

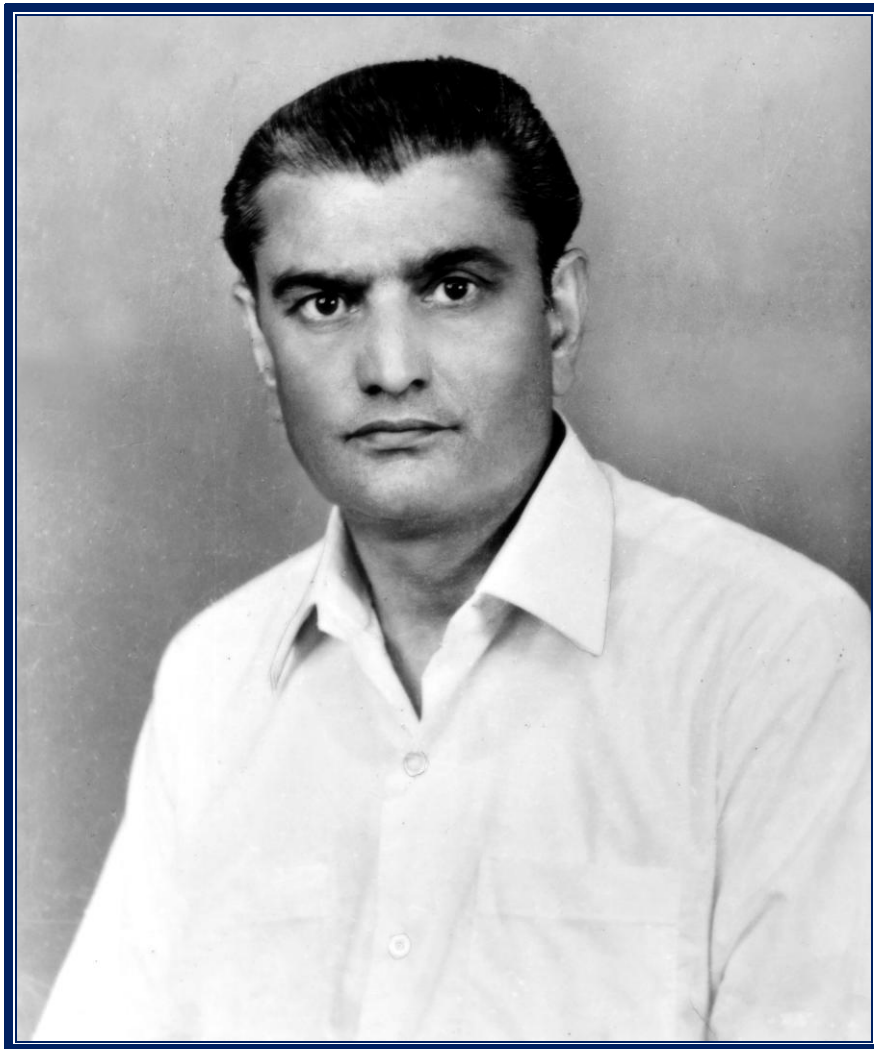


ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

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103rd Birthday of

H.L. PARVANA - THE PRECIOUS JEWEL



(3-11-1923 - 18-4-1975)

Central Committee Member of AIBEA : 1950

Vice President : 1951

Asst. Secretary : 1954

Secretary : 1964 till his death in 1975

A small life sketch of Com. Parvana, the great

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 **Harbans Lal**.

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 Bhagat 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 Com. 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 week end, 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 Com. 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 (later Vice President of AIBEA).

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 1964, in the Trivandrum Conference, in recognition of his most invaluable services to our organisation, the post of Secretary was created and 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 ever continuous and 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 heart 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 :

Com. Prabhat Kar wrote:

“ 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.”

This was our great Com. Parvana, the precious jewel of AIBEA.

“ Many times, our members feel that Union leaders are magicians. Yes, true, but so long as members are active, united and militant and implement all the Union’s call effectively.” Com. Parvana