

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Sydney, Australia
Vol.40 No.1 (230) April-May 2022

Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

International Workers' Self Organisation on the Job & Direct Action: The Only Answers to Capitalist Imperialist Adventures & War!



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Rebel Worker is the bimonthly Paper of the A.S.N. for the propagation of anarcho-syndicalism in Australia.

Unless otherwise stated, signed Articles do not necessarily represent the position of the A.S.N. As a whole. Any contributions, criticisms, letters or

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

P.O. Box 92

BROADWAY 2007 NSW

E-mail: Via our web site

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AUSTRALIA: \$12 a year

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\$25 (Aus.) by Air

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Strike! In the heart of NSW Health

By Clark Kent

The date is the 15th of February 2022. It has just ticked 6:00 am on a Tuesday morning and the sun has risen triumphantly to a cloudless sky over the city of Sydney. The early morning rabbles across the town have just woken up, to the buzz of a bright day, as the news of a thousand voices filters slowly through their phones, radios and television sets. We are the people of health, the workers in the hospitals, the guardians in the night and we have had enough.

In front of Parliament House, there stood the thousands of nurses who one would normally find in a hospital, with their hands filled with contaminated blood, sweat, urine and shit. But this day, they were here instead, holding pickets and on a mission, to tell the truth. That the New South Wales government regime and its unabated tactics of lies and misinformation about the conditions of its workers, will not be allowed to exploit them any longer.

The constant stream of meanderings on

Tele by the polities that everything is under control and going according to plan, while hospitals on red alert filled with workers suffering from burnout with over two years of dealing with staff shortages, beyond human working hours, bullying and harassment by executives; and an exodus of Covid 19 cases appearing over the past months due to the governments 'open up and let the hospitals deal with it' initiative, has not gone unnoticed.

One of the major demands they are making: For a realistic patient to staff ratio. A ratio of 2 nurses to 3 patients in ICUs and 1 to 3 in emergency. When the government set up all its COVID hotels, testing centres and vaccination clinics, many nurses were redeployed there, leaving behind an already stringent hospital crew.

It is no secret that the hospitals across NSW were in dire straits even before the pandemic. It is no secret that all of NSW Health employees were forced out of a pre-approved pay rise by the current elected government. And while the government ministers play and enjoy their money for nothing and health for free soiree, a lack of funding and questionable policy decisions have contributed to this outburst and the reality is, it's been a long time coming.

This is serious!

See most people don't actually want to strike, it's a last resort kind of thing. Most

people don't want to threaten their jobs, livelihoods and other peoples for a bit of time off work just to have their say about injustice. At least not since 1996 when the John Howard Government began their cut-throat campaign against workers rights with the Workplace Relations Act. An act which constricted the unions and gave more authoritarian powers to the employer, reducing their legal responsibility to their employees, giving them the hammer to the stone. And they say there's no tyrants in democracy do they.

So to take a stand against, in a show of strength and unity, despite the Industrial Relations Committee ruling and the poor show of support from the decadent Health Services Union. In spite of frequent negative press coverage associated with workers strikes, like the Qantas strikes of 2011; to even have the compassion to immediately return to work after the initial hours in the early morning as a duty of care to their patients, highlights the character of these people who are fighting for their respect, their rights, and their livelihoods. And in contrast it paints a truer image of the people in charge, cause if the front line workers are the real 'Heroes', then what does that make the people they are fighting? Well over a month has passed since that day, and the conditions are not getting better. In one hospital the executives continue to target and discriminate, to try to replace their workforce with a

ASN APPEAL

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casual workforce, to delegate their responsibilities on lower managers, to shift blame and play their games. To control and contain through bureaucratic procedure and policies the

highly skilled employees, who's knowledge and experience far outshine theirs.

The HSU may have abandoned their colleagues at the Nurses and Midwives

Association, but that doesn't mean all workers have. The word is out. These actions will continue.

Now is the time to strike, while the iron is hot!

N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS

The Rail EBA Campaign: A Treacherous Comedy of Errors!

Some of the most important news has been the continuing saga of the RTBU's (Rail Tram & Bus Union) Sydney Trains and NSW Trains EBA(Enterprise Bargain Agreement) campaign.

Since commencement in the depths of the COVID-19 lock down last year, it has been pursued in a half hearted and lame duck fashion such as an ineffectual late night 'strike' and strikes partially sabotaged as only 'foreign made' trains not allowed to run, etc. All designed to exhaust the grass roots so as to cave-in on major nasties in the final EBA document. The latest development has been a threat of industrial action to provide free fare days for commuters as compensation for the inconvenience of the Sydney rail lockout on 21/2/22.

STOP PRESS: In late March the union bosses held dozens of union meetings to rubber stamp a so called 'peace' agreement to stop most planned EBA industrial action for six weeks in exchange allegedly for the Govt's provision of free fare days and vague promises on some EBA industrial issues. Many workers at the sites were unable to attend the meetings which featured approval for the deal based on shows of hands. The meetings were designed to prevent any adequate debate on the EBA campaign and head off pushes for direct action.

This latest of these stupid games will not move the struggle forward. Basically the union is trading public opinion for not undertaking industrial action. Where is the EBA in this? This will delay the EBA even longer and simultaneously reduce disputation. Its vitally important to establish grass roots committees to take over the running of the campaign, achieve the

'real' demands and take advantage of the defeat of the rail lockout.

Delaying the EBA campaign and negotiations would be in line with the officials likely plans for having the ballot in Sept. to provide a fake pay rise and possibly a bonus 'bribe' before elections in Nov.-Dec. Likely to be the last elections for important positions with talk of a merger with the TWU and adopting its 'collegiate' electoral system where the rank and file are not allowed to vote for important positions. Its critical to demand the full EBA doc at least four weeks before the ballot for consideration and mount major pressure for it. Given likely severe nasties such as DOO(Driver Only Operation) and the gates opened to privatisation in the EBA. As occurred with the 2018 EBA the officials are likely to only provide a summary of some highlights without the nefarious fine print. Even with the achievement of the 3.5% pa pay rise, there would be no real pay rise given reductions due to legislated super increases, spiralling inflation contributed by the Ukraine Crisis/War.

Observations and Reflections on 2 Leaderships

by Crimson Coconut

There is upheaval in N.S.W. which impacts greatly on public transport and its workforce. While Gladys Berejiklian has resigned over allegations of misuse of public money and 'pork barrelling', her horrid legacy lives on in NSW, especially in public transport. Despite resigning and not performing any work and not attending any ministerial meetings, she is still collecting her \$14,000 a week salary. Her retired ministers, including the former Transport Minister, are also still collecting their pay packets. (Source SMH)

At the same time a new E.B.A. is being



sought for rail workers bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 Pandemic. However negotiations have stalled to the point where the government who have been offering a paltry 0.3% P.A. pay rise for employees is failing to meet with the rail unions

Gladys was N.S.W. Transport Minister for nearly four years, finally relinquishing the title fittingly on April Fools Day 2015 to become Premier of N.S.W. In her time at the Transport helm she decimated the workforce and privatised everything within sight. Overall she has overseen a dramatic fall in the overall workforce in the public transport sector. In some cases a few jobs were picked up by the private sector as the privatisation juggernaut rolled on.

In the public rail industry job numbers in that sector fell from something over 30,000 when she first intervened to be at today's 11,000 (estimates only). Technology has taken up some of the jobs, however, areas such as the maintenance sector, have been taken by private contractors.

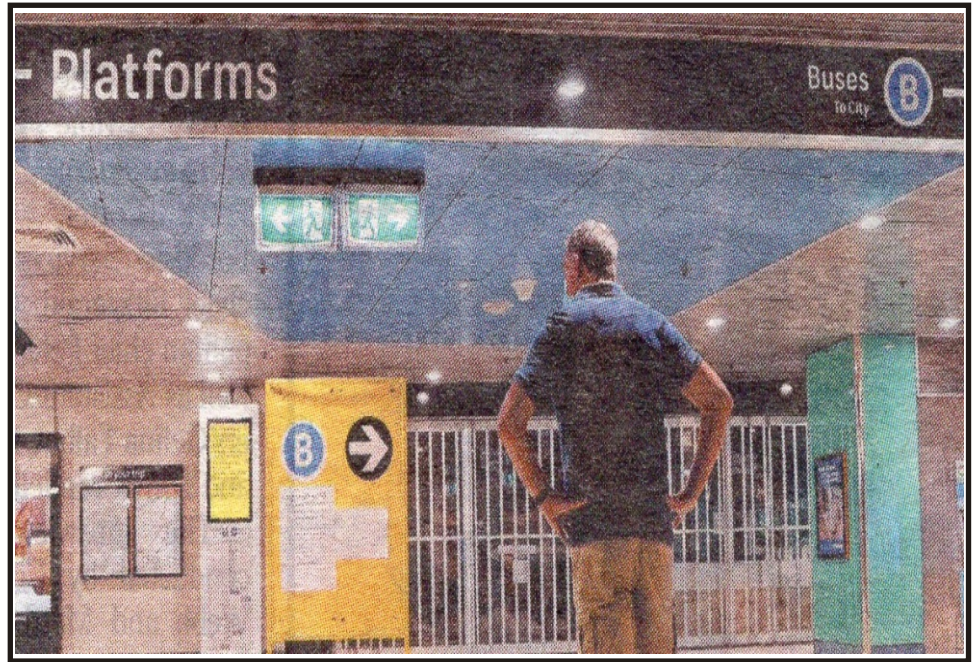
Let's just have a look at a few of the negative changes that happened within public transport during Glad the Impalers reign.

- * Outsourcing of Sydney's Buses and Newcastle buses on the most profitable routes with a promise to outsource the whole lot of the public bus services in NSW.

- * Outsourcing of Sydney Ferries to a consortium of investment houses and banks.

- * Wholesale cutting of jobs on rail stations saw the removal of full time workers and a shift to a greater proportion of part time and casual workers. Some of the most experienced operators in public transport were removed from their jobs and largely replaced by inexperienced or less experienced workers. Some of the jobs that were removed included administration staff replaced by temps, Station Managers, all sorts of trades people, roster clerks and timekeepers, ticket sales persons, information staff, cleaners who were outsourced to cleaning companies, track maintenance inspectors, luggage room, communications, rail post office and many others.

- * The privatisation of Sydney's



Northwest rail line to form the Sydney Metro. Metro will eventually be rolled out as the Bankstown Line as a completely new rail service. The trains and services that run on these lines are not complementary to the existing Sydney Trains network and thus trains cannot be run from Metro on the Sydney Trains system and likewise Sydney's trains cannot run on the Metro system. I can think of many cities in the world where a newly built rail system was incompatible with an existing and high volume rail system. \$Billions have been spent pulling down a fairly modern mass transport system and \$billions more have been spent rebuilding a system that will be run by a private consortium. This has been a developers dream because the rail corridor from Epping to Chatswood all the way to Bankstown will end up largely unrecognisable because of commercial acquisitions and development.

- * Scrapping of the existence of the old maintenance facilities to create new Centres of Excellence and the outsourcing of many maintenance functions at the cost of \$billions.

- * The purchase of new interurban trains overseas rather than having them built here in Australia/N.S.W. The latest acquisitions do not fit through the tunnels and bridges that were supposedly designed to run through. Other recently purchased trains are deemed to be unsafe in operation because they are designed to get rid of

the job of the train guard. These trains, while in a trial process, have been banned from going into service before safety issues relating to work performed by guards have been addressed.

- * Wage caps on employees in the public sector have kept transport workers' wages rises low and below the CPI. Enterprise Bargaining has been a long drawn out affair with those responsible from the government side stalling at every opportunity.

- * To help balance the State Government budget by sleight of hand the Berejiklian Government set up the Transport Asset Holding Entity separate from NSW Transport.

The latest C.E.O. of T.A.H.E., Benedict Colin, Group CEO from Keolis Downer, as well as having a position on the board of Infrastructure Australia is paid a reported salary of \$575,000 per year. (source SMH)

Despite this wasteful and purely profit driven agenda by the Berejiklian Government and its disastrous effect on the workers within public transport very little has been seriously organised to combat the job losses, privatisation and the wasteful changes that have been evident over the last decade and a half.

Public transport union density is one of the highest in the country. Accurate figures for union density are hard to come by, however at an educated guess it would be well above 30% of the workforce as compared with a union

density of around 14% in the general workforce. (ABS)

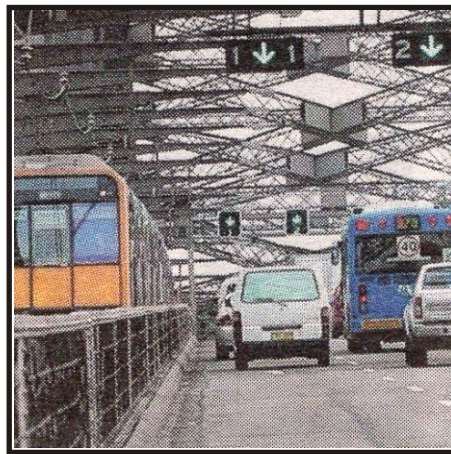
It has been shown that the Union Secretary dining or having coffee with the now defunct Premier, Berijiklian, is not just a bad look, it achieves nothing. There is surely something amiss in the union office. For despite the march of Gladys and her wrecking ball of ministers through public transport nothing positive has been done to curtail the job losses or to even stop the cutting of services.

While the union leadership was mainly silent during the pandemic I believe further measures should have been taken to ensure the safety of union members on the job. It took a while before management made masks for face to face workers mandatory. At the beginning of the pandemic no measures were taken by management to protect workers on the job. The unions decided to hand out their own face masks with the union logo printed on it rather than force the public transport entities to supply adequate PPE. A union membership vote on mandatory vaccination of staff could also have been useful to support the wishes of members and shore-up the unions statement about protecting all workers and commuters.

The latest EBA negotiations are instructive on the failures of half hearted, half assed measures by the elected union leadership. I understand that there is a genuine attempt to build solidarity during the bargaining period, in which over 90% of union members voted to take protected action, but really are these the best and most effective tactics that the leadership can come up with?

While there was a 4 hour rail strike on Tuesday the 28th of September, which was called a 'stop work' meeting, it hardly had any effect on the transport network because of the hours of the strike from 9am till 1pm. It did not hinder people getting to and from work, businesses or rail management. People working morning shifts could get to work before 9am and get home in the afternoon. Besides that, due to the pandemic, less than 10% of normal public transport commutes were taking place because of 'stay at home' orders. The trains were largely empty each day anyway.

The online stop-work meeting featured a series of speakers including one from the Nurses and Midwives Union and the usual cast from the union hierarchy. There were no real concrete industrial actions plans proposed except to keep the struggle going. One disappointment was that the stop-work meeting, as usual, was a top down affair where ordinary union members were not able to have any input or say. I don't think that Zoom meetings are a suitable substitute for traditional stop-work meetings. However, when was the last time you attended a stop-work meeting?



Other industrial action tactics are proving to be ineffective over time. I don't know who approved of these tactics but management must be laughing at them. Mostly they have proven ineffective in getting management to bargain 'in good faith'. So far they are not offering more than the .03% pay rise for the first year. The union's claim is a 3.5% PA which is moderate considering that rail staff bore the brunt of the pandemic and were classed as an essential service. So where are we now?

It seems that industrial action in its current form will continue. As we go to print an overtime ban and a cleaning ban of biological and toxic material is in force. This is not likely to cause too much consternation to the government or management as it possibly won't cause any staffing issues. An under utilised part time staff contingent, subcontracted workers and a partial overtime ban, plus creative overtime will mean that things will still run seamlessly.

Other tactics such as wearing union paraphernalia, sitting down on the job

when not busy, not cleaning graffiti etc are comical rather than effective.

The only thing that might move management is an indefinite strike. (stop work meetings should now be possible due to pandemic restrictions being lifted).

The transport unions have been fiddling while the entities have been torn apart, restructured and jobs lost. Clearly the form of action used so far and contemplated in the future is not working. We have to get serious about what is needed. Leadership of these campaigns is lacking the guts to do what is really needed to win. You all know what needs to be done.

The current union leadership have overseen all of the dastardly work of Gladys and her ministers and barely lifted a finger to stop it. Job losses, privatisation, outsourcing and public destruction have continued unabated and the union leadership we have seem incapable of organising a fightback.

In late 2021, American workers, having formed rank and file organisations outside of the old traditional yellow unions, have commenced an unprecedented industrial campaign across several industries. From Kellogs to John Deere, the agricultural machinery manufacturer, they are showing that walking out, picketing, showing no fear and building solidarity in a campaign of industrial disobedience can bring rewards. Concessions are being won and these grass roots movements are growing. Withdrawal of labour is the only way forward.

We can learn from these movements. At this stage we can't tell where future industrial campaigns will lead, but unless we act in unison and solidarity as the rank and file and insist on having a voice there will be more of the same defeats.

The new Premier of N.S.W. is more pro-business than Gladys, if that is possible. He has less experience in the transport sector and has not been exposed to working with people in our industry. For that reason alone, things could take a turn for the worse. We need to organise on the job and be ready to take the action that is needed by building a base that is deeply rooted in the rank and file.

SYDNEY RAIL LOCKOUT!

Workers Lock Out

While the Morrison National LNP Government pushes forward with their attempts at watering down workers' health and safety rights in the workplace the NSW Government is blocking Public Transport Unions attempts at keeping the public and transport workers safe. This is all part of a concerted attempt to bypass unions and allow management and contractors to openly flout health and safety laws.

In enterprise negotiations with the unions, the government and its representative managers are refusing to come to the table over safety issues and the enterprise agreement. These days there is little talk of the paltry 0.3% PA pay rise on offer through the agreement. It has become a major issue over the intransigence of the governments refusal to respect the negotiation process or the unions proposals.

Already we are many months past the use by date of the current Enterprise Agreement, yet there seems to be no urgency on the part of Government or Unions to finalise a deal which will give employees a decent wage rise or certainty over job security. Because payment for new agreements are not backdated to the expiry of the old agreement any more, each day that passes sees rail workers fall further behind in take home pay.

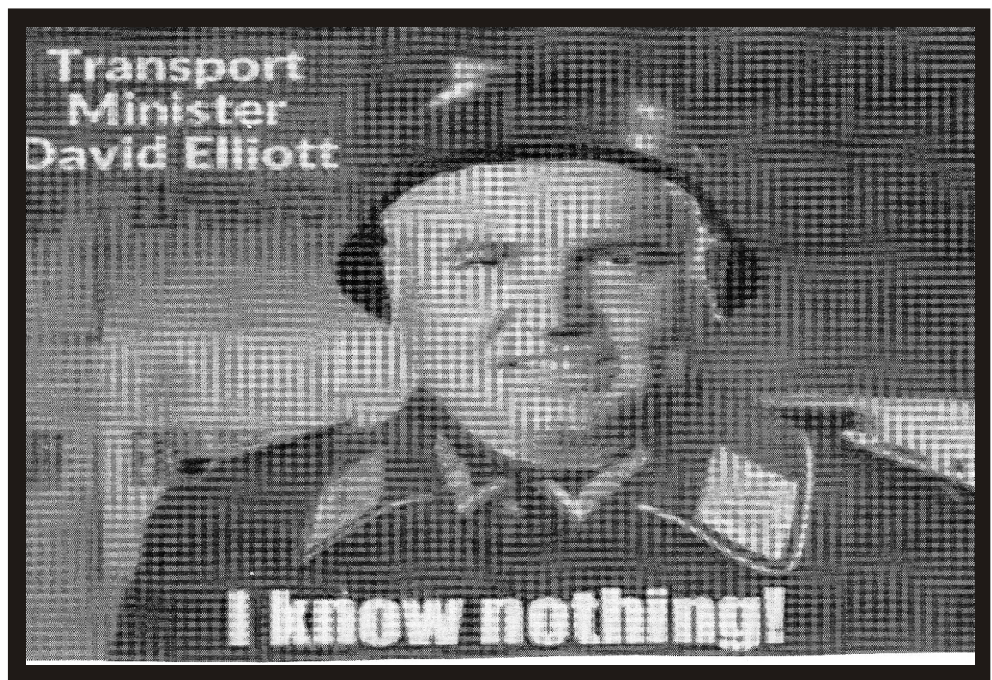
Who's at fault here?

On the 19th Feb, or thereabouts, Transport for NSW and the NSW Government applied to the Industrial Commission for industrial action that was being undertaken by the rail unions and their members to be terminated. This was largely unsuccessful. However it resulted in the RTBU calling off several actions. In a back room deal between the RTBU and the Government, members of the union were never allowed to give their opinion on the compromise deal, nor were they informed. The cancellation of the limited strike action by the union

was never put to a vote of the union membership or the workforce.

Because of the RTBU leaderships surmised weakened state of compromise the NSW Government thought it could strike out at the Union once and for all in a manoeuvre that was not well thought out or executed. On the 21st February 2022 the NSW Government shut down the whole of

The high stakes gamble of the NSW Government for a Lockout of workers on the Sydney rail network backfired on them. NSW Transport Minister Elliott denied that he knew about the shut down of the rail network when he was faced with public criticism. Yet documents produced in the NSW parliament prove that the Transport Minister had full knowledge of the proposed shutdown and lockout. This was a tactic dreamed up by the back room bullies of the LNP. Senior Transport Officials have been scapegoated for the debacle despite the fact



the NSW rail network and attempted to smear the unions. They cited safety concerns, which were blamed on the rail unions. They also intimidated the public that they could not provide safe passage during industrial action, therefore, that rail services could not be provided. This effectively was a Lockout, an industrial tactic by the government, which was prepared to inconvenience commuters around the state in their attempts to smear the union.

If terminating industrial action in the courts had not been successful Transport for NSW had planned to shut down the network for 2 weeks based on a safety risk assessment they had completed several days before. Of course, in the face of this, the RTBU leadership acquiesced rather than speak to their members to decide what they wanted to do.

that they produced evidence of unsuccessful attempts to contact the Transport Minister the night before the shut down.

However a serious industrial campaign by the RTBU and rail unions has still not been instituted. Both sides instead trade blows calling on the other party to negotiate back-room deals around the table.

These paragraphs on WSWs.org sum up the situation within the union hierarchy.

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2022/03/09/nswr-m09.html>

Notwithstanding the political embarrassment, TfNSW and the Perrottet government in fact achieved precisely what they set out to do. The manoeuvre was aimed at shutting down industrial action on the railways

and getting back to the business of imposing a regressive enterprise agreement, which is exactly what the union is seeking to deliver. This is in line with the role played by the RTBU for decades. In one enterprise agreement after another, the RTBU has enforced job cuts, increased casualisation, and the punitive 2.5 percent per annum wage cap. This is all part of a drive towards privatisation which the union has facilitated for every other mode of transport in NSW. Conscious of workers opposition to the deepening assault, the RTBU confines disputes to long and demoralising campaigns of limited work bans designed to cause minimal disruption. This is aimed at wearing workers down until they are forced to accept a rotten

deal cooked up in union-management talks.

Imagine what a realistic industrial campaign could have been achieved by union members

In light of the hypocrisy over safety. It was alright for the Government to take industrial action, yet the union was denied taking these safety actions, the union now has a precedent to put their safety issues forward in a forceful way.

In fact, the struggle should not see the union back pedal from this point on. To capitulate at this point would be a demoralising defeat. Can we be sure that the leadership will take up the cudgel and move the fight forward while the ball is in their court? Well only we can guarantee that. By coming together in our workplaces and

demanding democratic changes in the union and in our workplaces we can demand to stop backroom deals by our officials and include us in the processes at play.

Rank and file participation is a necessary part of the solution of pressuring the government over the EBA and safety. Yet we have been sidelined effectively despite the limited tinkering of an ineffective industrial campaign.

A well organised militant campaign is necessary to move the goal posts once and for all and give members new faith in the power of union. However we must move forward together, as workers, as comrades, in solidarity
a n d u n i t y .

LETTER

Dear RW

The RTBU has failed to protect its members as some 350 RTBU members have been stood down because they don't want to be vaccinated. The majority have valid reasons but Transport for NSW demands they get vaccinated or get sacked.

Transport for NSW hired as Secretary Rob Sharp a man that was sacked from Arnotts, Tiger Air and Virgin Air. Sharp on his LinkedIn account shows celebrating 80 percent vaccination. How could this person be independent? Sharp falsified Risk Assessments and failed to do risk benefit ratio where there is a comparison of deaths and adverse reactions from the vaccine compared to benefits.

Sharp put out a timeline to February: get vaccinated or be sacked by February. When I asked the RTBU to do something they stated they support vaccinations.

To date the RTBU have done nothing and during Christmas those staff members that have done nothing wrong, face the sack without any compensation.

I cannot believe the RTBU failed to represent its members. Other staff treat

us like lepers, yet the RTBU worry about the right to wear shorts.

Management are refusing to accept the EA in regards to a status quo ruling by Deputy President Easton on the 7th January FWC(Fair Work Court) 22 which opposes stand downs and sacking of workers who refuse COVID-19 vaccinations.

The RTBU is failing to represent workers that don't want this vaccine.

I have been at home for 8 weeks since 5 Dec mandate using my own leave yet being a union member means nothing. As the RTBU has sold itself to back big pharmaceutical companies.

Management has advised me that this decision is confined to ETU/CEPU/AMWU members within the Engineering and Maintenance Branch of Sydney Trains. It does not apply to me and other stood down Sydney Trains workers.

Furthermore I add workers have been stood down since 05/12/2021 and these draconian measures must now end.

Sydney Trains has 350 loyal hard working team members at home when we have severe staff shortages and I

believe the FWC ruling shows they should be back.

Risk Assessment need to be done in a proper fashion and if the mandate isn't withdrawn through this dispute then let's go to Fair Work.

Punishing innocent workers must stop now.

Sydney Trains Reader and Supporter

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

A very difficult issue, especially now that so many rail workers have become infected. A risk assessment would easily come down on the side of immunisation. Since the large numbers of people in ICU, and those losing their lives, are not vaccinated. Its a bit like a struggle between free will and the greater good. As a union they have a duty to uphold both. However realistically the "greater good" in the health and welfare of the majority of members is always going to win. Yet the union should at least talk to these members.

The other thing is that the non vaccinated pose no threat to the vaccinated. They could realistically go back to work at their own risk. A difficult issue for any union, but it could be done as it poses no threat to anyone except those that refuse
t o v a c c i n a t e .

CARINGBAH STATION NEWS

In May 2021 at Caringbah Station a P/T CSA (Customer Service Attendant) notices an envelope containing \$80 missing out of the safe, rings CAM (Customer Area Manager) & says the envelope is missing but I didn't take it. F/T CSA & delegate who's had run ins with same CAM, returns from days off

with mental health issues and is accused by the CAM with a background in a supermarket chain who is trying to make a name, of fraud, stealing, etc. CAM hounds F/T CSA for confession.

F/T CSA sarcastically replies, "yeah I took it". Next minute F/T CSA is charged with 4 code of conduct charges with not one piece of evidence bar a sarcastic remark. DISMISSED.

F/T CSA appeals to Transport for NSW on 20/10/21 but to no avail. Dismissal

stands.

Meantime P/T CSA has told anyone who walks past about this after signing a confidentiality agreement. Gets put on a PCIP, a slap on the wrist.

Now F/T CSA has to go to Fair Work Australia Court to try & get her job back with no income.

This took place without one piece of solid evidence, no witness, no CCTV, nothing, just a smart ass comment.

Angry NSW Rail reader and supporter

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS



Scene from the Rally outside NSW Parliament House

REPORT ON RALLY TO OPPOSE EASTERN SUBURBS BUS ROUTECUTS

With the lessening of the Delta mutation of COVID-19 pandemic and removing of lock down restrictions, the NSW Govt. moved ahead with the foreshadowed bus routes cuts affecting the Eastern Suburbs and South West Suburbs. From Sunday 5th December the following bus routes were abolished: 391, 393, L94, 395, 400 and 400N and a range of other changes to routes and bus stops location were made worsening bus services. UNIONS NSW and the RTBU(Rail

Tram & Bus Union) officials organised a public meeting/rally opposite the NSW Parliament at 1pm Wednesday Nov. 24th.

The rally was addressed by David Babineau NSW RTBU Bus Division Secretary, local ALP MP's and others. UNIONS NSW had 150 pensioners from the affected areas bused to the rally to make up the numbers. In Babineau's spiel he admitted that the bus route cuts were in line with NSW Govt. plans to privatise the Eastern Suburbs STA bus depots and Light Rail extensions. In particular the route cuts would compel more commuters to use the Eastern Suburbs Light Rail and increase revenue for the new private operator. Babineau also informed the audience that as a result of the route

cuts 150 lines of work for bus drivers would be lost. Potentially leading to the loss of 50 bus drivers' jobs in the Eastern Suburbs depots. Babineau also went on to refer to the foreshadowed fake industrial campaign by the RTBU and the TWU (Transport Workers Union) to tackle the 'two tier' employment regime in private bus companies in NSW. With the older ex-STA (State Transit Authority) drivers in privatised sections of the STA such as Region 6 on better wages and conditions than new drivers mostly TWU members on worse conditions. Babineau omitted to mention that the Rightwing ALP officials of both unions played a key role in creating and preserving this 'two tier' regime. In a previous STA/RTBU enterprise agreement the union officials gave the green light to a clause which extended STA bus driver so called 'traineeships' on much worse wages and conditions than permanent bus drivers from 6 months to 2 years. The TWU officials have also colluded for many years in worse enterprise agreements for private company bus drivers than those for STA drivers.

The rally was clearly another lame duck measure by the union officials to look like they were doing something to fight the bus service cut backs and looming privatisation but doing nothing with any serious effect. Meanwhile providing an ALP election stunt for upcoming NSW State elections later in 2022.

STOP PRESS: A NSW Parliament Upper House Inquiry into the Privatisation of Bus Services has been launched with a closing date for submissions 31/3/22.

Randwick Depot News

RW: What are your thoughts on the recent massive bus route cuts in the Eastern Suburbs?

Randwick Driver: The cut backs have seriously disadvantaged commuters. They now have to catch connecting buses to reach destinations. The Govt. should provide them with discounts as compensation for being inconvenienced in their commuting. As a result of the route cutbacks from 5th Dec. 2021 I have noticed we have become busier. I have not noticed any reduction in lines of work and associated major reduction in pay. The bosses with the complicity of the union officials have seized the opportunity of the route cuts to reduce our layover/rest breaks on runs. I have particularly noticed this speed up in our work in regard to the layover break with the 370 which now operates from Coogee to Glebe Pt. Road.

Other news is that wheels are moving with the privatisation of the Eastern Depots. Its going to occur in April. Transit Systems which won the tender for Region 6 will be the new private operator.

Port Botany Depot News

RW: What your impressions of the major route cut backs affecting the Eastern Suburbs in early Dec.2021?

Pt. Botany Driver: The cut backs are adversely affecting both us and commuters. A major objective of the cut backs has been to force commuters off our buses onto the Light Rail. Many of us are very angry over the cutbacks as a result of having major cut backs in our shifts and pay. Other news is that the privatisation of the East Suburbs depots will be going ahead in April angering many of us at the depot.

Waverley Depot News

RW: What is the latest at the depot with the massive bus routes cuts and privatisation push affecting the Eastern Suburbs depots?

Waverley Driver: I haven't heard anyone making complaints about the

route cuts. However some must be complaining, workers supporting the RTBU officials at the depot have been spreading mis-information of the officials justifying the route cuts from 5th Dec. 2021 on the basis that the cuts such as the abolition of the 400 and 400N from the Airport won't seriously disadvantage commuters and bizarrely in certain cases would be necessary. Consequently justifying the officials not holding a stop work mass meeting and the taking of industrial action on the issue and subsequent privatisation due to lack of commuter and community support. Despite large community attendance at the Save Our Buses Rally on 30/5/21 near Randwick depot. As part of the privatisation of the Eastern Suburbs depots in April we will be issued with new uniforms in February. Meanwhile as part of an ALP back room deal and

LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What is the latest with the union at the depot?

Leichhardt Driver: At a union meeting in late January we were advised by the union delegate that Transit Systems had agreed to the 2.5% pa wage rise. However, the company boss had been unwilling to back date the rise to when our former EBA expired. The union is demanding an approx 1.7% pa extra rise to cover arrears due with the back dating of the new EBA rise. The bosses have been so far unwilling to pay the arrears/back dating. The union officials say they are currently fighting for the arrears so the EBA campaign is continuing.

Editorial Comment: With the legislated super increases to 10% pa in



privatisation push the TWU looks set to takeover coverage of us in early 2022.

Another development was a major change in management at the depot a while back. With the departure of 'Madam Lash' from the scene. She was considered one of the worst bosses in State Transit. She particularly set out to sack many drivers through catching them out and setting them up for disciplinary action.

2022 and 12% pa in 2024, there will be a major cut back to 'in the hand' money from the EBA wage rise. Entailing a super rise of 0.5% pa and so only a 2.04% pa wage rise, effectively a pay cut taking account of the current 3.5% pa CPI inflation rate. However, the price of non-discretionary goods and services, including food, fuel, housing, utilities, school fees and health care, went up by 4.5%. Why aren't the union officials highlighting these issues and demanding further rises from the bosses to cover the Super increases, current 'real' inflation rate and

projected inflation increases during the length of the EBA?

RW: What is other news at the depot?

LD: There was an unusual development in mid Jan. At this time the manager/supervisor who had been at the depot for some years, suddenly resigned. However the relief

manager/supervisor was in isolation due to infection with COVID-19. So for a few weeks we had no such bosses. Management has been taking a very tough line on vaxing. They were continuing to threaten the sack for any drivers not having the first and second boosters. Other news is that on 23/8/21

the 'A' Team and 'B' Team rosters were introduced, where drivers would work one fortnight and be off the job for the next fortnight but paid their average wage. This set up has been scrapped a while back.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of RW we will discuss current issues at V/Line. As in previous issues names have been changed.

RW: What is the current situation at V/Line?

Ichabod: Managers are still trying to scare their employees.

RW: In what ways?

Moose: A couple of WA122 kios in the industrial relations section who want to reduce leave for shift workers from five weeks annual leave to four weeks annual leave.

Midge: To be granted five weeks annual leave you will have to work 32 Sundays a year.

Rastus and Roscoe: This proposal was an attempt to cut staff. A number of Holiday Relief Positions would be abolished. Five weeks leave for shift workers has been in the Railway Awards since 1976. Before 1976 it was four weeks.

Archie: An extra weeks leave is granted to employees who work continuous rotating shifts as a shift penalty for loss of social life.

Forsyth: The Union knocked this proposal on the head but it is seen as a threat in the future.

Ichabod: Due to the COVID outbreak, a number of Government Departments have been told to reduce costs and perhaps this proposal was an idea from these WA122 kios.

Rastus: During COVID restrictions V/Line has run full train services.

Roscoe: Due to privatisation, though V/Line is a statutory authority of the Victorian Government, their franchise states that X number of trains have to run. The same franchise conditions apply to M Trains and Yarra Trams.

Moose: To cut services legislation would have to be passed to cut services by Parliament as what happened in Britain. In Britain the Railways have been virtually nationalised and cuts to services have happened.

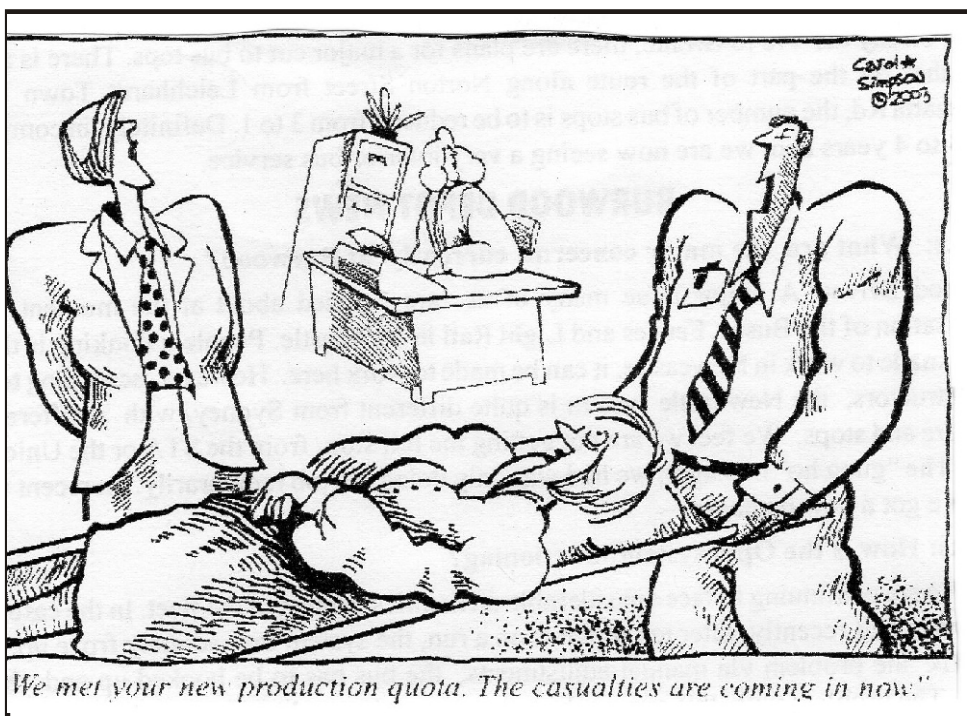
Rastus: Due to COVID a number of drivers had to go into quarantine so one weekend in September all V/Line services were suspended and replaced by Buses. No employees were stood

provided for drivers. The meal rooms have been divided into separate meal rooms for drivers from various regions.

Moose: An extra meal room has been provided for rail workers, V/Line was reluctant to provide this facility as they claimed it would cost an extra \$75,000 in rent. They were forced under O,H&S rules to provide the room.

RW: What has happened to the V/Line Board?

Rastus: The Board was dismissed and V/Line is now a Statutory Authority of the Victorian Government with the Chief Executive reporting to the Minister of Transport.



down.

Forsyth: The only cuts to Public Transport was the night network on the weekends. The employees who worked these shifts were redeployed.

Archie: It was alleged the COVID infection occurred in the meal rooms. The meal room at Southern Cross Station is a common meal room which shared with non rail workers.

Rastus: Extra meal rooms have been

RW: What is the situation at Bendigo?

Roscoe: The manager has been redeployed to Head Office where he is now in charge of issuing Travel Dockets for Drivers taxis. He has replaced the previous Train Drivers Manager who was doing this job. This manager's contract was not reviewed.

Rastus: He has certainly made an impact with providing taxis.

RW: In what way?

Rastus: He arranged for another Taxi Company to provide the service and these taxis are turning up at Country locations for up to an hour late and Drivers are left stranded.

Roscoe: In one instance a Driver had to be taken from Traralgon to Melbourne and the Taxi from Dandenong to Melbourne did not travel by the free way.

RW: Why?

Roscoe: The taxi driver told the Driver he could not use the toll road because his employer would deduct the toll charge from his wages.

Rastus: Unfortunately these incidents are common in the taxi industry and we hope this matter is reported to the Taxi Directorate.

Roscoe: We Drivers have a feeling that once this manager's contract comes up for renewal he will be flicked out of V/Line.

RW: What about the CSM in Bendigo?

Harriet: He has returned to his previous position at Seymour.

Herbert: The CSM position at Bendigo has been abolished.

Moose: The CSM positions are to be abolished and replaced by an enhanced Customer Service Position which will supervise all station staff as well as conductors.

Rastus and Roscoe: If you want to know about CSM's refer to issues 130, 132, 147 and 152. Drivers have a low opinion of CSM's due to the antics of a few.

Midge: We employees wonder if the CSM's will have to reapply for these Customer Service Positions as well as the existing Customer Service Officers.

Moose: They use this method to eliminate employees. If you are unsuccessful you are declared redundant.

RW : What is the situation at Bendigo?

Harriet and Herbert: We have a new manager. The tension in the depot is reduced but we will have to wait and see.

RW: What about the sacked manager?

Herbert: A settlement was reached before the matter went to Fair Work Australia. We do not know the outcome as the settlement was confidential.

Harriet: We do know he did not receive a Retired Employee Rail Pass because the Pass Office says he was sacked.

Ichabod: V/Line notifies the Pass Office when an employee with over twenty years is sacked. V/Line should wait until all avenues of appeal are exhausted before approaching the Pass Office.

Moose: When an employee is sacked V/Line uses threats as coercion to stop employees from discussing these dismissals. V/Line tries to keep the matter under wraps.

RW: Once again space is against us. We hope the Union and others petition the Pass Office for a sacked manager and we hope the Depot at Bendigo can return to normal.

Rastus and Roscoe: Once again in having the final say we call on all V/Line employees particularly conductors and Authorised Officers to treat employees who have been unjustly sacked with over 22 years service as retired employees. If everybody sticks together and shows some unity this matter could be resolved.

In this issue of RW we will be discussing the use of Sub Standard Rolling Stock on V/Line Regional Trains. Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff will discuss these issues. As in previous issues of RW names have been changed.**RW: What is the current situation at V/Line as regards rolling stock?**

Midge: Conductors arriving to run their trains to Shepparton, Warrnambool and Swan Hill have seen an 'H' set substituted for an 'N' set in a regional service.

Archie: The V/Line network is divided into two zones. One area is the Commuter zone in which the MYKI system of ticketing is used. This is bounded by Waurin Ponds, Wendouree, Epsom, Eaglehawk, Seymour and Traralgon.

Forsyth: The outer area whilst bounded by Swan Hill, Ararat, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Albury and Bairnsdale is classed as Regional.

Finbar: Carriage sets which are classed as 'N' sets are used on these services. The carriages are both First and Economy Class and have buffet

facilities. The long term plan is to replace these sets with Railcars classed as Velocity Trains with Buffet Facilities.

Rastus: Velocity Trains are currently being used on Regional Services to Ararat, Maryborough and on some Bairnsdale trains. As well as Echuca.

Roscoe: 'H' sets are used on peak hour Commuter Services within or radius of 100 km's of Melbourne.

RW: What is the origin of the 'H' sets.

Finbar: These carriages were converted from 'Blue Harris' suburban trains built between 1956 and 1971. In the 1970's certain politicians in the Liberal Party who ruled Victoria between 1955 and 1982 wanted to replace all country passenger trains except Geelong with buses. There was a political backlash in 1980 and a compromise was struck. In 1981 a number of trains were axed with the remaining services being modernised with 'N' sets being introduced between 1981 to 1986.

Roscoe: Because of limited finances 12 first series 'T' class locomotives were converted to 'P' Class locomotives between 1981 and 1984. These locomotives were equipped with head end power.

Finbar: At the same time a number of Blue Harris suburban trains were converted to 'H' sets. The Harris cars were stripped of asbestos and entered service from 1984 onwards.

Archie: The 'H' sets were used on all commuter trains plus the Leongatha service. They were used on a Shepparton service plus holiday extra trains and for Specials for various sporting events.

Rastus: In 1985 'N' Class locomotives equipped with Head End Power entered service. On trains with locomotives not equipped with Head End Power, power vans were used.

Roscoe: In 1982 with the split of V/Line into Passenger and Freight some 'P' Class locomotives were handed over to freight. Due to Velocity Trains being placed into service in 2016 V/Line Passengers 'P' Class were withdrawn. Some 'P' Classes had been returned for works trains.

Moose: 'H' sets were to have been withdrawn by 2014 but due to increased passenger usage their

withdrawal dates have been deferred.

Ichabod: In the last few years the use of 'H' sets in a number of regional trains has increased with these sets operating to Warrambool and Swan Hill.

RW: I wonder how a passenger would feel riding up to 300 km's on one of these sets.

Midge: Imagine if you are a passenger who has purchased a first class ticket to Swan Hill. You arrive on the platform and see a 'H' set as your train. The conductor walks through the train, apologises for the inconvenience and gives the passenger a refund slip to give to the booking clerk at Swan Hill. In the meantime you are in for a rock and roll journey.

Ichabod: You would make a vow never to travel with V-Line again.

Midge: One carriage in the 'H' set is not equipped with a toilet and only one set is equipped with covered gangways. The only good point about the 'H' set is that it is maintained to a satisfactory standard.

RW: Why do they run 'H' sets on these services and not Velocity trains?

Finbar: If the train does not run, V/Line is fined. Because Shepparton is the shortest of regional services 'H' sets are used. Velocity trains are not accredited to operate to Shepparton, Warrambool and Swan Hill.

Archie: Of the 18 'H' sets four sets are of standard gauge for the Albury service. The remaining 14 sets are used in the broad gauge. Velocity trains are being built for Albury services.

Rastus: Rolling stock has been increased over the last fifteen years but the ratio of maintenance staff to trains has not been addressed.

Roscoe: This should have been addressed when the franchises are renewed.

Midge: On Saturday recently I was rostered to work a Ballarat train. Whilst preparing the train I noticed a 'H' set on the adjacent platform. I was informed the set was operating a train to Shepparton. Whilst running the service to Ballarat I saw an 'N' set stalled at Bacchus Marsh for the weekend. It would have made sense to work this set as empty cars to Melbourne on Friday night and used the set as a standby train

for the weekend, then with the set back to Bacchus Marsh on Monday morning.

Forsyth: The movement control office will not listen to any suggestions from conductors regarding these moves. Conductors at times wonder whether they have the power of positive thinking. You could write a book about the clashes with conductors over the years.

RW: Once again we have run out of space. V/Line should plan ahead and make sure 'N' sets work these Regional Trains. Replace the 'N' sets on the Geelong and Bacchus Marsh trains. This may free up 'N' sets for Shepparton.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say, 'H' sets should be used on these Commuter services. Imagine if you were a passenger using a Mobility Aid and you were placed in the carriage without the toilet. Finally the movement control office should listen to employee suggestions not ignore them.

REPORT ON THE UKRAINE CRISIS

We publish a translation of the text in which anarchists from Kharkov talk about the situation and their position at the moment. Although we do not agree with all their assessments, we nevertheless consider it important to bring the internationalist voice from Ukraine through all front lines, whose working people have become a tragic victim of bloody showdowns between NATO and the Kremlin, Russian and Ukrainian oligarchic regimes today.

If someone does not know, we write about social conflicts in Kharkov, urban and environmental problems, self-organized efforts to overcome them from below, about local anarchist history. Our goal is to influence public opinion by advancing the agenda in the spirit of revolutionary anarchism.

On the second question [what Ukrainian anarchists are doing now], let's start with ourselves. We are all in Kharkov, with the exception of one participant with a Small son, who

safely left for Poland with her relatives. Now we are explaining the situation here to foreign journalists and activists who, from the first hours of the war, have been bombarding us with various questions and simply letters of solidarity. Secondly, we



participate in the distribution of essential goods to the most needy neighbours. And one more of our guys coordinates mutual assistance in solving various issues through territorial Telegram chats.

There are some hunting and edged weapons here, material for Molotov cocktails is also nearby, but in general, even cannonade is not particularly heard in our homes. Compared to the other half of the city, we were just lucky. In the northern and eastern districts of the city, heavy shelling of residential buildings from heavy weapons is really going on - just today, February 28, at least 11 civilians were killed and 37 were injured, including a family of two adults and three children burned alive in a car...

We see no point in covering the military situation here. All media and publications write the same thing, and there is no desire to try to expand your

awareness by spreading unfounded rumours. Our materials touch upon social and humanitarian topics, rather only secondarily covered by other journalists.

What do we think of all this? First, a few words about the public statement of our comrades from the Russian regional section of the International Workers' Association. While sharing in general their condemnation of both ruling cliques, we must still note that they did not fully understand the global causes of this hell. If the war is caused by competition for gas markets, then why has the West not yet imposed an embargo on the supply of Russian hydrocarbons? And who will divert attention from the "sanitary dictatorship" with measures that are 100 times less popular among the population and 100 times more disadvantageous for the economy than any Covid restrictions? Oh well, now is not the time to dig so deep... (1) According to their spokesperson, they now have to "fight the crazed patriotic bastards" with might and main, but they do not give any specific recommendations, except for the most abstract appeals for any time (2).

And then we come to the next point. A rather controversial position was taken by our other close allies from the Black Banner group, mainly based in Lvov and Kyiv. Of course, if in the Obolon metropolitan area even Kalashnikov assault rifles were handed out for territorial defence simply to everyone, without even asking for documents, then it's a sin not to take advantage of this (in Kharkov now you can get a gun only with documents and combat experience). Question: is it possible now to conduct anarchist agitation in armed formations, or will anarchists be just cannon fodder there? However, the main thing is that the political statement of the guys in general also places the responsibility for this massacre on both bourgeois sides, and this certainly warms our hearts (3).

Be that as it may, the general internationalist line is now seen as follows: let the Putlerite (4) White Guard scumbags choke on their blood here, but we should not help "our" state

get out of this meat grinder stronger. What to do specifically - let each comrade act according to local circumstances. We do what we can best and want to speak only for our group (...).

And where without historical analogies! The "Black Banner" at the end of its declaration appeals to the experience of Makhno, who fought both against Denikin's imperialists and against Ukrainian nationalists, but the objective reality is that our forces are now incomparable even with the anarchist movement of the Russian



Empire during the period of reaction itself after the defeat of the revolution of 1905- 1907 Based on the influence and resources we have, it seems most relevant now to take an example from Chernyshevsky and his supporters. Those who, first of all, rejoiced at the failure of the crowned gendarme Nicholas I in the Crimean War, but at the same time did not support the British, French and Ottoman empires, even as a "lesser evil" (5). (...)

The full English text of the interview with Kharkiv residents is here: <http://libcom.org/news/invasion-ukraine-anarchist-media-call-kharkov-28022022>

Comments from the editors of

aitrus.info:

1) Unfortunately, the Kharkov comrades did not understand the essence of the provisions they criticized. As for the competition for energy markets, it was, of course, not so much about the momentary struggle for the price of gas on European markets and long-term contracts, but about the long-term desire of Russian gas concerns (which are the true owners of the Russian state) to stop the process of reorienting the European energy market to a radical reduction in

energy consumption of the share of imported combustible fuel, primarily gas and oil. As for the "sanitary dictatorship", it should be borne in mind here that dissatisfaction with its measures has greatly shaken the support of the ruling regimes both in NATO countries and in Russia, and wars have always been and remain a powerful means of "national mobilization",

2) We by no means regard the anarchist principles of anti-militarism as abstract.

They really should always be proclaimed, regardless of how possible their implementation is at a given moment. When the internationalists proclaimed the anti-war principle of

turning the imperialist war into a class war in 1914, they were also considered by many to be naive dreamers. But then their ideas and ideas were picked up by the working people, tired of the slaughter. In addition, as we see, the comrades from Kharkov also do not give practical recommendations on how exactly it is possible to turn the war into a social revolution.

3) "Black Flag" announced the entry of its members into the so-called "territorial defence" forces, which are called upon to fight Russian

intervention on the side of the capitalist regime of the Ukrainian state. From our point of view, this is a serious departure from the internationalist principle, even if behind it there really is a naive attempt to "re-agitate" the members of the detachments.

4) While we completely reject the bourgeois, reactionary, neoliberal and despotic regime of the Kremlin, its White Guard ideology and policies, we still do not consider it right to resort to comparing it with the Hitler regime.

For propaganda purposes, one should not resort to relativizing and banalizing Nazism with its Holocaust and mass extermination camps.

5) The words in the first place, perhaps, somewhat contradict the phrase about the absence of a "lesser evil" ... But, quoting the Kharkov comrades themselves, "now is not the time to dig so deep" and find fault.

PUTIN's RUSSIA

The following is an ACG (Anarchist Communist Group UK) interview with the comrades of the Confederation of Revolutionary Anarcho-Syndicalists. We wanted to ask them about their organisation, the situation in Russia, and their response to the current war in Ukraine.

ACG: For people who don't know could you just say who CRAS is and what are your aims?

CRAS: In short, CRAS is a small anarcho-syndicalist organization, a kind of pre-union initiative. We have existed since the mid-1990s, supported many labor and social conflicts, trying to familiarize workers with the ideas, practices and methods of anarcho-syndicalism. Our aim is to prepare the creation of an independent, class-based libertarian labor movement in the region of the Earth that bears the name of Russia. We see anarcho-syndicalism as a way to achieve our goal of anarchist communism.

ACG: What was your group getting up to before the war, ie what activities have you done?

CRAS: In the center of our activity is the support of the strike movement, social protests in urban areas, the fight against neo-liberal reforms of the authorities. We have some experience in these areas. For example, we actively helped the occupational strike of the workers of the machine-building plant in Yasnogorsk in 1999 of one of the few that was led by the workers' assembly. In the mid-2000s, we participated in the

movement against the construction of commercial housing in Moscow, which destroyed the housing environment. In the 2010s, almost no demonstration against the destruction of affordable health care and education took place without our participation. In 2018, we were at the forefront of the movement against pension reform, calling for a



general strike against this neo-liberal reform. Unfortunately, our possibilities are very limited by the repressive laws on rallies and demonstrations, the dominance of bureaucratic trade unions and the

general frustration of the population. But we do what we can. Sometimes even more is possible. So, last year one of our comrades in one of the cities even became the inspirer of a small strike at his work place.

ACG: A very broad question I know, but from where you are what is the situation you are up against and what forms of actions are your comrades engaged in?

CRAS: Comrades who are members of the CRAS work in various fields and industries. Most of them are workers in the field of education and science, but there are also workers in logistics, in a factory, etc. Unfortunately, we are all scattered around different enterprises and institutions, which makes it difficult for possible joint actions in the labor sphere. In previous years, we were actively operating 'on the street', but now it has become almost impossible. According to Russian law, any group street action must obtain prior permission from the authorities, otherwise it is mercilessly dispersed, and its participants are arrested and put on trial. Already a few years ago, it became very difficult to obtain such permission even for a small solidarity picket, we were repeatedly refused. Since 2020, any street protests are generally prohibited under the pretext of a 'pandemic.' What remains is verbal campaigning, stickers, leaflets. And participation in larger protests when they take place. For example, now some of our comrades are participating in anti-war demonstrations.

ACG: Have you been watching/aware of recent western media coverage? Are there any recurring things that

the western media gets wrong or that people generally are getting wrong/missing?

CRAS: It would be difficult to demand objectivity and impartiality from the capitalist and statist mass media, be they 'Western' or 'Eastern'. Of course, in the present war they take a partial and one-sided position. The blame is placed solely on one side, and it all comes down to the presence of specific bad people in the top government leadership. Any systematic analysis of what is happening is completely or almost absent. And, of course, the idea of collective guilt of entire population of a country for the actions of the authorities of this country is completely unacceptable. We always say that ordinary people in any country are no more responsible for the actions of 'their' authorities than a prisoner is for the actions of the head of the prison.

ACG: It has been reported that in Russia the media has concentrated on the fact that the Ukrainian military had imminent plans to invade Donbas, and has also reported that the US is involved in bioweapons development in the Ukraine. What credence do you give to these reports?

CRAS: Let us first explain how we generally see this conflict. We think, there are different levels of conflict and different levels of inter-capitalist contradictions. At the regional level, today's war is just a continuation of the struggle between the ruling castes of the post-Soviet states for the redivision of the post-Soviet space. Contrary to popular myth, the Soviet Union collapsed not as a result of popular liberation movements, but as a result of the activities of a part of the ruling nomenklatura clans, which divided territories and zones of influence among themselves, when the usual and established methods of this domination were in crisis. Since that initial division, which was based on the then balance of power, a constant struggle for the redistribution of territories and resources has developed, leading since 1991 to constant wars throughout the post-Soviet region. At the same time, the ruling classes of all post-Soviet states (all of them, to one degree or another, come from the Soviet nomenklatura or its successors) have adopted militant nationalism in

ideology, neoliberalism in economics, and authoritarian methods of management in politics.

The second level of conflict is the struggle for hegemony in the post-Soviet space between the strongest state in the region, Russia, which calls itself a regional power and considers the entire post-Soviet space as an area of its hegemonic interests, and the states of the Western bloc (although here, too, the interests and aspirations of the United States and individual European NATO and EU states may not be exactly the same). Both sides seek to establish their economic and political control over the countries of the former Soviet Union. Hence the clash between NATO's expansion to the East and Russia's desire to secure these countries under its influence.

The third level of contradictions is of an economic-strategic nature. It is no coincidence that modern Russia is called 'an appendage to the gas and oil pipeline.' Russia plays today on the world market, first of all, the role of supplier of energy resources, gas and oil. The predatory and completely corrupt ruling class, purely parasitic in its essence, did not begin to invest in the diversification of the economic structure, contenting themselves with super-profits from oil and gas supplies. Meanwhile, Western capital and states are beginning the transition to a new energy structure, the so-called 'green energy', aimed at reducing the consumption of gas and oil in the future.

For Russian capital and its economy, this will mean the same strategic collapse that the fall in oil prices once caused for the Soviet economy. Therefore, the Kremlin seeks to prevent this energy turnaround, or slow it down, or at least achieve more favorable conditions for itself in the redistribution of the energy market. For example, looking for long-term supply contracts and better prices, pushing out competitors, etc. If necessary, this can involve direct pressure on the West in various ways.

Finally, the fourth (global) level is the contradictions between the main capitalist superpowers, the United States in retreat and China in the advance, around which blocs of allies, vassals and satellites are forming. Both

countries are now vying for world hegemony. For China, with its 'one belt, one road' strategy, the gradual conquest of the economies of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the penetration of Europe, Russia is an important minor partner. The response of the United States and its allies in the West is NATO's expansion eastward, reaching out through Ukraine and Georgia to the Near and Middle East and its resources. This is also a type of 'belt' project. He finds resistance from imperialist rivals: China and Russia, which depend more and more on him.

At the same time, the domestic political aspect should not be overlooked. The Covid crisis has exposed the deep internal instability of the political, economic and social structure of all the countries of the world. This also applies to the states of the West, Russia, Ukraine, etc. The deterioration of living conditions, the growth of prices and social inequality, the massive indignation of the population with coercive and dictatorial measures and prohibitions gave rise to widespread discontent in society. And in such situations, the ruling classes have always resorted to tried and tested methods to restore the notorious 'national unity' and the population's confidence in power: by creating the image of an enemy and whipping up military hysteria, even a 'victorious little war'.

In the light of this general analysis, your specific questions can also be analyzed. Was Ukraine preparing a strike in the Donbass? Theoretically, in principle, Ukraine has never ruled out the scenario of the reintegration of territories that Croatia once used against the Serbian Krajina. But was the Ukrainian state going to do it at the present moment? We are not included in high offices and general staffs, therefore we cannot answer this question. As for reports of biological weapons laboratories in Ukraine, we are also unable to verify them.

A war is going on, and military propaganda from any side can never be trusted.

In addition, these accusations are too reminiscent of propaganda rumors about the presence of weapons of mass destruction, which were used by the US and its satellites to invade Iraq.

ACG: Do you think that Western Imperialism/NATO actions created the circumstances where a war was inevitable?

CRAS: Let's put it this way: the sides provoked each other, trying to lure the other into a trap. As the head of Ukraine's delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Yegor Chernev, explained on February 12,

Western states were presenting the Kremlin with a choice: 'dare a large-scale invasion, or permanently retreat and lock themselves inside their own country.' And further: 'There is no need to panic, even if Putin tries to slip out of the American trap and still gives the order to invade. Our army is ready to give the Russians a hell of a reception, and the West's sanctions response will

quickly bury the Russian economy'. And then Russia may collapse, and let's us get peace. We don't know if that's what NATO really intended. But it is clear that even if this was the case, the Kremlin gladly jumped into this adventure, since it is in line with its hegemonic plans.

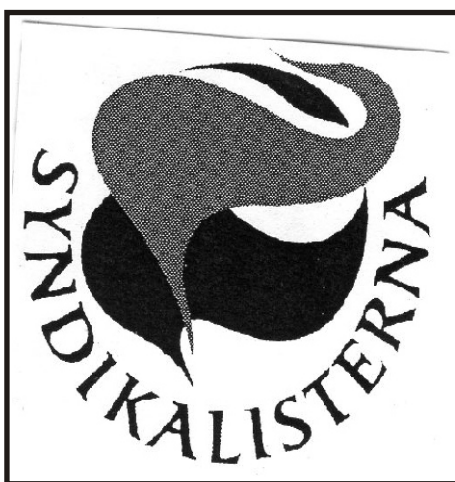
Debate on 'The Way Forward for Swedish & European Syndicalism'

From Libcom Internet Discussion Board Edited Discussion of the article 'Greetings from Sweden: A dual-track Syndicalism?' originally published in the American labor magazine ASR (Anarcho-Syndicalist Review) in the summer of 2021. The author argues for developing SAC as a popular movement union, rather than turning SAC into a "revolutionary" cadre union.

Extract from article: "In the 1930s, SAC (Swedish Workers Centre - a union confederation which currently works in the framework of the Swedish Industrial Relations set up but is a very small minority of that country's labour movement with currently 3,000 members and still claims to be syndicalist) had more than 30,000 members. No one can really predict if SAC will grow into a mass union again or not. We can only try and see. Oddly enough, SAC hasn't made a large-scale attempt since the 1960s. During that decade SAC grew. I believe we need to build both SAC sections and cross-union groups; at least we need both sections and cross-union cohesion among workers. The key people on both these tracks are workplace organizers."

Reply: **ASN:** However from the late 20's the SAC has been drawn into the Swedish welfare state re providing social welfare. So it had 'moved' away from syndicalism surely. It was never going to become a mass syndicalist revolutionary union movement rival to the LO (Swedish version of the ACTU) aligned with the Swedish Social Democratic Party. But be drawn ever closer in its orbit of the LO and the Swedish Welfare State and IR set up.

Since this time particularly in late 20th Century the SAC has been in receipt of subsidies from the Swedish Govt. for international work so ever more drawn into the corporate set up. According to a long term SAC member we met in Sydney during the 1990's its internal education for union reps etc is very similar to that of the corporate unions like the LO. There is no emphasis on the revolutionary project, the classic syndicalist tactic of direct action in its



various forms, etc. Illustrating again how it has been copying the ways of the corporate unions and drawn ever closer in its orbit of these bodies.

See essay on Sweden in "Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective" edited by Marcel Van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe.

Comrade Emma: It is true that SAC take part in the A-kassa system but I fail to see what it really means that SAC have been pulled into the LO orbit. Also, what do these actually "revolutionary" union courses look like? The glimpses I have seen of

SACs courses on workplace organizing as an outsider it seems that they take more from Labor Notes than the LO Sweden's major Social Democratic 'Corporate' union confederation.

Joakim: "It is true that SAC takes part in the A-kassa system".

Nowadays the Unemployment fund (financed by taxes primarily) is separate from the unions.

ASN: "What do these Revolutionary courses look like?"

They would look at basic principles and goals of revolutionary syndicalism, the history of revolutionary syndicalism in various countries - its rise and decline and factors contributing to it; basic principles and tactics of revolutionary syndicalism and application historically and currently on the job; the strike wave phenomena in various countries and studies of the employer offensive in various countries and how it would or is being slowed/countered to a degree. One key focus of such courses would be historical studies of key industries such as transport industries which could play a role in spear heading strike wave movements. Those who have experience in trying to get strike wave movements going obviously could give lectures focusing on the associated organising problems etc. A very valuable contemporary book which would play an important role in such a course is "New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism" Edited by David Berry and Constance Bantman. An extremely valuable essay in it is on the

French Strike Wave movement of 1947. Another aspect of the course/s would be historical studies of workplace papers and grass roots workers movements in various industries and problems with them. With the SAC being caught in the web of the State/Corporate set up by innumerable threads I don't see such courses happening with them. Independent syndicalist groups would have to do the hard lifting re getting it going.

"It is true that SAC take part in the Akassa system but I fail to see what it really means that SAC have been pulled into the LO orbit."

What I was getting out was the SAC being drawn into working within the Swedish IR set up leading to a 'taming of the grass roots', accommodation with the capitalist set up and loss of revolutionary elan similar to what you have in LO. In the case of the SAC leading later down the track to catastrophic splits toward the corporate unions. This has occurred some years back with the SAC associated with several ombudsmen (full time officials/organisers with industrial relations expertise) and the loss of some thousands of members. Rather than focusing on breaking out of the IR/Welfare State set up through facilitating strike wave movements and generating an expanding mass syndicalist movement. This scenario would be associated with the major resurgence of mass syndicalist unionism/movements internationally and associated strike wave movements. With the rise of mass Stalinism and Fascism in the 20's and 30's and isolation and defeat of the Spanish Revolution, the conditions were unfavourable. In the book "Wobblies of the World" edited by Peter Cole, the essay on Sweden and the SAC makes the good point how the rise of Fascism particularly in Germany had a very demoralising impact amongst Swedish syndicalists and militant workers.

Joakim: Fellow worker ASN, first, get your facts right. SAC's courses include principles, goals and tactics of revolutionary syndicalism, but we try to avoid narrow-minded focus on strikes (including general strikes, real or imagined ones), see for instance the

article: <https://libcom.org/library/let-s-find-alternatives-striking>

We are also evaluating and developing our educational material, see for example: <https://libcom.org/library/swedish-syndicalism-outline-its-ideology-prac...>

Comrade Emma, yes we "take more from Labor Notes than the LO unions", we draw from IWW's solidarity model, our own experience in Sweden etc.

ASN, to get the facts straight, it might be a good idea to ask questions rather than make guesses. Maybe start reading an FAQ: <https://libcom.org/library/faq-syndicalism>

Secondly, ASN, I think you need to provide some precision with examples and arguments about SAC being integrated into the Industrial Relations System, or else your sweeping rhetoric don't amount to much. If you want to know something about SAC's relation to labour law and collective agreements, you can read the article: <https://libcom.org/library/syndicalist-strategy-swedish-labour-market>

Maybe read the article "Greetings from Sweden...", first, if you haven't done it yet. It deals with the problems of integration, marginalization and more. Today, hardly any trade union in Europe is a part of a revolutionary working class. The class may become revolutionary in the future (but maybe it won't, nobody except Nostradamus knows).

ASN: Yes but this presentation by the SAC of syndicalist aspects seems obviously of a "theological character" not in any way connected to SAC day to day practice and overall strategy but as part of harking back to a romantic utopian 'golden' past. Therefore you water down fundamental aspects of syndicalist practice labelling them narrow. The strike phenomena in the shape of a form of direct action by the grass roots e.g. wildcat action at a favourable moment remains a great weapon of workers whether in the early 20th Century or today and can get positive results and can have a radiation impact inspiring the grass roots in other industries. In late November 2020 associated with long range ASN work, interurban train

drivers in NSW Australia conducted a wild cat strike which stopped the introduction of new trains based on Driver Only Operation. Within a few days of the latest edition of our industrial paper coming out the union bosses to counter its impact in this sector called a "bureaucratic" lightning strike.

Such 'narrow' syndicalist action - would be 'illegal' leading to massive fines and threaten SAC collaboration "working within" the industrial relations set up. However it is fundamental to raising the morale of workers, developing their combativeness and in certain cases can lead to the strike wave phenomena sweeping various industries "involving massive illegal industrial action" and leading to the major splits from the corporate unions. In turn leading to transitional steps toward a genuine mass syndicalist industrial union confederation/centre. The above book I have referred to edited by David Berry and Constance Bantman and the essay on France looks at precisely such initially promising developments which alas were derailed by the CIA and the Cold War. Also see review in a back edition of Anarcho-Syndicalist Review entitled 'Syndicalism in a Neo-Liberal Climate' on the RW web site archive www.rebelworker.org

"Today, hardly any trade union in Europe is a part of a revolutionary working class. The class may become revolutionary in the future (but maybe it won't, nobody except Nostradamus knows)."

Of course, unions of various stripes are enmeshed in various countries industrial relations/social welfare and corporate set ups to various degrees. This is not news. What genuine syndicalists should be looking at via their educational work and agitation/organising on the job, etc, is getting the big actions going affecting millions which can explosively raise the morale of workers and igniting the above mentioned processes leading to establishing mass syndicalist union confederations. In March 2004 the ASN and associated militants was involved in an effort to get such a strike wave going. It was associated with the emergence of 'Drivers for Affirmative

Action' comprising 600 train drivers in NSW at its peak and their 'work to rule' campaign. Not quite a wildcat strike movement but had a similar impact affecting millions for 4 days. We were just a day late getting a program for the movement and the drivers had been

bought off. We had made some progress amongst another grade - guards. A large slice were coming over to us - their "morale" had changed over night and raised sky high by the drivers action! It didn't seem 'narrow' and obsolete to them! But as a result of the

above and swift action by the union bosses - the movement was foiled. This is how its done re developing a revolutionary working class!!!

Domingos Passos: The Brazilian Bakunin

We do not know the precise year of Passos's birth (it was probably towards the end of the 19th century), but, from the books of Edgar Rodrigues, we know that he was born in Rio de Janeiro state. We find his first appearance in social struggles of the time as a UOCC delegate at the 3rd Brazilian Workers's Congress (1920) at which he was elected as travel secretary for the Brazilian Workers' Confederation (COB). Passos had been selected for that post because he stood out in the ranks of the organised proletariat on account of his intellect and oratorical gifts which he had honed in the day to day struggles of his trade.

In 1920 Passos worked with the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ) which had a daily newspaper in A Voz do Povo. Under the Epitacio Pessoa government, there was a severe crackdown with countless anarchist militants being jailed, tortured and murdered, trades unions shut down and labour newspapers pulped. In October 1920, the police dispersed a workers' parade down the Avenida Rio Branco with gunfire and, not content with that, stormed the UOCC headquarters, wounding 5 workers and rounding up a further 30.

The labour movement was reeling from the onslaught and went into a decline from 1921 on. The 'yellow' unions expanded rapidly and came to contest hegemony in several trades with the revolutionary unions. Among anarchists, the high hopes vested in the Russian revolution were evaporating as news percolated through of the Bolsheviks repressiveness.

On 16 March 1922, nine days ahead of the launching of the Communist Party of Brazil, the UOCC carried a document entitled 'Refuting the False Claims of the Communist Group' and

declaring its repudiation of the state communists, the Bolsheviks. It was assuredly written by Domingos Passos. Throughout the 1920s, Civil Construction workers were the steeliest and least compromising opponents of the Bolshevik doctrine. They were the very embodiment of critical awareness and in a number of regards took their toll of the communist cadres.

In July 1922, in the wake of the failure of the revolt by the lieutenants from the Copacabana Fort, the repression



slapped a ban on the UOCC paper O Trabalho, to which Passos was a regular contributor. A new anarchist bastion in the press was under the charge of another UOCC militant, Marques da Costa, editor of the Labour Section with the newspaper A Patria. In 1923, with the police crackdown hot on his heels, Domingos Passos stepped down from the UOCC Executive

Commission and turned his attention to propaganda and union organising, travelling twice to Paran to assist the local organisations. Like the intellectuals Jose Oiticica, Carlos Dias and Fabio Luz, Passos was frequently invited to give talks at union locals. He was also actively involved with workers' festivals, acting in plays, giving poetry-readings and talks on social themes. Such events certainly accounted for some of the few moments of pleasure that Passos enjoyed during his life as a labourer and political activist.

During the first half of 1923 he was one of the driving forces behind the relaunching of the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ), the rival FTRJ organisation having been set up under communist control. When the FORJ resurfaced on 19 August 1923, Passos was elected on to its Federal Committee. Refloated by 6 unions (civil construction, the shoemakers, the coopers, the ships' carpenters, the gastronomic and the Marechal Hermes General Trades Union) by mid-1924 the FORJ had recruited a further 5 significant trades: foundry-workers, brickworkers, ironworkers, steelworkers and stone-workers. In spite of state repression and underhanded communist tricks, revolutionary syndicalism grew in strength under the auspices of the FORJ which was at that time working on the organisation of an inter-union conference in Rio and planning the 4th Brazilian Worker's Congress. In July 1924, all of this organisation effort was wiped out by the crackdown following a junior officers' revolt, in Sao Paulo this time. Union locals were attacked and shut down, and hundreds of anarchists were jailed. Domingos Passos was one of the first to be arrested and after 20 days of suffering at Police Headquarters he was held in the prison ship 'Campos' in Guanabara Bay. The months that he served on

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NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important news in NSW lately was the Sydney Rail Network lockout of Monday 21/2/22. It only lasted the day and blew up in the faces of the NSW Transport Minister and the NSW Liberal Govt. due to likely major Big Business pressure. However if the lockout had been conducted in January during business 'down time' when several line closures and replacement bus services were in place ostensibly for track maintenance but also fitting this other agenda, the outcome would be greatly different. The ASN assisted militants to foil this likely move which would have Big Business's okay and led to an indefinite lockout to crush train drivers resistance to Driver Only Operation and subsequent NSW railways privatisation. It would have flow-ons in other sectors weakening workers resistance to accelerated management attacks. Similar to the lockout of Melbourne trammies in January 1990 and the Patrick's Lockout/Maritime dispute of 1998. (See article page 6.) The ASN also assisted militants to out manoeuvre the TWU (Transport Workers Union) bosses planned bogus 'Two Tier' industrial campaign also in business 'down time' with the TWU compelled to launch the half hearted industrial action in the lead up to Xmas. Contributing to the ultra bureaucratic run NSW public sector strike wave at that time.

In this edition we focus on RTBU's (Rail Tram & Bus Union) 'set up to fail' EBA campaign and plans for its likely railroading later in the year to open the flood gates to railway privatisation. (See article page 3.)

In this edition we again put the spotlight on the crisis in NSW Health and the ultra bureaucratically run industrial action in the sector. (See article page 2.)

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Parkville Vic. 3052

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Www.sparksweb.org

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Where we stand:

1. Our aim is to create a free and equal society.
2. We are a revolutionary labour movement that uses as its only means of struggle, direct action in all its forms: occupations. Strikes, boycotts, sabotage, etc. We are independent from all reformist and hierarchical unions and political parties, and we are creating an alternative to these and existing society. We do not seek to gain political power, but rather to see it distributed amongst all.
3. We are a network of anarcho-syndicalists practicing co-operation and mutual aid. We have an equal part in making decisions. Responsibilities within the network are subject to agreement by the members.
4. We are engaged in struggle where we work and where we live, to develop self managed production, distribution and servicing for the world community to meet human needs rather than profit. We give solidarity to others in their struggles.
5. We are fighting to abolish all authoritarian institutions such as the State (including its communist variety), capitalism, all hierarchical and oppressive divisions between people.
6. We have no country and are organised on an international basis in opposition to oppression everywhere. The ASN is striving to build a viable revolutionary syndicalist movement in Australia as part of a world wide movement able to meet the challenge of the global employer offensive.

TO FIND OUT MORE:

I would like more information about the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network. Please send me information.

Name.....

Address.....
General Secretary
PO Box 109 Kotara 2289 NSW.

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board were characterised by severe privation and restrictions. With other anarchists and hundreds of 'outlaws', he was to be moved to the 'Green Hell' of Oiapoque, the 'Siberia of the Tropics' where ill-treatment and disease claimed over a thousand lives. Passos managed to escape to Saint-Georges in French Guyana. Meanwhile, fever drove him to seek medical treatment in Cayenne where he received a warm welcome from a Creole who helped him regain his strength. From Guyana he moved on to Belem where he remained for a time as a guest of the organised proletariat in the city.

Domingos Passos was one of those who returned to the Federal District after the state of siege enforced by the Artur Bernardes government for nearly four full years (1922-1926). On reaching

BRITAIN TODAY

P & O Ferries Sackings

18/3/22 Working class solidarity was on display at ports around the country today, after P&O Ferries callously sacked 800 workers without notice by video call and replaced them with cheap scab labour hired through Malta-registered agency, International Ferry Management.

In an act of inhumane callousness, not to mention brand reputation suicide,

Rio de Janeiro at the start of 1927, he returned to union activity, but he was dogged by the after-effects of malaria. That year he moved to Sao Paulo, where he helped reorganise the local Workers' Federation (FOSP). He took part in the 4th Rio Grande do Sul Workers' Congress held in Porto Alegre. He was to the fore in the organising of several pro-Sacco and Vanzetti meetings and rallies organised by the FOSP and its affiliates. In August he was jailed in the feared FCambuci BastilleE where he spent three months, subject to all manner of ill-treatment.

According to Pedro Catallo, his cell-mate, Passos left prison with his body covered in ulcers and half-naked and was sent to the jungles of Sengos in the still untamed interior of Sao Paulo state, to die. A short while later he managed to write to some comrades,

employees were told "your final day of employment is today", in the video call, recorded by head of employee relations Stephen Nee, who informed workers that they were to be dismissed 'on grounds of redundancy' and that ferries will be crewed by cheaper agency workers.

Seafarers' union, Nautilus International, announced that it would employ 'its full resources' to support employees, and the RMT called the sackings 'one of the most shameful acts in the history of British industrial relations'.

The RMT reported that security guards

asking for money, which he received through an go-between. So ended the career of a man who had been one of the most influential and respected of the anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist activists of his day. Nothing more was ever heard of him, aside from the occasional, unconfirmed rumour. Not for nothing was Domingos Passos known to his contemporaries as the 'Brazilian Bakunin.' Few were as committed as he was to his ideals and suffered so much as a result. He put his all into the fight to emancipate men and women. He spent nearly a decade in prison and in tropical jungle conditions. Passos became a great beacon for libertarian and social activists in his day and in our own!

Renato Ramos and Alexandre Samis, Rio de Janeiro, 2001.

Translated by: Paul Sharkey.

with handcuffs were boarding ships to remove crew and calls for mass mobilisation against the company.

RMT General Secretary Mick Lynch said: "We are receiving reports that security guards at Dover are seeking to board ships with handcuffs to remove crew so they can be replaced with cheaper labour."

"If this happens at P&O it can happen anywhere and we are calling for mass trade union and wider public mobilisation and protest against the company."

Thanks to ACG