

SUD-Rail Federation of Trade Unions
17 boulevard de liberation 93200 St Denis
01 42 43 35 75- www.sudrail.org
Federation-sudrail@wanadoo.fr

The strike

November 16, 2007 - 23.30 hrs - No 15

Fourth day of the strike:

The General Assemblies are renewing the movement.

After three days of strikes, according to management's own statistics one railworker in every three is on strike across all grades taken as a whole ... **one in two amongst operational grades.** We are well aware that these are management's figures, because we see significant differences between the evidence on the ground and these 'conservative' figures! **The General Assemblies are constantly growing stronger since the 14th, and are voting overwhelmingly for continuation of the movement.**

Letter to the Minister

SUD-Rail is involved in an attempt at civic education.

The intemperate declarations of Mr. Bertrand [*Xavier Bertrand, Minister of Labour & Social Affairs in the Sarkozy government*], which go largely beyond the usual limits for a "publicly responsible" political figure, must be answered.

See below for our contribution to the civic education of a minister who evidently lacks training.

From: SUD-Rail Federation of Trade Unions
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To: Mr. Xavier Bertrand,
Minister of Labour and Social Affairs,
127, Rue de Grenelle
75700 PARIS

November 16, 2007

Minister,

For several days, you have said in the media that you refuse to communicate with SUD-Rail, which in your view, is not representative, and is the only trade union to refuse to negotiate on the implementation of your reforms.

The SUD-Rail Federation draws your attention to a number of items:

1. **'Representivity' is not yours to give.** It has been defined over the course of 40 years, SUD-Rail gained recognition in 1997, following some hundreds of tribunal cases. **What matters most to us, is the recognition given by the railworkers themselves**, which for example made SUD-Rail the second largest trade union force at SNCF. **At the present moment, 'representivity' is in the hands of the general Assemblies of strikers.**
2. We are not the only union to **refuse to negotiate on the implementation of your reforms.** Exactly the same basis for the national, all-out strike call was given by all 7 union federations.
3. **On the evening of the third day of the SNCF strike, we confirm that there is no question for SUD-Rail of negotiating, without having received a positive response to the strikers' demands, confirmed by daily General Assemblies: it is necessary for you to renounce the extension of the length of pension contributions from 37.5 years to 40 years, then to 41 years, etc., the benefit cuts and the de-linking of pensions from wages. We want no two-tier conditions, which penalise young and future railworkers.**
4. **We are not refusing negotiations at all; we are refusing to allow you to fix the reform agenda!** Saying the same thing to the strikers that we say to you, is also a SUD-Rail characteristic...
5. We are in a conflict; to get out of it through real negotiations, presupposes that everyone takes a step back. The strikers are organised to do so: through their daily General Assemblies, they are ready to consider all changes of position and to draw conclusions from them. **It's back to you, for your part, to create a level playing field and not to persist with wanting to impose your conditions before the negotiations.**

It is very clear for SUD-Rail that negotiations must be undertaken with all parties to the dispute, not by entertaining organisations one after another ...

In anticipation of your response, we send you our Syndicalist greetings.

For the SUD-Rail Federation:
Stephane Leblanc – Alain Cambi – Christian Mahieux

The government and management are intent on provoking us.

Despite pressure from the media carried out to order, **many transport users support our movement ... because they are workers and they share our demands to return to 37.5 years pension contributions for all.**

Resentful because our strike is so powerful, those trying to silence us are changing tactics: from now on they are climbing into bed with the extreme-right 'Freedom Association' types, such as «liberté chérie» (Freedom darling), «alternative libérale» (Liberal Alternative), etc.

We will not make any concession, nor let them play in our stations or distribute their rubbish leaflets without a reaction... but without falling for provocations!

November 20: civil servants and teachers on strike!

Tuesday If the government has not given way there will no longer be only railworkers and Paris metro workers on strike! This great day will weigh in the balance of forces.

But for SUD-Rail this will not be the climax of the movement... unless we manage to get a satisfactory success.

After Bertrand, here's Idrac* the copycat:

**[Anne-Marie Idrac, SNCF President]* Two days ago we were told about the letter from Xavier Bertrand, which would allow us to end the crisis. We know what a flop it was!

On Friday evening, the SNCF management gave notice of a text it was sending to the trade unions at around 8 o'clock.

SUD-Rail is publishing this text. For us, it is really not likely to bring an end to the strike:

- Moving from 37.5 years pension contributions to 40, then 41 in 2008, ...
- Introducing discounts.
- Pensions will no longer be indexed to wages.
- Introduction of a dual status once again penalising younger railworkers and future recruits.

**None of this has been removed:
*the struggle continues!***

METHOD DOCUMENT ON REFORM OF THE SPECIAL PENSION SCHEME

This method document is intended to specify the method, content and timing of negotiations on the reform of the special pension scheme called to open up participation of State representatives. It is subject to approval by the government.

- I. General framework and method of negotiation.
- II. Scope and topics of negotiation
- III. Timetable

SUD-Rail says: "We asked SNCF management to publish this document: initially they denied its existence."

I-General methodology and framework for negotiation

I-1. The general framework

SUD-Rail says: "We are offered only to discuss the implementation of the reform!"

Two governmental guidance notes indicated the general framework of the reform. The guidelines of 10 October has clarified the principles of harmonisation of special pension schemes, as well as issues relating to negotiations in a business or industry. The Guidance Note of November 6 has made a number of clarifications and amendments. The note stated: **"These latest governmental proposals apply** in the businesses and industries concerned, consequently a significant number of trade union organizations, which have noted the general parameters of the reform and have made amendments, will be involved in the negotiations with the companies and thus will dialogue prevail on the conflict. "

The company will conduct these negotiations based on the guidelines outlined here

- On the one hand through the letter from the SNCF President to railworkers, dated November 8, 2007,
- On the other hand through the first stages of consultation undertaken on 6 and 9 November.

SUD-Rail says: "As we have shown it's a lie, SNCF management has admitted having sent it to all trade union federations except SUD-Rail."

I-2. The method

Negotiations will be held with the participation of one or more representatives of the State, in the form of preparatory round tables (see timetable), resulting in a conclusive roundtable, and a one-month deadline. Each roundtable will be preceded by sending a technical dossier, setting up a "one-stop shop" for trade unions to complete their information prior to their formal meetings, or to answer questions in order to preparation for plenary sessions.

SUD-Rail says: "Are we disturbing their arrangements?"

II-Scope and topics of negotiation

SUD-Rail says: "They reiterated it here!"

In accordance with the principles of harmonisation, concrete proposals from management and the trade unions to improve the situation and rights of railway workers will be examined.

II-1. Complementary pensions and worker partnerships extensions of activity:

This component could include various measures including:

- **Taking into account elements of compensation that are not integrated today in calculating the pension**
- **Savings Account Duration**
- **Wage measures in connection with pension reform.**

The company will open discussions on salary measures that plug into further reforms of the entire scheme. One possibility would be to allow, under conditions of seniority, the granting of a "remuneration complement" to negotiate compensation for all employees based on the latest position of their qualifications (B2-11, C2-15, D2- 18...).

- **Repurchasing years of higher education.**

II-2. Changing the rules of the special pension scheme:

- adjustment of the minimum pension
- adjusting the minimum age for membership in the scheme
- adjusting the rules for granting further pension reform.

SUD-Rail says: "Fortunately, even among management there are people disgusted by these mafiosa practices..."

II .3. Taking into account specific grades:

Today, specific trades are taken into account in the form of

- Specific rules of organization of working time (Planned rest breaks, compensatory rest breaks...)
- Specific allowances (compensation for night work, Sundays and holidays, 3X8... etc).

The grades in the negotiating company will be taken into account and also reflected in future in several ways:

- **By means of an adjustment of working conditions** on posts deemed high duress.
- **By means of a gradual cessation of activity, or voluntary part-time working** at the end of their careers. The company could, under conditions to be negotiated, taking into account the arduous nature of the job under the conditions of use of part-time (duration in part-time work, which may be "longer" for employees who have more than [x years] in night work or 3x8 [shift

work]; variable by employer, pension contributions of the agent, part-time depending on the nature of the posts held during his career...).

- **By means of an assignment, in the last few years of his career, on a post at a lower responsibility** (sedentary jobs for traincrew, for example).

II-4. Implementation of new rights or improvement of existing rights:

1 ° - The 'new' family and marital rights: the main benefits for railworkers of an application of "public service" type rules would include:

- Increase in the length of service for children (career interruptions, for children born after 2008 would be taken into account and freely validated)
- Increase in the duration of insurance schemes for all discounts (2 quarters for each child born **after** 2008, and specific rules for handicapped children).

2 ° - Improvements in pension and disability coverage.

III - Schedule and organisation of the preparatory and conclusive round tables.

Business-level negotiations will be conducted over a period of one month. The hearings will be held with the participation of one or more representatives of the State.

They take the form of 8 roundtables:

- 6 thematic roundtables
- 2 conclusive roundtables.

SUD-Rail says: "Lots of promised meetings... to implement the reforms!"

III-1. Roundtable themes (from November 21 to December 7) around 6 familial themes

1. Wage measures and accompanying career devices
2. Pension supplement and the creation of new rights
3. Adaptation of rules for special pension schemes
4. Marital and Family Benefits and handicap
5. Facilities for career development and improvement of working conditions
6. Precautionary measures

SUD-Rail says: "The General Assemblies must decide: do you agree that the strike ends, and that in exchange ... reform is implemented?"

III-2. Conclusive roundtables (on 10 and 12 December).

Both sessions will be on the basis of a general text, combining all proposals for the company. All provisions will be negotiated when it is necessary to update the regulations governing the special pension scheme.

SUD-Rail says: "We, have a good idea of the answer..."