

GRAM: RAILWAYMEN.

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NATIONAL CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE FOR RAILWAYMEN'S STRUGGLE.

Convener:
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125-B, Babar Road,
NEW DELHI-1

April 15, 1974.

RESOLUTION ON GENERAL STRIKE ADOPTED
AT THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CO -
ORDINATION COMMITTEE FOR RAILWAYMEN'S
STRUGGLE ON 15-4-1974.

The National Convention of Railwaymen held at New Delhi on 27-2-1974 had formulated a 6 point charter of demands and had called upon the Railway Ministry to arrive at a negotiated settlement thereon by April 10, 1974. Through the efforts of the Union Labour Minister who had himself initiated a round of talks with various trade union organisations of railwaymen's unions culminating in a joint meeting on April 11, 1974, a meeting was held with the Railway Minister on April 12, 1974 in which the Labour Minister also was present. The Railway Minister, at this meeting, declared that he favoured a negotiated settlement on the demands submitted by the National Co-ordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle. Consequent on this, the Action Committee of the NCCRS held talks on April 15, 1974 with the Member Staff, railway Board on the demands which ended in sixty minutes with the Member Staff declaring on behalf of the Railway Ministry that no demand could be conceded and that he did not have the authority to negotiate. Why the Railway Ministry thought of making a mockery of the negotiating processes is best left to the Ministry to explain. The only conclusion to be drawn from the discussions held so far is that the Railway Ministry is keen on a confrontation with the workers and will concede nothing unless the workers have gone through a struggle.

The intentions of Railway Ministry are clear from the massive repression let loose on the trade union activities on the railways since the February 27 Convention. There have been penal transfers, suspensions, dismissals and arrests of workers on a large scale, especially on the P.F., Eastern, Northern and South Eastern Railways. The Territorial Army units have been moved to various railways, Border Security Force and Army have been called to duty, prospective strike-breakers have been offered fat rewards and concessions and the Administration is indulging in other unfair labour practices. The propaganda machinery of the Government, principally the radio, TV and newspapers, has been working overtime to run down the railwaymen and to drive a wedge between them and the people.

In the circumstances, railwaymen are now left with no alternative but to take a decision to launch an indefinite general strike. The National Co-ordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle calls upon the railwaymen to go on an indefinite general strike from 6 hours on

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The railwaymen are fully aware, perhaps more than any other section of the community, of the consequences of a railway strike. They are aware that the railwaymen's role in the economic life of the country is second to that of none, and any disruption in the railway services is bound to deal a crippling blow to the nation's economy. What is shocking is the cavalier attitude of the Railway Ministry to the railwaymen's demands and the conscious and deliberate moves taken by it to force a strike on the railwaymen.

While calling upon the railwaymen to launch the strike from 6 hours on 8th May, the Committee calls upon the Railway Ministry to reconsider its stand on the railwaymen's demands and bring about an amicable settlement. At the same time the Committee wishes to make it clear that no meaningful talks between the Railway Ministry and the workers' representatives would be possible if the repressive measures let loose by the Railway Administration are not withdrawn forthwith.

The Railwaymen today are at the threshold of the biggest ever struggle of their history. On the outcome of this struggle depends not only the future of the railwaymen, but of the entire working class movement and of the movement of the exploited and downtrodden people in the country. There is no doubting that the new inevitable struggle will be a bitter one. From past experiences, from the attitude shown by the Railway Administration during the negotiations and from the repressive measures already let loose, it is obvious that the government will come down with all its might against the workers. Railwaymen will be called upon to make the greatest of sacrifices before they are able to wrest their just and legitimate demands from the Railway Ministry.

The meeting directs all unions/associations/organizations which are a part of the National Co-ordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle to serve a 14-day notice of strike on the 6 demands adopted on 27-2-1974 on their respective zonal railways before April 23, 1974, and send copies of the strike notice to the office of the Co-ordination Committee.

The Committee appeals to the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen which was a party to the infructuous negotiations with the Railway Ministry on 15th April to make common cause with all railwaymen, and join the strike also that the struggle to win the workers long-pending demands may be quick and decisive.

The Committee calls upon the railwaymen to spare no efforts between now and May 8 to further consolidate their unity so that they can withstand all attempts to disrupt the movement. In a disciplined way they must proceed to act, so that in all eventualities they are able to carry on their struggle till victory is achieved. They must do their utmost to keep their power to keep the struggle

the efforts of those who are trying to isolate them from the people. The Committee appeals to the working Classes and toiling masses, youth, students and women, peasants and landless labourers and the broad masses of our people to extend their support to the railwaymen in their hour of trial.

RESOLUTION

A mass meeting of Rly workers Bhatinda was held on 8-2-74 under the joint auspicious of Coordination Committee of Rly workers representing all Associations/Unions of Bhatinda in connection with 'Dharna Strike' from 2nd April, to 8th April, 1974 as per decision of National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen.

The meeting demands that the Govt. should immediately start negotiation with the All India Action Committee for Railwaymen on the following common demands:-

1. (a) All Rlymen to be treated as Industrial workers with full trade union rights including the right to negotiate.
(b) The working hours of Rlymen shall not exceed 8 p. day.
(c) There should be job evaluation of all Rlymen through a scientific system to be followed by their reclassification and regradation with the need-based minimum wage as the wage for the lowest paid worker.
(d) Pending the completion of job evaluation and reclassification immediate parity in wages with those of workers in the Central undertakings, viz. IIT, PHEL, NSEL, HAL, etc.
2. Dearness allowance linked to the cost of living index with full neutralisation for every rise of 4 points in a six months period.
3. DNUA at the rate of one month's wages for the year 1971-72 and 1972-73.
4. De-regularisation of all casual railwaymen and their confirmation in service with all benefits given to them with retrospective effect.
5. Adequate and subsidised foodgrains and other essential commodities through departmental run shops @ 1.1.1972.
6. All victimisation cases should be withdrawn.

It is considered opinion of this meeting that Indian Rlys system is the biggest Transport Industry of the country and its proper and efficient functioning is very vital for the economy of the country. The organised Trade Union movement on the Rlys has to play the main role in running the railways efficiently. The management of the Railways is still being continued on the old colonial pattern in which the Railway workers have to pay.

In accordance with this meeting urges the Railway Ministry that if it failed to the National Co-ord. Committee of Railwaymen a friendly and come to a settlement by 10th April, 1974 on the above common demands of the Railway workers, they will have to face a UNLAWFUL GENERAL STRIKE on the Railways and be entirely responsible for its consequences. This meeting assured the National Coordination Committee to carry on all the decision taken by the committee.

(M.S. Malin) 8/4
Convener

Coordination Committee of Railway
Workers N.Rly, Bhatinda.

Forwarded to:- Sh. I.N. Mishra,
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