

V.A.N.Namboodiri, India

**Report to the II Congress of TUI (P and R) at Columbia from
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The Second World Congress of the Trade Union International (Pensioners and Retirees) is going to be held at Columbia on 27-28 February 2019. The Congress will review the activities of the organisation during the last five years since its inception at the First Congress held at Barcelona and also plan the future work.

The TUI(P and R), affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), is the only international trade union of the pensioners and retirees. Almost all countries have pensioners and retirees organisations, but there was delay in organising an international organisation. This weakness was overcome by formation of TUI (P and R). The pivotal role of the WFTU in this connection has to be much appreciated.

First World Congress of TUI (P and R) at Barcelona.

The historic formation Conference of TUI(P and R) was held at Barcelona in Spain on 5-6 February 2014. The Congress was held as per the decision of the WFTU with the intention of organising the organisations of pensioners and retirees all over the world and also to discuss and formulate the demands of the pensioners and how to settle them. 64 delegates from 20 countries from 5 continents participated. This was a great achievement as the first effort in this direction.

During the last five years, the organisation has grown with more pensioners and retirees organisations affiliating themselves with the TUI (P and R). Experiences of the various countries have enriched the organisation. General Secretary Com. Quim Boix has effectively functioned and intervened in many struggles, especially in the European countries. He has also addressed the WFTU session and presented the present position of the pensioners and retirees in the August session. In short, with all the financial and technical

difficulties, the TUI (P and R) has grown and made a name for itself in the international sphere.

Asia Pacific Regional Conference.

The first Asia Pacific Regional Conference of TUI(P and R) was successfully held at Kathmandu, Nepal on 03-12-2016. I too got an opportunity to participate and serious discussion took place on strengthening TUI(P and R) , particularly in Asia-Pacific region. Nepal comrades, had made excellent arrangements for holding the conference smoothly and effectively.

Struggles of the Pensioners and Retirees

The delegates will be presenting report on the struggles and agitations organised in the various countries by the respective organisation there and the support given by the TUI.

Report on India.

There are many pensioners' organisations in India, some at all India level and some at regional (state) levels. Co-ordinating Committees / Federations of pensioners' organisations are also there. All India BSNL DOT Pensioners' Association (AIBDPA) is the organisation of the retired BSNL and DOT(Department of Telecom) pensioners in India. Telecom was a government department till 2000, in which year it was converted in to a Corporation, a Public Sector Unit (PSU) , namely Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and its 3.5 lakh employees transferred to the new corporation. It was assured that the pension of the BSNL absorbed retirees will be paid by the Government. When there was wage revision for BSNL workers in 2007, the pension of the BSNL retirees was also revised; but not before several agitations. Now the wage revision for BSNL employees and pension revision for BSNL retirees are due w.e.f. 2007. But on the plea that BSNL is in loss, wage revision and pension revision are being delayed. A series of struggles are being organised both by AIBDPA and the joint organisation of the workers' unions.

Organisation.

During the last five years, many struggles were organised by the workers' unions and Pensioners' organisations. After the Narendra Modi government

was formed in 2014, the neo-liberal policy of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, is aggressively being implemented. The demands of the workers and pensioners are denied. Trade Union rights are being taken away by amending many of the trade union acts, which were achieved through sustained struggles by the workers. The denial of minimum wage and reasonable salary to the workers adversely affect the pension also. A countrywide two days strike, called by Central Trade Unions on January 8 and 9, 2019 turned to be a resounding success participated by more than 20 crore workers.

The government implemented all the retrograde recommendations of the VII Central Pay Commission for wage revision of Central Government employees (those directly under the central government), but denied the beneficial recommendation on the pension revision. Minimum wage of Rs. 26,000 is denied and only Rs. 18,000 is paid. This is the case with most of the state government employees also.

India Government has arbitrarily introduced a New Pension Scheme for those appointed in government service since 2004, which is Provident Fund based in place of the defined statutory pension. The NPS pension is very meagre and depends upon the market fluctuation. An Act, PFRDA, has been passed by the government, according to which the government can take arbitrary decision on the existing pension schemes also. The employees are organising sustained struggles to get the PFRDA withdrawn as also NPS and the earlier define statutory pension restored. This demand is also part of the 48 hours strike on 8-9 January 2019 organised by the entire central trade unions in the country to which the Pensioners and retirees gave full solidarity and support.

AIBDPA has been supporting all the struggles organised by the Central government employees and the BSNL employees. It is also supporting all the strikes called by the Central Trade Unions and organising solidarity action.

It is also part of the National Co-ordination Committee of the Pensioners Association (NCCPA), which is an umbrella organisation co-ordinating the pensioners' organisations at all India level. NCCPA also is organising struggles demanding settlement of genuine pensioners issues. AIBDPA organised

Parliament March, Dharna in all the states, demonstrations etc on the main demands of the pensioners and achieved some of the demands.

The struggle continues.

One delegate, Comrade K.G.Jayaraj, General Secretary, AIBDPA will be attending the Columbia Congress as delegate. I am unable to attend due to health problems.

Wish the Congress all success!

Yours Comradely,

V.A.N.Namboodiri,

Member Technical Committee. Kozhikode, India. 23rd January 2019