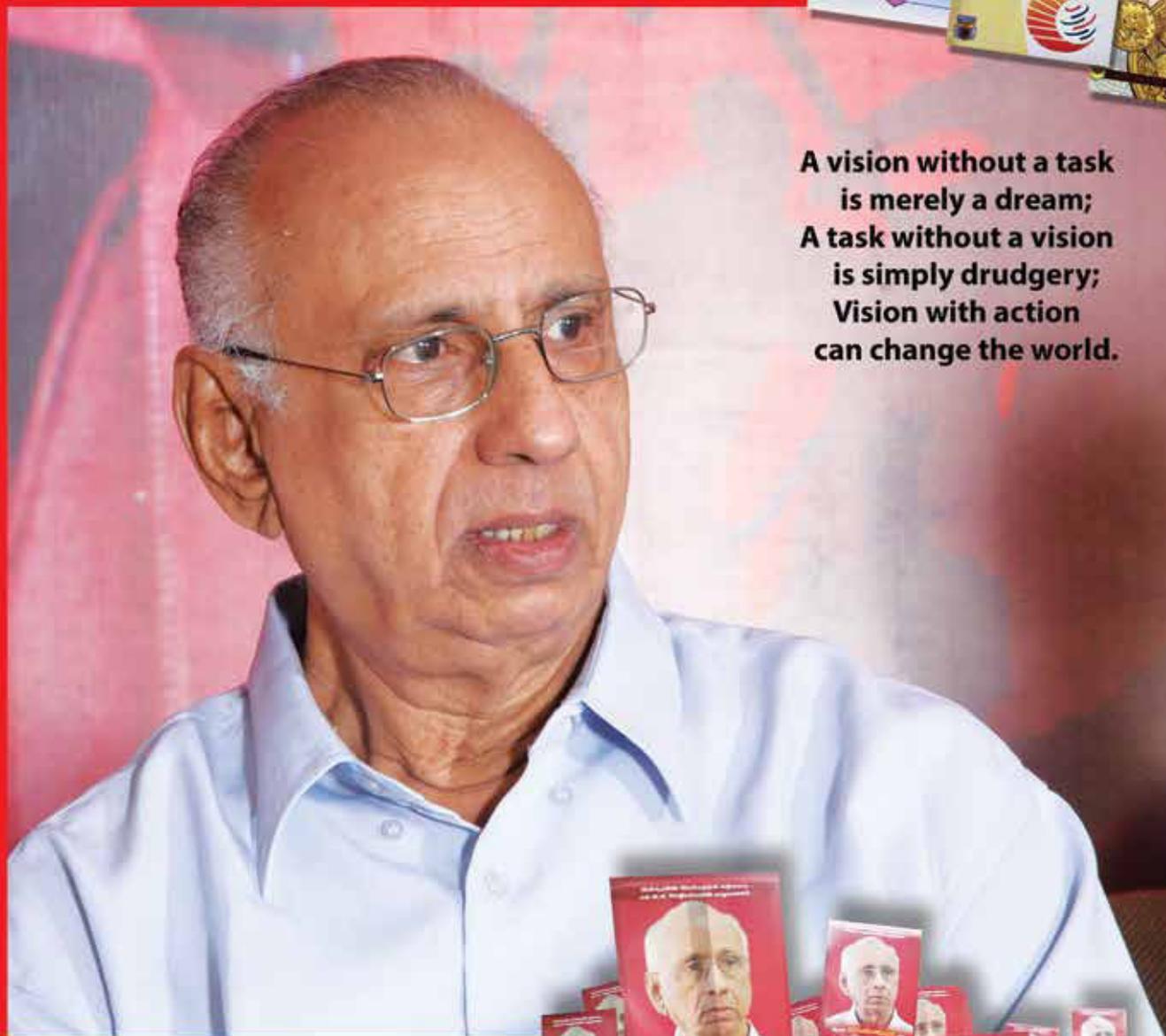


# insurance Worker

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**A vision without a task  
is merely a dream;  
A task without a vision  
is simply drudgery;  
Vision with action  
can change the world.**

**RED SALUTE  
COMRADE  
N M SUNDARAM**

(8.1.1938-26.12.2017)





Being felicitated in 24th AllIEA Conference at Ernakulam and in SCZIEF 11th Conference at Udipi in 2017



Kanpur AllIEA conference 2007 - with legendary Capt Laxmi Sehgal



Releasing first issue of Insurance Worker from Bangalore



With Coms Saroj Chaudhuri, Sunil Maitra & R P Manchanda



Taking over as President, AllIEA at Raipur conference, 2003

With Com. Manik Sarkar, CM, Tripura & Com. Tapan Sen, CITU. In Diamond Jubilee conference - with women participants





## Comrade N.M.Sundaram

Com N.M.Sundaram, one of the foremost leaders of the insurance employees passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2017 due to a massive cardiac arrest. He was aged 80 and leaves behind his wife, two sons and tens and thousands of comrades both within and outside the insurance industry in shock and grief. In the sudden demise of Com Sundaram, the working class of India has lost one of its illustrious sons. His death has left the AIIEA poorer and has created a huge void very difficult to fill.

Com Sundaram was a youth of 19 years when he joined LIC in 1957 as the Temporary Assistant. He was appointed as Probationary Assistant on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1957. This was the first batch of recruits after nationalisation. Com Sundaram inherited the qualities of leadership from his father Sri T.R. Narayanan who was a formidable leader of the Development Officers' Association. He was instantly attracted to the AIIEA and took active part in organising the employees. Com Sundaram was elected as the Secretary of St.Thomas Mount Branch unit of Insurance Corporation Employees' Union, Madras Division in March 1958. His association with AIIEA expanded the horizon of his understanding and knowledge. He learnt that the Indian society is being constructed on the vision of the exploitative capitalist social order. He was absolutely clear that the working class and the less privileged sections of the Indian society cannot get justice and dignity in this exploitative system. He was convinced that a life of dignity is the fundamental right of every Indian and this can be achieved only by working towards a society that is just fair and equal to everybody. With this understanding he committed his entire life to work for AIIEA and broader working class and democratic movement.

Com Sundaram was elected as the Joint Secretary of SZIEF in 1961 and two years later he became the General Secretary of SZIEF at the young age of 25 years. The SZIEF became a very strong and vibrant zonal unit of the AIIEA under his leadership. He not only worked to strengthen the zonal organisation but made enormous contribution to expand and consolidate the AIIEA across the country.

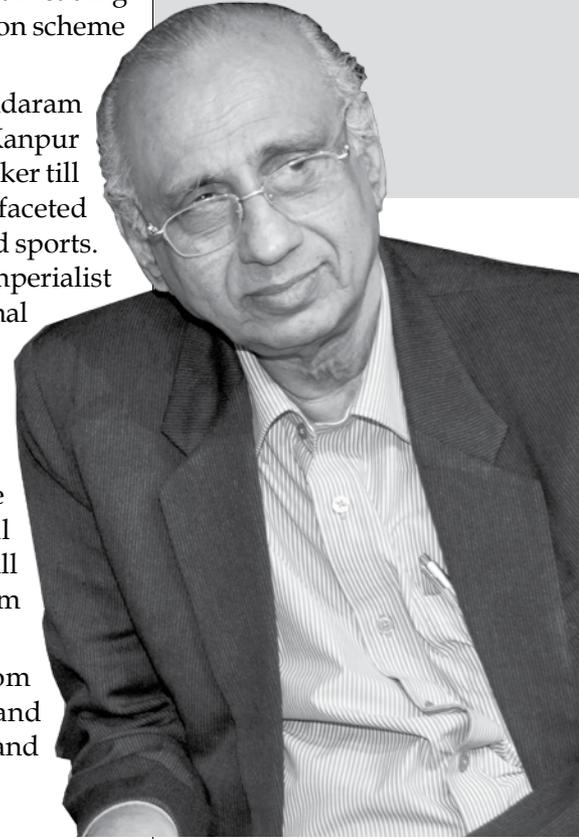
Com Sundaram was elected as the Joint Secretary of AIIEA in 1972 which position he held till 1988. The Jaipur Conference of AIIEA in 1988 elected Com Sundaram as the General Secretary of AIIEA. Stepping into the shoes of Com Saroj Chaudhuri, the gentle giant was no easy task. But Com Sundaram justified the confidence placed in him by taking the AIIEA to gigantic heights. The achievements of AIIEA in spearheading a massive struggle against neo-liberalism and to secure pension scheme under his leadership are well known and documented.

The Raipur Conference of AIIEA in 2003 elected Com Sundaram as President of AIIEA which post he relinquished in the Kanpur Conference in 2007. He continued as Editor of Insurance Worker till June 2011. Com Sundaram was an extraordinary and multifaceted personality with deep interests in literature, poetry, music and sports. He authored four books bringing out sharply the danger of imperialist led globalisation and its impact on the working class and national sovereignty.

The present issue of Insurance Worker is dedicated to Com Sundaram. We invited comrades who were closely associated with him to share their relationship and experiences of work with Com Sundaram. We have also published the review of the books he authored that explore his political beliefs and economic understanding. We hope this issue will help the readers to understand the brilliant personality of Com Sundaram and learn from his life and struggles.

Insurance Worker mourns the untimely death of Com Sundaram and shares the grief with his family and tens and thousands of his admirers both in the insurance industry and outside.

Long Live Com Sundaram.



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## काँ० एन.एम.सुन्दरम

बीमा कर्मचारियों के वरिष्ठतम नेताओं में से एक कॉमरेड एन.एम.सुन्दरम का गंभीर हार्टअटैक के कारण 26 दिसम्बर 2017 को निधन हो गया। उस समय उनकी आयु 80 वर्ष थी और वे अपने पीछे अपनी पत्नी और दो पुत्रों के अलावा दुःख व आघात से ग्रस्त बीमा उद्योग के अन्दर व बाहर हजारों साथियों को छोड़ गये हैं। काँ० सुन्दरम के अचानक निधन से भारत के मजदूर वर्ग ने अपने प्रसिद्ध पुत्रों में से एक खो दिया है। उनके निधन से ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. गरीब हो गई है और जो स्थान खाली हुआ है उसे भरना बहुत मुश्किल है।

काँ. सुन्दरम ने जब अस्थाई सहायक के रूप में एल.आई.सी. में प्रवेश किया था तब वे 19 वर्ष के एक नवयुवक थे। 11 नवम्बर 1957 को उन्हें परिवीक्षाधीन सहायक पद पर नियुक्त किया गया। राष्ट्रीयकरण के पश्चात भर्ती होने वाला यह प्रथम बैच था। काँ. सुन्दरम ने नेतृत्व की खूबियाँ अपने पिता श्री टी.आर.नारायणन से पाई थीं जो विकास अधिकारियों की एसोसियेशन के अति प्रबल नेता थे। वे तुरन्त ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. की ओर आकर्षित हुए और कर्मचारियों को संगठित करने में सक्रिय भूमिका का निर्वहन किया। मार्च 1958 में वे मद्रास डिवीजन की सेण्ट टोमस माउण्ट इकाई में इन्श्योरेन्स कारपोरेशन एम्पलाइज यूनियन के सचिव निर्वाचित हुए। ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. के सांस्थिय से उनकी समझ व ज्ञान के क्षितिज में काफी प्रसार हुआ। उन्हें यह समझ में आ गया था कि भारतीय समाज एक शोषक पूंजीवादी सामाजिक व्यवस्था की दृष्टि से बनाया जा रहा है। वे पूर्णरूपेण स्पष्ट थे कि भारत के मजदूर वर्ग व भारतीय समाज के कम सुविधा प्राप्त वर्गों को एक शोषक व्यवस्था में न्याय व प्रतिष्ठा नहीं मिल सकती। वे इस बात से पूरी तरह मुतमईन थे कि प्रतिष्ठा-पूर्ण जीवन हर भारतीय का मौलिक अधिकार है और ऐसा उस समाज को कायम करने के लिये काम करने से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है जो सभी लोगों के लिये न्यायोचित, सुखद व बराबर हो। इस समझ के साथ उन्होंने अपने पूरे जीवन को ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. और मजदूर वर्ग व जनतान्त्रिक आन्दोलन के विस्तार के लिये काम करने में समर्पित कर दिया।

काँ. सुन्दरम 1961 में एस.जेड.आई.ई.एफ. के संयुक्त सचिव निर्वाचित हुए और दो वर्ष पश्चात 25 वर्ष की छोटी आयु में वे एस.जेड.आई.ई.एफ. के महासचिव चुने गये। उनके नेतृत्व में एस.जेड.आई.ई.एफ. ए.आई.आई.ई.ए.की बहुत मजबूत व स्पंदनशील इकाई बन गयी थी। उन्होंने न केवल अपने जोन की इकाई को शक्तिशाली बनाने का काम किया वरन् पूरे देश में ए.आई.आई.ई.ए.को भी शक्ति प्रदान करने व उसका प्रसार करने का काम किया। 1988 में आयोजित जयपुर सम्मेलन में काँ. सुन्दरम को ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. का महासचिव निर्वाचित किया गया। काँ. सरोज चैधरी द्वारा किये गये महान कार्य की बराबरी करना कोई आसान काम नहीं था। लेकिन काँ.सुन्दरम ने उस विश्वास के साथ न्याय किया जो उन्हें सौंपा गया था तथा ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. को उन्होंने बहुत ऊँचाईयों तक पहुँचाया। नव-उदारवाद के विरुद्ध भारी संघर्ष तथा उनके नेतृत्व में पेंशन योजना प्राप्त करने की ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. की उपलब्धियों से सभी लोग भली-भाँति परिचित हैं तथा उनके दस्तावेज व प्रलेख भी उपलब्ध हैं।

2003 में आयोजित रायपुर सम्मेलन में उन्हें ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. का अध्यक्ष निर्वाचित किया गया था तथा 2007 के कानपुर सम्मेलन के समय उन्होंने यह पद छोड़ दिया। वे जून 2011 तक इन्श्योरेन्स वर्कर के संपादक रहे। काँ. सुन्दरम का व्यक्तित्व अद्भुत व बहुपक्षीय था और साहित्य, कविता, संगीत व खेलों में उनकी गहरी रुचि थी। साम्राज्यवाद के नेतृत्व में भूमण्डलीकरण और मजदूर वर्ग व राष्ट्रीय सम्प्रभुता पर उसके प्रभाव को बताते हुए उन्होंने चार पुस्तकें लिखी थीं।

इन्श्योरेन्स वर्कर का वर्तमान अंक काँ. सुन्दरम की स्मृति को समर्पित है। हमने उन सभी साथियों को आमंत्रित किया है जो काँ. सुन्दरम से सम्बद्ध थे तथा उनके साथ अपने सम्बन्धों को ताजा करने व काम के अनुभवों को बांटना चाहते हैं। हमने उनकी पुस्तकों की समीक्षा भी प्रकाशित की है जो उनके राजनीतिज्ञ विश्वासों व आर्थिक समझ की खोज करती हैं। हमें आशा है कि यह अंक काँ. सुन्दरम के जगमगाते व्यक्तित्व को समझने तथा उनके जीवन व संघर्ष से सीखने में मदद करेगा।

इन्श्योरेन्स वर्कर कामरेड सुन्दरम के असमय निधन पर शोक व्यक्त करता है तथा इस दुख को उनके परिवार व बीमा उद्योग के अन्दर व बाहर उनके हजारों प्रशंसकों के साथ साझा करता है।



# AIIEA'S TRIBUTES TO COM N.M.SUNDARAM

*"We account for this man  
as we do the highest Mountain,  
the greatest river,  
the most perfect gem"*

**- R.G. Ingersoll**

He strode the insurance industry like a colossus. He was tall literally as well as metaphorically. He was one who influenced and inspired thousands of cadres into trade union activity. He was a person with vision. His unwavering commitment to the cause of public sector insurance industry was only to be matched by his unalloyed love for insurance employees and the working people at large. He was an economist, a historian, a

philosopher, a voracious reader, a prolific writer, an astute observer of society, a great admirer of art, culture and music, a sports enthusiast, a trade unionist with an abiding commitment to the philosophy of the working class – all rolled into one. He was none other than N.M. Sundaram - 'NMS' to thousands of insurance and financial sector employees across the country.

26th December 2017 was a day of shock and grief for insurance employees. Com. Sundaram, the legendary leader adored and admired by thousands of insurance employees throughout the length and breadth of the country, passed away around 8.20 am on this day due to massive cardiac arrest. Insurance employees and cadres of AIIEA were left stupefied and devastated. A pall of gloom descended on the offices of LIC and General Insurance across the country. People were not prepared to believe that their beloved leader Com. N.M. Sundaram was no more.

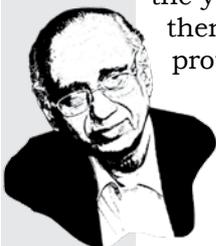
Born on 8th January 1938, he was a young Sundaram of 19 years when he joined LIC in the year 1957 (the first batch of LIC recruits in Assistant cadre). Little did the industry know then that it would be he who would set in motion a long, sustained campaign and struggle to protect LIC in the public sector. **William Jennings Bryan was absolutely right when he said:**

"Destiny is no matter of Chance. It is a matter of Choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved." At a young age of 25 he became the General Secretary of SZIEF, the largest Zonal Unit of AIIEA. He continued to lead the zone till 1988 when he became the General Secretary of AIIEA. He continued as the General Secretary of AIIEA from 1988 to 2003 and functioned as the President from 2003 to 2007. Though he retired from LIC in 1998 he was active as the leader of AIIEA. Even when he was relieved as the President of AIIEA in 2007 he continued to be the LEADER of AIIEA.

No sooner Com. Sundaram took over the leadership than started the liberalisation policies of the government. Privatisation of Public sector became the cornerstone of the new economic policies. It was during this period that privatization of public sector insurance acquired centre-stage of the policy paradigm. But he was a visionary who could see that the defeat of these policies could be only with the support of the people of this country. Thus started AIIEA's no holds barred campaign among the public and the volumes of literature that AIIEA brought out had the unmistakable imprint of Com. Sundaram's astute observation and incisive analysis.

It would be a truism to say that Com. NMS grew with the organization and the organization grew with him. The two-pronged campaign strategy – 'campaign from the seat' and 'campaign on the street' – was very successful. He convinced the rank and file of the organisation that upgradation of technology would stand us in good stead when the financial sharks start coming in the insurance sector. The fact that LIC today has the technological advantage of servicing over 40 crore policies goes to the credit of the sharp acumen of leaders like Com. Sundaram and the organization that he built up. It is this farsightedness that has kept the entry of the private companies at bay through campaign - this was achieved for more than 15 years. Then when the private companies came in, they saw a very strong LIC to combat. Now that campaign of 15 million signatures during 1999 stood us in good stead even today when people continue to bestow their faith in public sector insurance. When the trade unions remember AIIEA they recall this gigantic effort. It was NMS who gave this call in the 1998 AIIEA conference at Hyderabad.

Pension was a benefit which the insurance employees had been longing for since long. Com. Sundaram could see the commonality of this demand for the employees of insurance

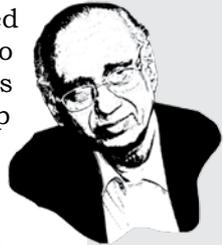


and banking and was instrumental in forging the Joint Action Committee bringing together the insurance and banking employees on one platform on the issue of Pension. Hyderabad comrades remember the numerous visits he made to Hyderabad to organise the meetings of the JAC. Finally, Pension was clinched in 1995 and comrades remember NMS for his stellar contribution in realizing this.

During wage negotiations he was always on one simple argument. 'Basic Pay is the mother benefit and negotiate to have a higher basic pay'. He also believed that the wages of insurance employees should be on the basis of the performance of insurance industry and should not be fixed on extraneous reasons.

Like Pablo Neruda said "He studied to be a hurricane wind, He fought himself until his blood was extinguished. Only then was he worthy of his people". He was quintessentially a man of organisation. He would spend any time needed to see that organisational issues were resolved. His closeness with the cadres was also an advantage which encouraged many cadres to take up leadership. The continuity of leadership across all the levels was also due to this aspect that he was looking much ahead in building the organisation. He played a pivotal role in bringing women comrades to forefront in the union activities and encouraged them into taking leadership of the organisation. When it came to organization, Com. Sundaram would never confine himself to the four corners of the insurance industry. With his unflinching commitment to the ideology of the working class, he had a firm conviction that insurance employees could never aspire to a life free from exploitation unless they made common cause with other sections of the exploited people. It was this understanding that propelled him to envision the "People for India" forums as a broader platform to fight injustice and exploitation of all kinds.

He was a man who respected and enjoyed music. He was a person who studied literature with as much sincerity and interest as he did history. He was a comrade who studied economics from the people's angle. It would be no exaggeration to say that his horizon of understanding and depth of knowledge was encyclopaedic. He would not keep them to himself but would teach others too. Hence, he was also called the 'Professor of University of AIIEA'.



He was a person who wanted the working class to remain united. He was every inch of his persona a secular person who would practice and teach the term in its truest sense. He was a democrat who would give the chance for others to speak and express. He was a communist who wanted a society without exploitation to be built and wanted the insurance employees also to be part of this effort. Today one cannot believe that Com. Sundaram is no more with us. But what if he is not there?

*Rahen na Rahen Hum, Meheka Kareng  
Ban ke Kali, ban ke Saba, Bagh E Wafa mein ...  
Mausam Koi Ho Is chaman mein, Rang banke rahenge hum khiraama...*

(Whether or not I am here, this fragrance will remain  
Amongst the flower buds, in the garden of faithfulness  
In all the seasons, I shall colour the garden of your life)

Whether Com. Sundaram remains with us or not, his memory will continue to inspire us and guide us towards realizing the cherished goals which he held so dear to his heart.

AIIEA SALUTES AND DIPS THE BANNER IN MEMORY OF

THE GREATEST GENERAL OF INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' MOVEMENT.

AIIEA conveys its deepest condolences to the family of Com. Sundaram and also to all the comrades of AIIEA.

**Com. NM Sundaram Amar Rahe....**





Amanulla Khan

## Com. Sundaram Walked the Talk His Ideas Live On

रहने को सदा देहर में आता नहीं कोई  
तुम ऐसे गये ऐसे भी जाता नहीं कोई  
*Nobody comes in world to live for ever  
Nobody also leaves the way you left*

**T**he suddenness of Com N.M.Sundaram's departure on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2017 is both shocking and deeply painful. It was really hard to believe that he has left us. Just a month earlier he was in the conference of SCZIEF at Udupi. He was full of energy, physically active and mentally agile moving around talking to the young cadres and inspiring them. In the discussions he had with me during those four days, I could make out that he was disturbed with the political and social situation in the country. The spread of communal poison across the country in an unprecedented scale deeply worried him. His address to the Conference reflected this concern when he questioned as to how one can be victimised and targeted due to accident of his or her birth. He was disappointed but was not disillusioned or overawed by the situation. He expressed hope and confidence that the movement of the working class in which insurance employees will have to play an important role will defeat all attempts to divide the Indian society on

communal lines and protect the secular and democratic character of the country.

The sudden demise of Com Sundaram is a huge loss not just to the insurance employees but to the entire working class. Yes we cannot but mourn his death. It is both a personal and organisational tragedy. But our grief should not overshadow the brilliant and rich life he lived. We, therefore, need to celebrate his life and draw lessons from his rich life and struggles and continue to walk the path that we all chose to build a decent and just society.

My first encounter with Com Sundaram was in early 1974 when he visited Bangalore along with Com Saroj to congratulate the employees for the successful struggle against lock-out. He looked a confident and determined person. Half the divisions locked out in the country were from his Zone and he had to lead the employees to success from this vicious attack from a very powerful government. But I did not find any trace of wear down on his face or from the body language. When he spoke, the self confidence and the confidence in the employees and organisation were clearly seen. As I grew in the organisation, my acquaintance with Com Sundaram also grew and it developed into a close relationship after I joined the Secretariat of AIIEA in 1999. Though

I and Com Venu were the youngest members in the Secretariat at that time, he placed lot of faith in us to help him during wage negotiations and other issues relating to the employees. This certainly helped our understanding about the issues and politics involved and enabled us to shoulder responsibilities later when we were asked to give the leadership to AIIEA.

Com Sundaram was fortunate that he worked with Coms Chandrasekhar Bose, Saroj and Sunil and had ample opportunities to learn from their experiences. These comrades had rich experience of participating in the national liberation movement as also waging a fierce resistance against the pre-nationalisation exploitation in the insurance industry. Their lived experiences convinced the founders of AIIEA on the need to build the organisation on class lines.

Com Sundaram made significant contribution to build the AIIEA as a revolutionary trade union of insurance employees. He continuously reminded the cadres and members that AIIEA is not just a mere bread and butter trade union but something much more than that. He pointed out that the working class cannot secure justice in a deeply exploitative capitalist society and AIIEA is duty bound to work along with other sections of the working class, progressive and democratic forces to construct a fair, just and equal society.

He was clear that to meet the challenges thrown by neo-liberalism and communalism, the unity of the trade unions alone is not enough and wider sections of the people have to be mobilised. Impressed by a program organised at Bangalore in the name of People For India, he placed the proposal to the Raipur Conference of AIIEA in 2003 that AIIEA units

should take the lead in forming People For India forums across the country to mobilise all progressive forces against neo-liberalism, divisive politics and socially regressive practices. This proposal was accepted and AIIEA could achieve considerable success in many centres to expand our reach and influence through PFI forums.

Com Sundaram had a clear understanding that theory without practice is of little help. Therefore he used to ask the cadres to walk the talk raising the question if everybody wants to only talk, who will walk. This reflected his correct political understanding and a determination to make the organisation perform the broader duties it is expected to. He was absolutely right as

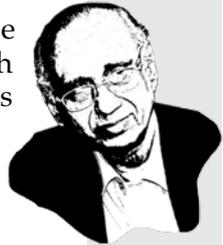
*Vision without a task is merely a dream;*

*A task without a vision is simply drudgery;*

*Vision with action can change the world.*

He therefore took upon himself the task of making AIIEA as an organisation that walks the talk.

Com Sundaram was aware of the cruelties imperialism can inflict on both human race and the nature. He was equally clear that the marauding global finance can destroy societies and the nations. He, therefore, took upon himself the task of educating the working class through his brilliant writings exposing the imperialist led globalisation. He saw the dangers to the insurance industry from the globalisation of finance capital very early and led the insurance employees from the front to defend the industry. It is a glorious struggle which perhaps has no parallel in the trade union movement. It is a miracle that a small trade union could take governments of the day head on and stop all efforts to privatise the



*We remember Com Sundaram for his rich and worthy life.*

*We remember him for the noble ideas that he propagated.*

*We remember him with gratitude for his invaluable contribution to raise the life standards and improve working conditions of insurance employees.*

*We remember him for his contribution to secure a social security in the form of Pension for the insurance employees.*

*Above all we remember him as a great human being. It is certain that Com Sundaram and his ideas will continue to live in our hearts and inspire our struggles.*

*He showed us how to live*

insurance industry for over a quarter century.

Com Sundaram always took principled and uncompromising stand on all issues. The turbulent days in the aftermath of the destruction of Babri Masjid created deep divisions in the Indian society and trade union movement was also not left untouched. Sundaram felt that AIIEA cannot remain unconcerned with these developments; any vacillation in this hour of crisis was to betray the historical responsibility of a class oriented trade union. He said that the destruction of Babri Masjid was a frontal attack on the Indian Constitution and rule of law and therefore has to be condemned. He appealed for peace and communal harmony. A section of the leadership of Baroda (Vadodara) unit of AIIEA threatened to disaffiliate from the AIIEA if the circular of AIIEA is not withdrawn. Com Sundaram stood firm and refused to deviate from the principles of AIIEA that see indisputable virtues in unity and communal harmony so necessary to keep the country united.

AIIEA has always remained an organisation of truth and honesty. It has always spoken truth to both the powers and its members. This is the reason why the AIIEA enjoys the trust of not only its members but also its adversaries. The AIIEA demands from its leadership trustworthiness and incorruptibility to a degree that one is incapable of being false to a trust, responsibility or pledge. Com Sundaram lived these ideals. He was a leader with integrity as can be described in the words of William Wordsworth:

*Who comprehends his trust, and to the same  
Keeps faithful, with singleness of aim;  
And therefore does not stop, nor lie in wait  
For wealth or honour, or for worldly state.*

For many it is a wonder as to how comrades like Sundaram can work tirelessly for decades to the cause they have undertaken. The answer is simple. It is their commitment and belief and a desire to do good for humanity. Com Sundaram had strong belief in socialism despite the campaign that it is a system that cannot work. The collapse of the socialist experiment in USSR did not erode Com Sundaram's belief that socialism is an idea; an

idea of emancipation of human race; an idea of dignity of life for every habitant in the world. He was absolutely right. The experiment may have failed but the idea is not. This idea continues to inspire all those who believe in an exploitation free society. Com Sundaram is no longer with us but his ideas about the nation, society and our organisation lives on as Sahir so beautifully puts it:

जिस्म मिट जाने से इन्सान नहीं मर जाते  
धडकनें रुकने से अरमान नहीं मर जाते  
सांस थम जाने से ऐलान नहीं मर जाते  
होंठ जम जाने से फरमान नहीं मर जाते  
जिस्म की मौत कोई मौत नहीं होती

*With the dying body men do not die  
When the heart stops beating, wishes don't die  
When breathing stops, declarations don't die  
With the freezing of lips, mandates do not die  
The death of the body is no death!*

We remember Com Sundaram for his rich and worthy life. We remember him for the noble ideas that he propagated. We remember him with gratitude for his invaluable contribution to raise the life standards and improve working conditions of insurance employees. We remember him for his contribution to secure a social security in the form of Pension for the insurance employees. Above all we remember him as a great human being. It is certain that Com Sundaram and his ideas will continue to live in our hearts and inspire our struggles. He showed us how to live as the following lines of Shailendra suggest:

के मर के भी किसी को याद आयेंगे  
किसीके आंसुओंमें मुस्करायेंगे  
कहेगा फूल हर कली से बार बार  
जीना इसी का नाम है

*Even when dead,  
will be remembered by someone,  
That we will smile  
through someone's tears,  
A flower will tell a bud, on and on,  
That this is what life is all about!*

Red Salute to Com. Sundaram  
Long Live Com Sundaram.



**Chandrasekhar Bose**

## Carry Forward the Mission of Com N.M.Sundaram

On December 26, 2017 morning at about 10 is, I received a telephone call from Com K.Natarajan saying that Com Sundaram was no more. I was so shocked that I repeatedly asked him 'our Sundaram our Sundaram. He replied yes - just about one hour back he was talking to Mrs Sundaram; suddenly he collapsed. It was hard to believe. Only some days back on 14<sup>th</sup> December I talked to him to inform that it was my 96<sup>th</sup> birthday. He wished me and informed that he would meet me at Nagpur in February 2018 on the occasion of the conference of All India Insurance Pensioners' Association. Natarajan told me that it was a massive heart attack.

My mind went back in 1959 when there was a negotiation with the management of LIC, I do not remember on what issue. All the Zonal Secretaries were present in Bombay (Mumbai). We were staying in 'Ship Hotel' next to VT station. Com K.G.Ramanathan (Ramji) came as the Zonal Secretary of South Zone. One day there was a telephone call for Ramji from Madras (Chennai). He talked for sometime in Tamil; then handed over the receiver to me saying that a new and a very promising comrade would talk to you. It was Com Sundaram. Possibly he was then an Assistant Secretary of the Division.

At that time the Madras Division in South Zone was in a very bad condition. There were differences among the leadership and they were always quarrelling. It was also the Zonal headquarter of SZIEF. All other divisions were quite strong. They were responding to the calls of the AIIEA very enthusiastically. Subsequently when Com Sundaram came to the leadership, everything changed for the better.

Com Sundaram was studying at Pune residing at his uncle's place. His father was a Development Officer of LIC. He was the Secretary of the All India Field Workers' Union (name of the Development Officers' union then). He was a well respected leader. He had a big family. In 1957, LIC had to recruit a good number of Class III employees throughout the country on ad-hoc basis. The Recruitment Rules were approved in 1959. Then a crisis arose. The LIC announced that the employees will be recruited on the basis of a written test and interview. It was notified that test will be held at the zonal headquarters. The employees who were working on ad-hoc basis also had to appear for the test; those passing would be retained in LIC and others had to go. Total numbers of ad-hoc employees were more than 10-12 thousand throughout the country.

The AIIEA had to intervene. We met the LIC officials in Central Office and protested that AIIEA would never agree to the decision. We informed the Central Office officials that we would give a call of agitation. Ultimately after discussions with AIIEA it was decided that a special nominal test would be held for these employees; the idea was not to fail but pass. When the test was held all those employees passed and they came in permanent roll of the LIC. So Com Sundaram had to sit for that test along with other ad-hoc employees and all of them were taken as permanent employees.

Afterwards he passed his graduation from Tribhuvan University in Nepal as a private candidate. Initially he was the Divisional leader. He became the General Secretary of the Zonal Federation and then the General Secretary and President of AIIEA.

He became the member of AIIEA Negotiating Committee and took part in all the negotiations. His other qualities are correctly mentioned in the circular issued by AIIEA. Out of the three pillars of AIIEA; Com Saroj and Sunil passed away long back. Now the last one – Com Sundaram passed away. But before that he created a well established AIIEA leadership to run the organisation.

Among the first generation leadership, I am the only surviving member. I lost a very intimate friend and comrade.

I hope and believe that leadership at all levels would carry forward the mission of Com N.M.Sundaram.

Long Live the memory of Com N.M.Sundaram.

## MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCES

*The AIIEA has received messages of condolences expressing shock over the sudden and untimely demise of Com N.M.Sundaram and extending solidarity with the insurance employees in this hour of grief from a large number of trade unions and individuals from various walks of life. We thank all these organisations and individuals. It is not possible to publish all the messages received due to paucity of space and hence we are reproducing only a few of them.*

I am extremely shocked to know the sudden demise of Com N.M.Sundaram. Please convey my heartfelt condolences to the family of Com Sundaram and the entire fraternity of insurance employees.

**Sitaram Yechury,**  
**General Secretary, CPI (M)**

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, in session in New Delhi expresses its shock over the sudden demise of Com. N.M. Sundaram, one of the senior leaders of Indian Trade Union movement and especially that of the Insurance Workers Movement today on 26.12.2017 at Chennai. He was 80.

Com. Sundaram, had led the All India Insurance Employees Association, in various capacities including that of the General Secretary for Sixteen years and President for six years. He had played a major role in the

struggle of the Indian Working people against privatization and other disastrous impacts of neo liberal economic policies. He was a prolific writer and orator and had written articles and books on various aspects of neoliberal economic policies.

CITU pays its homage to the memory of Com. Sundaram and also conveys condolences to his family members and to the Comrades of AIIEA.

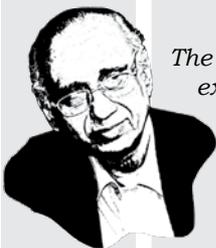
**Tapan Sen**  
**General Secretary, CITU**

I express my deep condolence on the sad demise of Com. N.M Sundaram. Comrade NMS was one among the National leaders of Indian Trade Union movement and led several struggles for the Rights of Insurance Employees.

He has been fighting for the protection of public sector and leading struggles against the impacts of neo-liberal economic policies. He had played a major role in the struggle of Indian working class against privatization.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to the family of Com. NMS and the Comrades of Insurance Employees Association.

**T.P.RAMAKRISHNAN**  
**Minister for Labour, Skills & Excise**  
**Government of Kerala**





K Venu Gopal

## Com. Sundaram our Teacher & Guide

**Com.** NMS or Com. Sundaram as he was called with affection, reverence and love was a great comrade who will be remembered for ever for his varied contributions to the organisation. He was an orator, a philosopher, an economist, a trade union leader, a teacher, and a guide to many of the comrades across the country.

I had an occasion to be with him in 1973 when he came to Vizag to resolve an organisational issue. He was running fever at that time. But he continued to have meetings with the leaders and the cadres and the members for three days. I was given the responsibility to attend to him. When asked whether he would go back to Chennai and again come back he said that he could go back to Chennai only after finding a solution. That was the Sundaram I remember on my first contact with him.

Pension struggle was one which was organized by him through a joint movement

of insurance and bank employees. He used to make frequent visits to Hyderabad since the convener of the JAC was at Hyderabad and many meetings took place at Hyderabad. Hyderabad comrades had an occasion to see him working on the issue at close quarters in his ability to keep the unity of bank and insurance employees together in achieving a great benefit.

He was a person with a vision - a vision for the industry and the organisation. He loved the industry and the employees alike. At the time when private insurance companies entered the insurance industry, he as the leader of the insurance employees' movement led from the front to provide the necessary confidence and today we see the result when the PSU insurance companies are going strong even after 17 years of the entry of private insurance companies.

On 26th December 2017 when the news of Com. Sundaram passing away reached us,

He was an orator, a philosopher,  
an economist, a trade union leader,  
a teacher, and a guide to many  
of the comrades across the country.

I was shocked and could not believe. Only a month ago he was there with us in the Conference of the SCZIEF at Udupi and very active. And also subsequently he participated in the Chennai I conference with lot of enthusiasm. He was telling the comrades that attending such conferences and interacting with the comrades gives him further energy.

At a young age of 25 he became the General Secretary of SZIEF, the largest Zonal Units of AIIEA. He continued to lead the Zonal Unit till 1988 when he became the General Secretary of AIIEA. When he took over the responsibility from the legendary leader Com. Saroj Chaudhury, he was already a tall leader in his own right. But he accepted the responsibility with humility and said that he would have to "fill the big shoes of Com. Saroj Chaudhuri". And he did meet the expectations of the comrades.

Winds of liberalization started in 1991. He was a visionary who could see that the defeat of these policies could be only with the support of the people of this country.

The campaign among the public was the fulcrum around which he designed the tactics of struggle. His essays on the impact of the globalization were the basis for the campaign by the AIIEA.

The slogan - campaign at the seat and campaign on the street- was very successful. He convinced the organization that the necessary level of technology would stand us in good stead in serving the policyholders and make them our true friends. Thus today LIC has the technology advantage of servicing the 40 crore policies. The campaign of 15 million signatures during 1999 benefits us even today when people continue to bestow their faith in public sector insurance. When the trade unions remember AIIEA they recall this gigantic effort. Even at the international conferences of TUI and WFTU the mention of mobilising 15 million signatures would be received with huge applause. It was NMS who gave this call in the 1998 AIIEA conference at Hyderabad. In fact the national media covered the conference with a tag of "trade union conference against privatisation". Star TV ran

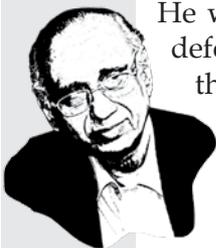
the news for two days.

Pension was a benefit which the insurance employees were longing for. I remember many comrades who were raising the issue of Pension in the conferences. Com. Sundaram saw the common demand for the insurance and banking and was instrumental in forging the Joint Action Committee bringing together the insurance and banking employees on the issue of Pension. Finally Pension was clinched in 1995 and comrades remember NMS. It also goes to the tenacity of Com. NMS that a clause was inserted in the Pension Scheme that LIC would meet the short fall in the fund to meet the day to day payments of Pension.

He respected and enjoyed music and classical dance. On occasions, he used to discuss about the difference of movements in Bharatanatyam, Odyssey, Kathak and Kathakali. He was person who studied literature. His quote "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" from A Tale of Two Cities caught the imagination of the people whenever he used to talk about the challenges and opportunities in a given situation. When Pension was clinched and when there was a discussion whether it was a second benefit or third benefit, he beautifully explained it in the words "A rose is a rose by whatever name you call". In fact Bengaluru comrades produced a documentary on Pension struggle with the same name. After the successful completion of AIIEA conference at Hyderabad in December 1998, he addressed the meeting of the volunteers and he called them "a thousand young beautiful flowers" and comrades remember that even today.

For me he will ever remain the Sundaram, the handsome comrade who was a trade union leader who taught economics and politics with a people's perspective, and a person who loved and respected the Indian Music and Dance.

Few people in the world will live even beyond their death, because of their selfless contribution for the people. NMS is one of them.





बी. सान्याल

## कामरेड सुन्दरम: एक अविस्मरणीय व बेमिसाल व्यक्तित्व

फायदे केवल तर्क देने से नहीं मिलते हैं,  
ट्रेड यूनियन की ताकत तथा संघर्षों से मिलते हैं।

— एन.एम.सुन्दरम

लाल झंडा लेकर कामरेड,  
आगे बढ़ते जायेंगे,  
तुम नहीं रहे इसका गम है पर,  
फिर भी लड़ते जायेंगे।

26 दिसम्बर 2017 की सुबह जब यह हृदयविदारक समाचार मिला कि हमारे प्रिय, हर दिल अजीज कामरेड एन.एम.सुन्दरम अब हमारे बीच नहीं रहे, तो कुछ समय के लिये इस मर्मभेदी समाचार को सच मान लेना असंभव ही लग रहा था। फिर एकाएक याद आया कि परिस्थिति हम तैयार नहीं करते हैं, हमें तो उपलब्ध परिस्थिति का दृढ़ता से मुकाबला करना ही होगा। और इसीलिये सच्चाई कितनी भी क्रूर व निर्मम क्यों न हो, कामरेड सुन्दरम का अचानक हमारे बीच से चले जाने की शोकस्थ कर देनेवाले हकीकत को स्वीकार कर लेने के अलावा हमारे पास और कोई विकल्प नहीं है।

बहुआयामी एवं सौम्य व्यक्तित्व के धनी, सुदर्शन, प्रकांड ज्ञानी, प्रखर वक्ता, उत्कृष्ट आन्दोलक व प्रचारक, हर परिस्थिति में दृढ़ता के प्रतिमूर्ति, सामूहिक सौदेबाजी के मामले में कुशाग्र प्रतिभाशाली कामरेड नारायणन मीनाक्षी सुन्दरम, जिन्हें सारा देश प्यार और आदर से एन.एम.एस. के नाम से पुकारता था, का निधन केवल बीमा कर्मचारियों के आन्दोलन ही नहीं अपितु सम्पूर्ण देश के ट्रेड यूनियन एवं जनवादी आन्दोलन के लिये एक अपूरणीय क्षति है।

बीमा कर्मचारियों के ट्रेड यूनियन आन्दोलन तथा व्यापक जनवादी आन्दोलन के लिए ऐसे चमत्कारिक

कुर्बानी देने वाले कामरेड सुन्दरम जैसे बहुत कम लोग ही होंगे। अर्थशास्त्र, राजनीति, कला, साहित्य, चित्रकला, संगीत, नृत्य एक मायने में जीवन तथा समाज के हर महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्र में कामरेड सुन्दरम केवल दिलचस्पी ही नहीं लेते थे वरन् इनमें से अधिकांश मामले में पारंगत भी थे। बिरले ही होते हैं वे लोग जो अपने असाधारण प्रतिभाओं का उपयोग स्वयं के हितों के लिये न कर समाज के वंचित तबके के हितों को समृद्ध करने के लिये करते हैं। बिरले ही होते हैं वे लोग जो अपने आदर्श एवं विचारधाराओं को प्रतिस्थापित करने के उद्देश्य से हर तरह के प्रतिकूल परिस्थिति से मुकाबला करने के लिये सहर्ष तैयार हो जाते हैं। बिरले ही होते हैं वे लोग जिनके हृदय दूसरों के दुःख व पीड़ा देखकर स्पंदित होता है। बिरले ही होते हैं वे लोग जिनके सामने व्यक्तिगत सुख व समृद्धि सुनिश्चित करने की अपार संभावना मौजूद रहने के बावजूद मानवता के व्यापक हित में स्वेच्छा से काँटों भरा रास्ता तय करते हैं। कामरेड एन एम सुन्दरम त्याग व बलिदान के क्षितिज में एक देदीप्यमान नाम थे। मजदूर तथा व्यापक जनवादी आन्दोलन के लिये सबसे कठिन, जटिल एवं चुनौती पूर्ण घड़ी में कामरेड सुन्दरम जैसे उज्ज्वल हस्ताक्षर का हमारे बीच से अचानक चले जाना अपने आप में एक बड़ी त्रासदी होने के साथ – साथ, एक गंभीर चुनौती भी है।

कामरेड सुन्दरम के साथ मेरा संबंध लगभग चार दशकों से रहा है। मुझे आज भी स्पष्ट रूप से याद है 1988 में ए.आई.आई.ई.ए के जयपुर सम्मलेन में किंवदंती कामरेड सरोज चौधरी के स्थान पर महासचिव निर्वाचित होने के बाद जब मैंने उन्हें बधाई देते हुये कहा, 'बधाई हो कामरेड महासचिव', तो उन्होंने असहजता महसूस

करते हुये कहा, 'मुझे महासचिव नहीं सुन्दरम कहो'। 29 साल तक कामरेड सरोज चौधरी ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. के महासचिव रहे। एक तरह से ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. के वे पर्याय बन चुके थे लेकिन, ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. जैसे महान संगठन की खूबी ही यही है कि हमारे लिये व्यक्ति नहीं संगठन ही सर्वोपरि होता है। संगठन को गतिशील व जुझारू बनाये रखकर उसे और मजबूती देने के लिये समय पर नेतृत्व में उपयुक्त परिवर्तन करना सांगठनिक गतिशीलता का अनिवार्य अंग है और जब इस अतिमहत्वपूर्ण सांगठनिक आवश्यकता की मांग पर जयपुर सम्मलेन में कामरेड सरोज के स्थान पर किसी अन्य को महासचिव पद पर निर्वाचित करने का सवाल पैदा हुआ तो कामरेड एन एम सुन्दरम ही स्वाभाविक विकल्प के रूप में उभरकर सामने आये। हालांकि शक करने वालों की कमी नहीं थी, लेकिन, इतिहास इस बात का सबसे बड़ा गवाह है कि कामरेड सरोज के विकल्प के रूप में कामरेड सुन्दरम का चुनाव बीमा कर्मचारियों तथा भारत के वित्तीय संस्थानों में कार्यरत कर्मचारियों व अधिकारियों के ट्रेड यूनियन आन्दोलन के लिये एक अति महत्वपूर्ण युगांतकारी निर्णय साबित हुआ।

अपने चुनाव के बाद जयपुर सम्मलेन को संबोधित करते हुये कामरेड सुन्दरम ने कहा, 'मुझे मालूम है कि आज मैं अपने पैरो को ऐसे जूते में डाल रहा हूँ, जिनका नाप मेरे पैरो से बड़ा है'। कामरेड सरोज के प्रति अगाध श्रद्धा एवं आदर से प्रेरित होकर ही उन्होंने यह बात कही थी। लेकिन इस उक्ति में कामरेड सुन्दरम की सहजता व विनम्रता भी झलकती है। जिम्मेदारी की विशालता निश्चित ही एक कारण रहा होगा लेकिन, हर तरह की कठिन, जटिल, विषम और चुनौतीपूर्ण जिम्मेदारी को सहर्ष स्वीकार करने का नाम ही कामरेड एन एम सुन्दरम था। यह सच है की उस समय भी शारीरिक रूप से वे संपूर्ण स्वस्थ नहीं थे लेकिन, इतिहास ने इस शख्स के लिये जो अहम जिम्मेदारी तय कर दी थी, उससे मुह मोड़ लेना कामरेड सुन्दरम के फितरत में नहीं था।

कलकत्ता से ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. का मुख्यालय चेन्नई स्थानांतरित होने के बाद उनके सामने सबसे बड़ी सांगठनिक चुनौती थी एक सशक्त टीम तैयार करना जो दक्षता के साथ मुख्यालय की जिम्मेदारी को पहले से बेहतर तरीके से निभा सके। इसमें उन्हें चेन्नई के

साथियों का भरपूर एवं प्रतीबद्ध सहयोग मिला। महासचिव बनते ही उन्होंने 1989 के वेतन समझौता को हासिल करने की जिम्मेदारी को बेहतरीन तरीके से अंजाम तक पहुँचाया। एक कुशल एवं दक्ष रणनीतिकार के रूप में उन्होंने 1989 के वेतन समझौता के संघर्ष के दौरान ही 'नो पेंशन नो सेटलमेंट' का नारा दिया था। यह एक सुचिंतित कौशलगत कदम था, जिसने आगे चलकर पेंशन को मूर्त रूप देने के संघर्ष की जमीं तैयार किया। वेतन समझौता की बारीकियों के बारे में कामरेड सुन्दरम की पैनी व सतर्क निगाह अपने आप में किवदंती बन चुकी थी। कर्मचारियों के हितों से संबंधित छोटे से छोटे मुद्दे जब तक हल नहीं होते थे उन्हें चैन नहीं मिलता था। जहा तक पेंशन का सवाल है, इस देश के ट्रेड यूनियन आन्दोलन के बड़े बड़े हस्तियों ने इस बात को सहर्ष माना है कि बीमा एवं बैंक कर्मचारी-अधिकारियों के पेंशन की अवधारणा के कामरेड सुन्दरम न केवल रूपकार रहे बल्कि अत्यंत प्रतिकूल राजनितिक एवं आर्थिक हालातों के बावजूद उसे सार्थक बनाने के उद्देश्य से संघर्ष तैयार कर अंजाम तक पहुँचाने के मामले में भी उनकी सर्वोत्तम भूमिका रही। इस मामले में एक मजेदार घटना आज भी मुझे याद है, उस समय श्री एस. पी. सूबेदार भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम के प्रबंध निदेशक हुआ करते थे, कामरेड सुन्दरम के नेतृत्व में हम जब केंद्रीय कार्यालय में गए थे तो, सूबेदार जी ने एक फाइल दिखाते हुये कहा कि 'मैंने अपना व्यक्तिगत पेंशन फाइल बना ली है अब इसमें लागू होने की तारीख लिखना बाकी है जो एएएइए मुझे बताएगा'। इस कथन के पीछे जो अन्तर्निहित हकीकत है इससे इंकार करनेवाले केवल बेईमान ही हो सकते हैं।

कामरेड सुन्दरम के महासचिव बनते ही बीमा उद्योग के सामने जो सबसे बड़ी चुनौती आई वह थी, बीमा उद्योग के निजीकरण का खतरा। उनके नेतृत्व में ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. ने 1989 से ही भांप लिया था कि अमरीकी साम्राज्यवाद की गिद्ध नजर भारत के राष्ट्रीयकृत बीमा उद्योग पर टिकी हुई है। वास्तविक हमला शुरू होने के पहले ही उन्होंने संगठन को तैयार कर निजीकरण विरोधी शक्तियों को भी शनैः शनैः एकजुट करने की कोशिश प्रारंभ की। 1989 में दिल्ली में अमरीकी सुपर 301 के खिलाफ ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. व ऊक्वहअल का संयुक्त कन्वेंशन उसी की उद्घोषणा थी। 1994 में मल्होत्रा समिति की सिफारिशों के खिलाफ देश की जनता को लामबंद करने के सुनिर्दिष्ट मकसद के साथ कामरेड सुन्दरम ने एक से एक रणकौशल तैयार किया। जिसमें रास्ट्रीयकृत बीमा उद्योग की हिफाजत में कई तरह की प्रचार सामग्री जारी करने के साथ साथ आम जनता से डेढ़ करोड़ से अधिक हस्ताक्षर प्राप्त करना भी शामिल है। अपने अंतिम समय में कामरेड सुन्दरम को यह संतोष निश्चित ही रहा होगा कि निजीकरण व उदारीकरण रूपी साम्राज्यवाद के कुटिलतम हमलों के बावजूद बीमा

Seldom we find persons with extraordinary talents, utilising them not for themselves, but for the betterment of the deprived sections of the society; seldom we see persons, despite vast opportunities open before them for individual happiness and prosperity, voluntarily choose the path full of thorns, in the interests of humanity.

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अनिल कुमार भटनागर

## विलक्षण प्रतिभाओं के धनी कामरेड एन.एम. सुन्दरम!

इतिहास घटनाओं से बनता है और घटनाएँ व्यक्ति बनाते हैं। इतिहास में जो प्रधान रूप दिखाई देता है वह उन युग पुरुषों का चरित्र है जो ऐतिहासिक महत्व के कार्य कर गये हैं। ऐसे ही महान व्यक्तित्वों में कामरेड सुन्दरम का नाम सदैव स्मरणीय रहेगा।

भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम में मेरी नियुक्ति के समय मैंने देश के बीमा कर्मचारी आंदोलन के प्रख्यात नेताओं कामरेड सरोज, कामरेड सुनील एवं कामरेड सुंदरम की त्रिमूर्ति के बारे में सुना। बीमा कर्मचारियों के हित में ट्रेड यूनियन एवं राजनैतिक विभिन्न कार्यों के सम्बन्ध में इस त्रिमूर्ति का देश की राजधानी दिल्ली में प्रायः आना-जाना होता रहता था और क्योंकि एल.आई.सी. में नियुक्ति के बाद मेरी पदस्थापना दिल्ली में ही थी, अतः मुझे इन महान नेताओं के विभिन्न अवसरों पर उद्बोधनों को सुनने का अवसर प्राप्त होता रहता था। इन नेताओं के निरंतर दिल्ली आते रहने एवं कामरेड आर.पी. मनचंदा के दिल्ली आधारित सांगठनिक गतिविधियों के सम्पर्क में आते रहने ने मुझे ऑल इंडिया इन्श्योरेन्स एम्पलाईज एसोसियेशन के एक सिपाही के रूप में बीमा कर्मचारी आंदोलन में सम्मिलित होने के लिए प्रेरित किया।

26 दिसम्बर 2017 को प्रातः 8.20 बजे जब हमने साथी नारायण मीनाक्षी सुंदरम (एन.एम.एस.) के निधन का दुःखद समाचार सुना तो हम सभी को गहरा धक्का लगा। ज्ञात हुआ कि प्रातः काल में हृदयाघात के कारण उनका देहांत हुआ।

साथी एन.एम.सुंदरम ऑल इंडिया इन्श्योरेन्स एम्पलाईज एसोसियेशन के पर्यायवाची थे क्योंकि उन्होंने इस संगठन के विकास में अहम भूमिका निभाई एवं इसके साथ ही उनका स्वयं का भी अभूतपूर्व विकास हुआ। यह एक अद्भुत अवसर था कि वे मात्र 23 वर्ष की युवावस्था में ही साउथ ज़ोन इन्श्योरेन्स एम्पलाईज फैडरेशन के संयुक्त सचिव पद पर निर्वाचित हुए थे

और सन् 1963 में अति शीघ्र ही उन्होंने साउथ ज़ोन इन्श्योरेन्स एम्पलाईज फैडरेशन के महासचिव पद का दायित्व संभाल लिया। वे इस संगठनात्मक जिम्मेदारी को सन् 1988 तक बखूबी संभाले रहे एवं इसी वर्ष जयपुर में सम्पन्न अधिवेशन में वे ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. के महासचिव निर्वाचित हो गये। वर्ष 1960 में ऑटोमेशन के खिलाफ चले संघर्ष में वे मद्रास कमेटी के कन्वीनर चुने गए और दक्षिण रेलवे के मद्रास मुख्यालय में आरम्भ होने वाले ऑटोमेशन के खिलाफ अभियान व प्रतिरोधी संघर्ष उनके नेतृत्व में सफलता पूर्वक चलाया गया। इस संघर्ष के ऊंचाईयों पर पहुंचने पर संगठन ऑटोमेशन के खिलाफ संघर्ष में सफल हुआ क्योंकि कलकत्ता स्थित एल.आई.सी. की ऐतिहासिक इलाको बिल्डिंग में कम्प्यूटर लगाये जाने के सरकार के प्रयास पूरी तरह विफल हो गये। वर्ष 1991 में तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री नरसिम्हाराव द्वारा आरम्भ की गयी एवं उसके बाद की सरकारों द्वारा जारी रखी गयी उदासीकरण-निजीकरण-वैश्वीकरण की नीतियों के खिलाफ कामरेड सुंदरम के नेतृत्व में चलाया गया बीमा कर्मचारियों का सफल आंदोलन संगठन की एक महान उपलब्धि रही। देश के ट्रेड यूनियन आंदोलन के समक्ष विभिन्न चुनौतियों एवं इस की भावी भूमिका के बारे में उनका दर्शन उनके द्वारा लिखित विभिन्न लेखों में स्पष्टतया प्रतिबिम्बित हुआ जिनमें उन्होंने विश्व व्यापार संगठन/डंकल प्रस्तावों तथा मल्होत्रा कमेटी रिपोर्ट व बिलों के असल मसूबों को अपने दस्तावेजों में उजागर किए। कामरेड सुंदरम के नेतृत्व में ही सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र बीमा उद्योग के निजीकरण के खिलाफ देश भर से 1.54 करोड़ हस्ताक्षर एकत्र किये गये जो कि देश के ट्रेड यूनियन आंदोलन में एक ज्वलंत उदाहरण के रूप में सदैव अंकित रहेगा।

वे आर्थिक, राजनैतिक एवं संगठनात्मक मुद्दों पर एक प्राध्यापक थे। किसी भी विकट संगठनात्मक समस्या

को संतोषजनक ढंग से हल करने की उनमें क्षमता थी। जब उन्हें दिल्ली में भारत सरकार ने कृषक-मामलों पर एक मंच पर उद्बोधन हेतु आमंत्रित किया तो हम सभी ने गौरवान्वित महसूस किया। आर्थिक एवं अन्य राष्ट्रीय मुद्दों पर उनके उत्तम ज्ञान के मद्देनजर उन्हें विभिन्न देशी/विदेशी विश्व-विद्यालयों/महाविद्यालयों में व्याख्यान हेतु आमंत्रित किया जाता था।

वित्तीय क्षेत्र के संस्थानों के कर्मचारियों व अधिकारियों के संगठनों की एक सयुक्त कार्यवाही समिति गठित कर वित्तीय क्षेत्र में पेंशन के सिद्धांत को लागू कराने के लिए किये गये संघर्ष व ऐतिहासिक उपलब्धि के लिए वित्तीय संस्थानों के अधिकारी/कर्मचारी सदैव ऋणी रहेंगे। इस संघर्ष के माध्यम से वे न केवल वित्तीय संस्थानों के कर्मचारियों व अधिकारियों के लिए पेंशन हासिल करने में कामयाब रहे बल्कि इन संस्थानों के समक्ष विभिन्न चुनौतियों के सफल मुकाबले के लिए संयुक्त संघर्षों को चलाने में भी उनकी अहम भूमिका रही। ऑल इंडिया बैंक इम्प्लॉईज कन्फेडरेशन के तत्कालीन महासचिव साथी गोडबोले ने उन्हें 'ज्ञान के खजाने?' की संज्ञा उचित ही दी थी।

साथी सुंदरम विभिन्न मुद्दों पर पूर्ण लेखक एवं प्रबल वक्ता थे। उनके द्वारा लिखित पुस्तकों- *Global Finance Capital on Rampage, Politics of Anti-development*, *Fragility of Global Finance Capital: Free Market Capitalism Exposed* आदि एवं बीमा क्षेत्र के निजीकरण के खिलाफ लेखों की अन्य विभिन्न श्रंखलाएँ उनकी विलक्षण प्रतिभा के प्रमाण हैं। इन्शुरेंस वर्कर में श्रवणम ए स्मज ने चसंल च्वसपजपबेश के शीर्षक से प्रकाशित लेखों की श्रंखला ये साबित करती है कि नवउदारवादी एवं अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय वित्तीय व्यवस्था जिनके माध्यम से साम्राज्यवादी शक्तियों का अंतिम उद्देश्य दुनिया की विकासशील

अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को आर्थिक व राजनैतिक रूप से गुलाम बनाना है, ऐसे मुद्दों पर साथी सुंदरम की श्रेष्ठ समझ थी। साथी एन.एम.सुंदरम ऐसे नेता थे जिन्होंने बीमा क्षेत्र के ट्रेड यूनियन आंदोलन को राजनैतिक दिशा दी। कोई भी संगठन राजनैतिक समझ के बिना शासक वर्ग के पैशाचिक मंसूबों व चालों के खिलाफ सफल संघर्ष नहीं चला सकता।

साथी एन.एम.सुंदरम अपनी वात्रा-निपुणता के लिए जाने जाते थे जिनके बल पर वर्ष 1988 से 2003 तक उन्होंने ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. के महासचिव तथा वर्ष 2003 से 2007 तक अध्यक्ष के रूप में दायित्वों का निर्वहन कर बीमा कर्मचारियों के लिए उनके महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धियाँ हासिल कीं।

साथी सुंदरम ने ट्रेड यूनियन आंदोलन में महिलाओं की सहभागिता को सुनिश्चित करने एवं उन्हें संगठन में नेतृत्वकारी भूमिका में आने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करने हेतु विशेष प्रयास किये उनके प्रयास संगठन में बदलाव लाये और संगठनात्मक स्थिति ऐसी है कि बीमा क्षेत्र में कार्यरत महिलाएँ संगठन में विभिन्न स्तरों पर नेतृत्वकारी भूमिका निभा रही हैं।

ऐसी विलक्षण प्रतिभाओं के धनी हमारे प्रिय नेता कामरेड एन.एम. सुंदरम को दिनांक 26.12.2017 को मौत के क्रूर हाथों ने हमसे छीन लिया। लेकिन दीपक जो इस संगठन व देश के ट्रेड यूनियन आंदोलन में प्रकाश बिखेर गया है, वह सदैव रोशनी देता रहेगा-

आज मौत हारी मरने वाले की अमर कहानी। वह हर दिल में छोड़ गया है खुशबु भरी निशानी। टूट खिलौना गया सुगन्धित मिट्टी नहीं मरेगी। लै मिट्टी का दीप राह पर दुनिया चला करेगी। कामरेड एन. एम. सुंदरम अमर रहें! कामरेड सुंदरम को लाल सलाम!

## एक अविस्मरणीय व बेमिसाल व्यक्तित्व

Cond from P15

उद्योग के राष्ट्रीयकृत स्वरूप को सुरक्षित रखने में ए.आई.आई.ई.ए. सफल हुई।

कामरेड सुन्दरम की याद में इस लेख को लिखते समय ऐसे असंख्य स्मृति यादों के झरोखों में मौजूद है जिन्हें चंद शब्दों या एक लेख में रखना संभव नहीं है। अब भी इस बात को स्वीकार करने में अत्यंत तकलीफ महसूस हो रहा है कि अब और कभी कामरेड सुन्दरम मुझे अपने सीने से नहीं लगायेंगे। अब और कभी उनकी गंभीर और निष्कपट आवाज मध्य रात को टेलीफोन के जरिये मेरी कानों में गुंजेगी नहीं। सांगठनिक क्षति के साथ साथ मेरे लिये व्यक्तिगत रूप से यह एक ऐसी निर्मम क्षति है जिसे पूरा करना मेरे बचे हुए जीवनकाल में असंभव ही है।

कामरेड सुन्दरम जैसे महान शख्सियत को हम केवल उनके बताये गए रास्ते पर अविचलित रूप से आगे बढ़ते हुये इन्सान के द्वारा इन्सान के शोषण से मुक्त समाज

निर्माण के मानव सभ्यता की अन्तिम लक्ष्य तक पहुँचने के लिये दृढ़ प्रतिज्ञ होकर ही सच्ची श्रधांजलि दे सकते है. जैसा कि मशहूर शायर फैज़ ने कहा है...

अभी गरानिए-शब् में कमी नहीं आई  
निजाते- दीदा-वो- दिल की घडी नहीं आई  
चले चलो कि वो मंजिल अभी नहीं आई  
कामरेड सुन्दरम जैसे व्यक्ति मरा नहीं करते. उनकी कृतियों के जरिये वे हमेशा जनता के हृदय में जीवित रहते है.

शायद ऐसे ही अमर व्यक्तित्व के लिये कवि गुरु टैगोर ने कहा था..

साथ लाये थे मृत्युहीन प्राण  
मौत से तुम उसे ही कर गए दान.  
कामरेड सुन्दरम अमर रहे.

कामरेड सुन्दरम को लाल सलाम.

कामरेड सुन्दरम के अरमानो को-मंजिल तक पहुँचायेगे.

Com. Natarajan with Com. Sundaram and Com. Saroj Chaudhury, the then General Secretary of AIIEA.



K. Natarajan

## Camaraderie and Leadership Personified

**I**t is difficult to believe and assimilate that five decades of Association has come to an end; and it will take time to percolate within.

When it was dawn on December 26, 2017, there was no inkling that a sad news was going to descend affecting the psyche.

**Com. N.M. SUNDARAM, the Leader and Comrade is no more.**

As a young employee, transferred from Cuttack in 1967, I joined the Southern Zonal Office at Madras and could get acquainted with comrades like Com. NMS.

Never I knew then, his association and friendship would kindle the energies in me and in the days ahead. I would have an opportunity to work in close co-ordination with him in South Zone Insurance Employees' Federation.

I had admired his skills and leadership qualities when Com. Sundaram led the Automation Struggle in South Zone. His horizon expanded beyond LIC. When as part of computerisation efforts, a Computer was to be installed in the Southern Railway Office in

Madras, LIC employees were in the vanguard of protests and some got arrested.

I could watch him from close quarters and also learn the nuances of leadership. Though he was a Leader of Leaders, Com. NMS's nature was he mingled with all employees never letting any one feel alienated.

While he was at the helm in the South Zone, his contribution to decision making process of AIIEA was worth emulating.

Com. Sundaram shouldered the twin responsibilities at SZIEF and AIIEA with conviction and courage for more than fifteen years. These years had been crucial in the onward march of AIIEA.

A split in the Organisation, on ideological moorings, was successfully fought by Com. Sundaram and he could ensure that in almost all Divisions of the combined South Zone, AIIEA could maintain its majority. This, he did risking his personal safety and had to face an assault in Bombay suffering physical injuries, for spearheading AIIEA.

It was at this time during wage revision

struggle, selective lock-out was clamped in Madras and other Divisions in South Zone and the Leadership provided by Com.Sundaram ensured that a wage agreement with lifting of Lock Out was achieved.

When the Country was facing Emergency with all rights abrogated, Com.Sundaram could protect the Organisation from the onslaughts and his determination and encouragement to the cadres in Madras helped them to host an AIIEA Working Committee.

I had been a direct witness to the meritorious role of Com.N.M.Sundaram, when Collective Bargaining Rights were taken away and Bonus and Dearness Allowance were under attack.

The wage negotiations under difficult circumstances with no collective bargaining right was a challenge and Com.Sundaram gave his best to lead to a successful culmination.

A major fire accident in the LIC Building in Madras in 1975 disrupted the servicing apparatus as policy servicing was centralised then.

Com.Sundaram's leadership saw to it that servicing was restored to near normal level immediately thereafter exhorting the employees to do their best and assuring them that Organisation will safeguard their interests braving the calamity.

When it was time for Com.Saroj Chaudhuri, after his retirement from LIC, to hand over the mantle, the natural choice was Com. Sundaram; but he would say with humility that Head Quarters was shifted to Madras because of the strong base and in the process, he donned the role of General Secretary of AIIEA. Com.N.M.Sundaram and his dedicated team worked hard to live up to the high standards set by Calcutta.

Com.Sundaram led from the front struggles against the policies of globalisation and privatisation of insurance industry and he had been a chief spokesman before many of the Parliamentary Committees earlier to Malhotra Committee and also later Committees.

When Pension issue came to the fore, Com. Sundaram forged an united struggle and many meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee on Pension had been held at Madras and I had been admirer of the ways he projected the issues how he assured that Pension in lieu of PF was beneficial and how it was possible to achieve a breakthrough and I personally know how he collected and worked on figures to achieve pension.

Insurance Worker, when published from Chennai, and earlier too, has seen his strenuous work, deep commitment, vast knowledge as an intellectual giant and his penchant for carrying the message to the cadres.

When the country witnessed rise of divisive tendencies and attack on dissent, his concern was for building a social fabric free from all evils.

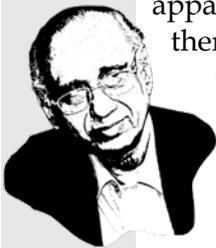
He was fierce orator in English and passionate speaker in his Mother Tongue.

Com.Sundaram may not be with us today. But his ideals remain; his resolute will guide us; his all pervasive personality and his comradely spirit endears one and all.

The Tribute to Com.N.M.SUNDARAM will only be to work for his vision of a Nation that is truly democratic and secular where

**" INSAAN KO INSAAN SE HO BHAI CHARA".**

Let us eulogise Com.Sundaram by working like him!



A major fire accident in the LIC Building in Madras in 1975 disrupted the servicing apparatus as policy servicing was centralised then.

Com.Sundaram's leadership saw to it that servicing was restored to near normal level immediately thereafter exhorting the employees to do their best and assuring them that Organisation will safeguard their interests braving the calamity.





Bhagwan Swaroop Sharma

## Com. N M Sundaram - Inspirational Genius Some of my recollections

“The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight. But they, while their companions slept, were toiling upwards in the night”

The heart-rending news of sudden demise of Com. N M Sundaram on 26-12-2017 came as a rude shock that cast a pall of grief over the entire Insurance fraternity. His death has removed from our midst a stalwart trade unionist who dedicated his whole life in furtherance to the cause of insurance employees movement in particular and that of the working class in general. It will take years to fill the void created by his death. Words fail to express the loss caused by the sudden demise of com. N M Sundaram. In the truest sense he was a doyen, a strong pillar in his own domain. His demise is like the end of an era, he strongly represented through his writings.

My association with com. NM Sundaram dates back to the year 1968 when AIIEA assigned to both of us the job of attending the proceedings before the National Industrial Tribunal at Delhi. The NIT was constituted to

adjudicate our wage dispute. I was thereafter included in the negotiating committee of the AIIEA and remained in its Core Group necessitating our frequent visits to Bombay that brought us more closer to each other resulting into our mutual affinity, which provided me many opportunities to know Com. N M Sundaram intimately. He was a multifaceted leader - a great scholar, an effective orator, organiser, writer, crusader, campaigner, fighter, and negotiator - all in one. He was endowed with rare gift of logical presentation with great oratorical talents apart from his organisational skills, it was his ideological clarity on working class issues that made him stand apart. Trade Unions, has larger role i.e going beyond the struggles for economic interests of the workers. He was an inspirational genius of our trade union movement, relentless critic of social inequalities existing in our country, and a crusader of secular values, a prolific writer.

At this moment of recollection of the past, many events flood in. It is difficult to organise

my thoughts, but it is my duty to make an attempt to bring out his many halting spots which are not only the milestones of insurance employees movement but quite unfolding the fine attributes of NM Sundaram about his amazing sense of confidence and firm conviction that AIIEA is undefeatable. Going down the memory lane, some unforgettable incidents/initiatives are imbedded in my memory.

1. I remember that in the evening of 08-01-1974, we came to know that from the following day i.e. 09-01-1974, lockout would be imposed by LIC in Delhi, Madras, Bangalore and Patna Divisional offices and in the Machine Deptt. of Dharwad Division. I recall at that crucial moment i.e. in the night of 08-01-1974 itself Com. Sundaram, remaining undeterred in the face of such an unprecedented onslaught, instantly recommended to AIIEA to decide immediately to call upon the remaining employee of the locked out divisions to go on indefinite strike and ask the employees of the other remaining Divisions to resort to intense work to rule. Alacrity with which the decision was taken and implemented manifestly unnerved the Corporation. AIIEA came out victorious and an honourable settlement was concluded in the night of 24-01-1974. Com. Sundaram was the prime mover of this decision which amply reflected his steadfastness and conviction in the strength of employees and their movement. Another important event relating to this settlement, I recall that when Com. NM Sundaram was informed that the issue of undoing of large number of victimisation cases would be dealt with afterwards, he became emotionally surcharged, with his choked voice and tears in his eyes he bemoaned for such a situation. He said that he would not be in a position to face the victimised comrades, Com. Sunil Maitra explained in details the reasons for that and after hearing him, he had a sigh of relief. This incident revealed his unalloyed expressions of his concern and passion towards his fellow comrades and certainly speaks eloquently about the best attributes of his personality.

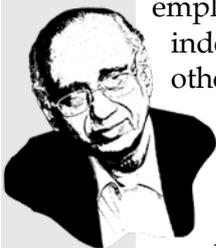
2. When Babri Masjid was demolished

on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1992, AIIEA issued a circular condemning the action of demolition which was nothing but a calculated assault on the secular ethos of our country. The Varodra Divisional unit of AIIEA protested against AIIEA's action of condemnation of the demolition, and threatened that if the said circular was not withdrawn, they would disaffiliate from AIIEA. It was a nerve testing time, but Com. Sundaram did not submit to their dictates and instead opted for sacrificing the membership of Vadodra Division. This episode established once again that a motley crowd is no substitute to a disciplined organisation nurtured and fostered on ideological convictions. This could be possible only with the determined and committed leadership of Com. NM Sundaram.

In 1972 when a split in the AIIEA was being engineered in Bombay Com. Sundaram and Com. Dev started addressing the meetings of LIC employees in Bombay. The splitters designed physical assault and inflicted on them knife wounds to prevent them from addressing the employees and awakening them about the real motives of the splitters. Com. Sundaram and Com. Deo did not relent and remained undeterred. They continued addressing the meetings in Bombay. It proved their firmness and the fact that they couldn't be cowed down. For such acts of bravery, he shall always be remembered.

Securing the benefits of pension was the sterling achievement of AIIEA under the leadership of Com. Sundaram who shall never be forgotten by the employees. Today thousands of retired employees and the members of their families are highly indebted to his leadership. It was his Conviction, Determination and Vision with which he awakened the employees and hurled them into struggle to secure this benefit. The requisite strength to make the Government move was ensured by him combining our struggle with that of the Bank Officer's. But for his timely initiatives, we might have missed the Bus. Red Salute to the memory of Com. NM Sundaram.

The Success of AIIEA under his leadership in getting the process of our wage revision de-linked from the bank pattern is another matter of worth recollecting. Having suffered



a lot in the wage-revisions of 1985 & 1989, Com. N M Sundaram took all possible steps to get the issue of wage-revision decided on the basis of the progress and paying capacity of the corporation but failed in 1996 despite prolonged struggle. However, his vision worked well and struggle bore fruits when AIIEA succeeded in having our subsequent wage revisions completely de-linked from Bank parameters. Today, insurance employees get more compared to that of Bank employees. It is all due to his determined initiatives & struggles. His contribution is quite significant, and insurance employees' movement shall not forget this.

During the last round of discussion held in 1995 in respect of wage revision due from 01.08.1992, AIIEA did not accept the proposed terms of wage-revision. The government issued notification unilaterally on 23.02.1996 without taking into account the view point of AIIEA. At that time, a view was expressed that if we did not give our consent for the wage – notification the other unions might succeed in misleading the employees that AIIEA had no role in that wage-revision Com. Sundaram stood firm and told that he had implicit faith in the sagacity of the employees. He carried on a relentless campaign and struggle reflecting his determination, He used to tell that when you step down on the battlefield, your unity is your weapon let us broaden it, Let us continue

to play our role we are destined to, He always placed his reliance on the employees & their struggle.

In the year 1991 itself he felt that the neo-liberal policies being pursued by the Government of the day would be disastrous to our country and the employees in general. The way he awakened the comrades to the portending evils of the neo-liberal policies, hurled them in a prolonged struggle, ensured broader mass platform to oppose these policies, has so far prevented listing of LIC on share market & stalled disinvestment of Public Sector General Insurance Companies for a fairly long time. He shall never be forgotten for his contribution in awakening the working class against these pernicious politics.

I can recollect many such incidents which embellished his personality, but for want of space I am refraining myself from doing that. Suffice to say that Com. Sundaram has left an indelible mark on the trade union movement of insurance employees. He is now consigned to memory sooner than he deserved to be and much earlier than his Comrade could have anticipated. The best tribute to him will be to continue his legacy of Commitment, Dedication, Determination and Sacrifices for the cause of working people.

COM.SUNDARAM AMAR RAHE.



WITH VOLUNTEERS-24TH AIIEA CONFERENCE - ERNAKULAM





Celebrating Golden Jubilee of Insurance Worker Com. David, then Manager of Insurance Worker is at the extreme right

K.David

## Com. N.M.Sundaram would Live In My Heart till Eternity

With a lot of pain in my heart, I attempt here to recall briefly my long association with Comrade N.M.Sundaram, who passed away on December 26, 2017. When I was an Office-Bearer of ICEU, Madurai Division in the early Seventies, I spent most of my energy and time in coordinating the activities of fraternal trade unions and extending moral and material support to their agitations. This was possible since there were competent and efficient leaders in our union to look after the interests of the insurance comrades.

But whenever Com.N.M.Sundaram visited the southern parts, he used to ask me to accompany him. We had together visited centres like Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Nagercoil, Thiruvananthapuram, etc. where he used to address the employees. I had also accompanied him whenever he addressed special Seminars on his famous subject of liberalization. On a day prior to a Seminar held in a hill station near Madurai, he practiced his speech several times loudly even late in the night. On the next morning, the first session was allotted to Com.Tamilchelvan, a prominent leader of the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers and Artists Association. He was and continues to keep

his audience spell-bound with his oratory and meaningful speeches with anecdotes and with a lot of humour.

When he finished his interesting speech, it was the turn of Com.N.M. Sundaram to present a Paper on his favourite subject of LPG and address the huge gathering, most of whom were intellectuals. The lunch-time was nearing and people started to move out. This had little effect on Com.N.M.Sundaram who used to speak even to a couple of listeners because of his conviction. It was I who was disappointed with the way such intellectuals behaved in the meeting.

Once when Com.N.M.Sundaram started to speak in the open session of a Conference of Madurai Division, there were loud protests by a section of the audience which demanded him to speak in Tamil. I was presiding over the meeting and I repeatedly appealed to the protestors to remain calm assuring them that after Com.N.M.Sundaram finished his speech, a Tamil version of it would be presented to the audience, but since the shouting continued, Com.Sundaram could not continue his English speech. But, he assured the protestors that he would learn and speak in Tamil within a

short period of time. He is not one to forget his promised actions. As everyone knows, Tamil is a tough language and one would find it difficult to learn it, but Com.Sundaram started speaking in chaste Tamil within a short period of time.

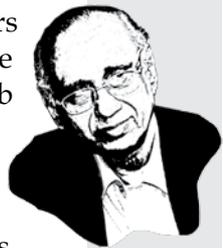
A new building to house the Madurai Divisional Office of LIC was being constructed adjacent to the burning ghat and the whole area was in thick smoke and bad smell. Discussions at the higher level of LIC and even protest actions did not yield the desired results. The demand of the Union was for the air-conditioning of the whole building to protect the employees. Ultimately, the AIIEA fixed up a discussion on the demand with the then Chairman of LIC, Shri T.A.Pai, on January 1, 1971 and Com.N.M.Sundaram and myself formed part of the Negotiating Committee of AIIEA. Ultimately the Chairman was persuaded to concede the demand for air-conditioning of the building.

While I was doing some translation work for the *Theekkathir* Tamil Daily, at some point of time, I was made a member of the Editorial Board and was doing writing and editing for about 20 years after my office hours. I used to work from 5-30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. everyday and since my house was very near, I would reach home within five minutes. When I was about to retire in March, 1996, I was persuaded to work in the Editorial Board till June 1996 when the General Elections to the Tamil Nadu Assembly were to be held. I had planned to settle in Chennai after my retirement and I was asked to continue the work in the *Theekkathir* Office in Chennai. Those were days when there was a huge shortage of hands in the newspaper offices both in Madurai and Chennai. When I reached Chennai, I learnt that with the shifting of the AIIEA headquarters from Calcutta to Chennai, it had been decided to shift the publication of *Insurance Worker* also to Chennai. In the absence of competent people to handle the work, there was the possibility of discontinuing the publication since Com. Ramen Bhattacharjee could not manage the work at Calcutta. Then came the surprise

suggestion to entrust the work at Chennai utilizing my services. The proposal was made to me by Comrades N.M.Sundaram, R.Govindarajan, K.Natarajan and others, but I was reluctant to take up the work for two reasons. The first was my promise to continue to work for *Theekkathir* newspaper and the second reason was that I had my own doubts whether the *Insurance Worker* job can be handled by me. While it was published from Calcutta, eminent leaders like Comrades Chandrasekar Bose, Saroj Chaudhury, Sunil Maitra, Ramen Bhattacharjee and N.M.Sundaram were involved in the work maintaining a very high standard. Ultimately, Com.N.M.Sundaram persuaded me to take up the work with the promise that himself, Comrades R.Govindarajan and K.Natarajan would render all help. This was done only after persuading the leaders of the CPI (M) Party to relieve me from the newspaper work, which itself was a great task. The Party leaders were of the opinion that there would be competent hands in LIC to take up the job of *Insurance Worker*, but the *Theekkathir* newspaper was running short of hands.

Comrades N.M.Sundaram and R.Govindarajan kept up their promises and took up the roles of Editor and Publisher respectively of *Insurance Worker*. Both of them came to help me whenever the occasion demanded. I did not hold any post at the beginning, but was doing the work consciously. Myself and Com.V.Devanathan, who was appointed as the Manager, went to Calcutta and there Com.Ramen Bhattacharjee taught us the basics of printing and publication of *Insurance Worker*. The first issue of *Insurance Worker* was published from Chennai in November, 1996 and I involved myself in the work till June, 2011 when it was shifted to Bangalore.

Today, the two great leaders who helped me to acquire proficiency in the work and made me a writer and reporter, are no more, but they are bound to be within my heart till eternity.





H I Bhatt

## Com. N M Sundaram - The Great Thinker A Role Model for Youth

**T**he AIIEA and the working class as a whole suffered a massive blow when on the 26th December of 2017 our beloved comrade Com.N.M.Sundaram left suddenly due to massive cardiac arrest. After the demise of Com.Sunil Moitra and Com Saroj Choudhuri insurance employees of this country lost another legendary leader com.NMS.

Com. NMS took over the leadership of AIIEA at very crucial period. He strode the trade union scenario like a gentle colossus and became a legend in his own life time. He served the organization and came to symbolize the hopes and aspirations of the multitudes of insurance employees under the glorious banner of AIIEA. For over five decades he had taken the organization to great heights in tune with the traditions of AIIEA. His death is an irreparable loss, the void of which can never be filled-up. He was not only a leader but a great revolutionary, a tireless organizer, a restless thinker, a prolific writer, a brilliant orator, effective agitator and skilful negotiator, simple and easily accessible to others. His foresight,

dynamism and a deep commitment to the Insurance employees and working class were very transparent and discernable in all action.

He built up a very strong joint trade union movement of employees against privatization of banking and insurance sector. His contribution in developing Insurance employees movement against automation, fight against split of LIC & Neo-Liberal policies of the Government is appreciated by the working class. Com. NMS had travelled many parts of the world and participated in various international conferences. He was actively associated with the Trade Union International (Public and Allied Employees

Com. NMS played a stellar role in building up the Forum of Bank and Insurance Unions which was known as JAC (joint action committee). Com NMS was the main architect of insurance and Bank employees' movement for pension. Today lakhs of insurance and bank employees are secured by pension scheme because of this visionary leader. His spirit of understanding and accommodation

in propelling a united movement has been acclaimed by everyone.

Similarly, he also realized that women employees have to be organized, activated and integrated in the organizational activities and took a lot of initiatives. If today, women employees are getting represented to some extent in the organization at various levels including in the AIIEA secretariat and Zonal Office Bearers in team of AIIEA, it is in no less measure due to the persistent efforts of Com NMS.

In the fast changing scenario of increasing hostile attacks on the trade unions, their rights, the jobs and job security of the employees, Com NMS labored had to bring in necessary changes in the orientation of our movement from mere fighting for economic demands to shifting the priorities to fighting fundamental attacks. His slogans of "DEFEAT PRIVATISATION AND STRENGTHEN PUBLIC SECTOR INSURANCE INDUSTRY" exemplify his vision and far-sightedness.

In his 61 years of continuous trade union activity, he had become a titan and a colossus. But his death has created a void, which cannot be filled up. The death of this illustrious leader is a grievous blow and a great loss to our movement. His life-long crusade was an inspiration to the entire middle-class trade union movement in general and bank employees' movement in particular.

Remembering NMS for his lifelong contribution and mission will give us the courage, confidence and hope for the furtherance of the cause for which he stood for and to dedicate ourselves to work for the same.

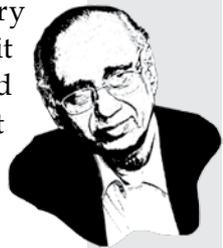
Leaders like Com.NMS live beyond the grave and to them; death signified nothing more than mere consigning their mortal remains to nature. But they live forever because they stood for a cause and gave their life for the same.

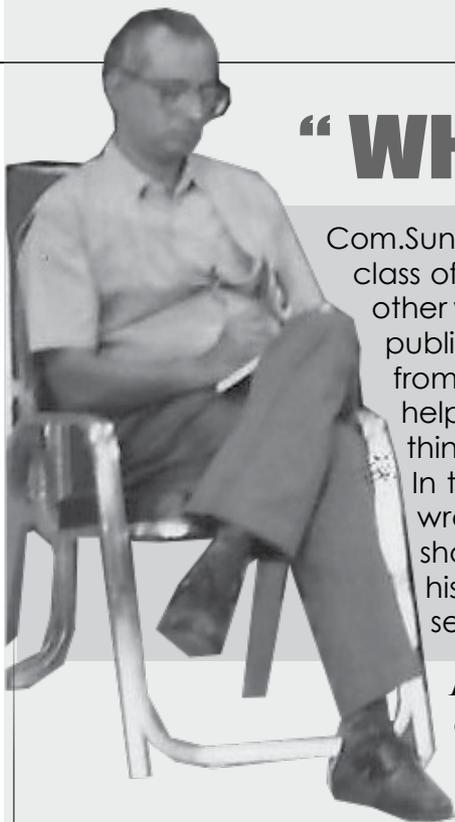
Com NMS was perhaps one of the last links between the fast fading generation of insurance

employees who had founded and built up this mighty AIIEA and the present generation of employees. To all of us, like our illustrious leaders Com. Saroj, Com.Sunil & Com.NMS will ever inspire us in our continuing fight. His qualities of providing enthusiasm and sustenance had attracted young cadres like me in the movement. He has always guided, helped and encouraged me to function efficiently in difficult days. In the week before his death he was frequently inquiring with me about political situation of Gujarat and about state assembly elections. He wanted to write on non planning expenditure by Central Government and for that he asked me to get a book from IIM Ahmedabad. I remember the day when Com.NMS inaugurated the unit of AIIEA at newly opened Gandhinagar Division in 1990. While inaugurating he said that this new born child of AIIEA will lead WZIEA/AIIEA because child is very healthy, energetic and confident. The unit had 99 percent membership. I was elected as a first president of Gandhinagar unit and the entire election procedure was conducted by com.NMS. WZIEA was very much important for him because corporate office is in Mumbai and existence of other unions and divisive forces are also in this Zone. WZIEA can take pride that the last Zonal conference held at Ahmedabad in 2007 which was inaugurated by Com NMS as President of AIIEA.

Com NMS dedicated his entire life to the cause of the insurance employees and the working class. The real homage that we shall pay to Com .NMS would be to take a pledge that we shall work to fulfill his unfinished tasks and dreams. Let's close our ranks, work cohesively and united and move forward. Let us give a befitting account of ourselves in taking forward our beloved AIIEA whose baton Com.NMS was carrying all these years.

Com NMS lives on forever because he lives in the hearts of millions of insurance employees.





## “ WHY DO I WRITE ? ”

Com.Sundaram was a prolific writer. He inspired the working class of India through his writings. His selected articles and other writings were published in the form of books. We are publishing here the reviews of these books and selections from his own prefaces from these books. We hope it will help our readers to understand the politics, ideology and thinking of Com. Sundaram.

In this section, we are also recalling three circulars he wrote as General Secretary of AIIEA, one after the shocking demolition of Babri Masjid and two after the historic achievement of pension benefits in the public sector insurance industry.

*From Com. N M Sundaram's preface to his 'Fragility of Global Finance Capital' published in 2011*

The All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) celebrated its Diamond Jubilee Year Conference in November 2010. If any trade union can celebrate this event proudly and with a sense of fulfillment, it must be the AIIEA. This is so for the simple reason that AIIEA, always believed that the workers in whichever sector, must have a proper understanding of the social, economic and political policies, from the point of view of the toiling masses, whether organized or unorganized.

The cadres of the AIIEA are being made to realize this and are seen to be involving themselves in the struggles of other sections as well. They have also been educated about the exploitation going on against the underprivileged class and those categorized as backward classes, Dalits as well as tribal communities. The AIIEA has succeeded in its efforts to integrate these deprived communities with the mainstream to a considerable extent. But much more requires to be done. Centuries of exploitation of these people who are as much Indian citizens as anyone else, must be quickly ended. The AIIEA does not compromise on this struggle.....

The well educated employees in the IT

sector, though comparatively paid better, are made to undergo levels of stress and exploitation to an extent unimaginable. This is true of those working in the garment manufacturing, construction and such other sectors too. There are many more industries where the workers get exploited to a degree that can only be described as inhuman. Merely because some sections are paid high comparatively, does not mean they would not be exploited. But in India, the workers in the unorganized sector, getting paltry wages, undergo exploitation many times more and much more cruelly than those employed in the organized sector.

In the midst of all this, the women get exploited much more and in several other ways, including sexual harassment and abuse.

This unfortunate situation in a country that calls itself a democracy must be considered a shame. These exploited sections being very much disadvantaged, cannot tackle their problems by themselves. This shameful situation must be remedied. The organized sections of the workers, must come forward to take up the task. It is satisfying that several of AIIEA leaders and cadres are actively involved in this task.....

Often, we hear people in high places,

particularly those whose business is business, including those occupying seats of power, criticizing the workers movement and struggles, as retarding the progress of the country. American President Calvin Coolidge (1929-33) once said: *"America's business is business"* The father of modern free market economics, Milton Friedman also echoed the same thing, in the 1990s. These two were in effect, speaking not only for their country but for all the countries, where workers' / people's welfare is last on the agenda or not at all.

They do not realize that the progress of the country is not measured in terms of GDP or the stock market indices, but by the quality of life of all sections of the people. Those in the seat of power do not realize that mere averaging out per capita income does not truly reflect in the wellbeing of the people. Wielding political power, they take care of their own peculiar interests rather than the people's interest. At the same time, they would pontificate to the workers on what is right and what is wrong and that struggle by the workers is against that particular industry's interest as well as the country's economic development. They often pontificate to the workers and toilers how honest they must be in their work! Can hypocrisy go any further?

These elements also preach that politics is not for the workers and they should keep away from political activities. Our contemptuous reply to this must be that the workers have as much right as anyone else of the citizenry. More than that the reply must be, instead of: *"Politics being the last refuge of a scoundrel,"* as Winston Churchill spoke in a particular context of his own, it should be the concern of all – every citizen. It is this, they constantly deny and in doing this, they have a vested interest. In the circumstances, the toiling masses must proclaim and defend that proclamation. They must proclaim and ensure that politics and political activity is also for the workers, who alone can democratize the country. They alone can work and struggle, in order that the society becomes more democratic and truly reflects the interests of the masses of the people. Otherwise, 'democracy' would remain just ornamentation in the Constitution and the statutes enacted thereunder. Constitutional and other political

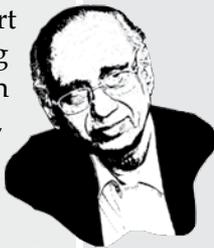
and human rights would remain denied altogether.

Refusing to acknowledge the human and democratic rights of the workers and keeping them away from political activities and struggles, is the bane of the Indian trade union movement – of the Indian polity itself. Sometimes, sadly, the Government actively working towards this objective, succeeded in securing the help and assistance of the leaders of a section of the trade union movement itself. This must be overcome; this could be done only by educating workers on a broad spectrum of issues and subjects. No trade union should hesitate and refrain from undertaking this task. There is no odium attached to the term 'political'. The stigma is sought to be attached by the vested interests who desire to exploit without any hindrance.

Even the educated and most certainly those in power, do not accept the truth that workers and toilers have as much right to influence policy decisions as others. To them we retort with contempt: 'If your business is using the political levers to maximize exploitation and thereby maximizing your own profits, the trade union's business is to thwart it and try and force a policy that would be egalitarian and equitable to all sections of the people, who have remained neglected all the time.' The trade union's right and responsibility is to democratize the society in the true sense, not just confine to taking care of the workers they happen to represent, in regard to their wage and service conditions. The rights in the constitution and laws enacted are for the people, including the workers to understand and enforce. Or else, they are only as good as they appear in paper – dead rhetoric, without any use or validity.

Having asserted this, the workers must be educated on all nuances of public policies and public interests, on the constitution as well as laws. They must be in a position to judge and assert what social, economic and political policies should be followed in the interests of the generality of the people. Otherwise, what we call a democracy would turn into a mere hollow shell, with no substance inside. It would turn into an autocracy of the rich and the powerful.

The trade unions must educate the workers



as to why the private as well as public authorities seek to crush the struggles of workers; why they are resisting even the workers rudimentary rights of organizing their own trade union, hoisting the union's flag and holding meetings to discuss what they should do and in what manner they should organize struggles. After all, this is one of India's rudimentary laws - the right to organize trade unions.

Let not the workers befool themselves that through the trade union struggles alone they would be in a position to bring about a change in the society in the manner they want. Trade union struggle is only a learning process about the dynamics of the society, how it operates and whom it benefits.

Unless the truth of this understanding is consolidated in political form - in a political organizational framework, exclusively of the workers and toilers, imbued with proper ideological orientation about the dynamics of exploitation, nothing can be done. This orientation should help the workers to transcend the stage of ordinary economic struggles to one with clear political orientation in the interests of all toiling sections. There must be the realization that none other than the working class would be able to give leadership and achieve this.

These problems cannot be tackled and these historical tasks cannot be undertaken unless a basic knowledge and understanding of the goings on in the name of growth and now globalization is obtained. The workers and their trade unions, should also know the objectives of many of the policies and laws enacted by the government, such as, in whose interests these are being done and enacted. This task could be successfully fulfilled only if the workers and trade unions come to the realization of the larger responsibility they have to the society, to the country and people as a whole. This indeed,

is the critical objective, albeit just falling short of the larger transformation of the society itself bereft of exploitation.

It must be realized that apart from this being a moral responsibility, if the unorganized sections continue to remain ignorant and take a fatalistic view of the process of their exploitation, sooner or later, the struggles of organized sections of the workers too would be blunted. It would become impossible to even organize. This has happened all too frequently in several countries of the world. Therefore, fighting for the larger interests of the people and securing their social, political and economic rights, is a responsibility never to be forgotten by the trade unions.

Still some trade unions chose to claim that they are apolitical! This indeed is strange. This in itself is a kind of politics - the politics of blunting the consciousness of the working class and toilers so that they could be manipulated and continue to be exploited. Let us not mince matters: the objective of the working class is social change. The tendency to keep the workers away from class struggles, therefore, must be resolutely fought against.

This was the reason why, these series of articles were written month after month, under the general heading: "*Come, let us play politics.*"

Having spent well nigh 50 years in the leadership of a conscious, active and vibrant trade union movement - AIIEA - that has always revolted against all manners of exploitation, I have learnt much and much more needs to be learnt and learning, much more struggles need to be organized. The process of education could never stop.

I am aware that the credentials of this militant trade union - or for that matter of its functionary - to write and comment on what goes on in the name of social, economic and political policies, would not come into question. ....

- N.M. Sundaram

Com. Sundaram gives the following quotation at the end of his preface:

*"People who shut their eyes to reality simply invite their own destruction, and anyone who insists on remaining in a state of innocence long after that innocence is dead turns himself into a monster."*

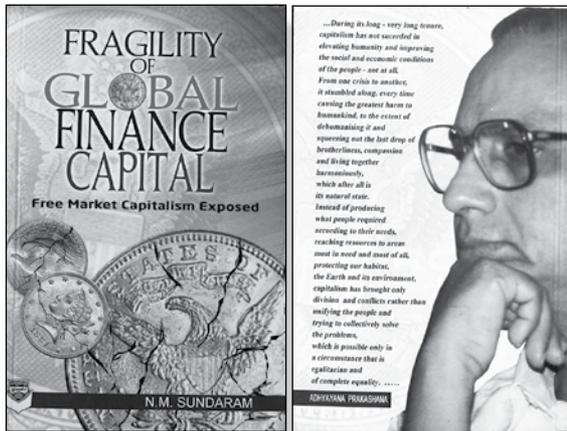
— James Arthur Baldwin

from *Stranger In The Village-Notes of a Native Son*, 1955

*'Fragility of Global Finance Capital: Free Market Capitalism Exposed'*

## A critique of neo-liberalism and the games imperialism plays to control global economy and politics

-Amanulla Khan

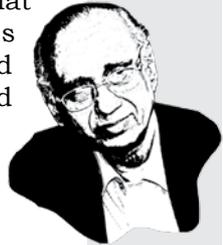


.....'Fragility Of Global Finance Capital: Free Market Capitalism Exposed ' is a collection of 27 articles written by him for Insurance Worker in the past two years. Insurance Worker is widely read and respected monthly journal of All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA). The AIIEA has earned respect and appreciation of the Indian working class and other progressive sections for its uncompromising struggle against neo-liberalism. N.M.Sundaram's book is a critique of neo-liberalism and the games imperialism plays to control global economy and politics.

Fidel Castro, the icon of resistance against imperialism was once asked: why he dislikes capitalism. Fidel answered 'I find capitalism repugnant. It is filthy, it is gross, and it is alienating ... because it causes war, hypocrisy and competition". This book of Sundaram demonstrates that capitalism is really repugnant and makes the worker bleed from every pore to earn profits.

This book has come at a time when the world has been hit by an economic crisis comparable to the Great Depression of 1930s in its devastating impact on the working class. Crisis is inherent in capitalism under the very nature of its production relations which is social nature of production and individual appropriation. Capitalism goes through cyclical crisis of over productions and slumps. Despite this a myth has been carefully created in the past few decades about the infallibility of capitalism. The ideologues of capitalism

had declared that capitalism is the final destination of humanity and there cannot be any progress for humanity beyond capitalism. The present global crisis has demolished this myth. Interestingly Sundaram had foreseen the developing crisis as early as 2003. In his article published in August 2003 under the title '*American economy on a cliffhanger*' he had made a detailed analysis of the problems confronted by the real economy of that country. Sundaram had argued that United States is the most heavily indebted nation and the financialisation of this economy will only increase the speculative tendencies leading to a serious crisis. We saw that the financialisation created fictitious wealth which could not be sustained and the resultant burst has drowned the American economy into a very deep crisis. The crisis spread from the US to Europe and rest of the world very fast. Europe is in great turmoil.



The global economic crisis today has thrown out millions of workers out of jobs across the world. The workers in different countries are organizing themselves to resist attack on their living and working conditions in the name of austerity measures. Europe is home to militant working class actions. This situation has provided an opportunity for the working class to unitedly fight neo-liberalism. But the crisis has also created conditions for racist and fascist tendencies to emerge. Sundaram has always held a firm belief that a worker and trade unions cannot remain apolitical. Politics is the ideas about shaping and structuring the society. The workers should have their own vision of the society and they should not see the society from the eyes of the vested interests. ....

Sundaram has been critical of world imperialism led by the US imperialism. Imperialism in its blind pursuit for profits is trying to capture the critical natural resources. The human misery these policies have created

in Iraq and other parts of the world demonstrate the inhumanness and cruelty of imperialism. The world imperialism is also indulging in degradation of environment threatening the very existence of planet earth. But today US imperialism has been weakened. Its economic clout and political influence – both are being questioned. The economic system imposed on nations by the US imperialism utilizing the Bretton Woods institutions has been rejected by large number of nations. Multi-polarity in the international affairs has surely emerged. Sundaram sees this as an opportunity for the working class to properly direct their struggles projecting an alternative political vision.

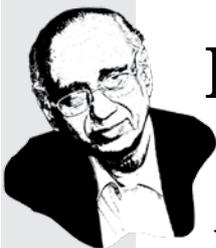
The earlier works of Sundaram 'Global Finance Capital on Rampage' and 'Politics of Anti-Development' have been widely

appreciated. His articles against the policies of privatization, attacks on Pensions and on issues relating to liberalization of the Indian economy have helped the workers and trade union activists to understand the issues in proper perspective. The present book will also surely help the movement of the working class. Sundaram modestly admits that his work is not of an expert or an economist. But the fact is that his work reflects the maturity and the experiences of those 50 years of being a leading functionary of a trade union like the AIIEA. The Book is a must read for the trade union activists and all those who are struggling to make India a better place to live for the working class.

*'Global Finance Capital on Rampage' published in March 2002*

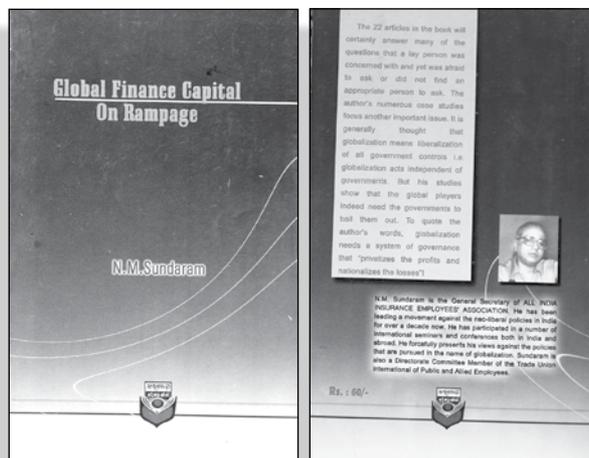
## A Guide as to how world events can be analyzed

-Dr. S. Chatterjee



It was a little over ten years ago that the Indian public was first introduced to the question of economic liberalization and came face to face with a bewildering number of terminologies, phrases, jargons and concepts. Moreover, the discussion was conducted on a plane that often made the common man feel that the issues involved were too complex and could best be left to the 'expert' to analyze. Side by side one also came across groups, individuals, organizations who considered that the issues were so serious for their own lives, for the lives of their children, neighbours, fellow citizens and the citizens of the globe at large that it was their duty to grapple with these issues no matter how complex they were. They thus tried to learn and also tried to teach. The present book, which contains a series of twenty-two articles written by N.M. Sundaram is a result of such an exercise.

The book strikes one with its method of teaching and learning. It is very different from the way that we are used to hear from the economic experts in our mass media. This method is also not found in economics text books. The author, however, puts a disclaimer at the outset. He declares that he is not an economist (by which perhaps, he means that he has no formal training in the subject)



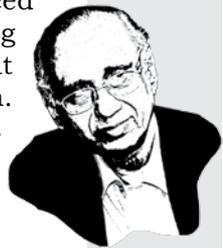
but a trade union worker. While being away from the world of academia, he nevertheless deals with economic issues making them living. To the author, therefore, questions of balance of payment, inflow of the foreign direct investment or rates of interest are not to be treated as mere subjects of discussion nor numbers to be played with but issues which directly relate to peoples' lives. His approach can thus relate to questions: whether there will be jobs for our children or whether there will be epidemics of plague just as they happened in Surat and Shimla or suicide deaths by our peasants. To this as a scientist I feel appropriate to add a question: whether there will be enough scientists in the Indian labs in the years to come?

While complimenting the author for the wide variety of topics that he has ably dealt with, compliments are also due to the journal "The Insurance Worker" and the insurance employees themselves for whom these articles were initially written. This would also help to remove the myth that the public sector worker in India is interested only in his personal benefits and not in the interest of the nation at large. This volume eminently presents the Indian working class especially the insurance employees' commitment to the suffering people in our globe no matter where they are located - Indonesia, Philippines, Argentina, Mexico, Russia or Chicago. The profusion of these case studies makes one feel the underlying connection between the crises in these countries and the author's analysis leads one directly to identify globalization and the accompanying stranglehold of imperialism as the causes of these human tragedies. The author makes a serious observation of the consequences of globalization, but even before that, he unequivocally states that globalization was not inevitable and it was forced primarily to help imperialism to tide over the economic crises that the unequal distribution of the world's assets inevitably leads the system to. There is another equally important factor which compounded with the economic pressure from the west. That was the surrender by the political leadership of the developing world of their own national interest and interests of their people before this imperialist challenge. In this respect the author finds the role of the ruling Indian elite to be most reprehensible. It perhaps does no Indian proud to hear the visiting President of the United States lecture our parliamentarians on the virtues of human rights, dangers of terrorism and evils of crony capitalism while our elected representatives (barring a few) bow before him in gratitude. It was in fitness of things that it needed another Head of State Shri K.R.Narayanan to undo the indignity heaped on the once proud (as people we still are) founder - leader of the Non Aligned Movement. His polite warnings that the global village did not allow a global headman to rule must have come as a much awaited message to the oppressed humanity in the same way as the messages of Castro and Mandela that the author has referred to.

In my mind, the chapters 3-9 form the core of the book. They explore the dynamics

of globalization. Man's exploitation by man has been there for long, plunder of the globe by the rich nations has been there since the birth of colonialism that began with Columbus' discovery of America and Vasco da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India. But what makes globalization so special? What has really become global? These chapters show how globalization of finance capital demarcates this phase from the earlier phases of imperialist plunder. Finance has to be made mobile. The barriers that nations put to protect their own markets have to be broken. The capital which has its origin elsewhere has the right to find its way. If market in one country saturates, goods in circulation have to be absorbed by the market in another country and the national governments have to create atmosphere that allows this to happen! For one so used to conservation laws in science (like conservation of energy and momentum) the dynamics described in the above chapters look radically different. It is not money alone that matters, but how money is forced to circulate and with what astonishing speed that it is made to circulate that determines the "success" of globalization. It is here that we have no natural laws that can lead to natural equilibration. Unlike fluids money does not flow from a higher level to a lower one. Globalization ensures that money, in fact, will flow from the poor to the rich whether through drug trafficking, prostitution or arms deal are of no concern. This reverse flow of resources from the poor to the rich clearly prove how false the much touted theory of 'trickle down' is. How this process leads to economic and political anarchy, breakdown of law and order, militarization, growth of terrorism and general insecurity concerning peoples' future are commendably dealt with in the book. The fact that even architects of globalization present it as a system with unqualified success shows the necessity of having books of this kind.

Two more issues are of importance in this respect. Under globalization even intellectual properties and nature's gifts like biological resources are commodities of global trade. The second point is that for globalization to have reached the stage it has reached today, the breakthrough in information technology was absolutely essential. Without this mobility of



information, this rapid mobility of capital was unthinkable. Neither are real material objects. Another notion needs to be clarified. The proliferation of the IT does not, however, mean a free mobility of information: you may be allowed to know the information about stocks and capital markets but the real scientific knowhow is not allowed to flow as it is bound by intellectual property rights.

The 22 chapters in the book will certainly answer many of the questions that a lay person was concerned with and yet was afraid to ask or did not find an appropriate person to ask. The author's numerous case studies focus another important issue. It is generally thought that globalization means liberalization of all government controls i.e. globalization acts independent of governments. But his studies show that the global players indeed need the governments to bail them out. To quote the authors words, globalization needs a system of governance that "privatizes the profits and nationalizes the losses"!

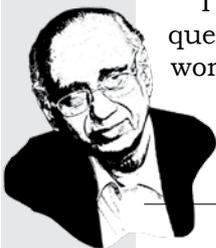
The book will inevitably raise many questions and may provide a guide as to how world events can be analyzed. A question that may appear is how long will this phase last? The articles do not propose an answer for that and the reason is

understandable. The process that can set forth the change has not yet matured and a long gestation may be inevitable. Till that happens, this process of education and re-education must go on. I hope that this book will serve this purpose effectively. It will be nice to see large number of social activists using the material contained in the book to educate the citizens with whom they meet every day. This way they can contribute in some measure to the movement against globalization that is rapidly spreading across the globe. This is precisely what I plan to use the book for.

To conclude, I shall come back to the issue with which I began and with which the author too begins his introduction. It concerns the urgent need to educate ourselves and our countrymen on questions which we often leave to economic experts to resolve. The message (though not stated directly) that comes on reading the book is this if philosophers merely stop at interpreting the world and do not think of changing it mankind will create its own philosophers of change. Globalization cannot stop that.

DR. S.CHATTERJEE

Indian Institute of Astrophysics Bangalore



## Pushing the developing countries into a more distressing stage of underdevelopment

*From Com. Sundaram's Preface to his book "Politics of Anti-development" written on 1 January 2007.*

After the end of the Second World War there was a naturally sprung impetus to reorganize the affairs of nations, of human kind, in a manner to avoid violent conflicts in the future. Naturally, care was taken to rectify every aspect of human intercourse in a way justice and equity would be maintained and conflicts and wars would be avoided at all costs. Towards this salutary end, many institutional frameworks were created.

The most important aspect of any such endeavour naturally would be putting in place firm arrangements for ensuring that poor and developing countries that missed out on opportunities for development due to colonial exploitation would be enabled to develop their economies in an equitable manner.



Securing markets has been in the centre of conflicts between countries that led to wars in the past. The development of the industrialized rich countries was built on

these markets that supplied raw materials for industrialization and provided ready outlets for their manufactured goods. It is clear therefore that trade occupies a very important aspect of development. There have been many instances in history where countries developed their economies enormously through the means of trade. And, as already mentioned, trade is also the area where most conflicts have arisen that even led to violent wars.

There is no doubt that international trade has vastly increased both in terms of volumes and value. But trade liberalization cannot be insensitive to national circumstances and needs for development. If ever there was an area where strong supervision and control was required, it is in the area of world trade. International organizations, particularly the U.N. recognized the importance of this.

This resulted in the principled slogan of 'development' the New International Economic Order' (NIEO) enunciated by the UNCTAD and other UN sponsored agencies. For the countries which rid themselves of the colonial yoke at the end of the Second World War, the promise of independent economic and social development provided an exciting prospect that was as important as national independence itself.

On the other hand for the developed countries – the former colonial powers that had ceded their colonies only under compulsion, such sea-change in economic relationship was an anathema. Their imperial instinct for continuing exploitation of their former colonies as well as other countries remained unabated. The U.S. that emerged the strongest political and economic power after the Second World War wanted to incorporate the newly independent countries as subordinate entities in the system of global capitalism that it came to dominate. Such an attitude obviously would not accommodate adoption by these emergent independent countries of autonomous policies suited to requirements of their development. That means no space would be allowed for independent development of nationally appropriate policies that reflected the very essence of their national struggle for freedom. No space would be available for putting into practice such policies as 'trade for equitable development' and the 'New International Economic Order' as envisaged by the UNCTAD

and other U.N. agencies.

In such background, the frustrating experiences of the developing countries, including India, in successive trade discussions under the aegis of the WTO comes as no surprise. The attitude displayed by the rich developed countries, particularly the U.S. would push the developing countries into a more distressing stage of underdevelopment. Hence, the choice of title to this book: Politics of Anti-development'.

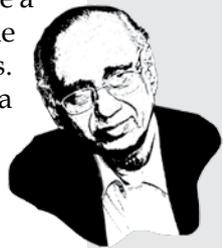
What then is the remedy? Need it be stressed that the developing countries must come together and unitedly meet the challenge to their development? Countries like India, China and Brazil with their considerable political and economic clout should come forward to rally the whole of the developing countries for protecting and furthering the common cause. Another equally salutary method could be concluding healthy bilateral and regional trade arrangements among the developing countries, which would create a combined phalanx for squarely facing the dominating instincts of the rich countries. This appears to be the only way towards a free trade for all – trade as a vehicle for development.

The six articles published are part of a series of articles being written on different facets of imperialism. They are by no means exhaustive and merely give a glimpse of the unfair regime that has been built under the WTO, betraying in the process all international efforts at setting right centuries of injustice, underdevelopment and backwardness imposed by the imperial powers. These articles are being serialized in the Insurance Worker, the monthly journal of the All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) and are primarily intended to educate the insurance employees. ....

.....

Finally, I must once again sound a word of caution. This is the effort not of an expert on the subject, but a mere trade union functionary with an ambition to widen the horizon of understanding of not only himself but also other workers like him and those fighting for the cause of democracy and social change.

-N.M. Sundaram



## A DEVASTATING BLOW TO DEMOCRACY AND SECULARISM

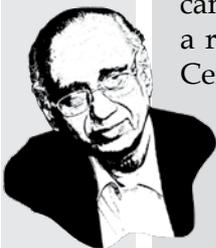
What happened in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992 should have been quite shocking to all the people of this country. A devastating blow has been inflicted to the concept of democracy and secularism. All the constitutional norms have been thrown to winds and a frenzied mob, with a brazen intimidation reminiscent of fascist terror and with shrill cries of religious and communal hatred, brought down the Babri Masjid. Nothing has been left in that disputed area. The entire nation has to hang down its head in shame at the loss of professed faith in State's secularity and rule by constitution.

An issue which had been kept alive for certain political reasons by the ruling classes came to a flashing point on December 6 with a remarkable inefficiency exhibited by the Central Government allowing everything to reach that final disaster. When the question of faith is whipped up to fanatical execution, the result would have been the destruction of humanity itself. It did happen exactly that way. The backlash that we could witness now,

has already claimed more than 900 lives in the country. Press and media reports indicate that no part of the country is free from incidents of murder and incendiary activities. The rule of law has been put to serious test and the lives of people are now full of tension and anxiety. When and how the wound will heal is surely a matter of conjecture. India's moral authority in the region has been put to severe jolt.

But all the democratic and secular sections of the people are on the move. The whole country witnessed a spontaneous Bandh immediately following that dastardly act at Ayodhya on what was called a "Black Sunday". Efforts are on now to build a united movement to fight to those forces of communalism and religious intolerance that had become the essence of Indian civilization and society. This perfidy in dividing the people when they are getting united in a struggle against the most disastrous economic policies of the Central Government has to be squarely met and defeated by all sections of the people irrespective of their caste, community or religion.

11.12.1992



## NOTIFICATION ON PENSION SCHEME – THE EFFORTS OF AIIEA

The notification on Pension is issued on June 28, 1995. The inordinately long delay in issuing notifications much to the resentment of the employees and in gross violations of the bilateral process, was caused by hostility and prejudice and determined attempt on the part of the government bureaucracy to mutilate the provisions and dilute the benefits as agreed on January 14/15, 1994 to the maximum extent possible. It is a measure of the resilience and stubbornness of the employees and their organization, AIIEA which safeguarded the interests of the employees and forced the notifications to be issued, thought delayed.

In the process of the delay what has been lost is the goodwill that is normally expected to accompany a bilateral settlement ensuring a very important social security benefit in the industry. The loser therefore, is the employer and not the employees.

The long and tortuous path to notification had to be inevitably marked by struggles including strikes reaffirming our long experience that it is not merely enough to struggle to secure a benefit, to get it implemented and to protect it for the future too struggle is required. In this hour of triumph of the employees, this hard lesson learnt through

experience should not be forgotten. On the contrary, the achievement itself should help us to consolidate our unity and determination to fight for and protect our interests resolutely and without any vacillation and let up.

Comrades, pension is unique social security benefit. Securing it in the Insurance industry had remained elusive for long. What has come is a landmark achievement of the AIIEA which built up struggle and broadened the base of it by involving the bank employees and officers through the JAC. In fact, the cutting edge that proved to be the determining factor in securing the much desired pensionary benefit in the Financial Sector has been the formation of JAC and involvement of the massive unity of over 10 lakhs officers and employees achieved there under in struggle. In this hour of jubilation this too should not be forgotten. Insurance employees, therefore, are beholden to the other constituents of the JAC for the tremendous unity and solidarity expressed in struggle. This must be preserved and nurtured for future advancement as this unity, this broader unity in struggle truly speaking is an achievement as important as pension itself.

To make the pension benefits fuller in LIC, a debilitating provision, 19(4) of the Staff Regulations, which made the employees ineligible to receive pension for the period of encashment of privilege leave on retirement, had to be deleted or amended. We are happy to inform that a separate notification deleting this regulation and fully protecting pension for the period of encashment of leave has also been issued. There is no such debilitating provision in GIC.

The AIIEA has already taken up both with LIC and GIC managements, implementation of Pension Notification without further delay. The managements have also agreed to expedite implementation. We are happy to inform that certain preliminary steps have already been taken in this direction. The Trust Deeds for formation of Pension Trust are ready and would be sent for registration with the Income Tax Authorities in the next few day. The Competent Authority (in respect of LIC, ZMs upto AAO Cadre) have also been briefed as

to implementation. Advertisement seeking option to join the Pension Scheme is to be released on July 7, 1995. Steps to get allotted the required funds for initial payments are also being taken. In LIC, a CELL under an Executive Director is being organized to manage the implementation. The list of employees who retired/died after 01.01.1986 with relevant details like PF and interest thereon, age etc., have been prepared. In some Zones there have already been sent to Divisions.

The AIIEA has represented that in order to expedite pension payments, it would be necessary to proceed with implementation without waiting for the option period of 120 days to be over. The option applications must be taken up batch by batch so that the process is expedited. Though the Competent Authority upto the level of AAO is the ZM in charge, we have represented that implementation process should be decentralized at the Divisional level. Similar representations have been made to the GIC also. However, there is a variation with regard to GIC in that the fund is to be administered by LIC in view of Income Tax requirements. The representation of GIC for an in-house establishment of pension fund and for necessary exemption from CBDT has not been accepted by the government. This requires to be studied and appropriate steps taken subsequently, if need be.

AIIEA has represented that in regard to the employees who are yet to retire from service, and who opt for pension, protection through a group insurance scheme in respect of the corpus of employer's contribution to PF and interest thereon (including the possible accretion before retirement) which they would be transferring to the pension fund is required. This has been appreciated by the management and it has assured to consider the representation in all seriousness. The AIIEA has urged for early decision in this matter. After LIC takes a decision, similar representation in respect of GIC employees also would be made.

Anxious enquiries are being received as



to whether the PF Dues would be adjusted against commutation values and outstanding pension (and family pension). This has been agreed to by LIC and a provision in this regard is expected to be incorporated in the administrative instructions.

Comrades, any appreciation of the achievement would not be complete without fully understanding the ramifications of the serious conspiracies that were afoot at the bureaucratic level in the government to scuttle the benefit or to mutilate it as much as possible. It is not necessary to go into all details. The innumerable questions and clarifications asked, several of them repetitive and in instalments, are too well known to need recapitulation. But one specific aspect needs mentioning. **At the fag end to issuance of notification, a clause was attempted to be inserted to ensure that additional liabilities on pension benefit (obviously targeting dearness relief on pension due to cost of living index going up) would be subject to availability of fund.** Having become

aware of this well in time, the AIIEA firmly and decisively intervened both with the management and government.

As a result, a clear cut provision under Rule 5(3) in both the Notifications has been added fully protecting all benefits under the Scheme including those arising in the future. The Clause 5(3) as incorporated in the LIC notification reads as under:

**“The Corporation shall be a Contributor to the Fund and shall ensure that sufficient sums are placed in it to enable the Trustees to make due payment to the beneficiaries under these Rules”.**

A corresponding provision is incorporated in the GIC Notification.

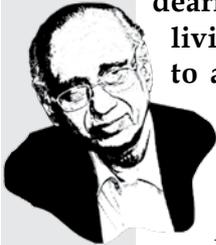
Comrades, the pension benefit, though in lieu of PF, is beneficial to substantial number of employees and officers with the commutation itself being more than or adequately compensating the Corporations’ contribution to PF and interest thereon, which has to be surrendered, the residuary basic pension and the dearness relief thereon becomes an additional benefit. In this sense, a third benefit has indeed been secured. But we

are aware that there would still be substantial number of employees who are juniors in service and who may not choose to opt for the pension scheme and would continue to avail contributory PF upto 1148 points of the index.

The Pension Scheme as evolved, though conferring substantial benefit enabling employees after retirement to live an independent and head-high existence, suffers from certain shortcomings. For example, basic pension is 50% of the average of the basic pay for the last 10 months irrespective of the accumulation of employer’s contribution to PF and interest thereon which would be taken to the pension fund. This makes it rather unscientific. Contributory PF for the younger employees particularly when related to 1148 points of the index would bring them substantial accumulation on retirement. (Incidentally, wage revision when it comes would also be related to 1148 points and would be an achievement secured in the process of pension struggle, which should not be forgotten. Otherwise, revision would be related to a much lower point of the index).

Despite this, there is uniqueness about pension benefit which enables the retired employee to receive sustenance month after month even after meeting lumpsum liabilities due to social obligations, which is not always in conformity with requirements of prudence. **AIIEA’s endeavour, therefore, in the coming days would be to secure a pension benefit which is better than what has been achieved and what is more, universal in application leaving out no section of the employees including the present junior employees.**

Apart from the demand for pension as a third benefit being a general trade union demand, no less a person than the Member Secretary to the Fifth Central Pay Commission has come out with a statement stressing the need for enhancing the quantum of pension and making it universal. In essence, his statement stresses the need to increase the percentage of pension from the present 50% of the average of the terminal pay to the full extent of terminal pay. He has suggested that it could be ensured by a fund being created with contributions both by the employer and



the employees. Coming as it does from the Member Secretary of the Pay Commission this may sound paradoxical. He is obviously echoing the requirements of the bureaucracy. If the workers do not take note, they would be pushed behind. Already in State Bank of India, free pension including with an element of commutation value and indexing is in existence apart from contributory PF and

statutory Gratuity. We only want to stress here that there is need to set our sights high. AIIEA's objective after getting the glorious pension scheme achieved, is to improve upon it still further and to make it applicable to all employees, in the coming days.

30.6.1995

## PENSION: Sharing A Few Thoughts

The long and tortuous journey of AIIEA in quest of an effective pension scheme, has at last met with success. The Notification embodying the pension rules has been issued on June 28, 1995 and the administrative instructions enforcing them on July 5, 1995. This indeed is a landmark victory for the AIIEA. This happiness of the employees benefitting by it is palpable. They are seen to throng the meetings convened to explain the scheme in all parts of the country. Their unbounded enthusiasm and what is more gratitude to their organization AIIEA, is to be seen to be believed. Even those who are not members of AIIEA, Officers and Development Officers are unhesitating and generous about their praise for AIIEA in making this monumental achievement possible.

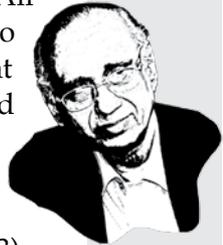
Every settlement brings forth benefits and benefits secured by the AIIEA are legion. But there is something about every settlement which makes it extraordinary – even great. Introduction of pension benefit itself is a great achievement. What make it greater still are some finer aspects such as

- i. Retrospective effect from January 1, 1986
- ii. Facility of commutation by families of those who retired after November 1, 1993 and unfortunately died.
- iii. Family pension for the families of those who retired after January 1, 1986 and unfortunately died.
- iv. Most important of all, securing the basic pension related to 1148 points of index for those who retired after November 1, 1993

thereby almost doubling the quantum of commutation value.

The last aspect in particular is significant in that it constituted a substantial improvement after an MOU was signed on May 20, 1993 by a union in Banks, which had to be overcome. This singular advancement it is, which makes the pension benefit an additional benefit, a third benefit in substance. All that is required is for the beneficiaries to realize for themselves when the payment is made that commutation value and arrears of pension is equal to employer's contribution to PF surrendered or considerably more (in respect of those who retired on or before October 31, 1993) and substantially more in respect of those who retired after November 1, 1993 thus making balance of pension and dearness relief virtually a third benefit. There is hardly any need for debate on this; the figures speak for themselves.

Equally important is to realize that nowhere in the Public Sector excepting in insurance and financial sector an Index Linked Pension Scheme is in vogue. Even agreements concluded as far back as 1989 in some PSUs are yet to be implemented. Even in Government service, pension is related to Basic Pay linked to 608 points. Nowhere Basic pension and commutation value are related to DA linked to as high a point as 1148. What is more, the world over long standing pension benefits are being shrunk or dismantled altogether. Our achievement can get fuller appreciation when viewed in such background.



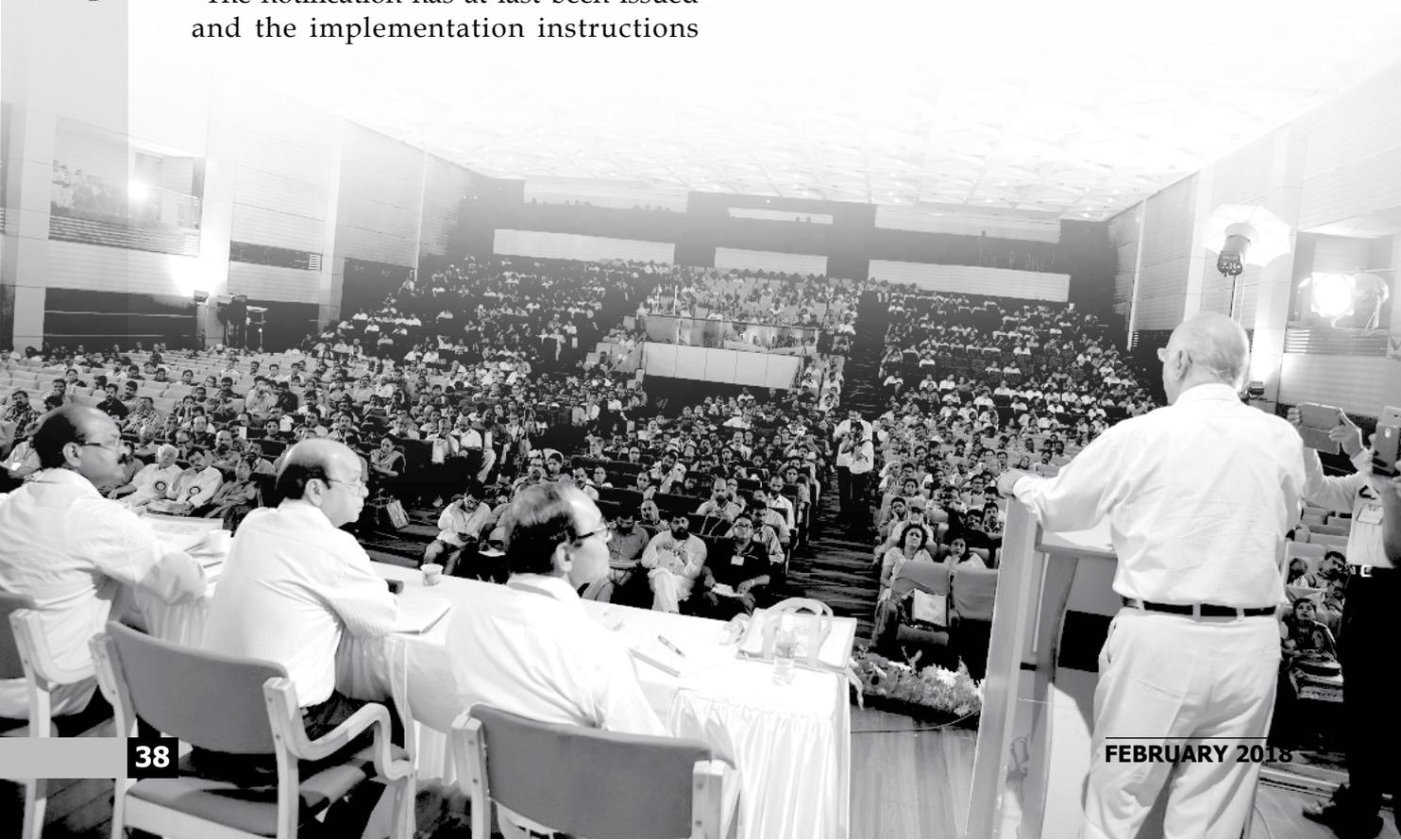
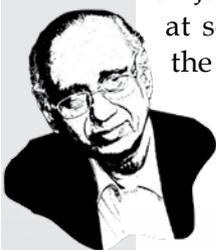
The benefit achieved is sweeter still considering the long and stubborn resistance to the demand forcing the AIIEA to seek the path of struggle. The various agitations launched and strikes observed and what is more important is the broader platform of united struggle, first as **'Pension Co-ordination body'** and thereafter as **'Joint Action Committee'** encompassing over ten lakhs of financial sector employees including Bank officers add substance to the intrinsic value of the benefit. The extent of resistance by the powers that be, makes it so. First the unconscionable blowing up of the alleged cost to as high as Rs.1200 Crores, then the subterfuges, the outright opposition followed by a sectarian and below par settlement in Banks in May 1993, the bureaucratic dribbling around, dithering and blatant stonewalling tactics even after 'agreed conclusions' were reached on January 14, 1994, the last minute attempt at scuttling the agreement by so wording the notification as to virtually deprive the benefit of future dearness relief, all this and more. All these obstacles were overcome by a combination of struggles, representations and deft maneuverings. The notification has at last been issued and the implementation instructions

too. The inordinate delay though frustrating to the employees (AIIEA itself never gave way to despair but remained steadfast in its determination to get implemented what had been achieved) only succeeded ultimately in projecting the achievement of pension in its true and monumental worth.

At this hour of triumph, we pay our tributes to all those who participated in the struggle and appeal to the small section of the others to join in future struggles at least for the common good. We also express our gratitude to the JAC and its constituents for the solidarity expressed. We look forward to many more fruitful joint endeavors and struggles in the coming days.

There is about pension a uniqueness which cannot be said about other retirement benefits. Being a combination of lumpsum payment in the form of commutation value and regular monthly income after retirement, pension has to capacity to give material support, sense of independence and a 'head-high' existence in old age. That makes the achievement all the more gratifying.

25.7.1995





## We bid adieu Com Sundaram

**I**t is said that “A Funeral is not a day in the lifetime it is lifetime in a day”.

The commendable life story of Com.NMS came to an end on 26.12.2017. The time came to lay his mortal body on 29.12.2017 thousands of comrades from across the country came to pay their last respects to this departed leader. The grief and sadness on the faces were clearly visible. The leader who they loved and revered had left them. There was a pal of gloom all across. The mortal remains of Com Sundaram were taken in a procession and laid to rest in the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> December.

Earlier in the day, a condolences meeting was held at Com Sundaram’s residence which was presided over by Com K.Swaminathan, Vice-President, SZIEF. He said it is hard to find words to express how devastated we are at the tragic loss of our dear Comrade. All of us have lost not only a great workers’ leader but also our beloved guide, mentor and a personal friend. Today is the time to mourn and remember him. But com.NMS would have been the first to insist that we must not allow our grief to divert us from our historic mission to struggle for workers’ rights to build a just and equitable socialist world.

Com.V.Ramesh, General Secretary, AIEA, visibly moved shared that Com.NMS never had any easy task. Though he had been assigned to work in the difficult and turbulent times with forces trying to weaken our efforts

to win a decisive victory every time, he always undertook this task with great enthusiasm. We owe it to him to ensure that we bring a smile to his face in his grave with our renewed commitment to our cause at all times.

Com.K.Venugopal, Vice President, AIEA said that we must take NMS’s life as an example to inspire us to work even harder. He lauded the efforts of NMS in forming PFIs throughout India. His preoccupation towards the advancement of his class interests must possess us too. He wanted to live in a society that will not tolerate high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequalities. He wanted a better life for all, in particular for workers and their communities and this must motivate us to consolidate our efforts in future.

Com.M.Girija, Joint Secretary, AIEA paid encomiums to NMS for placing women where they are right now in AIEA. Such gradual ascent was even possible only thanks to the efforts of visionary leaders like NMS. The power filled backing handed out by such committed leaders would help women in AIEA rise and shine in the days to come too, she said.

Com.B.Sanyal, Joint Secretary, AIEA said that under Com.NMS’s leadership, AIEA has fought countless epic battles. As I have been observing, AIEA is stronger than it was, thanks to his continuous mentoring. It is much strengthened and is poised to win the

forthcoming struggles decisively.

Com.G.Ramakrishnan, State Secretary, CPI(M) said that NMS was a true servant of the workers, a Communist, a tireless campaigner for a better and more secure future for the insurance industry workers, He served in AIIEA from an ordinary member level right up to the union's national leadership structures and continued to do so even after his retirement mentoring AIIEA.

Com.A.Soundararajan, State President, CITU shared that the trade union movement and indeed the whole country has lost a great leader, a worker who was passionate about creating a better life for insurance workers in particular, and all workers nationally and globally in general. He was a perfect role model for young workers to follow.

Com.C.P.Krishnan, State Secretary, BEFI in his sharing said that there are many ways in which we can and will commemorate the life of com.NMS, but as always the best memorial to a fallen comrade is to pick up his spear, and continue the work to which he dedicated his life.

Com.K.Natarajan, Vice President, AIIPA in his words of consolation said that he had worked very closely with NMS and fought hard battles together. He never once wavered nor showed any sign of weakness. He never buckled under pressure, he said.

Com.Sanjay Jha, Standing Committee Secretary, GI said that it would be a long time till we see a leader of this caliber and standing. This high level of unity and cohesion in AIIEA has been achieved under his leadership and guidance only, he said.

Com.Venkatesh Athreya, Former Vice Chancellor, Bharathidasan University said Com.NMS stood out for his habit of reading and analyzing what he read. His rise to the national position and holding fort was greatly enhanced due to this. A leader worthy of emulation, a mentor worthy of thanks and praise is what NMS was, he said.

Com.Subramanian, President TN

Government Employees Association said Com. NMS faced enormous challenges heading the Insurance employees union but his response to these challenges was with the ultimate goal of strengthening the workers movement. He was prepared to do everything to protect and advance the worker rights. A leader par excellence is what he was, he said.

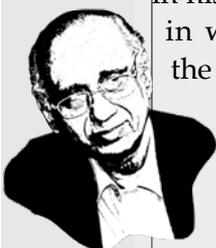
Com.T.Senthilkumar, General Secretary, SZIEF said that those who did not have the honour of working with him would never know that in him we had one of the best trained and polished worker leaders. He has left behind for us new lessons about loyalty to the organisation, its principles, procedures and policies.

Shri Raja, NMS's elder son said his entire life epitomised the hardships and the struggles of union leaders. I remember the tales he used to share about the struggles he had faced. Over time I grew to admire him after listening to him interacting and debating with other union functionaries both at home and in his office where he used to take me along as a child.

Shri Anand, the younger son of Com.NMS said as a father he gave all freedom to his sons to bloom in the field of their choice. His strong perspectives on the labour movement were never thrust on them at home. Shri Gopinath, brother of NMS reminiscing his days with NMS read out a poem detailing the life of NMS but very importantly shared that the heart of NMS rested with the members of AIIEA only at all times. He said AIIEA was his lifeline.

Comrades Venugopal Rao (SCZIEF), H.I.Bhat (WZIEA), AK Bhatnagar (NZIEA), Jayantha Mukherjee (EZIEA), Sanjeev Sharma (NCZIEF), Mahapatra (CZIEA), Srikant Misra (ECZIEA) and Com.KVSSN Raju, Vice President, AIIEA attended the funeral apart from the large number of leaders and cadres from South and South Central Zone.

*Comrade NMS, We will not allow you to die, for your ideals live on.*





जिस्म मिट जाने से  
 इन्सान नहीं मर जाते  
 धडकनें रुकने से  
 अरमान नहीं मर जाते  
 सांस थम जाने से  
 ऐलान नहीं मर जाते  
 होंठ जम जाने से  
 फरमान नहीं मर जाते  
 जिस्म की मौत  
 कोई मौत नहीं होती

With the dying body  
 men do not die  
 When heart stops beating,  
 wishes don't die  
 When breathing stops,  
 declarations don't die  
 With the freezing of lips,  
 mandates do not die  
 The death of the body  
 is no death!



