantial following ranging from 15 to 35% in 10 PSBs and majority stake in Private Sector. Its numerical strength at about 40000 in PSBs is a significant factor and its leading role on matters has now earned it space in national spectrum. It has been bold enough to initiate national debate on its role and future and has not hesitated to state its position on vital issue no matter whatever may be the reaction in its genuine bid to revive trade union spirit amongst officers and to inculcate the elimination of subservient attitudes that stultify initiatives.

However it is a sad commentary that even after AIBEA has committed to found and promote AIBOA even as on date 7 out of 27 PSBs AIBOA's flag has not been unfurled and in about 4 Banks it stands frozen. Bank-wise co-ordination with AIBOC unions in banks like Bank of India and subsidiaries have pushed back the growth of AIBOA. Some Banks -wise unions are weary and timid of fighting AIBOC unions in their Banks against the declared policy of AIBEA. There has been no will to enforce implementation of AIBEA decision in letter and spirit.

▪ **MATURED AND MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH AIBEA**

The concept of AIBOA is yet to be implemented in many areas by AIBEA. Fifteen years is just too long period to implement the accepted decision of forming AIBOA to all Banks and AIBOA seeks AIBEA's sustained role to help implement its decision atleast now.

Another disquieting feature of AIBOA movement has been the negation of State Committees. Hardly 5 to 6 states committees are functioning and even in these states the participation by bank wise unions who are active in respective Banks is seldom seen to be perceived. Role model of bank-wise set up advanced as the only blue-print for AIBOA without State Committees doing any work to build the units particularly small ones to give them courage of trade union spirit has not helped AIBOA. AIBOA has to develop its ranks to dictate states and get dictated and improved by states instead of suffering from Bank-wise phobia and culture, which is disastrous to a national movement, committed to general political and trade union issues.

Finally AIBOA is the creation of AIBEA not only to bolster AIBEA's strength in the changing scenario but also to develop AIBOA as the mainstream Trade Union of officers. It has brought glory in the best traditions of AIBEA, through achievements listed above, in a short span. Ushering in collective bargaining, winning pension, ensuring duty leave to officers' association functionaries, settling early wage revision, wresting back computer increment are all achievements unparalleled, given the forces it had to encounter and overcome. Its co-ordinated struggle for the industry and spate of strikes for reforms of banks are a new landmark in the officers' trade union movement.

At the height of crowning glory of GOLDEN JUBILEE of AIBEA, AIBOA the cutting edge of Bank officers movement looks forward to more challenging future to face the hidden pages of the future with determination and poise to build up a perfect foil from the officers' side in the traditions of AIBEA's foresighted vision towards broad based unity of both cadres and to push officers own matters tactically so that the present context of joint consultations will not allow the IBA and Government to play negatively taking the management unions in their pockets. In this arduous task AIBOA fondly hopes that AIBEA will render all help to complete the organisational structure of AIBOA and lay concrete foundations of co-ordination at all levels of our two organisations in a spirit of our usual traditions, love and affection and through concrete programmes and forums as a fitting tribute of Golden Jubilee joy to strengthen us mutually.

Let GOLDEN JUBILEE of AIBEA render the slogan of "WE SHALL OVER COME AND HUM HONGE KAMIYAB EK DIN" in all our activities to spell a new dimension to the trade union movement of Banks in its original concept and present day context. AIBOA salutes AIBEA on its 50 years glorious, golden march and waits to respond its golden message as a sister organisation with love and affection wishing AIBEA men on their unique moment of history NOW. -- R.J.SRIDHARAN, GENERAL SECRETARY, AIBOA

*** BANK OFFICERS DEMAND –**

- ❑ INCREASE INTEREST RATES ON DEPOSITS
- ❑ REDUCE INTEREST RATES ON CREDITS TO FARMERS, ARTISANS AND SMALL BORROWERS
- ❑ ABOLISH TDS ON TERM DEPOSITS
- ❑ RESTORE 12% INTEREST ON PF AND SMALL SAVINGS
- ❑ SPECIAL DEPOSIT SCHEMES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

*** BANK OFFICERS REDEDICATE TO-**

- ❑ EFFICIENT AND COURTEOUS SERVICE
- ❑ GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALISED BANKS
- ❑ MEETING EXPECTATION OF THE NATION, SOCIETY AND CITIZENS.

ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
AIBOA-AIBEA COORDINATION :JOINT CIRCULAR

Dear comrades,

In 1981 February, pursuant to AIBEA Allahabad Conference decision, All India Bank Officers' Association an independent sister organization of AIBEA – the pioneer and principal apex level trade union of Bank employees came into existence.

Since moment of its birth, AIBOA has been playing the role hand in hand with AIBEA – on all issues and fronts be it wage revision, premature retirement of officers or the fight against Privatisation of Bank or New Economic Policy offensives of the Government. In all matters affecting the Bank Employees – Award Staff or Officers – AIBEA & AIBOA have moved in a co-ordinated manner. They are indeed two sided of the same coin.

Today, AIBOA, is the second largest organization of Bank Officers with its affiliated units in many Banks of Public and Private Sector. In quite a few of them, AIBOA is the majority organization of officers. But that is not enough at all. Recent developments have highlighted the supreme need of a powerful, militant well-knit officers' organization, acting in continuing and increasing co-operation with mainstream of the movement – AIBEA if the emerging challenges in Banking sector arising out of Government policies are to be effectively met and employees fate and future coupled with those of the Banking Industry protected and promoted.

In this task, we appeal to all of our concerned affiliates to strengthen our ties at floor to apex level – horizontally and vertically – in every Bank and every State. At State level regular co-ordination between our State Organisations and State Committees will have to be established and extended to lower level regions, districts and stations. At Bank level similar committee should e established and extended to other lower levels of the organization. AIBEA's Bankwise Unions will spare no efforts to build up and strengthen the AIBOA in their respective Bank, wherever AIBOA is at the moment non-existent, prompt steps should be taken to fill up the vacuum.

Award Staff and officers movement are supplementary and complementary to each other. Weakness of one limb is bound to weaken the organic body as a whole. Without a strong AIBOA with its presence everywhere AIBEA cannot become stronger and vice versa.

We issue this Joint appeal in the earnest hope that this will evoke proper and prompt response at all levels of our two organizations to our mutual benefit and furtherance of our shared heritage, legacy objectives and ideas and to meet the emerging challenges unitedly and adequately.

SD/-R.J.SRIDHARAN –

SD/-TARAKESWARCHAKROBARTHY

ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
Circular No.23:96:19 Dated March 31, 1997

Dear comrades,

A STRONG AIBOA MAKES AIBEA STRONGER - BUILD UP A STRONG AIBOA

In 1980 Allahabad Conference, AIBEA took a momentous decision to build up an independent Officers' Organisation, as a sister Union of AIBEA, as a powerful wing of the bank Employees' Trade Union movement. Accordingly, in February 1981, under the guidance and presidentship of Com. Prabhat Kar, the All India Bank Officers' Association [AIBOA] was founded. Since inception, AIBOA has grown up as a powerful organization of bank employees' movement. Today it is the second largest Officers' Organisation, it has played a significant role in the field of officers' service condition as well as the united movement of bank employees, be it against attempts of privatization of branch closure or latest struggle against wage freeze attempt and against Local Area Private Banks etc.

In AIBEA's Calcutta Golden Jubilee conference, a resolution was adopted for strengthening AIBOA as an imperative task of AIBEA's organizational responsibility. In this background, the principal office bearers of AIBEA & AIBOA recently met and resolve to build up closer co-ordination between the two organizations in the interest of our movement.

Accordingly, following steps have been agreed upon:

1. Five representatives of AIBEA & AIBOA shall meet regularly at an interval of 4/5 months for the purpose of exchanging views, review the situation and taking appropriate steps.
2. In all the meetings of AIBEA & AIBOA 2/3 representatives of the other organization shall be standing invitees.
3. The same procedure as in [2] above should also be introduced in all the All India Bankwise organization.
4. The State bodies of AIBEA & AIBOA shall also have regular exchange of views between state units of AIBEA & AIBOA and 2/3 representatives of each organization shall be permanent invitees to the others meeting.
5. In all matter of joint movement AIBEA & AIBOA of the National/State/Bank wise level shall move jointly and unitedly.
6. Both the Unions are conscious of the fact there may be some issues where the two organizations may have different viewpoints in the context of their respective constituents interest. Whenever such a situation arises, the matter would be freely and frankly discussed between the organizations to avoid any subsequent misunderstanding.

We hope the above will bring AIBEA and AIBOA closer; it should be endeavour of AIBEA unions to strengthen AIBOA in all possible ways as a strong AIBOA mans a stronger AIBEA. We hope our unions shall implement the understandings with all sincerity and seriousness it deserves.

/sd./ Tarakeshwar Chakraborti - GENERAL SECRETARY

ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Circular No.13/III/97 DATED April 9, 1997

AIBOA-AIBEA CO-ORDINATION DECISION OF JOINT MEETING AT ERNAKULAM ON 09.02.1997

Members are aware that it has been the common endeavour of AIBOA & AIBEA to ensure co-ordination in functioning between AIBOA and AIBEA on all common matters concerning the Nation, Industry and general service matters of Bankmen. Even while committee level exchange was a common feature of such efforts, AIBOA has been pains takingly endeavouring for permanent forums of mutual co-ordination with AIBEA on common issues. AIBOA office bearers and CC meetings have been endeavouring for such joint forums and AIBEA GOLDEN JUBILEE conference at Calcutta had also decided to strengthen AIBOA in all ways.

In the light of the above factors and the experience of last few years, where some sectional issues have been pursued by officers and employees separately, a meeting of some office bearers of AIBOA and AIBEA took place at Ernakulam on 09.02.1997, for discussing ways and means of improving the level of co-ordination between our two organizations at every level.

We are happy to inform you that in this meeting after discussions the following points have been agreed to mutually further our co-ordination.

1. Co-ordination meeting to take place once in 4/5 months and if need be even at short notice between 5 Office bearers of both AIBOA and AIBEA to discuss all matters of mutual and general interest.
2. Such co-ordination forums/standing committees will be established at Bank wise and state wise levels with 2-3 representatives from both organizations.
3. While sectional issues are free to be pursued by AIBOA and AIBEA through their strategies and in consultations / strategic alliance with other representative organizations of officers and workmen in their categories respectively mutual consultation between AIBOA and AIBEA will be ensured to ensure proper understanding and appreciation of each others view point and action even in such situations.
4. All efforts are to be made by both organizations to co-ordinate the functioning of State and Bank wise bodies by improving mutual regard, respect and appreciation of view points in a spirit of understanding and discussion.

Comrades! This development after our Joint declaration dated 19.11.94 is a positive development for the future of AIBOA and AIBEA and brings out the concern of AIBEA for growth of AIBOA and of AIBOA for the continuing dominance of AIBEA. AIBEA has already issued its circular to their affiliated Bank wise and State Organisations calling upon their members to implement the decisions for furthering our co-ordination.

In conveying this information we call upon our Units, State Committees to bring the above decision to knowledge of all AIBOA members through circular and to take positive steps in the direction of ensuring improvements in co-ordination with AIBEA State Organisations and Bank wise Units in the respective banks. We are confident that in the present days of united approach of Workmen and Officers in the Industry AIBOA-AIBEA historical bonds of unity and mutual co-operation will be reinforced at all levels, to take on the challenges of times ahead.

With Greetings,/sd./R.J.SRIDHARAN - GENERAL SECRETARY

Com. Prabhat Kar
(13.10.1910 - 27.11.1984)

It is but a few who acquire the status of the mythical Prometheus, who is fabled to have stolen fire from the gods and brought it down to earth for the benefit of mankind. Com. Prabhat can only be described as the Prometheus of the bank employees' movement, the Commander Par Excellence who 'found it mud and left it marble'. A major portion of his seventy-four years on this planet was lived in searing dedication to the cause of bank employees. He was so much the architect, the high priest, the life-breath of the bank employees' movement going under the name of AIBEA, such an integral, intricate part of it, that it is difficult to speak of the one without referring to the other. He finally died with his boots on, his last breath being rasped out in the cause of bank employees.

Com. Prabhat was born on 13th October 1910 in Calcutta in a middle class family not very different from the ones from which today's bank employees hail. In 1928 as a youth of 18 he had his first taste of the freedom struggle when he joined as a volunteer in the Calcutta Congress Session. After graduating from the Presidency College in Calcutta in 1931 he joined the services of Lloyds Bank Ltd., as a clerk in 1933. It is here that he first witnessed and experienced the rampant and inhuman conditions to which this section of the working class was subjected. The situation obtaining then is beyond our imagination today. The right of hire and fire prevailed and employees were often hired only to be fired. Service conditions were non-existent and the word 'union' was an unutterable blasphemy. The hold of the paymaster on his workers was complete and total. Destinies were made and broken at the mere whim of the 'Employer', which was only a euphemism to describe the lord and master. It is in such a hostile environment that Com. Prabhat had his baptism in the Trade Union Movement. From 1933, the year in which he joined the bank, till 1946 he was fully immersed in organising bank employees against these sub-human conditions.

Right from the beginning Com. Prabhat was clear as to the cause underlying this primitive exploitation. He was aware that what he witnessed in the banks was only the expression of a larger callous system, which continuously endeavoured to keep the worker oppressed and harassed. Hence from the very day he joined the bank he was conscious that this situation could be battled only by a workers' organisation of comparable size and strength. Envisaging the broadest platform of unity possible in the then prevailing situation and circumstances, Com. Prabhat made the organising of the entire lot of bank employees in the banking industry his prime target.

With the characteristic courage of his convictions and vision which in later years came to be reckoned as his hall mark, Com. Prabhat, along with a group of young, angry but dedicated comrades took the historic decision on 9th April, 1941 to form an all India organisation for bank employees. On 20th April, 1946

this vision stood translated into reality as the AIBEA took formal shape on the banks of the Hooghly. At the time when the AIBEA was founded, in certain pockets in some of the banks, there were a few fledgling organisations. But all these were struggling against immense odds even for survival. There was nothing present on the Trade Union scene in the banking industry to encourage the formation of an all-embracing industry-Level organisation.

Yet from the day the AIBEA was founded Com. Prabhat started a ceaseless and unremitting struggle to unify all banks employees under a single banner. "One industry, one union" had become his immediate lodestar. In the meantime he was already shouldering the responsibility of being the General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Bank Employees' Association. On 17th August 1948, Com. Prabhat, as General Secretary of BPBEA, led the sympathy strike in support of the 19 days' strike by the employees of the Central Bank. Lloyds Bank declared a lock out for 26 days because the employees of Lloyds Bank had also participated in the strike under the leadership of Com. Prabhat.

In the after- math of this strike, 51 employees including Com. Prabhat, were dismissed from Lloyds Bank. Subsequently Com. Kar and 11 others from Lloyds Bank were convicted under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 for having participated in the 'illegal' strike. The dismissal issue was later on brought before the Sen Tribunal, which ordered reinstatement of 40 of the dismissed employees but excluded Com. Prabhat and 10 others from reinstatement. However the vindictive management of Lloyds Bank went on appeal, against these reinstatements. After 9 years of protracted and attritional legal battle, the Supreme Court reinstated these 40 comrades in June 1958.

Two things are noteworthy here. The first is that it is possible that the management of Lloyds Bank, given its class bias, foresaw in Prabhat Kar the awakening titan of the bank employees movement and decided to ruthlessly crush him to obviate such a possibility. Their persistent vindictive attitude towards him betrays as much. The fact that the Sen Tribunal also deemed it fit to exclude him from reinstatement perhaps indicated the first recognition, albeit negative, by the powers that be of the emerging status of Prabhat. The second noteworthy point is that amongst the 51 initially dismissed from Lloyds Bank was Shri Sen Gupta who subsequently became the Chairman of the United Bank of India. Had Com. Prabhat also chosen a similar path, perhaps Had this been the case, the bank employees movement would certainly have been the poorer. It certainly must have been crucifying for an individual of 38 years age to stand dismissed from service and to be confronted with the prospect of further grueling struggle in the years to come.

The period 1953 to 1966 was a period of incessant, relentless and prolonged struggles for both Com. Prabhat and the AIBEA, which he had come to represent

as its General Secretary since his election to that post at the 5th Conference of the AIBEA held at Lucknow in 1953. It was during this period that the sweep of the organisation came to acquire an unprecedented magnitude. The AIBEA fought bitter battles inside the portals of tribunals and outside in the streets under the stewardship of Com. Prabhat. During this period, in 1957, Com. Prabhat was elected to the Parliament from the Hooghly constituency. During his tenure in Parliament Com. Prabhat Kar took up the issue of bigger banks' taking over small banks that went into liquidation and saw to it that an amendment was made to the Banking Company's Act to that effect, while also endeavouring to ensure that the employees of the liquidated banks' were absorbed into the new banks. The first bank to be taken over was the Indo- Commercial by the Punjab National Bank.

In 1961 Com. Prabhat Kar participated as a member of the Bonus subcommittee at the Indian Labour Conference at Bangalore, where it was decided that the entire Banking Industry, both private and public sectors, excluding the RBI, would come under the purview of the Bonus Commission. The phase of tribunalisation and third party intervention came to a decisive end with the signing of the historic first ever industry level Bipartite Settlement under the captaincy of Com. Prabhat in 1966. In bringing about this unique settlement Com. Prabhat, along with Com. Parvana, had toiled ceaselessly. The dream and slogan of " One union, one industry " had now assumed formal shape and begun the process of fleshing out with the signing of this settlement. Here again it was Com. Prabhat's strong conviction that the signing of such an industry level settlement, which would include under the comprehensive sweep of its umbrella virtually the entire banking industry, would also resultantly strengthen and streamline the growing unity of bank employees under the banner of AIBEA. The dialectics of uniform wage structure and service conditions would produce dynamics that would strengthen the, environment for bank employees' unity.

The Signing of this First Bipartite Settlement metamorphosed the status of both the AIBEA and the bank employees. It constitutes a decisive watershed in the history of the movement since the period of definite consolidation of the movement and advancement commences from this point. The AIBEA has never looked back after this. It was also during this period that yet another aspect of this multifaceted genius stood demonstrated- his mastery of the art of negotiation. This mastery was to acquire legendary proportions through the authoring of the succeeding Bipartite Settlements. The quality that was peculiarly his own at the negotiating table was that while Com. Prabhat was never aggressive, always persuasive, yet without yielding any quarter to the management, he carried them along with him. The most strident of antagonists came around to accept his viewpoint slowly but surely.

While this acme of his genius stood displayed in one form at the negotiating table, yet another side to it was displayed in the reinstatement of 135 comrades of Syndicate Bank. In the year 1965, the management of Syndicate Bank dismissed 135 of its employees following an agitation, and mulishly persisted in its refusal to reinstate them despite persistent attempts. Com. Prabhat stepped onto the scene and a series of negotiations commenced with the management, spread over a period of two years at different centres. It was virtually a war of attrition across the table. As the talks continued without any apparent breakthrough many began to lose confidence. Some began to have misgivings. But Com. Prabhat persisted with paramount, unbounded patience. The management unable to with- stand the gentle onslaught of this dogged persistence, finally cried a halt and reinstated all the dismissed comrades. Com, Prabhat had once again achieved the impossible.

The period that followed was an era of bipartism. AIBEA grew from strength to strength under the stewardship of Com. Prabhat Kar. In 1967 he was elected to the Parliament for the second time. In 1969 when 14 major banks were nationalised Com. Prabhat Kar along with Com. Parvana met the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and suggested improvements in the structure of the Banks. Having thus far devoted his attention to aspects of wages and service conditions, in the 17th Conference of the AIBEA held at Madras in 1973, Com. Prabhat made a bold departure by laying more emphasis on national problems and called for a change in the credit policies of the government. This concern for the nation, the role the banking industry played in the growth of the nation, and the potential of the bank employees to influence this role played by the industry in the nation's growth, increased over the years.

In successive conferences Com. Prabhat's emphasis on this sphere of activity also increased as this conviction grew, A personal and organisational set back for Com. Prabhat was the passing away of Com. Parvana in 1975. His responsibilities increased as a result of this sad loss. In the period that followed, the securing of the III Bipartite settlement formed one of the sternest of organisational challenges faced by Com. Prabhat in his long tenure as pilot of the movement. The government at the helm of affairs was the Janata Government, which had triumphed at the hustings with a massive mandate from the electorate in the aftermath of the emergency. And the Government was headed by Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister. When the AIBEA proposed the long overdue wage revision for bank employees it was the Prime Minister himself who thundered that bank employees enjoyed best of both the worlds and therefore there was no question of any wage increase for them. Not only did the government rule out any wage revision but also simultaneously attempted to foist the obnoxious Boothalingam Committee D. A, formula on the bank employees. The resistance to imposition of this formula in other industries was tepid.

A battle royal ensued therefore between the AIBEA and the government in which Com. Prabhat directed the use of every known item of weaponry from work-to-rule and other forms of agitation to novel methods like short duration strikes at different centres. The government had to finally bow before the combined might of the bank employees and Com. Prabhat once again achieved the impossible by signing the III Bipartite Settlement. The Fourth Bipartite Settlement came to the Bank employees virtually on a silver platter as it was achieved with comparatively less struggle. The movement had come full circle under the stewardship of Com. Prabhat. It has progressed from the situation of protracted battles for small gains to that of limited struggles for major gains. The subsequent period witnessed Com. Prabhat busily engaged in the task of organising the officers under the banner of the AIBOA of which he was the Founder President.

In the midst of these activities Com. Prabhat travelled to Nizamabad in Andhra Pradesh on 24-11-1984 to inaugurate the Conference of State Bank of Hyderabad Staff Association. While on his way back to Hyderabad from this Conference, he collapsed in the car in which he was travelling. It was 9-30 p.m. of 27th November 1984. Thus he passed on to the ages, serving the cause for which he lived upto the last breath of his life. There are only a few who continue to live beyond the grave, for whom death signifies nothing more than the mere consignment of mortal remains to dust. That immortality is truly noble which is achieved in the cause of organising the masses. That immortality is uniquely Prabhat's.

COM. PRABHAT KAR AMAR RAHE

**TEXT OF SPEECH BY COM.PRABHAT KAR [PRESIDENT-AIBEA] IN THE
FOUNDATION CONFERENCE OF AIBOAT NAGPUR ON 14.02.1981**

Comrades,

I wish to draw your attention to one or two vital points on the Founding Conference of AIBOA. Why today so much of anxiety on the part of the government, on the part of the management, and also on the part of the AICOBBO's leadership? Are we really going to split the officers organizations? Is the AIBEA acting as a splitter? The answer is NO. AIBEA is brining amongst the officers the real class concept of trade unionism, which is lacking under the leadership of AICOBBO. Ie; the militancy is being imported among the officers in the Banking Industry, which neither the Government nor the management wants.

Second thing is the relationship. The unity amongst the so called workmen staff and officer staff, are being imbibed as a result of this conference, which means neither the Government nor the management will find any section either workmen or officers isolated. That means if there is a strike by the workmen, officers are also participating. If there is an attack on officers, it the workmen

jointly taking up the challenge to meet the offensives. This change of character, complete change of understanding which exists today, that has created a great sense of frustration amongst the AICOBBOO and fear amongst the Government and the Bankers. That is why from tomorrow it is true that various forces will combine to see that this unity, this new organization under the banner of AIBEA does not come up. Those who represent a different class interest, those who think of class collaboration including those who talk of class struggle are today getting nervous and are opposing the formation of AIBOA under the banner of AIBEA.

This has to be borne in mind. Why? I will not go into the character of AICOBBOO. I will not go into the role they played. I will not go into the betrayal they made against the interest of officers. The important factor, which I feel today, is that we have to fight for our own rights. Unity of every section is very important. They engineered and created a sense of hatred between the workmen and the officer staff, which only helps the Government and the bankers. Therefore, what we are today doing is really organizing the officers in a proper conscious level of the trade union movement and perspective and imbibing a feeling in a sense of unity amongst the workmen staff and the officers, a division, which has been artificially created by the ruling class for their own interest which does not exist anywhere, but it exists here and they try to take advantage of it. We are taking their struggle and making it known to everyone that whatever name we call, we are one and we shall meet the challenges unitedly. That is, today the message of this conference which has to be carried on to all Bank employees of this country. I can warn the Government because the Government has lost its balance as already Com.Garg has spoken, or the problems which was raised by the Chairman of the Reception Committee, and the way things are moving as narrated by Com.Bardhan and they may come out heavily against any section, with the fond hope perhaps that it may succeed not without realizing that today whatever name you call, you can't be fool, that we all belong to one class, the class of exploited persons and we have to fight unitedly against the class enemy whether it is a rule of the management or the Government. These are the major things, which we have to remember. To the members of AIBEA and AIBOA, I only want to say that ours is a class organization and where the class interests have to be safe guarded, militantly and unitedly fighting against all the class enemies in whichever form they come. Unity is the only way out and with that unity we shall overcome all the attacks that will be launched and attempted to be launched by the employer as a whole. It is coming to be immediately attended. Com.Tarak has referred the AICOBBOO's statement that "you impose discipline and we shall be with you". Bigger people have come in the Industry but onward march of the movement in the banking system itself and not only that, in the total working class of the country and the world, could not be stopped; their onward march will move on. Shri L.V.Subramanian should understand that this will not work, in his own interest, in the interest of those

whom he represents he should realize that unity with the militant trade union organization in the Banking Industry, i.e.; AIBEA, and moving along with them is the only way out to stop exploitation of all including the officers in the banking system.

I can assure you that AIBEA and AIBOA will not only move together, we shall face all attacks together, and we shall win and win. That will be ours.

With this I conclude

Com. H. L. PARVANA
(03.11.1923 - 18.04.1975)

Com. H. L. Parvana was born in a poor middle class family on 3-11-1923 in a remote village in Punjab. His name was Harbanslal. He studied in Rajpore Bhaiti upto middle school. He did his High School education at Badden-a place 10 kms. away. He used to walk daily to go to the school. The sweep of the freedom movement, the Jallianwala Bagh incident, the inspiration from Lala Lajpat Rai and Baghat Singh, -all had their natural impact on the young and sensitive Parvana. His instincts were pushing him away from routine studies and towards active public life. The seed had been sown in him. Alongside, he took keen interest in literature. He was especially attracted to Urdu literature due to its realistic depiction of the commoner's plight and the naked exposure of the exploitation existing in the social set up. He began writing small Urdu couplets and adopted the pen name Parvana. Though he completed Matriculation with very high marks, his family could not afford his further higher education. Com. Parvana, volunteered to seek a job to support the family suppressing his desire and urge to prosecute higher education. This was the beginning of the era of sacrifice for Corn. Parvana.

At the age of 16, he started to hunt for a job and after lot of difficulties, through the introduction of a friend; he got a job in Punjab National Bank. But he was posted as a Daftary even though he was a first class matriculate. After about 3 months, he was put on probation as a clerk with a salary of Rs. 16 per month. After joining the job, he continued his studies in an evening College and passed B.A. with honours in Urdu from Punjab University. Every weekend, Com. Parvana used to visit his elder brother who was employed in a textile mill. His brother was a Trade Union worker of that Mill and Corn. Parvana found that through the efforts of the Unions, the problems of the workers were being mitigated and resolved. Com. Parvana took no time to found a Union in Punjab National Bank at Lahore. But as a consequence of this crime he was dismissed by the Bank in 1944.

Then Com. Parvana came to Delhi in search of job again. With the help of his friend, he got a job in Bharat Bank Limited as an unpaid apprentice. Due to his efficiency and hard work, he was soon promoted as a supervisor and again as Superintendent. Undeterred by the bitter experience of victimisation by the

previous employer, Com. Parvana, as a result of his deep convictions, soon formed a Union in Bharat Bank, Delhi. He organised strike actions in 1946, 1947 and 1948 and the Union made spectacular achievements including recognition of the Union by the Management. Later, he organised a day's strike on 8th March 1949 in support of the Railway employees, setting example for fraternity and solidarity of workers. But the Management reacted sharply by getting 450 out of its 527 employees arrested by police. Com. Parvana fought back against these repressions and there was a strike for 21 days. Management terminated 35 activists of the Union including their leader Com. Parvana. Com. Parvana was again on the streets and underwent sufferings.

When the Sen Tribunal was appointed, it also heard the dismissal of the 35 employees of Bharat Bank. Com. Parvana himself argued the case on behalf of the victimised employees. The Bank's side was represented by the eminent lawyer Setalvad. The Tribunal awarded reinstatement of all the 35 employees but the Bank went on appeal to Supreme Court and obtained a stay. But in the final hearing, the Supreme Court confirmed the reinstatement of these employees including Com. Parvana. But that was not the end of the tribulations. The Bharat Bank decided to purchase the Punjab National Bank but cunningly dissolved the Bharat Bank rendering the 1,300 employees jobless. It was March 1951. Com. Parvana had organised a Union in Punjab National Bank with the help of Com. P. L. Syal. The Punjab National Bank Union went on strike against the Bharat Bank's decision to throw out its employees. Punjab National Bank Management dismissed 159 of its employees for this. The issue was referred to a Tribunal which ordered absorption of all the Bharat Bank employees in Punjab National Bank. But the Management went on appeal to the Supreme Court. After 12 years of legal battle, in 1963 the employees won the reinstatement of all the employees including Com. Parvana.

By then, Com. Parvana had immersed in the movement so much that he decided not to accept the reinstatement and continued to work for the Trade Union whole time. This was the ripening of Com. Parvana into a Leader of unparalleled dimensions. Com. Parvana had become the centre of activities of the Bank employees' movement in and around Delhi and was responsible in forming Trade Unions in different Banks during the 1950s. In 1951, he was elected as Vice-President of AIBEA and in 1954 as Assistant Secretary. In 1962, he was elected as Secretary of AIBEA which position he held till he died in 1975. Com. Parvana was always known for his hard work. The more the AIBEA movement grew, the harder and longer he worked. Whether it was the fight before the Sastri and Desai Tribunals in 1950s and 60s, whether it was the fight to achieve Bipartite Settlement in 1965-66 or the sustained struggle for nationalisation of the Banks from 1960, Com. Parvana was straining every nerve to gear up the rank and file to back up the organisation's demands for their eventual accomplishment.

This tremendous strain had a disastrous effect on his health and he suffered from heart attack in 1966. But much against the advice of the doctors, he freed himself from the hospital and resumed work in AIBEA Office. The hectic activities during the First Bipartite struggle and negotiations further affected his health. But he refused to take rest. He suffered a second attack in 1970. After a slight recovery, he plunged into his routine work again. He got a third attack in 1973. Doctors told him that his health had deteriorated and advised him to be very careful. But with some little improvement in his health, he was back to his normal work and frequent tours and meetings. His health had become so bad, that he could not climb the staircase of his house. So he shifted to the house of Com. Prabhat Kar who took care of him as his younger brother. Com. Parvana was managing to live with heavy doses of tablets daily. But this was not to be a permanent solution. On 13th April, 1975, he took seriously ill and was admitted into a hospital. Despite best medical attention by eminent doctors, the precious life of this hero could not be prolonged any further. At about 10-45 a.m. on 18th April 1975, Com. Parvana passed away. Volumes can be written about Com. Parvana about his sterling qualities of leadership, about, his outstanding contribution to our movement at every point of time and about the multi-dimensional activities of this gentle colossus. In short, he personified AIBEA.

There cannot be a better acknowledgement of his services than through the following words of Com. Prabhat Kar, the father of our movement who wrote in his General Secretary's report in the Amritsar Conference of AIBEA :

"I am placing this report in a Conference where Com. Parvana is not present. For me, this situation is almost unbelievable. Days in and days out, throughout all these years he was a comrade who helped me in discharging my responsibilities. He was the life and soul of the AIBEA centre. His dedication to the cause and thoroughness of minutest details are unparalleled. In every dimension of work of AIBEA, he was indispensable. In movement, in agitation, in campaign, in negotiations, in settling differences and solving problems his unique contribution was visible. As an agitator, organiser, as a leader conversant with every sphere of Trade Union movement, his imprint was distinct. He was a comrade with clarity, with vision and a comrade who never knew tiredness. It is almost impossible to think of Central Office of AIBEA minus Com. Parvana. His amiable disposition brought everybody near him and he became the closest friend, philosopher and guide of each and every bank employee. He was a man of the masses. He was a man of the Trade Union movement. He was a leader of the working class. He was a comrade who cannot be replaced. The movement is indebted to him, which cannot be repaid. I only wish to put on record our great gratitude for his able, mature advice, dedicated service and unparalleled comradeship manifested all the years he lived." That was Com. PARVANA. Let us try to emulate him.

COM. PARVANA AMAR RAHE

COM. TARAKESWAR CHAKRABORTY
(02.06.1926 - 02.05.2003)

Com. Tarakeswar Chakraborti, the beloved leader of bank employees' movement and General Secretary of AIBEA, left us forever on the night of 2nd May 2003 at the Kolkata Airport due to a massive heart attack.

Com. Tarakeswar Chakraborti was born on 2nd June, 1926 to Shri Sashikanta Chakraborti and Smt. Hiranmoyee Devi at Lakshmipur, a small town in District Noakhali, which is now in Bangladesh. He had his early education in his village and after Matriculation came to Kolkata for higher education. He passed B.A in 1945 with high distinction from Ashutosh College. It was at this time of his life in college that he had initiation in social work as Secretary of Students' Relief Society. During the period of the infamous Bengal Famine, he worked amongst the various ranks of the poor people, which gave him proper outlook to life. Because of the extreme pecuniary exigencies he was taking private tuitions even as student to help his parents. Because of financial limitations of his parents, he discontinued his MA Degree Course and joined Central Bank of India on 1st January 1946. Some months after AIBEA was born and then in July 1946, Central Bank of India Employees' Association was formed in Kolkata he became a member of the union.

In January 1947, he had become the Assistant Secretary of Central Bank Employees' Association, West Bengal and thus started his journey in the trade union movement. He had dedicated his entire life for the cause of bank employees' movement. In 1956, he became the Central Committee Member of AIBEA, its Assistant Secretary in 1960, its Secretary in 1976 and was elected as General Secretary of AIBEA in 1980 at the Allahabad Conference. Since then he had been steering the AIBEA and had taken the organization to greater heights under his matchless leadership. He was affectionately known to all the bank employees as Dada.

He was also the main architect of the Central Bank employees' movement; He was the founder Treasurer of All India Central Bank Employees' Federation in 1956. From 1957 to 1993, he was its General Secretary when he opted to become its President, which post he continued till his death. He had build up a very strong joint trade union movement of employees and officers in Central Bank. Till his death, he was also the President of both the Employees' and Officers' Unions in West Bengal, Sikkim, Orissa, Bihar and Jharkhand. Similarly, he was closely associated with the Bengal Provincial Bank Employees' Association and held various positions in the same. He was also associated with number of bank trade unions.

He had been associated with the various Tribunals and Settlements in the

banking industry right from Shastry Tribunal in 1951 and had been a signatory to all the Industry-level Bipartite Settlements since 1966. After the death of Com. Prabhat Kar, he successfully steered the 5th, 6th and 7th Bipartite Settlements. Com. Tarakda will be particularly ever remembered for his achieving the Pension Settlement in 1993 against the worst odds. While he was intimately associated with the AIBEA 's campaign and struggle for Bank Nationalisation in 1969, he played a very sterling role in fighting against bank privatization attempts in the last one decade. Bank employees will ever remember his pioneering initiatives in building a tough resistance against the Government's ill-advised moves to privatize the Banks. His bold steps of publishing the List of Bank Loan Defaulters etc. were reflective of his patriotic commitments to the cause of national development and the role of banks therein.

Realising the changing needs of broader unity and strong united actions to protect and preserve the gains of the movement, Com. Tarakda played a leading role in building up the United Forum of Bank Unions – the umbrella platform which today represents 100% of the employees and officers in the Banking industry. His spirit of understanding and accommodation in propelling a united movement has been acclaimed by everyone. In the fast changing scenario of increasingly hostile attacks on the trade unions, their rights, the jobs and job security of the employees, Tarakda laboured hard to bring in necessary changes in the orientation of our movement from mere fighting for economic demands to shifting the priorities to fighting fundamental attacks. His slogans of **“DEFEAT DENATIONALISATION – DEFEAT DE-UNIONISATION”** exemplifies his vision and far-sightedness.

He raised the prestige and reputation of AIBEA in the international arena by his initiatives in building up solidarity with bank trade unions in many countries. He was the Vice President of the Trade Union International of Public and Allied Services. He was also the General Council Member of AITUC and was deeply concerned with the general working class movement. No doubt, Com. Tarakda was committed to the cause of the bank employees but equally he was concerned about the problems of the banking industry and the positive role that banks have to play in the economy. His matured views, opinions and suggestions were highly respected by the bank managements and the Government. Bankers held him in high esteem because of his practical and matured approach to any problem.

Besides his total commitment to trade union movement, the bitter experiences in his early years of life provoked him in search of answers to the problems in our society and he found the same in Marxist philosophy. This changed his course of life and he became a member of Communist Party of India in 1951. At the time of his death, he was a National Council Member of CPI. Tarakda was a multi-faced personality – an able organizer, an ardent agitator, a logical and virulent

campaigner, a steadfast fighter, a skillful negotiator and a matured leader. His righteous indignation against all injustices led his conscience to crusade the fight there against all throughout his life. Notwithstanding his stature and towering personality, Tarakda was accessible to anyone and he was a real leader of the masses. He was the most popular leader of bank employees. Everyone affectionately called him DADA and he was our beloved Dada in the true sense of the term – an ever-caring elder brother. He was the guardian of our interests and equally an effective teacher in imparting trade union values. He was our avenger and harbinger.

Tiredness was unknown in his dictionary and he traveled extensively and undertook intensive tour to inspire the masses of the employees in our struggles. His powerful oration and speeches impacted and influenced the minds of the employees to fight under the banner of trade union. Notwithstanding the fact that he suffered a heart attack in 1987 and underwent a bypass surgery in 1989, despite Doctor's advice to restrict his activities, he continued his unrelenting mission with total dedication to the cause he had undertaken. Those who moved with him knew of his intellectual capacity, amazing brilliance and the wonderful softness of the heart. He became the leader of leaders and yet he was a man of the masses.

With 55 years of continuous trade union activity, he had become a titan and a colossus. He had become a legend in his lifetime. But his death has created a void, which cannot be filled up. The death of this illustrious leader is a grievous blow and great loss to our movement. His lifelong crusading fight had been an inspiration to the entire middle-class trade union movement in general and bank employees movement in particular. Remembering Tarakda for his lifelong contribution & mission will give us the courage, confidence and hope for the furtherance of the cause for which he stood for and to dedicate ourselves to work for the same. Tarakda was perhaps one of the last links between the fast fading generation of bank employees who had founded & build up this mighty AIBEA and the present generation of employees. To all of us, like our illustrious leaders Com. Prabhat Kar & Com. H.L. Parvana, Com. Tarakda will ever inspire us in our continuing fight.

Leaders like Com. Tarakda live beyond the grave and to them, death signifies nothing more than mere consigning their mortal remains to nature. But they live for ever because they stood for a cause and gave their life for the same. The real homage that we shall pay to Tarakda would be to take a pledge that we shall work to fulfill his unfinished tasks and dreams. The task is stupendous because we have lost our leader. Let us close up our ranks, work cohesively and unitedly and move forward. The task before all AIBEA – AIBOA men and women is to rededicate ourselves to the ideals of AIBEA – AIBOA and to keep the flag of AIBEA – AIBOA fluttering ever high in the sky. Tarakda gave his life to building

strong AIBEA & AIBOA and the same commitment from all of us will be the tribute & homage to this great leader.

TARAK DA AMAR RAHE

**Article written in the Bengal Provincial Bank Employees' Association's
"Mortal Man - Immortal Work"**

OUR COM. TARAKESHWAR – THE GREAT INSPIRER OF ALL

It is rather difficult for an absolute junior like me to recount the versatility of the leader of the class of Com Tarakeshwar who led AIBEA from the front right through for 2 decades, leaving it many times stronger than what it was when our doyen Com Prabhat left us.

As I have already told, inheriting the mantle from the tallest leader and matchless strategician of reckoning in the world of TU movement like Com Prabhat, leading AIBEA in his absence was an uphill task for anybody. But Tarak did it with poise and dignity and like a mechanic of astute precision attended to bank wise and state wise problems with care and affection, to bring about a better functioning organisation.

The greatest quality of this leader was "Never say die" or "never adopt an attitude of untouchability." In a world of prejudices and preferences Com. Tarak was a different sort going out of the way to handshake with anybody and everybody for unity. This attitude aided by his outstanding intellect and memory power made him easily the outstanding leader in any forum. Today more than before it is time this quality of openness to hear and have dialogue that will help the T U movement to withstand the tides of change, needs to be reinforced.

This was clearly understood by him. It was his brainchild to form UFBU. Viewed from the backdrop of attacks on T U rights as flowing from everywhere, and the erosion in bilateralism and in roads into gains of workers, Com Tarak could visualise the need for talking to all and working together on consensus. Unions that were fighting cats and dogs till the other day echoed Com Tarak call and formed UFBU and steered the struggle for beating back PSB disinvestments bill and opening of LABs and went on to achieve bipartite agreement on common charter. Com. Tarak performed a miracle in the middle-class segment of workers to usher in and maintain all unions' unity and sustained it till his demise.

As I have had the opportunity of working with him closely for over 16 years, I saw his best coming out during pension time. He was one leader who could see through the womb of times to ensure "cradle to grave" security for bankmen when exit was being thought of by the Government and Industry. Undaunted by a section of rival unions to influence many AIBEA unions on their catchy 'third benefit' slogan which was a non-starter, he could understand the game of SBI management to stay on top already having pension and their attempt to try not

to allow other banks a better scheme as proposed by AIBOA and AIBEA, Com Tarak agreed with us and encouraged us to fight for pension and at a critical stage he jumped into the fray to settle the issue in favour of AIBOA. In fact he achieved the settlement at the appropriate time proving to the posterity that AIBEA and AIBOA work with vision for the future. Personally it was a great period of trade Union track record of consistency and performances even against odds. It was a spectacular victory to ensure uniformity of terminal benefits for bankmen. Those who try to justify bank wise violations to fundamentals appearing fundamentals apex unions in the name of unity should learn a lesson from the fight and struggle for pension which we put up despite SBI instigated resistance to its introduction in the industry. AIBEA and AIBOA today stand vindicated as all the employees today favour a second option to come back from the static PF now.

Com.Tarak's memory of dates and events was something superlative and unbeatable. Almost in all forums even of the managements without exception Com Tarak was the acknowledged speaker of rare distinction. I was personally elated when this comrade of great oratorical skill, appreciated my speech at Mavlankar Hall at New Delhi and termed it as magnificent in AIBEA circular. He never failed to articulate and inspire youngsters to perform better. I was a beneficiary of his father-like guidance all the times.

It is not as though we did not differ. Even though he was way above all of us, he never shied away from dialogue and conversation and took note of our assessments and feelings. He never felt that he is too big to talk to anybody. This attitude stood him out as a T U leader of distinction and encouraged comrades to discuss differences with him in a spirit of confidence. In fact during the previous bipartite when officers' basic pay was discussed at around 1900 he discounted the possibility of higher start. He resented our assessment about this and stuck to his assessment. Finally when basic pay was agreed at 2100/- and relativity was upset on construction of scales at that time itself and Com Tarak preferred early settlement and fought the issue later on in the next bipartite. When we explained the situation of antagonism and rivalry developing between Officers and workmen, being fermented in the industry by other unions, Com TC agreed with our difficulties and appreciated AIBOA stand of support to workmen on negotiated settlement on workman's disputes on Relativity including the basic pay merger and add on affecting scales of pay as a main aspect of relativity. He was one leader who could understand the situation and was practical. This is how there was no permanent division between two segments and he bridged the gap whenever such gap was found with affection and warmth.

When we try to recount Com Tarak's life, one can never miss the shining thread of consistency in pursuit of his mission. He lived through with a mission of T U activity and fought issues with consistency and clarity. Whether bipartite, or

privatisation, pension issue or relativity, Com Tarak gave the finishing touch to the issues bringing in a fair settlement keeping up the spirit of confidence for the masses in the trade union movement. I deem this a spectacular quality of consistency and pursuit as one thing that stood him out as a matchless leader.

For us he was a great legendry supporter in the cause of officers' movement and its impeccable relationship with workmen. He was practical to concede differences on issues and advocated relationship on proper lines even amidst these issues so as to revive and revitalise the T U movement. 1985 joint struggle and settlement of AIBOA and AIBEA is a tribute to his concern for officers' cause and AIBOA' growth. In fact even in his last days he wanted to bring a greater mobilisation in five banks selected by him for closer review and work by AIBEA and AIBOA. AIBOA always felt relieved in his company and guidance and was always nurtured by him to promote officer – award staff unity and joint movements in banks and the industry. In his last days he was very much concerned at the indifference growing in the movement and tried the best to revive the TU spirits.

It is said in our area that the choicest of flowers, 'the Kurinji' blossoms once in 12 years. Leaders like Com Tarak are born very rarely and in a century or so, we see such towering personalities. We were fortunate to have him for 20 years to lead the bank employees' movement, which he did magnificently maintaining the great heights built up by Com. Prabhat and Com. H L Parvana.
