



ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

Central Office: "PRABHAT NIVAS" Regn. No. 2037
Singapore Plaza, 164, Linghi Chetty Street, Chennai-600 001
Phone: 2535 1522 Web: www.aibea.in
e mail : chv.aibea@gmail.com & aibeahq@gmail.com



CIRCULAR NO. 28/390/2021/114

1-9-2021

TO ALL UNIONS AND MEMBERS:

Dear Comrades,

We reproduce hereunder an article written by Com P.S. Sundaresan, former Vice President of AIBEA on **TRADE UNION WEAPONS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.**

Our members are aware that Com. Sundaresan is a veteran leader of AIBEA and was Vice President of AIEBA for 28 years from 1968 to 1996. He is connected with AIBEA and is a part of our organisation for the past 65 years.

At the age of 93, he is writing various educative and informative articles recording his observations and concerns and experiences.

We will be shortly compiling and publishing these articles as a booklet for the use of our unions and members.

The latest article furnished herein is very relevant to our unions at all levels. It deals with the importance and significance of our various trade union programmes like demonstrations, Badge wearing, procession, etc. There is no doubt an increasing tendency to take these programmes less seriously. It is also our experience that participation in these programmes is not there to the full extent. We are proud and hats off to our members, all our strikes are successful. But we cannot resort to strikes on every issue and every time.

Hence programmes like demonstrations, deputations, Badge wearing, submission of mass memorandum, sending protest letters, Dharnas, postering, pamphleteering, processions, Gate meetings, rallies, etc. are an important and inevitable part of our struggles and have to be taken and implemented with all earnestness and seriousness.

In this article, Com. Sundaresan has made very valid observations and we are sure that in interest of our organisation, we all will ponder over the same.

We recommend wide circulation of the article amongst our units and members.

Yours comradely,

**C.H. VENKATACHALAM
GENERAL SECRETARY**

**In trade unions, we are not just members,
we are like soldiers in an army. And, only
a disciplined army can win a battle.**

- D P Chadha, former President, AIBEA

TRADE UNION WEAPONS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

P.S. Sundaresan,
former Vice President, AIBEA

Struggles – the only way : The struggles of the working class fraternity, throughout the world for a better life are perpetual. While those who control the wealth and resources grow richer and richer, they never concede the demands of the workers without a fight. This would mean that trade unions have to keep their weapons always ready and polished.

Our weapons are important : But sometimes the situation slowly develops when workers forget the significance of their own trade union weapons. Lethargy and complacency engulfs. The gap between the younger generation workers and seniors widens. Response to the calls of the union for participation in the protest programmes slackens. Knowledge of the past history of the organisation is lacking. A sense of carelessness pervades.

Ponder over : Take for instance our own industry. If a call is given by the General Secretary of AIBEA for one day strike the response is 100% participation all over India. But if a call is given for a demonstration or signature campaign, the response is very poor. Even badge wearing is observed reluctantly just for two or three hours. How do you interpret such a behavior? What could be the reason? If this tendency or lack of interest is not checked and members at the grass root level are not educated and awakened from their slumber of casualness and non-seriousness then a day will come when even a strike call will not be responded to in full.

Huge struggle ahead : Our base units and bank- wise organizations and state machineries should urgently ponder over these trends and launch necessary remedial measures. A gigantic struggle is looming large in the horizon of India's banking industry. Those who rule the nation today are planning to denationalize the nation's assets and ensure that all vital sectors of economy are privatised. All the 31 eminent leaders and statesmen who spoke during the webinar organised by AIBEA in July 2021 underscored this point. Hence overhauling and polishing our fighting machinery is an urgent task and organizationally important.

DEMONSTRATION – an effective weapon : Demonstration is indeed a very impressive and impact making weapon. By witnessing and hearing the thundering slogans of the employees before the branch building, the public understands what we are fighting for. Small pamphlets should be distributed to the public during such demonstrations explaining our demands. Participation by the members must be very large. Slogan raising should be meaningful, disciplined and orderly. Our will-power and determination to fight should be demonstrated. The message will go that all over India the employees are angry and in large numbers are getting ready to resist and repulse the attempts of the Government to privatise the Public Sector Banks. Such impressions and feedback to the rulers will make them rethink.

What we observe : But all of us observe that such massive participation is not happening. In a metro centre where 5000 members and 500 branch secretaries are working, not even 10% of comrades are coming. All the local office bearers of our units do not turn up. Bulk of our members are going home and do not care. But if there is a call for strike they respond.

This would only mean that they have not understood as to how important it is for us to attract and impress the public on our demands through demonstrations. It means, perhaps, that the call for demonstration does not reach all the members. It means that the local leaders do not follow up and pursue as to why such non participation is taking place. They should question their own branch wise leaders regarding their absence. They should conduct local meetings and educate the members on the issues involved.

Demonstration is a powerful weapon. By continuous, large-scale non-stop daily demonstrations we have won so many battles in the past. Ordinary members locally working should not develop immunity for not attending a demonstration and participating in a strike.

Why this is happening ? Union membership is not for fun. It protects the members from victimisation and ensures a life of comfort in convenient places and enables one to pass on, in his/her career progression. Members should realise their duty, role and responsibility by responding to the calls of their own union for their own safety and prosperity. Local leaders should be alert and active in this task. Non-participation in demonstration by members should not be ignored by union leadership. We should take demonstrations as a serious programme.

BADGE WEARING – Our walking Poster : Badge wearing is a programme not understood properly by the members. Badges, wherein our demands for justice are printed do not reach in time to all the branches all over the country. They are just distributed during office hours and members wear it for a few hours and after lunch recess throw them away. These practices are wrong. A badge with our demands printed therein should be proudly worn by the member in the morning in the house before leaving for office. He should explain to his family members, relatives and neighbours the significance and meaning behind our demands. While walking on the road or travelling in metro, or local trains, or bus he should politely and gently draw the attention of the co-passengers and explain to them our slogans.

Badges help in publicity to our demands: For example if you tell them the consequences of selling public sector banks to private parties and how much insecurity and danger it would be for the 1.50 lakhs of crores of rupees of deposits of the general public, they will understand. If you give them the names of notorious defaulters and the loan amounts that they have not repaid, the public will be shocked.

While working in the branch and wearing the Badge, we should draw the attention of the customers and educate them on the dangers and risks involved in privatisation of Government owned banks. Profit and more profit will be the policy and credit to the needy, poor and rural folk will all slowly vanish. Thus the customers should be enlightened.

Again in the evening when you go home you should meet as many people as possible and explain the situation. Badge wearing means that you become a walking and talking poster throughout the day. If 5 Lakhs of bank employees talk to 10 members of public, on that day we would have made 50 lakhs of people aware of the wrong policies of the authorities. Thus badge wearing programme can be made into an effective impact making weapon.

PROCESSION – powerful tool to propagate : Procession is a programme for giving publicity to our demands by carrying our message directly to the people. We should carry placards and banners inscribed with our demands. This orderly disciplined way of marching through the main streets of the city should impress the public and should reveal our determination to fight. Pamphlets should be extensively distributed to the public, shops and offices on the way. Traffic must be allowed to cross at junctions and this will earn the appreciation of the public. Our intention should not be to create a jam and earn the curse of the people whose support we are seeking. In the rear, the comrades with two wheelers should march. In the front, the lady comrades should lead. Everyone should not crowd in the front. Impressive slogans should be raised. People should wonder at our discipline and orderly march. Such conduct will go a long way to image building process of AIBEA. A procession is not a tamasha. It is a very serious public protest display.

DHARNA – to highlight our demands : Dharna is a daylong unique programme when a limited number of comrades sit or squat before the bank premises, raise slogans, listen to lectures on the issues involved. From time to time general members will join and demonstrate briefly. Thus from morning to evening the compound in front of the bank will be alive with activity. A tense atmosphere should prevail.

STRIKE – our powerful weapon : Strike is the ultimate weapon in our armoury. This call electrifies everyone. This subject will be covered in the next article.

Battles cannot be fought without weapons : All these weapons are known to everyone. But what is happening is that there is no seriousness in observing the same. A slow indifferent attitude is creeping within. No one is opposed to launch a struggle. But the message does not reach or sometimes does not inspire. Union functionaries at various levels do not move amongst the ground level comrades and discuss day to day developments with them. The Central Office of AIBEA through most modern communication technology, almost every day sends circulars, messages, draft protest letters etc. But at bank-wise levels and State Organisation levels, lethargy has crept in.

Rectify to rejuvenate: Regular Trade Union classes are not being arranged. Branch visits have become rare. Even follow-up measures after programmes are observed, does not take place. Slowly a careless atmosphere is looming. Only a call for strike awakens everyone. But rest of the activities does not enthuse everyone. For instance, all speeches made in the month-long webinars in July have now come in hard copy material. What a wonderful store of knowledge and information. But how many comrades all over India have access to it. This is typical instance of our functioning at middle level of a gigantic organisation. Middle level leadership should ponder over this trend.

Next article: “Strike -The ultimate weapon”.
