



CHAPTER XVIII

BEFI in International Fraternal Relation

BEFI in International Fora onwards from 1994

BEFI's relations with different internationals became closer with the passage of time. Ashis Sen (General Secretary) and P. Sadasivan Pillai (Joint Secretary) attended, on invitation, the International Solidarity Affairs and May Day celebrations organized by Kilusang Mayo Uno of the Philippines in 1994 and 1998. Also G.M.V. Nayak (Joint Secretary) took part in World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki on invitation from the Organising Committee in Japan.

World Congress of TUI

Trade Union International of Public & Allied Employees, the largest constituent of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), consists of unions of employees in Government and Municipal establishments, Banks, Insurance and other Financial Institutions in various parts of the world. It held its IX World Congress at Calcutta during 4-6 November 1998 after a lapse of a decade since the last Congress in 1988 at Sofia (Bulgaria). The time gap was due to international turmoil facing the organization. BEFI took active part in organizing the Congress. Preceding the Congress, a seminar was held on Globalization of economy and its impact on working people with special reference to public and financial service employees, the character of capitalist globalization, neo-liberal economy and privatization, stark realities of 'Reforms' prescription of World Bank-IMF-WTO and the developing global resistance by the working people. Delegates came from Cyprus, Japan, Cuba, Vietnam, Fiji, Mauritius, Ghana, Libya, South Africa, Nepal, Bangladesh etc. Non-availability of visa from GOI prevented Pakistan delegates' participation. The Congress elected Com.

Christos Alekkon Chirston of Cyprus as President and Com. Sukomal Sen of India as General Secretary for the next term.

For the first time BEFI was accorded affiliation to TUI. Also affiliated was All India Regional Rural Bank Employees Association. Six delegates from BEFI attended the Congress.

TUI - PAE Dacca, 2.000

Trade Union International -BEFI being a constituent of Public and Allied Employees (TUI - PAE) deputed Com. GMV Nayak, Secretary, to a Seminar organized by it in Dhaka, Capital of Bangladesh, on neo-liberal globalization, on 3rd and 4th November 2000. Santi Bardhan, General Secretary and P.S. Pillai, Secretary, participated in another of its Seminar on the same subject held on 5th and 6th July 2002 in Cox Bazar, the tourist capital of that country. Santi Bardhan and Harish Sharma, Joint Secretary BEFI were among the delegates of TUI-PAE to the 2nd SAARC Trade Unions Conference organized by the World Federation of Trade Unions in New Delhi on 11th and 12th August 2001. The objective of the Conference was regional cooperation, coordination and solidarity in struggles for social progress, development and peace in the Asia-Pacific Region. Com. P. S. Pillai attended the Asian and SAARC Regional Trade Unions Seminars of the WFTU.

Cuba Solidarity Congress - 2000

Pradip Biswas and MSN Rao represented the trade union community from our country in the Congress held at Havana in November.

World/Asian Social Forum

Simultaneously during 6th Conference of BEFI in Kolkata from January 4-8, 2003 the 1st Asian Social Forum was organized in Hyderabad. From 16th to 17th January 2004, the 4th World Social Forum was held in Mumbai. The India Social

Forum 2006 was organized in New Delhi from 9th to 13th November. Representatives from BEFI participated in all these three fora. The well-attended fora declared that the slogan “TINA” was wrong and that the better alternative is - TIAA i.e. There is Another Alternative which is SOCIALISM.

15th International Conference of WFTU :

The 15th International Conference of World Federation of Trade Unions was held at Havana in Cuba from 1st to 4th December 2005. Com. K. Krishnan was deputed as a delegate through TUI-PAE.

X Congress of TUI-PAE

The X Congress of Trade Union International of Public & Allied Employees was held at Johannesburg in South Africa from 20th to 22nd March 2006. The participants in the Congress were from Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Japan, African countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Ghana, Lesato, Swaziland and European country Cyprus. Representatives from some countries like Bangladesh and Cuba could not come for visa problems.

Three bank employees Organizations were represented - BEFI and AIBEA from India and an Organization from Sri Lanka. Pradip Biswas, MV Madhavrao and Santi Bardhan, General Secretary attended the Congress on behalf of BEFI. The Congress decided to grant new affiliation to AIBOA (India) and Inter Bank Associations of Nepal.

The main subject that was discussed in the Congress was “the challenges of neo-liberal globalization”. All the participants in the deliberations expressed deep concern over the adverse impact of this policy on the economies particularly of the third world countries and on the working class everywhere in the world. As many as 15 resolutions on various important topics were adopted at the Congress. The new Directive Committee

was elected with Com. Lulamile Sotake (South Africa) as President and Sukomal Sen (India) as General Secretary-both re-elected.

National Education Health & Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) hosted the Conference and every participant in the Congress appreciated the hospitality extended by it.

TUI for Banking and Financial Sector, 2009 (Athens) and 2011(New Delhi) :

Trade Union International (TUI) which is part of World Federation of Trade Unions, has got different sector wings. Till last congress of TUI, Public and Allied Employees’ held in Brazil in 2009, BEFI was part of that. Pradip Biswas, General Secretary, attended the Congress. In the background of the global financial meltdown, WFTU decided that there would be separate TUI for banking and financial sector and accordingly an international meeting of unions in banking and financial sector was held on 12th March 2009 in Athens (Greece) where it was decided to form a new TUI for Bank, Insurance and Finance Unions (BIFU). The foundation conference of TUI-BIFU was held on 24th and 25th of February, 2011 in New Delhi. BEFI had its presence in the Preparatory Committee constituted from the meeting held in Athens and delegates from the Federation participated in the Foundation Conference of TUI (BIFU). Delegates from our Fedn. attended.

Japan World Conference, 2010 :

On invitation from the National Confederation of Trade Unions (ZENROREN) of Japan, BEFI General Secretary Pradip Biswas attended 2010 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held at Hiroshima and Nagasaki of Japan from 07th to 10th August 2010. He also represented our country in the “Trade Union Exchange Meeting for a Just World

Without Nuclear Weapon” in Hiroshima. On this occasion, bilateral exchange of view took place between BEFI and National Federation of Finance Workers’ Union (KIN-YU-ROREN) Japan.

A delegation from KIN-YU-ROREN graced the 8th Conference of BEFI held at Bhubaneswar from January 22-25, 2011. Delegation from Bank Employees’ Organisations of Sri Lanka and Nepal also attended the said Conference.

World Trade Union Congress, Athens, 2011:

16th World Trade Union Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions was held on April 6-10, 2011 in Athens, capital of Greece. A total of 881 representatives from 106 countries representing all five continents and all segments of industries and service sectors attended the Delegates’ Session of the congress that commenced on 7th and continued till 10th April. From our country 64 delegates representing different central trade unions and national federations affiliated to WFTU participated. The activities of the delegates’ session included the presentation of the main document titled, Athens Pact.

TU Meet at Peru :

The 13th Congress of the General Confederation of Workers of Peru (CGTP), one of the very representative trade unions in Latin America, was held at the headquarters of the Federation of Construction Workers, Peru (FTCCP), in Lima, the capital city of Peru, on November 16th-19th, 2011. The theme of the International Conference was Global Economic Crisis, its consequences for workers, the response of class unions and the role of WFTU. 35 foreign delegates from various parts of the world, apart from all Peruvian delegates to the CGTP Congress, joined this event. From India the lone delegate was Pradip Biswas, General Secretary.

The CGTP Congress was participated by 567 delegates of whom 112 were women, from 83 base unions and Sectoral Federations from within Peru.

WFTO Asia Pacific Regional Summit :

The Asia Pacific Regional Summit of the World Federation of Trade Unions was held at Foundation Institute in Colombo, Sri Lanka on October 6th - 7th, 2012 with the participation of delegates from different country and Asia and pacific region. The summit was successfully organized by the Inter Company Employees Union and All Ceylon Trade Union Federation.

Trade Union Representatives from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, altogether 37 in number, participated in the meeting. WFTU was represented by H. Mahadevan, one of its Deputy General Secretaries. Pradip Biswas, General Secretary, BEFI was one of the delegates from India.

TUI Meet at Cyprus :

Earlier BEFI was a constituent of TUI (Public & Allied Employees). New TUI for unions in Bank, Insurance and financial services have been formed on the basis of principle adopted by WFTU for organizing sectoral wings like Agroalimentary, Metal, Tourism, Energy, Education, Public & Allied Employees, Bank and Financial Services, Transport & Construction.

To share the experience of the functioning of TUIs and to chalk out future tasks, a meeting of representatives of all TUIs was held on November 1 and 2, 2012 in Cyprus. From BEFI Pradip Biswas, General Secretary attended. The meeting highlighted the motto of all TUIs to insist on “We will not pay for their crisis”.

60th Anniversary & 18th Delegates Conference of PSTUF:

BEFI had been invited to attend the 60th Anniversary and 18th Delegate Conference of Public Service Trade Union Federation (PSTUF) of Sri Lanka held on 29th and 30th August,

2013 in Colombo. Accepting the invitation, Pradip Sarangi Secretary and Pradip Biswas, General Secretary participated in the aforesaid events of PSTUF on behalf of BEFI.

WFTU Asia-Pacific Regional Meet, 2013 in Malaysia :

This historic meeting of the WFTU - APR was held in Port Dickson, Malaysia, attended by 132 Union leaders of affiliated and friendly Trade Unions from most populous regions of the globe, including major fighting organizations from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Iran, besides People's Republic of China with Sudan and Argentina as observers. Besides them, a number of Sectoral Trade Union Internationals such as TUI - Finance, TUI - Construction, TUI - Public Services, TUI - Energy and others were also present. The meeting, having analysed the very important issues concerning the "Right to Livelihood" of the people -working people, and having identified the pro-capitalist and anti-worker role of the International Financial Trio, WB - IMF - WTO and other instruments of finance capital and MNC's and also having thoroughly examined the neo- liberal globalization policies pursued by most governments in the region, made out a declaration, better known as Malaysia Declaration.

SIGTUR Congress 2013 :

One hundred twenty trade union activists from twelve countries across four continents in the Global South, representing democratic unions from Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Nigeria, Rwanda, Japan, India, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea and Australia gathered in Perth, Western Australia from December 2-6, 2013. Four issues were focused, challenging the power of global corporations, public sector restructuring, transport and communications and trade union education - empowering

workers in the age of neo-liberalism. Pradip Biswas, General Secretary, BEFI as a TU Representative from India participated and took a vital role in the Congress.

Nepal - 2014

On invitation by Nepal Government Employees Association in connection with their Silver Jubilee Celebration Pradip Biswas and Joydeb Dasgupta attended the programme held at Kathmandu on April 20-21, 2014.

May Day 2014 in Cuba :

A.K. Ramesh Babu, President BEFI had the privilege to represent the working class of our nation in the mammoth May Day rally in Havana. The schedule time of the May Day March was 7.30 a.m. but by 6 O' Clock, the pavilion and gallery situated on either side of the 30 ft. road was almost filled in by neighbouring Latin Americans and others from different Continents of the World. Each Latin American country was represented by scores of workers' leaders from Chili, Uruguay, Paraguay, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil. African countries were also adequately represented, as also Europe. At 7.15 a.m. leaders of the Cuban revolution, President Raul Castro and others appeared and greeted the gathering and responded to the ovation.

A Cuba Solidarity meeting was organized at convention palace on May 2. Nearly 70 representatives from different countries, India included, spoke expressing solidarity with the fight Cuba is forced to undertake. A video presentation on the 5 Cuban heroes held in custody in American jail seeking justice, was made.