



# ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

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**TO ALL OFFICE BEARERS, STATE FEDERATIONS  
AND ALL INDIA BANKWISE ORGANISATIONS  
( FOR CIRCULATION TO ALL MEMBERS)**

**52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Bank Nationalisation  
AIBEA's National Campaign - Webinar Lecture 18  
By Com. Amarjeet Kaur, General Secretary, AITUC  
Special Greetings by Com. George Mavrikos, GS, WFTU**

- **Purposeful unity and struggles are the only way for the better future of working class – George Mavrikos**
- **AIBEA should play its role to lead the change for the better – Amarjeet Kaur**

**All India Bank Employees' Association** is holding month-long webinar programmes to commemorate the 52<sup>nd</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF BANK NATIONALISATION.

As a part of this series of lecture, AIBEA invited Com. George Mavrikos, General Secretary of World Federation of Trade Unions to give his greeting message on the occasion. WFTU is a global trade union representing about 105 million workers from 130 countries from 5 continents.

The Lecture of the Day was given by Com. Amarjeet Kaur, General Secretary of All India Trade Union Congress.

**Gist of greeting message by Mr. George Mavrikos:**

Com. George Mavrikos, General Secretary, WFTU, congratulated AIBEA for having arranged these webinars as the same will be useful to educate and understand the problems for today and also for tomorrow. To win the fight against the attacks on the working class, we should know the history of the trade unions and to that extent, these webinars would be of great help.

Com. Mavrikos said that we live in a crucial period and live in a pandemic situation due to Corona virus. Last year, in every country, the poor people had lost their lives, had difficulties, lost their jobs but the corporates have exploited the poor. As far as the WFTU is concerned, the vaccination for all is the demand. Even in this pandemic, the anti-labour position of the government against the poor farmers, bringing about the labour law reforms, attempts to privatise the public sector banks and units, etc. are open and clear to us. Hence, there is a necessity to join together and fight.

Recently, in Columbia, in Greece, France, Bangladesh, countries in Asia-Pacific regions, there have been labour struggles and the biggest strike took place in India, in which 250 million people participated. Only through struggles, we can secure a better tomorrow.

If we put a question before this audience, what type of world we want to live in, the answer will be quite clear from WFTU and AIBEA - it is that we need a better world, without exploitation, without capitalist barbarism, for emancipation of working class. Through imperialist tools, capitalists exploit the women, children, refugees, immigrants throughout the world. Last week, the puppets of USA tried to create problems in Cuba through Miami and are trying to create problems in that socialist country.

The situation in the world is anti-labour. Hence, we should strengthen our movement internationally. What kind of internationalism we need is the question before us. Our colleagues from Palestine need our solidarity. We need unity to support Palestinians, Cubans, Venezuelan people, unity against capitalist and in support of the working class. We need unity against privatisation, against exploitation, we need unity to create socialism. When capitalists want unity to strengthen capitalist barbarism, we need exploitation-free world and hence, our unity should be based on Working Class unity.

AIBEA has enlightened membership and a mature leadership and we should continue our struggles through our unity, militancy, through aligning ourselves with the Working Class of not only your country but internationally also. If the Working Class, for example, of Panama comes to know that the unions from India, Greece, France and elsewhere are supporting them, there will be a lot of strength for the working people of that country to fight against oppression. That is why international unity, and solidarity of the working class is very very important. He expressed hope that with our unity and struggles, the world will be a better one in the future.

**GIST OF LECTURE BY COM AMARJEET KAUR :** Trade Unions are the first test of democracy. You know in India that the right to expression and freedom of dissent are attacked. The trade unions are under attack because they are sought to be suppressed. What do we expect from AIBEA in this challenging situation - I will talk about this in my lecture.

We have to understand our strengths and weaknesses and we expect AIBEA to work on our strengths and eradicate our weaknesses. We have to know about our history. The lessons from history will tell us where do we stand, what part of history we should carry forward, how we achieved our victories, how and why our defeats happened, how our fights have changed the course of our organizational actions, educate the youngsters, train the youth in our unions.

We cannot afford to waste time because the attacks are manifold and the attempts of this government is trying to throw us back a hundred years from the present times. In the Parliament session that will commence on 19<sup>th</sup> July, we should expect more kind of attacks from the government. We may not be able to assemble our comrades in these pandemic times but we have to reach the comrades, members, customers, public to educate them about the dangers of the privatisation of not only public sector banks but also the public sector units.

It is a challenge that we are taking up as a mission to reach out to the people. The social media is a boon as well as a bane. Because falsehood is being spread about the unions, its leaders and our policies. Hence, to counter those false propaganda from the vested interest, we should have to develop our youngsters to spread the message about our unions, its policies, our leaders, our fight against the privatisation of banks. We should find our way to reach the people, to educate the public about mass banking and for that we should ensure that our comrades should be in the forefront to do such an exercise.

With half a million-membership strength, AIBEA members have the contact with millions of customers, both rich and the poor, and through them we should spread the message.

Now, it is the time for all the working class to join together. We need broadest possible unity. One sectoral trade union cannot win over their fight without the help of the other trade unions inside the sector and also outside. When the working class is tried to be decimated, it is for the survival of the working class, the broad unity not only in the sector but also across the wider spectrum is the need of the hour.

Workforce in our country is now around 54 Crores. Out of 54 crores, only 4 crores are from State, Central Governments, another 8 Crores are from registered industries and rest of the workers are in the informal sector including farm sector. These informal workers have no rights and the government is trying to take away the rights of the organized sector. With the introduction of 4 labour codes, the rights of the organized sectoral unions are under attack. Being a bank employee, we are fortunate, thanks to the fight of AIBEA. The government actually wants to exclude the workers through the labour law reforms though they speak of inclusion of workers and their betterment. The same is the case in other claims of the government.

Unions of the vulnerable sections and sectors should be helped and that is expected of AIBEA. AIBEA leaders should support and extend help to the unorganized sectors also. What happened to our workers in the lockdowns last year and this year? How the migrant workers walked thousands of miles to their natives, how they were killed in accidents, and due to hunger. 96% of the migrant workers told that they did not receive rations, cooked food, lockdown wages. They said that corona will kill us tomorrow but hunger will kill us today. The government did not give its attention for their problems. But, the government is supporting the Corporates and help them to accumulate further. So, it is these people, who need support of the unions and that is where we look to the organized unions and especially AIBEA.

Some employees ask us what the unions have done? What the AIBEA has done to us ? Answer them that our bank job is due to AIBEA. Because of nationalisation, so many jobs were created in the Banks. Can anyone ignore this? See the condition of Working women, only 2% of them are enjoying the maternity benefit. If woman bank employees are enjoying that maternity benefit, it is only because of AIBEA. Hence, unions only fight and secure all benefits.

This government has used the pandemic to bring about anti-people legislations. Farm laws, labour codes etc., are just a few examples. Before the year-end, 5 crore more children will be forced into child-labour. Majority of the migrant labourers haven't come back to their place of work. More than 48% of the people, who lost their jobs in the pandemic, did not get the job till now. Hence, our fight in support of these jobless workers should be united and, in that fight also AIBEA should be in the forefront.

Many say that we should not speak politics. When the policies of the government are against the working class, we should fight those policies. Our politics is working class politics. It is confined to the fight against the policies of the government that are against the Working Class. This government is against the working class. Farm laws, labour laws etc., are examples of the attack on Indian Parliamentary Democracy.

For the last 6 years, Indian Labour Conference has not been held. The strikes are being throttled. The indefinite strike that was to start on 26th July in Defence sector, Ordnance Factories, are scuttled by invoking Essential Services Ordinance. Even though the Parliament is to be convened on 19th July, this Government did not wait till the session but brought an ordinance to stop the strike. Because this government doesn't believe in consultations and discussions. Even in organized sector, the strike cannot be held as before because of the labour codes.

There were no unions in India but they began striking work way back in 1800s in India. The uprising of peasants, workers gave impetus to the opposition of the imperialistic rule of the British and thereafter started our organized independent struggle. In 1857, in the first war of India's independence, it was workers, who supported this struggle. From 1860, working class started fighting. We should learn from history.

Why AITUC is so close to AIBEA. Because AITUC leaders gave inspiration to the then young leaders of AIBEA at the time of its formation and in nascent stages to organize their struggles. AITUC is the mother of all trade unions in India, Central trade unions as well as the sectoral unions.

Working Class has been involved in the independent struggles and it was branded as a political fight. But, working class has its own politics. It has been there from the beginning, the governments in support of the employer-class when they tried to suppress the trade union movements, working class fought against these policies of the governments. If that be called as political fight, it is the working-class politics and we are proud of it.

In the freedom movement, workers participation was enormous. In the fight against the policies that were against the working class, the workers fought. Hence, our fights have been thrust on the working class by the political leaders even in the colonial era. Therefore, our fights are always political.

Whenever the political movement was suppressed in the country by the rulers, it was the working class that started the fight against such oppression and oppressive acts right from the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh.

When political parties demanded complete freedom for India in 1929, the working class in 1921 itself demanded total independence from the colonial rule.

In India, there has been misuse of Sedition law, UAPA, NSA by the present government. Unions have been opposing these laws since several years but only now the Supreme Court has questioned about the Sedition Law. When Central Trade Unions fight against these laws, we expect AIBEA to fight along with us. When we speak against these draconian laws, we cannot be branded anti-national. We love our nation. This nation belongs to us. What we fight is against some of their policies and if we are branded as anti-national, it is an attack on democracy.

If organised trade unions are put under attack and are suppressed, then the voices of millions of workers will be suppressed and throttled. Hence, the fight against such policies should be united. AITUC and Central Trade Unions expect AIBEA to be in the forefront in that fight.

In India we want equal pay for equal work, we want exploitation of workers and women to be stopped, we want women not to live a slave life, we want exploitation-free work atmosphere. For all this, we should look into the past history of our struggles and work out struggles to fight against present-day policies of the government in trying to privatise the public sector banks and public sector units.

The history also says that at the time of nationalisation of banks, it was the members of Jan Sang, the forerunner of present BJP, filed case against nationalisation ordinance and supported the bank-lords and private owners of the banks against nationalisation of the banks. AIBEA fought against the decision of the Supreme Court judgement negating the nationalisation ordinance and ultimately, we got nationalisation of 14 major banks. Hence, defending public sector banks is the duty of AIBEA. We should fight against attempts to privatise the public sector banks.

Like that, several sectoral unions and unorganized sector unions are fighting their battles. Hence, we should see beyond our own economic demands and fight by joining hands with the general working class against the anti-labour policies of the government, against the attack on democratic rights of the people. We cannot, as trade unions, be onlookers and keep quiet. We should fight against all these oppressions. In carrying forward this legacy of fighting, I expect AIBEA to be in the forefront in that fight with all the working people of the country by joining hands with the working class, progressive and democratic forces.

When pandemic is used by the government to implement their own agenda, as trade unions, we should also find our own ways like these webinars, to address our comrades, educate the members, carry forward the message to the public, enlist their support and fight against these policies.

Com. Sushil Gautam, Joint Secretary of AIBEA, who coordinated the programme thanked Com George Mavrikos for his greeting message and Com. Amarjeet Kaur for her inspiring address and lecture.

Yours comradely,



**C.H. VENKATACHALAM  
GENERAL SECRETARY**