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ARE THE GOVERNMENT SERIOUS IN NEGOTIATIONS ?

It is said that Govt. is desirous of a negotiated settlement on the demands of Railwaymen. From the Prime Minister to Railway Minister - everybody is expressing their keenness for a negotiated settlement to avert a Railway Strike, which will be a disastrous for the economy of the country. But how these negotiations are going on ?

About two months have passed since the National Convention of Railway Workers held at Delhi wherefrom it was announced that if settlement could not be reached on 6-Point demands of the Railwaymen through negotiations by 10th April '74, Railwaymen would be compelled to go on strike from any day after that period. Government was silent all along. But Govt. came forward only when there was a big stir and agitation amongst the Railwaymen through the length and breadth of the country during the demand week observed from 2nd to 8th April '74. After much fuss and fun, when discussion was opened as late as on 15th April '74 and that too from a lower level, like the Member Staff, Railway Board, who had no jurisdiction to take decision on any of the demands, there was a complete deadlock as Member Staff offered flat 'NO' to all the six demands of the Railwaymen.

The discussion started on 18th April '74 could not be continued more than 45-minutes as chief negotiation on behalf of the Government, Md. Quereshi had to leave the meeting due to sudden death of his father. Com. George Fernandes, Convenor, N.C.C.R.S., then requested Shri L.N. Mishra to resume the discussion personally, as he is the man in charge of Railway Ministry, but he declined, allowing the matter to be drifting till arrival of his Deputy.

When this is the position of discussion, Govt. is not sitting idle. They are adopting measures after measures to vitiate the atmosphere of negotiations. They are adopting arresting hundreds of Railway Workers under D.I.R., M.I.S.A. & etc.,

which is contrary to the earlier assurances. All the mass media have been pressed into services to spread half truths, untruths and conflicting reports to raise the public wraths against the Railway Workers. They also cancelled a lot of train services much ahead of the strike only to cause public inconvenience.

The delay-dalling methods being adopted by the Govt. in negotiations and the repressive measures already taken or under way of taking, have naturally given rise a doubt as to how far the Govt. is keen to bring about a settlement through negotiations on the demands of the Railwaymen.

However, from the side of Railway workers, it can be only said that they are anxious for a settlement through negotiations, but if it fails, the Railwaymen are determined to go into striking their coordinated mode of action throwing aside all the intimidating policies and pressures of the Govt.

JAT KUND

The untiring services 'FORUM' rendering for promoting the causes of Rly. men have been acknowledged by many & we consider the acknowledgment received from Com. Fernandes, President, AIRF and Convenor, NCCRS is topping them all, we therefore, publish his letter dt. 11-4-74 here to share this pleasure along with our members, supporters and sympathisers.

No. AIRF/160-B. April 11, 1974

Dear Com. Subramaniam,
I have the copy of the circular to your units and also a copy of your bulletin. I hope you are doing everything possible to organise action of your Rly. With greetings,
Yours fraternally,
Sd/-George Fernandes

NEWS AND VIEWS:

Why now retreating ?

During Dec '72 both AIRF and NFIR made a joint demonstration before Parliament on the question of Bonus and other demands of the Rly:workers. During May/June of the last year NFIR posed also that they would go to the extent of strike on the issue of Bonus. General Secretary of NFIR, Sri Kulkarni has spoken very recently that they are committed to strike on the question of Bonus.

Now, NCCRS of which AIRF is the main force has given a Call for indefinite strike from 6 Hrs. on 8th May '74 for realisation of Six Demands including Bonus.

At the present moment what we observe is that Unions affiliated to NFIR are dissociating themselves one by one from the ensuing struggle. What further Role they will be playing in new future is no longer a matter of guess.

May we now ask the supporter of NFIR why they are retreating from the struggle of Bonus ? When they have already taken Ballot on this issue ?

NO DIALECTICS BUT DOUBLE STANDARD

Having praised the unity move of Com: Fernandes, President, AIRF in the National Convention of Rly:workers at Delhi in full-throated ease, Com:Dange's first initiative was to form a 3rd Federation parallel to AIRF comprising all the Rly:Unions affiliated to AITUC. He advanced arguments in support of his disruptive action saying that the leadership of AIRF is reactionary.

• Dange has recently stated that SERly: Men's Union though an affiliate of AITUC will not join the newly formed Workers Federation but will remain within the AIRF of whose leadership he himself has termed as reactionary.

This ~~apparently~~ contradictory stand cannot be explained by the application of any Dialectical theory. It can be realised only if one can muster some knowledge of "Double Standard" policy being pursued by Com:Dange and his supporters so skilfully in the field of politics and Trade Unions.

CONTRIBUTE GENEROUSLY
FOR STRUGGLE FUND.

NEWS ABOUT STRIKE PREPARATION

A meeting of the National Co-Ordination Committee for Rly:Men's struggle was held at Delhi on 15th April/74. The resolutions adopted at the meeting are appended below :-

- a) That Rly:men have no alternative but to go on an indefinite strike from 6 hours on 8th May '74.
- b) That all Unions/Associations/Organisations which are a part of the NCCRS are directed to serve a 14 day's notice of Strike on the local Adms. by 23rd April/74.

Central Council Meeting of Labour Union was held at Kharagpur on 21st & 22nd April to discuss and review the whole situation on SERly: in the context of the ensuing struggle.

Apart from taking various resolutions and action programmes to make the coming struggle a complete success, the meeting also decided to serve strike notice on behalf of this Union as per resolution of NCCRS.

SERly: Labour Union has served a Strike Notice on 22-4-74 on the local Rly:Admn: at GRC along with other Unions/Associations.

SERly: Accounts Sub-Head Association in its general meeting held on 22-4-74 at Garden Reach has unanimously resolved that in case of non-settlement of the demands by negotiations with the leaders of NCCRS, this Association will actively support the proposed strike by Rly: men commencing from 6 hours on 8th May '74.

A meeting of the SERly: Co-Ordination Committee for Rly:Men's struggle was held on 22-4-74 at Garden Reach. Convenor Com: M. G. Roy Chowdhury discussed various problems in connection with the ensuing struggle and submitted a programme for holding a series of meetings in various strategic points of this Rly. which was accepted unanimously. Com: Subrahmaniam, General Secretary, SERly:Labour Union suggested certain steps to be taken immediately for augmentation of the strike preparation which were also accepted unanimously after discussion from all points of view.