

## **J.P. Chaubey, General Secretary, AIRF & NRMU (Delhi)**

<b>Name</b>	Shri J.P. Chaubey, General Secretary, AIRF & NRMU. Delhi.
<b>Date of Interview</b>	4th Oct. 2002
<b>Time</b>	Afternoon
<b>Place</b>	AIRF Head Office at Chemsford Road, near New Delhi rail reservation
<b>Context</b>	J.P. Chaubey is in his 70s and in okay health. He is a senior leader in his personality. He is very leader like, and very agile in his answers where he argues his position very well. People came and touched his feet in respect of his age and stature in AIRF. He is quite cheerful and witty and insightful in his remarks. His office is the old British bungalow. His room is big well furnished full of souvenirs, almarihs of books and etc. He has lots of Secretaries in nearby rooms. He looks every inch the TU leader of the biggest TU in India i.e. the AIRF. Overall he seems to be a man of cheerful personality.
<b>Interviewers:</b>	Anil Rajimwale, Krishna Jha & Bobby Poulouse.

### **Biographical Sketches**

J.P. Chaubey was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1923 in village Baijpur of the Sultanpur district of UP. He joined railways in 1946 as a clerk at the rail office at Lucknow. In the 1960 rail strike J.P. Chaubey was removed from service and got his job back only after a court case he fought for 12 years. After that he was elected Gen. Secretary of AIRF and has been so since then. In the 1968 strike too he led and went on indefinite hunger strike before parliament and forced PM Mrs. Gandhi to take back the 30,000 central government employees thrown out of job after the 1968 strike. He again was one of the key leaders along with George Fernandes in the 1974 strike and also threatened strike on bonus issue in 1978 to the Charan Singh government and got it. He is a towering leader of the AIRF.

## Transcript Summary

J.P. Chaubey was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 1923 in village Baijpur of Sultanpur district in UP. His father was an agriculturalist. J.P. Chaubey joined railways in 1946 as a clerk in the railway office in Lucknow. He was only a matriculate. As regards his trade union activities J.P. Chaubey talked about his participation in the 1960 Central Govt. Employees-cum-Railway employees strike; then, his participation in 1968 strike; the 1974 rail strike; then in 1978 he gave a call for strike for bonus but called it off after Charan Singh agreed to it.

J.P. Chaubey said he became Assistant Secretary of Lucknow branch of AIRF since 1950. In the 1960 strike J.P. Chaubey said he was removed from service and was out of service for 12 years. After this long period he was reinstated by court orders and after that was elected as the Gen. Secretary of AIRF and has been so since then. Prior to that also he was full-time working in the union.

As regards the 1968 strike, it was based on the issue of “need-based minimum wage” and it was a one-day token strike on 19<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1968. As 30,000 temporary employees of the central govt. were thrown out J.P. Chaubey and 4 other leaders went on indefinite hunger strike in front of the parliament. On the seventh day when the govt. employees of North & South Block heard that the condition of one of the hunger strikers had deteriorated they all marched to the PM Mrs. Gandhi’s office and she was forced to concede to the demands and took all the 30,000 temporary staff back.

As regards the 1974 railway strike J.P. Chaubey said it was a historic strike and though they were ready for a settlement the govt. was not. About 10,000 rail workers were dismissed and it was only by 1977 when the Janta Party came to power that Madhu Dandavate as Rail Minister reinstated all. He also added that in 1978 the AIRF again threatened another strike but this time Charan Singh conceded the bonus issue.

Some of the other points he mentioned was that he became JCM member since 1968 and left it only after he became Gen. Secretary of the AIRF. He mentioned that the JCM was first evolved after the 1960 strike by Jawaharlal Nehru. As regards the 1974 strike J.P. Chaubey said that Fernandes was not in favour of going for the strike it was he and Peter Alvares who moved the resolution for the strike at Secunrabad AIRF Conference in 1972 where George Fernandes was made the AIRF President and J.P. Chaubey became convenor. Then he talked about the 1978 and now 1998 settlement which he claimed all were in favour of the railway workers. He was critical of current road of privatization and globalization. He also explained some the technicalities of bonus issue.