



ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

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TO : ALL UNITS AND MEMBERS :

Dear Comrades,

Be Convinced – Be not Confused – Get ready for more actions

We furnish herebelow the article written by Com K J Joseph, affectionately known to bank employees as Uncle Joe.

Com Joseph is a rare diamond of the bank employees movement. He was the General Secretary of Bank of India Staff Union, Bombay in 1951. He became the General Secretary of Federation of Bank of India Staff Unions in 1953. He was the Asst. Secretary of AIBEA from 1955 to 1962. He was the President of Tamilnadu Bank Employees Federation for two terms from 1960. He has been associated with AIBEA movement for the past 70 years, from 1948, i.e from when he joined the bank. Even today at the old age of 95, he is keenly following the developments in the banks and in AIBEA.

Today when we are the midst of our struggle to achieve wage revision, when we are engaged in the fight against the IBA-Government combine, we find that there are people who want to confuse the bank employees and there are people who are willing to be confused.

Agonised by the posting and pasting in the social media, Com Joseph wrote this article and we reproduce the same for the benefit of our units and members.

With greetings,

Yours comradely,

**C.H. VENKATACHALAM
GENERAL SECRETARY**

Appeal from Uncle Joe

Dear Friends and Comrades,

Be Convinced – Be not Confused

Congratulations! Hat's off! It was a magnificent manifestation of unity and spontaneous response by bank employees for the 48 hours strike. With tiding pride and surging joy, I greet you all! I feel the throb and thrill of this movement.

In our country, we saw the revision of salary and allowances of Governors, Judges, MPs, MLAs and others who are comparatively affluent. But Bank employees, who are the PERFORMING ASSETS of the Industry, are denied a revision entitled as per a legal agreement, not by charity, after 5 years. What is the sin we have committed?

The only fault is we are an enlightened, educated, cultured and socially conscious section of the society and our militant unity is an inconvenience and eyesore to Corporates and Government. The Government has already punished us for the "crime" by denying our representation in Board of Directors which we are entitled by the Law of the Land.

We shall further cement our unity and sharpen our fighting tools and war weapons. At the end of the day, we shall receive our dues and achieve victory.

Before our united strength and might, the calculated, stony silence of the Government would crumble, because,

if necessary, driven to the wall, we shall call for a total standstill in the Industry and paralyse the economic activity of the Nation as a whole. We hope that the Government will not push us to the brink.

Make no mistake. This is not a threat but a promise by a million of awakened bank employees, from the bottom of their heart.

Meanwhile, I do hear some discordant notes sounded by a fringe group. These are the points they have raised. First, we should demand implementation of Pay Commission Report applicable to Central Government employees. They want mechanical transplantation of this report for bank employees or pay scales alone.

My simple question is that, how many of them have really read this report? How many of them have studied about the evolution – not revolution - of wage pattern, how it has emerged for different sections of employees, such as Factory Workers, Railways, P & T, Central Government, State Governments, Public Sector, Banks, Insurance and other Sections?

With all humility, I would appeal to them to have a peep into the past to arrive at the present and proceed to the future.

In any case, it would be rewarding for those who aspire to become leaders to go through the study materials provided by various Commissions and Committees on Wage Fixation in our Country.

There is another important point. Our 1st Bipartite Settlement in 1966 was the first industry wise All India Settlement in the history of Trade Union movement in our Country. Bank employees who were heroes and torch bearers of collective bargaining should not become Pall bearers (coffin carriers) of collective bargaining.

George Bernard Shaw wrote that “we all know the XYZ of everything but do not know ABC of anything”. This is our problem.

The second point is that the retired employees who are leading the movement must be replaced. Who are these retired employees? They are not professionals. They are the proud products of this mighty movement, matured through struggles. There are storehouse of knowledge and arsenal of experience. They are “Persons” who did their homework well and with great difficulty forged UFBU - an enchanting and exciting blend of colours like a rainbow formation – which leads the movement. They are the “Persons” who negotiated and scripted earlier Bipartite Settlements on which the critics landed in service of the banks and enjoy the present pleasant privileges while making “running commentary” in social media

to run down the movement and leadership of UFBU.

Dear Friends! There is no shortcut to leadership. One earns it through hard work, education and dedication. The present leadership of UFBU is a harmonious blend of youth and experience. It is wise to cut the branch of the tree on which one sits.

The other point is that whether we should resort to higher form of action and that too immediately.

Look at the stark realities that stare at us. Industry is in coma. IBA has no Chairman for reasons best known to all. Finance Minister is slowly recovering from his illness. (Let us wish him all the best and a speedy recovery). “Budlee” Ministers are there only to “Fill up the gap”. PM is immune to the happenings in the Country. Because he is busy sharpening his skills to divert and divide the attention of common people, which he has perfected as an art. Moreover, 2019 is nearer home!

The attitude of the Government is visibly pro corporate and anti working people which is admitted even by BMS which is part of ruling party. Response of public is patchy and limited to emotional, momentary issues. Speaking half truth is the main trade. Distortion is the profession. Diversion of attention is a hobby. This is how ruling powers thrive and survive.

There is an old saying that “it is easy to fight an outright lie; but very hard to fight half-truth!”

Against this background and political climate we must think twice before we plunge into all out actions. We do not start our motorcar on top gear. We have to adjust to the conditions of the road and road map.

I have walked with this movement as a foot soldier for more than 70 years. Never in my memory, have we faced such a difficult and complex situation.

The need of the hour is unity. Keep the powder dry! Keep the fire burning! Strike while the iron is hot. When we strike, strike hard to wake up the powers that are in deep slumber.

IBA is only a mask. The real face is the Finance Ministry. Therefore, we should not underestimate the strength of the force we fight against. We should hold our forces together and Act at the appropriate time.

This movement has an inherent strength and stamina to overcome all obstacles and achieve results.

Hold aloft the banner of AIBEA, UFBU and Unity!
Advance step by step.
We shall overcome.....

With warm greetings,

The process may be a bit delayed because of prevailing circumstances. Our new generation of employees and youth would understand and appreciate our approach. Those who sit on the fence may be provoked to think aloud and change the track. Life and death struggle – which we are engaged now, are not fought through “Facebook”. I would most humbly request them to merge and mingle with the mainstream and feel the fascinating charm and warmth of this great movement which made you and me what we are today.

Armed with conviction, courage and with a fanatical determination, march forward. The ultimate victory is ours.

Beyond the blue sky, behind the roaring waves of Arabian Sea, across the green valleys and grey mountains, we see a Dawn – The Dawn of Tomorrow – that always belongs to us – the working people.

Yours affectionately,

Joe

K. J. Joseph