

11. K Venkataraju, Andhra Pradesh RTC Workers' Union, Vishakhapatnam

BIO-NOTE

A short biographical note on K Venkataraju, Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation workers union, interviewed at CPI Office in Vishakhapatnam on September 11, 2004

Venkataraju was born on March 24, 1944 at Mamuduru village in West Godavari district in a agriculturist family. Venkataraju did his pre university from Andhra University in 1962 and left studies. He was unemployed for three years before joining APRTC in 1965. He joined union in 1967. He was picked up by Com MBN Khaparde, a state level AITUC leader in the road transport corporation.

Venkataraju was a sincere worker of the union and was soon given the charge of a depot with 300 employees in West Godavari.

In June, 1975, bus operations were nationalised. By 1982, Venkataraju was made regional secretary of the union and remained there for fourteen years. After that he was sent as one of the state secretaries of the union where he remained for three terms, and nine years. In 1998, he was brought back to Vizag as zonal secretary. Venkataraju would be retiring from his union life next month of October as according to the decisions to retire all the union workers after their retirement from job to give space to the younger generation in the leadership.

The road transport union is a scattered unit with 230 units in 24 districts. The union was started in 1932 when it was called Nizam State Railways which continued upto 1951. In 1952, the union was registered as APSRTC Workers' union. The leaders like Gurumurthy, Khaparde and Bhadrām fought for the nationalisation of the road transport. Com KL Mahendra toured all the districts to enroll workers.

After nationalisation, there were scores of unemployed workers retrenched from the private bus services but no public sector unit was ready to absorb them and agitation was launched in June, 1975. Now, 19500 buses are running as single biggest bus operation in the world.

After agitation, allowances were sanctioned to drivers and conductors for staying over night at outstations. Conductors in the city buses are given Rs 40 per day as standing allowance. The drivers had only three hours duty.

However situations have changed since then with competition from the private buses. Earlier the maximum speed was thirty km per hour but now the passengers would not be interested if the buses do not run fast. The state transport buses have to provide now videos and transistors to charm more passengers. The gains of the union are gone and the drivers are made to do eight hour shifts and thus increasing the accident ratio.

#### TRANSCRIPTIVE NOTE

A short transcriptive note on K Venkataraju, Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation workers union, interviewed at CPI Office in Vishakhapatnam on September 11, 2004

I was born on March 24, 1944 at Mamuduru village in West Godavari district in a agriculturist family. I did his pre university from Andhra University in 1962 and left studies. I was unemployed for three years before joining APRTC in 1965. I joined union in 1967. I was picked up by Com MBN Khaparde, a state level AITUC leader in the road transport corporation.

I tried to work sincerely for the union and was soon given the charge of a depot with 300 employees in West Godavari.

In June, 1975, bus operations were nationalised. By 1982, I was made regional secretary of the union and remained there for fourteen years. After that I was sent as one of the state secretaries of the union where I remained for three terms, and nine years. In 1998, I was brought back to Vizag as zonal secretary. I would be retiring from my union life next month of October as according to the decisions to retire all the union workers after their retirement from job to give space to the younger generation in the leadership.

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