

August 24 2007

### A LEGEND PASSES AWAY

#### COM. ASHIS SEN IS NO MORE.

No words can be more painful, more heart-rending, more devastating to Reserve Bank employees, vast section of bank employees and trade union fraternity than these

He suffered a massive cerebral attack in the early morning of 22nd August 2007 and was admitted to a city hospital. He breathed his last at 1-30 a.m. to-day. He leaves behind his wife, his silent companion in struggles, Smt. Archana Sen, son and daughters.

Com. Ashis Sen was born in September 1922 - the same year the "Currency Association" was formed in the then Controller of Currency office at Calcutta, which later became Reserve Bank Employees Association. Com. Ashis Sen and the trade union movement of Reserve Bank employees are thus truly synonymous. Coming from a background of freedom movement and trade union movement - his maternal uncle Bhupati Mazumder was a renowned freedom fighter and his father Ajit Sen was the pioneer and founder of trade union movement in State Bank of India - Com. Sen himself, an activist of anti-imperialist students movement of pre-independent India, joined Reserve Bank in 1944. Imbued by the surging freedom movement of the early forties, Com. Sen with a few other colleagues of his, transformed the then quiet and subdued Reserve Bank employees association, into a militant class conscious trade union body and integrated it with the general democratic and workers' movement. That was a courageous and sustained effort, fraught with risks, but he was undaunted. Reserve Bank employees and the Association will forever remain indebted to Com. Ashis Sen, who as the organiser of collective effort, led them from the front through trials and tribulations, through stormy situations, brought glories and honour to the movement. He was the Secretary RBEA, Calcutta from 1949 to 1955, its Vice-President and President for long years, General Secretary of All India Reserve Bank Employees Association from 1968 to 1990, and then its Vice-President and currently he was the Advisor.

In late forties and early fifties Com. Sen had a leading role in forming and shaping up the All India Bank Employees Association(AIBEA). Along with Coms. Naresh Pal, Pravat Kar, H.L. Parwana, Montu Biswas, Com. Sen had significant contributions for rallying bank employees with AIBEA.

He was the member of the undivided Communist Party of India from early forties, when the nascent communist movement in India was going through very difficult time; he had been the member of CPI(M) since its inception in 1964 till he breathed his last. He remained firmly committed to the philosophy of class struggle althroughout his life, never compromising with any deviation, fighting any aberration with all his might.

Com. Sen had been the founder General Secretary of Bank Employees Federation of India(BEFI), then its President and was currently its advisor. Under the inspiring guidance of Com. Naresh Pal, he laid the foundation of a strong militant class conscious bank employees organisation. He was the pioneer architect of militant unity of bank employees under the banner of UFBU.

He was the founder President of All India Regional Rural Bank Employees Association (AIRRBEA) and guided the Gramin bank employees till his last days.

Com. Ashis Sen had been the leader of trade union movement as a whole. He has always taught us to look beyond the confines of one's own trade union and extend fraternal support to others in struggle. Unions of various sectors sought his guidance, his counsels, which he provided amply.

He was arrested twice, on 4th January 1956 on the eve of a countrywide strike call by AIBEA and on 2nd May 1979 while leading anti-computerisation movement in RBI Mumbai.

In the year 1966, RBI management dared to serve him show-cause notice to remove him from trade union movement. The employees rose in total opposition, struck work for 10 days and forced the management to rescind the show-cause notice. It was a memorable event in the annals of trade union.


In recognition of his immense contribution to bank employees' and country's trade union movement, he became a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1987 to 1993 and in that forum he fought for the workers and trade unions.

Com. Sen's contribution cannot be narrated in a few words. Suffice it to say that whatever we are to-day and whatever we aspire to be are due to Com. Sen. Suffice it to say that we could afford to make mistakes because Com. Sen was there to rectify us. Now he will guide us through the lesson he left for us.

Com. Ashis Sen is no more. However, painful it may be, we have to continue our work for strengthening the trade union movement, the working class movement, the democratic movement, for that is what he has done strenuously for more than six decades, till his last days. Age and failing health could not overpower his eagerness to attend any important meeting of RBEA/AIRBEA/BEF/BEFI and other important fora. As always, even in his last days, he guided such meetings with sharpness and vision that was exclusively his, borne out of his vast experience.

RED SALUTE TO COM. ASHIS SEN. HE WILL REMAIN ALIVE EVER. WE ASSURE YOU, COM. SEN, WE WILL NOT DEVIATE FROM THE IDEALS YOU HAVE TAUGHT US. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW YOU ALONG THE PATH YOU HAVE CURVED AND THE WORKING CLASS PHILOSOPHY YOU CHERISHED MOST.

LONG LIVE COM. ASHIS SEN.

  
General Secretary

Com. Sen's mortal remains will be brought to RBI office around 12 Noon on Monday, the 27th August 2007 to enable trade unions and others to pay their last respects to Com. Sen. In the afternoon we will follow him in a procession, as we always used to, upto NRS Hospital, for Com. Sen bequeathed his body for medical science.

A Condolence meeting will be held on Tuesday, the 28th August 2007 at 5-30 p.m. in the Exchange Hall of RBI, Kolkata jointly organised by AIRBEA, BEFI and other trade unions. All India office-bearers will be attending the funeral and condolence meeting. Leaders of other all India organisations in RBI, trade union fraternity may also attend. AIRBEA units may hold condolence meetings on Monday, the 27th August 2007. RBI employees will wear black badge in mourning on Monday, the 27th August 2007.