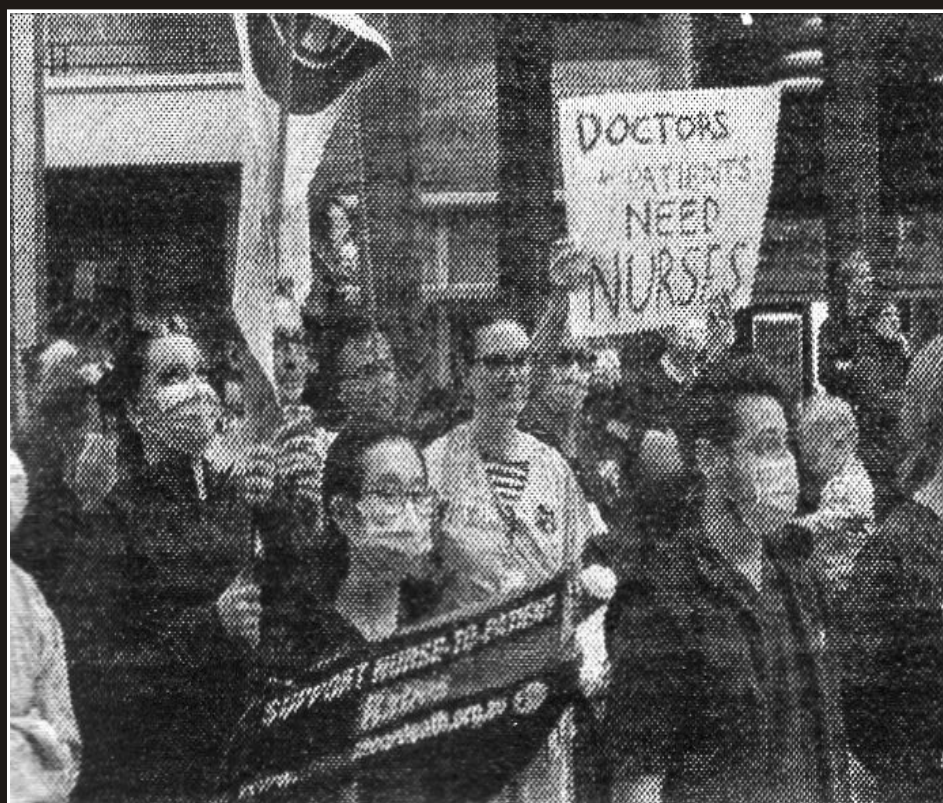


Establish 'Grass Roots' Committees to run a joint NSW Public Sector Direct Action Campaign to smash Perrottet's Wages Cap & Fight Privatisation!



Recent NSW Nurses' Union protest rally.

N.S.W. HEALTH P.2;

N.S.W. Railway News P.3;

Letters P.6;

Sydney Buses News P.7;

Victorian Railway News P.10;

Ukraine Crisis & War P.12;

Britain Today P.14;

Discussion of the Way Forward for Syndicalism in Australia, Today P.15;

1973 Newcastle 'Workers Control Conference' & 1973 Ford Strike P.17;

News & Notes P.19;

SPAIN P.20 ;

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.

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NSW Health: The art of Thievery & Passing the buck

By Clark Kent

In most societies, from a young age, many are taught to believe in good morals and to stand up for our core values. Religion has long preached these principles in its turbulent and bloody existence. For instance, it is wrong for one person to steal from another. It is shameful to consider that someone could steal from a place such as hospital. It is therefore outrageous than to think, that the government itself could pick the pockets of its own health staff. However, this is exactly what has gone down. With no regard to subtlety, or attempted clever ruse, the Premier of the NSW Government, stood on national television on the morning of the 5th of June, and lied straight to the Australian Public. "Today I can announce, that we will be making a \$3000 payment to the health

workers in appreciation for all the sacrifices they have made over the past two years".

And the mass media rejoiced "Praise be, our benevolent leaders" Except it was a lie, a publicity stunt and a false bribe. After two months of waiting, clinging on to an empty promise, a promise that halted the strike actions and slipped the deal on the 3% pay wage rise negotiated with the Health Services Union (nice one fellas); the health staff across the state opened their bank accounts to dismay. The payment was taxed And not only taxed, but placed on top of the regular pay too. So for all the workers who worked a normal fortnight they received a bonus \$1,500. They won't complain, but it's not even close to \$3000, and they're the ones who got lucky. For all the workers working overtime due to a constant staff shortage problem, some of them received as low as \$300. With the rest of their pay going straight back to the government's coffers.

It would be similar to someone standing in front of a crowd, telling the crowd that he is going to give \$20 to a charity for their good work, he hands over the \$20 to the charity rep in front of the cheering audience, and after the people

disperse, runs up to the charity rep and demands \$10 back, calling it tax.

To quote a staff member from a local hospital's intensive care unit, It's very disappointing, we work so hard, day in and day out. Every week there's less staff, people are still getting COVID. There's pressure from our managers to do things that they don't provide the resources for, and now the government is kicking us in the teeth and reaping the reward.

Yet 'civilised' society continues to go on like this, where politicians posing as good responsible leaders are so well versed in sly manoeuvres and deceit that it has become the common norm, that the government can't even make a real gesture of goodwill without having to make money off it themselves. The fact that the Health Service Union, who make over \$25 million a year in union fees from its 45000 members (\$577 per year per member), negotiated this deal and paraded it around as a victory raises many questions. It's not Oliver Twist and the pickpocketing orphans that the people should be concerned about.

At an operational level the case is also becoming apparent that a lot

ASN APPEAL

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of the staff employed during the peak of lock down have left. Many of those employed from that 'struggling' multi-million-dollar private flying company have returned to their original jobs after their all paid for vacation to the public system. The people who could have received those jobs now filling the backlog of applicants as the hospital tries to cope with the decisions it has made. And coping the way the executive management tends to cope, by passing the buck to someone else, who passes it on to someone else. until it ends up apparently being some cleaner's fault who wasn't even at work that day. In many departments of the

health system it is the staff who get paid the least that seem to cop the most injustices. These staff are often denied their own leave entitlements, are forced to do jobs that are not part of their job description, are blamed for any issues that occur for doing the job that's not in their job description, and will regularly be left uncovered in the event of absentees. In a case floating round in one hospital, a ward assistant was left in tears while having to cover 4 different wards with 4 different pagers, all going off at the same time with emergencies and then being yelled at by each respective ward for being late. When it was brought to the attention of upper

management in a meeting, they passed the buck again, saying it was the fault of the people on leave and that the way forward was to have more measures in place to restrict people going on vacation. Except for them of course. Some rules for some and some for others.

So if one wants to find to employment where they can practice stealing from others and shying from responsibility, then working in the NSW parliament, the Health Services Union or the cushy roles of upper government management seem to be the way.

N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS

A Way Forward for the Rail EBA Campaign to Win the 'Real Demands!'

Some of the most important news in the NSW Railways is the long drawn out, half hearted, set up to fail EBA campaign which we warned about in the last RW. Currently it's buried in the Courts providing another excuse for a 'truce' and delay in the still favourable for industrial action period in the lead up to Xmas. (**Stop Press:** 9/9/22 An RTBU letter talks about resuming the lame duck campaign. The RTBU officials make the ludicrous claim that by turning off the Opal machines, affecting a tiny amount of the NSW Govt.'s income, it will be brought to its knees! 17/9/22 this action was cancelled by the officials following NSW Govt. threats. The officials are now talking about a new ballot on continuing the campaign testing how exhausted the grass roots have become.) Claassens the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) NSW State Secretary has diverted attention from major wage cuts resulting from the way below inflation (currently 6.1%) EBA demand for so called 3.5% pa pay rises

and other likely fine print nasties with the chase after the mirage of renos on the NIF (New Interurban Fleet) to maintain the guard's role in safe working. DOO (Driver Only Operation) is an important prerequisite for the neo-liberal agenda of rail privatisation to cut costs for private operators. All the political

establishment of Libs,ALP& Greens agree on this agenda. Check their record. While Claassens is associated with the ALP and signed off on the M O U (M e m o r a n d u m o f Understanding) early 2017 over riding EBA 2014 okaying DOO on the NIF. Its urgent to establish grass roots committees to takeover the running of the campaign to achieve the 'real demands' in the favourable period for industrial action. Avoiding walking into a possible ambush by Elliott with his 'radical action lockout' in the



holiday period 'bosses down time' to impose DOO and as an election stunt. These committees could organise

sending delegations to the grass roots in the buses and other parts of NSW public sector to link up and take joint

action to smash the NSW Public Sector Wages cap.

Where does our struggle begin? - Not our Summit – Not our Courts!

By Crimson Coconut

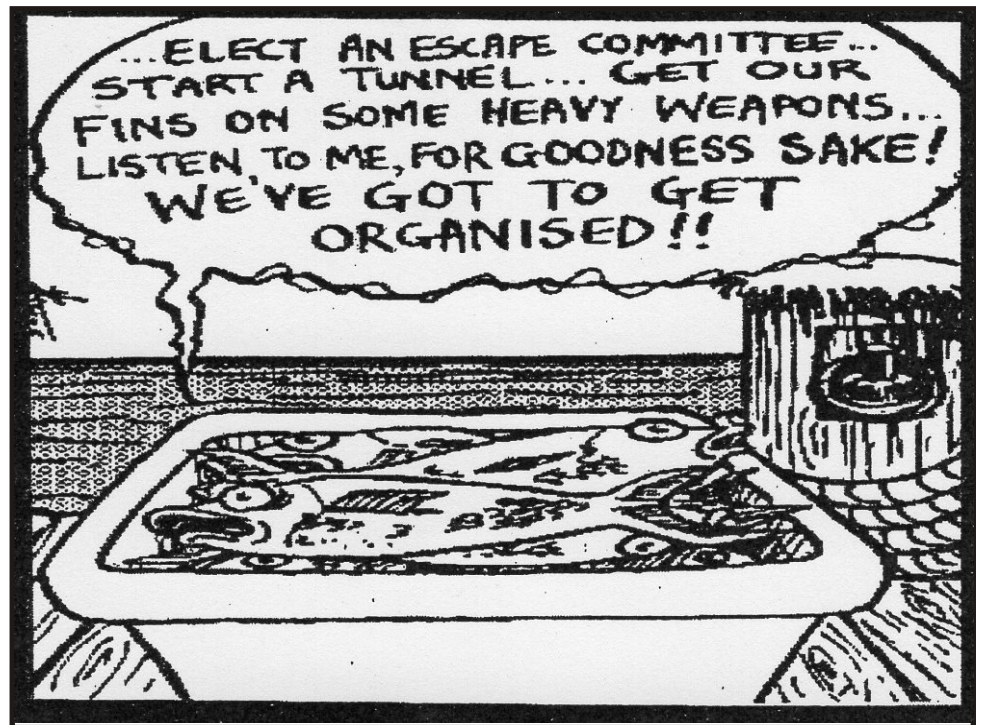
The “right to strike” is not one of the concessions that was won at the recent Jobs Summit of talks between Unions, Business representatives and Government. A workers Right to Strike is missing, yet it is still a basic human rights issue in Australia, it's an essential tactic that workers need to be able to force employers into providing decent wages and conditions. Without the ultimate right to strike workers have no real bargaining power. At the “Jobs Summit”, the A.C.T.U. (Australian Council of Trade Unions) concentrated on the needs of the economy (Capitalism) by providing an agreement on the flow of migrant workers into Australia and a Government training scheme somewhere down the track. Skilled migrants will provide businesses with a ready trained overseas workforce on the cheap without having to spend money on doing the training themselves. Not that we are against migrants or migration. We just don't want to see them or our own workforce exploited in order to simply make profits for employers by driving down wages.

Why would the unions want to strike a deal with the various heads of business such as Alan Joyce (Qantas CEO), The Business Council of Australia, etc. who have been hellbent on cutting the wages and conditions of workers and outsourcing most of their workforce to the lowest bidder? The old adage of “If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas” applies here. Is it simply that the union hierarchy wanted a seat at the feeding trough?

Industry wide bargaining, which the A.C.T.U. has argued, will simplify the business of making agreements, coincidentally which the business lobby also agrees on, might strengthen

and give more power to the bureaucratic layer in the trade union movement but it does not empower those on the shop floor. There will be greater resort to deals between the union bureaucrats and employers like there was in the past, rather than agreements in individual workplaces. This also might mean a more legalistic approach to bargaining involving union lawyers and employers lawyers.

The Union Movement has long argued for a “fee for service” model, where, if you are a union member you pay your fees and the union bureaucrats supposedly do their best for you. Recently they proposed that non-union members should not get pay rises negotiated on workers behalf by unions unless they join the union in question or pay a fee.



Transparency, openness and workers struggle will be gone or made harder in some individual workplaces due to the dis-empowerment. Yet the A.C.T.U. argues that industry wide bargaining can deliver better wage outcomes since individual workplaces don't have the power to put pressure on employers. However I would argue that if individual workplaces were supported across the board good agreements could be struck and the individual workplaces would retain their autonomy and local knowledge. Of course autonomy is the last thing the A.C.T.U. Wants.

Charging a fee and/or making it compulsory goes against the whole idea of union solidarity. People should be free to join or not a union. What say do workers have when the money they pay into the union coffers is used for funding a Labor Party campaign that they may or may not agree with? Consequently the “fee for service model” will do nothing to raise the level of class consciousness, solidarity, diversity of opinion or the struggle of rank and file workers. The ranks will be cut out of the decision making process and get what they pay for instead. Hardly a recipe for winning a workplace struggle. What about those

that are also excluded from unions because of their political views? We know of people that have been denied membership simply for being critical of the union leadership over tactics. Where does that leave them? Unions have an obligation to all of our Class, not just to Members. What about community campaigns by Unions? Yes, unions have an obligation to the Community, however most people would believe that the Community should not be paying for any support given. Take the example of the industrial campaign by the rail unions promising to ensure the safety of the traveling public over the introduction of new overseas made trains. While I agree this is a just cause it does nothing to put money into the pockets of members.

For that reason I think the issue of the EBA negotiations with NSW Trains should have been separated out from those of the safety issues. Safety though should be a core interest of unions and workplaces. Maybe it is not part of the current Enterprise Agreement, but the Government and the media surely is making it appear that way. Is the Enterprise Agreement contingent on solving the safety problems with the new imported trains? Just maybe this situation is convenient for all parties involved in negotiations as the EBA renewal is well overdue causing delays to pay rises and ensuring that train guards still have their jobs for now. Media such as the Daily Telegraph have made false claims about the log of claims within the Rail EBA by stating exaggerated pay rates for rail workers and taking many of the claims, such as R.U.O.K. Leave, out of context. There is a huge media campaign against the rail unions and workers involved in negotiations while mass media slavishly supports the NSW Liberal Government's position. The aim of the media campaign is to turn the public, inconvenienced by sporadic and haphazard industrial action, against the unions and deliver a win for businesses and the NSW Government. The wishy washy half hearted campaign such as whistle blowing by train drivers and staff, failing to clean trains, wearing union paraphernalia to work, and banning certain trains being

put into service, etc have drawn on for many months. As industrial action has ramped up and commuters have been inconvenienced at times attempts by the media have been made to get the unions off side with the public. To their credit the unions have done well at diffusing the misinformation campaign and have kept a large section of the public on side.

As we said in a previous article, in the last issue of RW, when the Government manufactured a lockout by ordering the stoppage of trains earlier this year then publicly blamed the union for causing trains to stop, a tactic that they have tried multiple times, a window of chance for retaliatory action was available to union members. With this stupid stunt by the Government public opinion was firmly in the ball-court of the unions. At that time we suggested that an all out campaign was not only possible but necessary. The union leadership continued to take the softly-softly approach making them vulnerable to a b a c k l a s h f r o m p u b l i c misunderstandings and impatience.

The continued "fxxking around" by the union leadership who failed in their task of building a workplace led campaign of stop work meetings, street marches and industry wide strikes hampered negotiation efforts. Going hard and early by "walking out" the whole of the rail workforce may have worked better at bringing the NSW Government to its knees and back to the bargaining table. The public may have also accepted industrial action at that time for a short while. Haemorrhaging businesses in NSW would have been at the necks of the NSW Government to settle the disputes. Alas the rail unions preferred a drip fed industrial action campaign where a majority of workers remained at work and any actions became a minor irritation to the public and to the government. There were even public apologies by union officials explaining that they were not on strike and that members are ready and willing to serve the public. It became a silly cat and mouse game between unions and the NSW Government. The opportunity for full blown industrial action that the

public would accept has probably passed.

NSW Unions also had a very good chance to build public campaigns with other public sector workers such as teachers and nurses who had similar bargaining problems. There are common ground issues such as the ending of the State Government Wage Cap that could have been a rallying point. There must be real reasons why Unions NSW and even the unions themselves never enacted a statewide public sector industrial campaign. The anger is still there across the board of state entities but nothing is being planned on a statewide scale. As Sparks goes to print the rail unions are in the Fair Work Commission arguing against attempts of the NSW Government to cancel progress made on the latest EBA. I have always argued that the best and most effective form of action is action in which the whole of the decision making and action involves all of the workforce. Workers standing up for themselves is the most powerful and effective action. Having a legal team that argues the union/workers case in the bosses courts removes workers from the political and active process of industrial advocacy on behalf of themselves. Also, involving a majority of a workforce in a militant industrial campaign strengthens the unions hand in the industrial courts as well as strengthening the union. Having a poorly organised and top heavy industrial campaign appears as a sign of weakness and lack of workers solidarity to the adjudicators at the bosses courts. Workers solidarity and organisation is what the bosses and courts fear most.

So the question is again what do we need to do? Of course in all calculations the Unions subservience to the ALP is a huge obstacle. It is also the main reason why the Unions are reluctant to give workers their heads by encouraging them to form democratic workplace bargaining and solidarity units that feed into the union as a whole. Understanding the limits of action because of the union's ALP connections and the reasons for certain actions is essential.

While it may be difficult to have input into the bargaining and dispute process individuals should still work together, both in their own workplaces and within the union itself. Encourage others by being bold, bringing issues of union democracy before the union leadership. Join with like minded people from other sections applying pressure when necessary in the fight for a say, keeping in mind that other union member's opinions are just as valuable as your own.

The looming union elections in October are a chance for us to vote for people that will extend democracy within the union. Seek candidates out and vote for them according to how much credence they give to listening and giving others a voice. Workers can't complain if things stay the same by continually voting for incumbents who promise more of the same.

The bureaucratic nature of the trade union movement and their desire for

self preservation and prestige at all costs along with the "pay for service" model which they advocate, are all a massive hindrance against lifting the living standards of workers across all sectors. The "New Accord" (Job Summit) designed to appease businesses and keep the ALP in power will solve none of the problems that working people face with the "cost of living crisis". By acting together and building solidarity in our favour we can be content that we at least tried and we won't be ignored, ever.

This action caused the RTBU officials to become embarrassed and so they went to the Fair Work Australia Commission to contest the suspension and likely sacking of workers who refused COVID-19 vaccinations.

Not once did the RTBU officials acknowledge us! No pay for 6 months for those stood down! We have been treated like animals!

Angry Sydney Trains Reader & Supporter

Dear RW

Briefly: I am a Sydney Trains worker. My application for exemption last December was based on legal and moral grounds and other issues. After that was rejected in January I was paid out all my annual leave, then put on leave without pay for the next four or so months.

I quit the RTBU after months of no response to contact over this issue and the usual abuse from its reception staff when trying to get help. Running out of rent money my partner and I moved to a country town where we had been lucky enough to buy a house last year before things went so bad.

The RTBU eventually piggybacked on the Fair Work Tribunal case of two other trade unions which had gone in early to stand up for their members... it was June before they decided to join the case, and I believe that was only on the strength of one of the members lodging an individual dispute without their assistance. They did a verbal deal with the railways that members would be given the same support the other 2

LETTERS

RAIL-BUS MARSHALS RACKET IN TfNSW

Dear RW

I was recently seeking employment as a Rail-Bus marshal. I rang 'Prospect Employment' a body hire employment outfit. It is supposed to recruit bus marshals for private bus companies replacement rail bus services due to track work. They wouldn't get back to me after I left messages on their phone (its not a land line with receptionists, just a mobile - seems suspicious) seeking a bus marshal job. Also the Transport for NSW recruitment web site - when getting into the recruitment section there is no mention of "bus marshal jobs"! I have approached various people who I have seen doing the bus marshal job on the Bankstown line re bus rail replacement bus services. I have been constantly told they got the jobs through friends or relatives. Seems dubious/corrupt employment practices by Transport for NSW. I understand the union hierarchy has let this happen for many years and they don't care.

Concerned Reader

COMMENT: Also we wonder if the 'customer experience Marshals' are being reinvented for The Bankstown line? They were EOI positions but at a much higher rate than a CSA & all they did was bus marshaling. When no buses, help people with the opal machine, places of interest blah blah blah.

Anyway the team leader bus marshals were on equivalent to an SDM3 money, wtf?, for what?

STAND DOWNS & RE-STATEMENTS OF NON-VAXED IN SYDNEY TRAINS

Dear RW

It's been a long 6 months will be 7 by first of July since we have been stood down by Sydney Trains management due to refusing to be vaccinated for COVID-19.

However we still will need risk assessments to gain a return to our jobs. Management breached the EBA (Enterprise Bargain Agreement) clause 33.5. We should have been on the master roster till a determination. We were threatened with dismissal 4 times.

We did nothing wrong but stuck together in solidarity to fight a policy change that was wrong by trying to force vaccination on employees. Yet the vaccinations didn't stop people from catching COVID-19 or transmitting COVID or dying.

The RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) failed to help workers until a grass roots activist in Sydney Trains put in a dispute grievance under the dispute settlement procedures using the RTBU EBA document.

unions got, namely back pay and to be put back on master roster. But members who had quit were required to pay them back all the interim fees before they would be included. This notwithstanding that membership rules permit suspension of fees in the case of hardship... Moreover, the union didn't actually notify former members that this was going on: it was only through a Telegram group that people found out about the deal and that they could be helped. Then of course they had to confront again the terrifying Cerberus who answers the telephone in order to rejoin and be put on the list.

Now, after a nominal consultation, the DoT has indicated its intention to lift the vaccination mandate and allow the rebels to return to work on September 1. (Various other government departments in NSW have preceded it.) On that day we shall no longer apparently be the deadly threat we have been for the past nine months. (Two weeks earlier suspended teachers

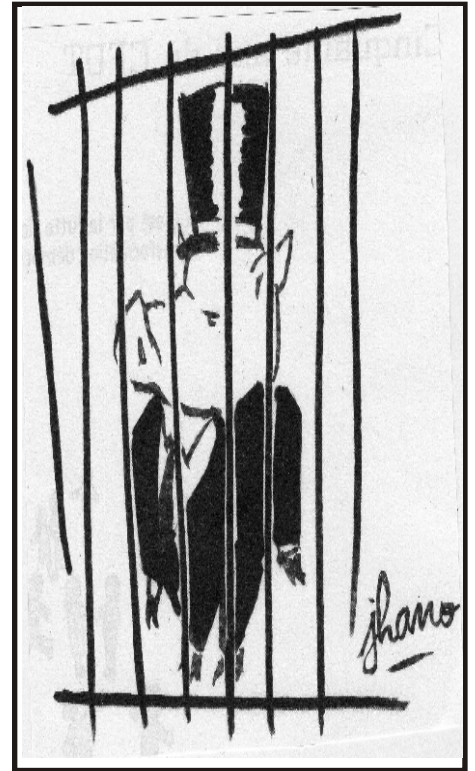
suddenly became safe.) As of August 21 there has been no official confirmation of this revocation. Employees are uncertain whether the policy will actually be removed and when, if at all, they will be reinstated in their positions. **STOP PRESS: As of 1/9/22 the mandate against non-vaxed workers lifted in Sydney Trains by CEO Sydney Trains.**

It's tricky having to arrange rental accommodation five hours from where one is living on the strength of a rumour. It's tricky in a market where prices have risen and availability has diminished. It's really tricky for those who are living in friends' sheds with no money left.

I really want to preach but I suspect those who haven't seen for themselves the important issues in play here won't learn a thing from my doing so. I hope the editor has some wise thoughts to contribute. I have found your magazine valuable, informative and very very

real in my time on the railway.

Sydney Trains Reader & Supporter



SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

RW: What has been the impact of the takeover by TransDev at Waverley as part of privatisation of the Eastern Suburbs depots?

Waverley Driver: Regarding the privatisation - we are being screwed down so hard there is very little more that can be drawn/milked out of the workforce. The Govt. ensured this before it handed over the management to private operators.

RW: What are your impressions of the industrial action initiated by the union officials of the RTBU in the Eastern Suburbs STA bus depots in solidarity with drivers of Region 6 opposing privatisation?

Waverley Driver: In Mid 2017 the RTBU officials bureaucratically called a 24 hour 'No Opal Card and No Uniform' action in the Eastern Suburbs depots in support of Region 6, of RTBU members at Leichhardt, Burwood, Tempe and Kingsgrove depots facing privatisation. It was such a dreadful, poorly managed industrial

action - the out of uniform, and No Opal machines fiasco.

Workers were alerted at the last moment. We were only informed by text and email late the night before the action. (In my case upon waking up that morning for work at perhaps 5 am!) There were no union depot meetings held before this action commenced. I noticed only 10 to 15% of drivers were visibly out of uniform at Waverley and adhering to the uniform bans (probably more for Opal machines).

The drivers involved in the action subsequently faced victimisation by management, some only the letter and the union officials failed to support the targeted drivers. The pictures of some drivers involved in the action were taken at the Bondi Junction interchange. On returning to the depot other drivers involved were photographed by depot administration personnel and subsequently fined. The pay docking was what I believe to be called an FIndustrial allowance which I vaguely recall was \$100-\$150. I think closer to \$150. It was about \$3 less per

hour for I'm guessing - maybe 6 months. Letters were sent out obliging a reply as to why we were not wearing a uniform, and recorded insubordination or E1 warning type record on their records for not operating the Opal machines and not wearing the uniform. Some only received a letter of warning. Other targeted drivers received a fine in the form of a fortnightly pay reduction for 6-12 months.

As a result the new private operator may have been effectively assisted by the RTBU officials in fitting up for the sack of militants at the depot later down the road. Cynics may consider the officials sabotaged the effectiveness of the industrial action. However everyone remembers what a failure and the negativity of the outcome. Other news is that the RTBU officials using the flimsy pretext that the Eastern Suburbs bus depots had only recently been privatised failed to call industrial action by union members to take joint action with Region 6 RTBU and TWU drivers over the 'Two Tier' wages and conditions campaign. Although clearly industrial action when the solidarity is so weak - is not smart!! Particularly given the result from 3 years prior.

RTBU Officials' Incompetence or Conspiracy?

Editorial Comment: However a case could be argued based on the above evidence that the RTBU officials deliberately set up this action in 2017 to fail, and so demoralise drivers and undermine solidarity. Perhaps even a cynical manoeuvre by the officials in cahoots with the bosses and Liberal Govt. to head off any industrial action over the more recent bus routes cuts in the Eastern Suburbs in Dec. 2021, ahead of privatisation in early 2022

and the Two Tier campaign.

Intriguingly when the Liberal Govt. drastically cut E.S. Runs and argued the Light Rail would replace those these services the RTBU staged 4 public rallies to give a platform to ALP polities in the lead up to the State and Federal elections. Randwick drivers at the Randwick rally told Sparks the public were not told the deal had already been cut with the State Govt. to privatise. No attempt was made by the Union to mobilise the public and local Councils to back any industrial action. Just 'Vote ALP'. Post Federal elections the RTBU went quiet again and went back to focusing on the Rail issue where the Liberals were running

amok.

The union officials displayed a similar seeming 'incompetence' in the organising of the so called 'lightning strike' in Region 6 following then Transport Minister Constance announcement to privatise Region 6 back in 2017. Again there were no depot union meetings and union reps advising drivers of the action. With many drivers only learning of the action via the corporate media or from passengers while out on their routes! There was also well organised strike breaking by the bosses with the aid of ex-STA drivers from the private bus companies who knew the routes and conveniently a role for the Metro Buses crossing Region 6 assisting the strike breaking. These Metros were from STA depots outside Region 6 where the union hierarchy and union reps had not encouraged drivers to take more hard

hitting solidarity action presumably with the flimsy pretext that privatisation wouldn't affect their depots! Later on the day of the strike a poorly attended protest rally organised by the union officials was held near NSW Parliament. No mass stop work union meeting for even Region 6 drivers was held to discuss the running of the campaign against privatisation. Ensuring ultra bureaucratic control by the RTBU union officials of the campaign and maintaining the isolation of Region 6 drivers.

According to information received by RW a RTBU Bus Division delegates meeting was held two weeks before



the strike and voted for strike action across Sydney. However one week before the strike another RTBU bus delegates meeting was held attended by Mark Morey Secretary of Unions NSW. He convinced the delegates to only take action in Region 6. Grass roots union members were kept in the dark about the decisions of these meetings and the looming privatisation announcement. The RTBU officials are certain to have had much more advanced warning of the privatisation push in the buses and needless to say kept members in the dark. Given 'secret' weekly meetings between the NSW Transport Ministers and RTBU NSW State Secretary Claassens. The corporate media spread the dis-information that a delegates meeting was held at Leichhardt depot in the evening following the announcement

to cover-up the conspiracy. Pointing to a spiders web of conspiracy involving a lot of back room meetings and long term planning involving the bosses, NSW Govt. and the union bosses of the RTBU and TWU. Highlighting the importance of establishing grass roots committees on the depot level to organise direct action independently of the officials. (See earlier issues on www.rebelworker.org on-line for the full story.)

LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What are latest developments?

Leichhardt Driver1: We have still not heard the outcome of the new Two Tier EBA campaign. Meanwhile there has been some positive developments. Following the new company Transit Systems/SeaLink taking over in 2017 as part of privatisation, the new bosses proceeded with savage attacks on us particularly the old time ex-STA drivers. Except four rosters, ex-STA drivers were being displaced from these better paid rosters and facing major wage cuts. Their positions on these rosters were given to the much lower paid new drivers, often TWU members. However recently the CEO of the new operator has directed management to place these ex-STA

drivers back on their old rosters. Another expression of the cowboy approach of the new company management was their refusal to pay us the 2.5% pay rise associated with the old RTBU EBA which we were due 2 years ago despite us being legally entitled to the rise. Now management has made another U-turn and decided to pay us the pay rise with back pay. **(Editorial Comment:** The principle underlying the old award system and now EBA's is not defending or preserving conditions but avoiding industrial disruption. Even before enterprise bargaining with the Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Court and awards system, in certain sectors award conditions still needed to be enforced with industrial action.) We continue to experience a shortage of drivers due to the low wages and

other poor conditions of new drivers. An important example of the lack of enthusiasm for employment as a driver for Transit Systems was that no one bothered to attend the recent Leichhardt Depot Open Day.

RW: What are your impressions of the situation in Transit Systems?

Leichhardt Driver2: We have been very concerned about being kept in the dark by the union officials with the outcome of the new 'Two Tier' EBA campaign. Management is pursuing a new wave of attacks on us. In regard to the bendi shifts they now want to reduce the shift loading. Their longer term plan is to remove the bendi buses completely from the depot bus fleet. They want all our buses to be electric. Another prong of the management onslaught is their demand to remove our Home & Duty Opal card.

STOP PRESS: Region 6 bus drivers struck from 4am to 7am and then 2.30pm to 5.30pm on Wednesday 31/8/22 with up to 1100 drivers off duty for six hours over the TWU/RTBU Two Tier EBA campaign. Neither the TWU nor the RTBU officials advertised the strike on their social media. Obviously too frightened to publicise joint action by rail and bus workers and the important precedent it sets for industrial campaigns. The officials took every measure to prevent any unified action by rail and bus workers, including those covered by the same union. Meanwhile the 'Two Tier' campaign offers nothing in regard to improving the conditions of those drivers on the upper tier. Only improving the conditions of those on the bottom tier further dividing workers. The so called pay rises being negotiated by the union bosses are way below the spiralling rate of inflation currently estimated at 6.1% pa (in reality much higher taking account of various food and other staple prices increases) and expected to grow even higher and will mean a major real wage cut for many! Meanwhile legislated Super contribution increases over the next 3 years will cut in the hand pay.

Randwick Depot News

RW: What has been the impact of the privatisation of the Eastern Depots for the depot?

Randwick Driver: Since the major bus route bus cuts in early Dec. 2021, we have not seen major changes. However a major attack looming associated with privatisation is the removal of our Home & Duty Opal. It seems certain to go ahead and will have a major effect for many of us. Some of us live nearby the depot and won't be affected much, however many drivers come from the Far West of Sydney and the Central Coast. They will be hard hit with the extra costs imposed on them, and won't be worth for them to continue on the job at the depot and will find bus driving work closer to their homes.

RW: What do you see as the impact of the upcoming NSW State elections in March next year?

RD: One strong possibility is that the Perrottet Liberal Govt. will even introduce new bus routes and putting on more drivers. So as to garner more votes in the elections. Over the years there has been talk of closing the depot and selling off the real estate for high rise developments. However with the Liberals in dire electoral straits and likely to lose the elections, its likely the sell off the depot closure and land sell off will be put off the NSW Govt. agenda.

Pt. Botany Depot News

RW: What has been the impact of privatisation at the depot?

Pt. Botany Driver: The takeover of Region 9 and the Eastern Suburbs STA depots only occurred in April so we have not noticed any significant changes. The cuts to many of routes occurred before privatisation in early Dec. 2021 Many drivers at the depot were angry over the cutbacks to shifts and major wage cuts associated with the bus routes cuts. However the union officials have been spreading talk in the media of the removal of the home and duty Opal by the new operator.

STOP PRESS: SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

All tenders for the 8 year contracts for bus regions in Sydney are currently up for review. Its 'business in confidence' whether Busways is competing with other companies for their contacts as part of an expansion push in the industry. Meanwhile all Sydney bus companies are experiencing a shortage of drivers. An important factor contributing to the shortage is the COVID-19 outbreak.

Newcastle Bus News

EBA Campaign Strikes

Newcastle bus drivers went on strike for four hours over a new EBA (Enterprise Bargain Agreement) on June 3rd 2022 and for 24 hours on Monday 20th June.

At a RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) rally in Wickham Park on 3rd June drivers rejected the way below inflation pay rise offer of 10% over 4 years of their employer Keolis Downer (KD).

The RTBU officials have expressed willingness to accept a revised new EBA based on a fake pay rise of 7% over two years which is also well below inflation which is currently 6.1%.

Newcastle bus drivers are already facing savage attacks by KD bosses. As its contract with Transport for NSW specifically allows the company bosses to cancel up to 120 runs a month without paying any penalties to drivers. However they are cancelling up to 90 runs a week. They just write 'COVID-19' as the reason so they don't get penalised.



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 in Bendigo?

Harriet: Due to works on the line by V/Line and Melbourne Metro Tunnel works there have been lengthy closures of the line.

Ichabod: During these line closures trains are replaced by buses for the entire journey to Bendigo, or from Gisborne to Bendigo. As a result a number of bus drivers are employed by the bus companies for the duration of the works.

Harriet: One of the bus drivers employed was the former manager at Bendigo.

Herbert: Since the settlement of the unfair dismissal case he has been doing some casual work. He was a popular manager with the local bus companies and one of the bus companies hired him as a bus driver for the duration of the line shut down.

Harriet: As soon as V/Line found out the former manager was driving buses, V/Line informed the bus company that he was not allowed to drive buses on V/Line property.

Rastus and Roscoe: The manager has no convictions so V/Line cannot stop him from driving buses to Bendigo. You cannot have a conviction to drive a bus. It is also a restraint of trade. This action is depriving him of his livelihood. What does V/Line want?

Ichabod: They don't want him around V/Line. He will be the rallying issue to unite V/Line employees.

Roscoe: V/Line does not own Bendigo Forecourt. It is owned by Victoria.

The same applies to Southern Cross station. Civic Nexus owns the Bus Terminal so the ex-Manager could still legally drive buses. Over the last fifteen years other former V/Line employees have driven buses during the shut downs. The TWU would become involved as they cover bus drivers.

Harriet: You can see why V/Line employees hate management.

RW: Is V/Line still standing down employees?

Ichabod: An employee received a please explain over an incident. His manager wasn't impressed and ran bleating to Human Resources. So the employee was stood down.

RW: Couldn't the manager sort out the incident?

Rastus: The manager is just a robot. If Human Resources tell him to jump. It would be how high.

Moose: We do not know the outcome of the case.

Forsyth: Another stand down has occurred in a regional location. An employee was stood down for five weeks. The employee was assaulted by

friend maybe in the V/Line Intent Pool.

Roscoe: The attempt to sack this employee BACK FIRED. The stood down employee had the support of the union, fellow employees and local townspeople so he was reinstated.

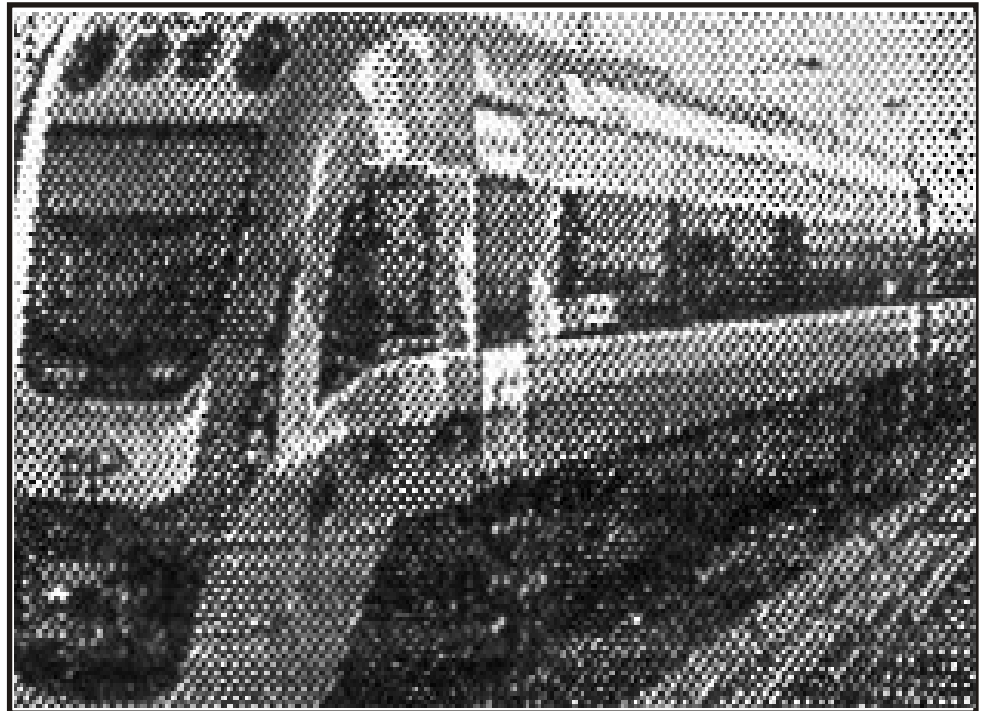
RW: What is the position for employees who want to transfer to other depots by mutual swaps.

Archie: No hope of a transfer.

Sheona: Years ago you were able to transfer to another depot if there was a vacancy at this depot. If you were declared redundant you could transfer to another depot where there was a vacancy under the Transfer and Resettlement scheme.

Moose: Employees could transfer to another depot but now you have to compete with an outside applicant.

Forsyth: As a result of this policy a number of employees wanting to transfer have been unsuccessful. The present position is some Melbourne



a passenger and he defended himself.

RW: Is this incident a repeat of an incident reported in issue 150?

Forsyth: It is looking that way but what has come to our notice is the Regional Manager at this location has taken a dislike to this employee. V/Line employees are of the opinion that this manager wants him dismissed.

Rastus: We wonder if one of his mates was after a position at V/Line. His

based employees live in regional locations and work in Melbourne. For some it is a long drive to Melbourne if you work an early shift. You get free travel to work so for some shifts you can travel to work by public transport but it is still a long day.

Archie: With high fuel prices and the cost of housing in Melbourne a number of Melbourne employees who have applied for positions at Country

locations have been unsuccessful due to outside applicants obtaining the position.

Ichabod: An employee is challenging Human Resources over the policy. The employee has been knocked back a number of times and I understand he is taking his case to Fair Work Australia. He may succeed with his application. We are hoping he succeeds.

RW: What is the story of V/Line increasing the part time positions?

Archie: In the conductors' grade full time employees who resigned, retired or promoted have been replaced by permanent part time employees.

Moose: This is an attempt by V/Line management to break the union. With these part time employees an employee was working a shift of eight hours for the week. A permanent part time employee is supposed to work a maximum of twenty hours a week. A breach of EBA agreements.

Forsyth: Originally there were part time employees in Melbourne but these positions lapsed. There are still part timers at Geelong, Kyneton and Bacchus Marsh and Warrnambool.

Ichabod: A number of Rest jobs have been eliminated in Melbourne. These have been replaced by permanent part time positions at Bairnsdale, Warrnambool and Albury.

Rastus: Part time employment should be used as a transition towards retirement not for replacement of full time employees.

Sheona: With these part time positions created V/Line can say to the Government they are creating extra jobs at Regional locations.

Moose: The union is fighting these changes.

RW: Once again we have run out of space. Part time positions and job share should be used as a transition to retirement. Employees should be allowed to transfer between depots with no obstacles.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say the treatment of the former manager at Bendigo is in one word SPITE. He should be allowed to work as a bus driver. He has no convictions and it is a restraint of trade. As for Human Resources, readers of RW know what we drivers think of Human Resources BASTARDS.

In the last issue of RW we discussed the use of sub standard rolling stock on V/Line Regional trains. Once again conductors, drivers and station staff will update readers on these issues. Once again names have been changed.

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

Midge: N sets up until the latest shut down, one still being replaced by H sets on Shepparton services.

Finbar: During the shut down over Max. to upgrade the Geelong Warrnambool line N sets have reappeared on Shepparton trains. It has been rumoured that the union went to the Minister of Transport over the issue. Also regular passengers on the Warrnambool and Shepparton lines have complained to their local Members of Parliament.

Moose: Since the last issue of RW four Velocity sets which are numbered sets 93 to 96 have been delivered to operate Albury trains.

Forsyth: One of these new trains has been equipped with a buffet module. The other sets will be returned to ALSTOM to be equipped with buffet modules in the near future.

Rastus: Since December six car Velocity sets have operated the 12-05 Albury service on weekdays. The other services and the weekend trains are operated with N sets.

RW: What is the rumour that an N set has been placed in storage?

Roscoe: A N set used for standard gauge services to Albury has been placed in storage at Seymour.

Forsyth: This set could have returned to broad gauge services using bogies from a broad gauge N set which then could be overhauled.

Rastus and Roscoe: Drivers and conductors are of the opinion that V/Line does not want to spend money on N sets. If the cost of the overhaul does not justify keeping N sets then these sets will be stored then withdrawn. Due to Disability legislation V/Line hopes to withdraw some of these sets over the next three years.

Finbar: In the recent State Budget money has been appropriated for 12 new Velocity trains.

Moose: The Velocity sets operating the

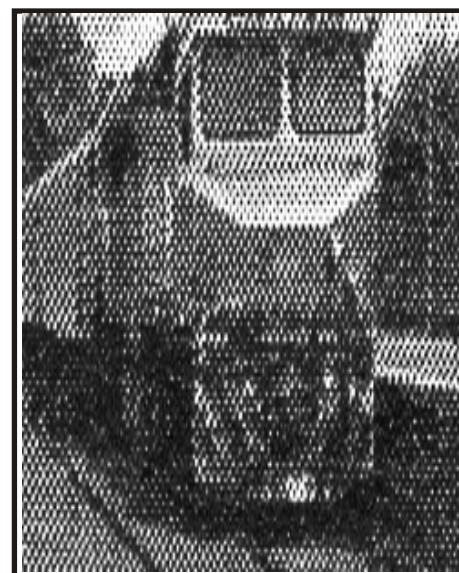
standard gauge services were fully overhauled in 2009 and 2010. They were at first operated broad gauge services then placed on the standard gauge during 2011 and 2022. They still have a few more years of life left.

Rastus: With the 12 Velocity trains being delivered perhaps a few H sets could be withdrawn.

RW: What is the story of the operation of the H set in the Shepparton train on Good Friday?

Forsyth: This was like an episode of Comedy Capers.

Archie: The H set was okay in the forward journey but in the return journey things went wrong.



Midge: The toilets failed so the train was stopped for a lengthy period at Seymour so passengers can use the toilet. Seymour was the only station where people could use the toilet. On leaving Seymour a young child wanted to use the toilet. We do not know what happened.

Rastus: During previous shut downs the drivers in the station pilots have noticed N sets in sidings at Spencer Street for the duration of the shut downs. The drivers have noticed that some of these sets have not been moved to the sheds. They have only been tested at the sidings.

Midge: Conductors have noticed this as well. Conductors have wondered if these sets have operated.

Forsyth: As we have said in previous editions of Sparks since 2004 the rolling stock at V/Line has nearly doubled. V/Line now has 96 Velocity

sets, 21 Sprinters, 8 H sets and 16 N sets. Have the number of Maintenance workers increased?

Archie: We cannot answer these questions but in the opinion of conductors there should be a ratio of maintenance staff to service the carriages. In other words maintenance staff should be increased.

RW: What of service cancellation?

Finbar: There have been a few cancellations. One of the reasons are COVID restrictions. This can happen at short notice if a driver, conductor or maintenance employee has to isolate at short notice.

Archie: Another reason is unavailability of rolling stock. Sometimes trains are cancelled at

short notice and passengers are told to wait for the next train. This could be a wait of forty minutes or a wait of 1 ½ hours. This leads to Customer Service staff being abused.

Forsyth: Some trains run as reduced cars. For example 6 car velocity sets are reduced to 3 cars. 4 and 5 car N sets reduced to 3 cars. The only good news is Sprinter trains if they are 2 cars cannot be reduced to 1 car on V/Line as this is now forbidden.

Midge: Most times conductors are not told if the trains are reduced and they only find out when they arrive at the platform to run their trains. Conductors are abused by passengers and if we stood up for ourselves we end up facing Human Resources. We know

how passengers feel that we are not punching bags. Years ago management backed us but now if there is a problem, management runs away.

RW: Once again space has overtaken us. V/Line should be renegotiate the maintenance agreement with the maintenance contractor to employ more staff.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say V/Line management should be ashamed of themselves for what happened with the H sets to Shepparton on Good Friday. So they have a conscience? The answer is no. As long as the train operates they are not fined.

UKRAINE CRISIS & WAR REPORT

Mon, 12 Sept 2022

With this interview, we wish to present to Italian-speaking (and international) Public the Assembly group that is active in the city of Kharkiv where it produces an online counter-information newspaper, to which several links are provided in the text of the interview, and operates in local solidarity networks in a city that is currently being bombed every day. Being our first contact with this reality, it is an important opportunity to know the opinions of this group on the controversial international debates on which our Federation has recently expressed its positions, and on the concrete needs of those who find themselves doing social, solidarity and humanitarian work not far from the front line.

CRINT-FAI: Given the lack of information with Italian public on the situation in Kharkiv, can you tell something on the history of your group and your insertion in local political dynamics?

Assembly: In general, we have really been active since March 30, 2020 - as soon as there was a feeling in the air that this habitual status quo had finally cracked. The start of a global pandemic took us by surprise! It was unusual to

stay at home all the time. At some of our comrade's workplaces, their salary was cut by 20% and there was a fear of staff lay offs. But a couple of weeks after the start of quarantine, she started development of our website and so began to talk about acute social problems and help people unite to directly help each other in the face of a crisis.

Our reasoning went something like this: if at least 10% of the population of our city understands, for example, the public transport system better than the mayor and the city council do, then



why do we need their administration? Something like that... The journal soon became a place where the

peaceful segment of social struggle and self-organization could meet with the radical underground, and began to really live up to its name. We covered street events, workplace struggles, and urban development issues in our metropolis. We have also tried to restore historical memory on the revolutionary workers' traditions.

Since the outbreak of hostilities, our magazine has become a platform for presenting and coordinating self-organized humanitarian activities, as well as for highlighting how the local ruling class is benefiting from this massacre. And if in the last year we had 20-30 thousand visits per month, then since the beginning of spring it's jumped to between 80 to 120 thousand!

CRINT-FAI: You managed to keep activity alive during the conflict. How is it deployed in daily work?

Assembly: Fortunately or unfortunately, we are the only anarchist collective in Ukraine whose fame has grown significantly during these 6 terrible months.

Probably, because we give useful information for workers in their daily confrontation with bosses or officials, and our position with the condemnation of both warring

states - the aggressor commits open genocide against everything Ukrainian, the small suffering

democratic victim keeps most of the population as hostages to show more bloody pictures abroad demanding more money, also robbing its serfs by all available means, while not a single Russian missile has yet flown into the government quarter - is quite close to those who have nothing to defend in this bleak hole with no clear future. The main problem that is such support does not transform into a desire to study anarchism and spread its ideas - even grassroots volunteers and other active parts of society are maximally de-ideologized here...

CRINT-FAI: What about Zelensky's government? We read about the new labour legislation. What are the implications of the state of emergency on daily life?

Assembly: If for Russia defeat in the war means some political changes (at least a palace coup, and possible disintegration into parts or partial loss of sovereignty), the future of Ukraine seem to be very sad in any case. Long before the war, Zelensky was often compared to young Putin not without reason, and as a result of victory, we can get a regime no less dictatorial than the Russian one.

A very telling example came this month when he stated that the borders for men would not be open until the end of martial law, don't caring that it's the most popular petition topic on his website.

With regard to labour legislation, it is very indicative that we see only Europeans concerned about this. Because at least half of those employed in Ukraine work in the informal sector, and even officially employed ones rarely hear anything about the compliance with labour rights and guarantees - it all depends on individual agreements.

Most of all, the working class is now worried about other things: the already mentioned street raids for the issuing of subpoenas (the most active in the eastern and western borderland regions) and the need to open departure from the country for those who are liable for military service. Yes, petitions make only information sense, however

it is the first attempt of Ukrainian workers in our memory to express their own agenda at the nationwide level. Since street actions are now impossible, they resort to the only remaining means of communication with the authorities.

We can only imagine how many Ukrainians would be happy if the state loosened its grip as the result of the international anarchist movement's campaign. If this movement had taken its anti-war statements as more than just words, we would have seen its massive rallies for opening the borders near Ukrainian embassies many months ago. What to talk about, if even on the May Day you found more important affairs? It seems that there is nowhere to wait for help, and one can only guess how many more Ukrainian families will die, because they don't want to part with each other. How do you differ from politicians if you declare things that you are not going to fulfil?

The only mass libertarian structure whose words did not differ from deeds is the EZLN. Shortly after the invasion, they filled the streets of their municipalities, unconditionally condemning this aggression, calling for the immediate withdrawal of the Russian military, at the same time not considering the Ukrainian bourgeois state as something principally better. This protest was symbolic, hardly anyone in the Kremlin even saw it at all, but it seems they did the maximum that is possible in their mountain jungle...

CRINT-FAI: What effects did the war on Ukrainian anarchist and radical movements?

Assembly: Some groups just disappeared, the rest - except for us - continue to operate as state units, but as a political entity (even if far from anarchism) are actually dead, and no prospects for their revival in this capacity are now visible. It should be noted that different Ukrainian anarchists joined the army for different reasons. Black Flag rather tried to promote the anarchist agenda in the ranks of the military and

broader defence movement. We consider their experience valuable, although unsuccessful, and assumptions about this were expressed by us in an interview from the first days of the war. Others, on the contrary, rather protect the Ukrainian state from attacks by anarchists - therefore, we treat them as negatively as we treat the state as such.

In a few words all of them are not for the state, but only for the Ukrainian people, however even such Jesuit rhetoric they cannot use in a revolutionary way. If you want help the Armed Forces, many of whose soldiers don't even have body armour, not to mention other ammunition - okay, help them, make useful contacts for the post-war time, as Malatesta supported the Cuban rebels against Spain and the Libyan ones against Italy... But why even Zelensky's right-wing opponents are not shy to use every case of such injustice to undermine trust in the Ukrainian authorities, while they, on the contrary, only advocate Ukrainian state interests in the libertarian circles? Those who don't want to obey any government have no reasons to see such groups as a real alternative to it, and those who love the state don't need such schizophrenic exoticism - there are ordinary nationalist parties and movements for them.

We do not think that this would radically change the situation: the example of the same Black Flag shows that any revolutionary agitation in the Ukrainian troops is now meaningless, as soldiers are generally satisfied with their salaries, quite solid even by European standards (100,000 hryvnias or about 2700 euros at the front line). Nevertheless, the majority of those who identify themselves as anarchists in Ukraine were not even going to do this, but immediately merged with the ruling class in a single nationalist impulse.

Meanwhile, the numbers in the Ukrainian army is approaching a million people, and a few dozen fighters under black flags are a drop in the ocean, unable to demonstrate anything but their own futility and

helplessness. However, the relative success of our media in comparison with pre-war times also should not give us the illusion that anarchist views have become more popular in at least one of the regions of Ukraine. We need to be ready for the fact that the political situation in the country may be like in Afghanistan, Yemen or Somalia for a very long time, and nothing can

guarantee the growth of the influence for anarchism, but the only chance for this is the refusal to flirt with some or another authorities/politicians as a lesser evil, and a resolute and unconditional opposition to them all. Otherwise, the masses will increasingly perceive anarchists as strange and incomprehensible clowns which they don't need to pay

attention at all.

Commission International Relation of the Italian Anarchist Federation (CRINT-FAI)

<https://umanitanova.org/guerra-in-ucraina-e-diserzione-intervista-con-il-gruppo-anarchico-assembly-di-kharkiv-iten/>

BRITAIN TODAY

A number of wildcat strikes broke out in the UK during August.

The wave of wildcat action kicked off at Cranswick Continental Foods in Pilsworth. Next, wildcat strikes broke out at several Amazon warehouses including Tilbury, Rugeley, Coventry, Bristol, Dartford, Coalville, Belvedere, Hemel Hempstead and Chesterfield. --- There were also more wildcat strikes at Grangemouth oil refinery. Chemical plant workers also took wildcat action at several sites across Teesside and at Humber Refinery in North Lincolnshire as well as at Valero refinery in Milford Haven. Train drivers at Avanti West Coast brought some services to a halt by refusing shifts.

But what makes a strike wildcat'?

Wildcat strikes are a form of autonomous direct action. Autonomous because they are not officially sanctioned by and are likely to be outside of the control of the unions and left-wing political parties. Direct because they short circuit the mediating and representative role of the trade unions. As the recent wildcat strikes spread like wildfire, media outlets were keen to describe the danger to businesses.

Share Talk website wrote: "Businesses cannot plan for wildcat strikes, making it difficult to manage them. These strikes are dangerous for employees who abandon the legal protections

granted to them in collective bargaining."

The Evening Standard asked: "What is a wildcat strike?" Wildcat strikes don't have the permission of their union, and workers don't go through the typical process a union does when arranging industrial action, which sometimes challenges their union's authority."

Computer Weekly stated: "Amazon workers also have staged wildcat strikes (meaning they were conducted without the involvement or support of a union) in Rugeley, Coventry, Swindon, Rugby, Doncaster, Bristol, Dartford, Belvedere, Hemel Hempstead and Chesterfield"

A couple of dictionary definitions of wildcat strikes are: Wildcat strike: a strike that is started by a group of workers without the approval of their union. Merriam-webster dictionary.

Wildcat strike: a sudden strike (= act of refusing to work as a protest) without any warning by the workers and often without the official support of the unions. Cambridge dictionary.

But council communist Anton Pannekoek outlined the reason that anarchist communists and libertarian communists emphasise the subversive potential of wildcat strikes: "In the wildcat strikes, we may see the beginnings of a new practical orientation of the working class, a new tactic, the method of direct action. They represent the only actual rebellion of man against the deadening suppressing weight of world-dominating capital."

Wildcat strikes are a form of direct action and the anarchist Emile Pouget explained the significance for revolutionaries of this tactic of militant working class action:

"Direct Action is a notion of such clarity, of such self-evident transparency, that merely to speak the words defines and explains them. It means that the working class, in constant rebellion against the existing state of affairs, expects nothing from outside people, powers or forces, but rather creates its own conditions of struggle and looks to itself for its means of action."

As a form of autonomous action, wildcat strikes have the potential to go beyond the narrow framework of trade unionism. Anarchist communists and other communist revolutionaries offer criticisms of the limitations of trade unions.

The wildcats in the UK have been in mostly, though not entirely, in workplaces where there are either no unions or they are unrecognised. The GMB are talking credit for at least some of the Amazon actions, but they are, for the most part, self-organised. What is important about these wildcat strikes is that they show what workers can do for themselves. If they can be extended and spread then they can overcome isolation and being picked off.

Useful texts and pamphlets: Goodbye to the Unions! Controversy About Autonomous Class Struggle in Great Britain

Direct Action. Emile Pouget.

libcom.org/article/direct-action-emile-pouget

<https://surreyanarchistcommunistgroup.blogspot.com/2022/08/wildcat-strikes-very-basic-introduction.html>

DISCUSSION OF THE WAY FORWARD FOR SYNDICALISM IN AUSTRALIA, TODAY.

G'day Comrades,

I'm writing to say hello and ask a couple of questions, if that's ok, around the history of the ASN and where the ASN is currently situated in the context of other syndicalist groups in Sydney.

I've been interested in anarcho-syndicalism for a while, and read widely but always learning and changing my mind). When I was younger I have fond memories of picking up copies of the Rebel Worker at Gould's book store and reading it on the way home down King Street. Always respected and appreciated it.

I've always been hesitant getting involved with 'revolutionary' groups generally, because experience has taught me the people involved tend to not be terribly serious about actually organising workplaces or engaging in worker struggle beyond their own inward looking circles. I have no interest in the Trot scene for obvious reasons, and my dealings with Trots and similar groups have always left my blood boiling.

I'm a fully active member of my trade union, an elected delegate, and do what I can for workers in my industry and for the labour movement generally, but have wanted to find Sydney people motivated by anarcho-syndicalist modes of organising more generally. I don't have time for reading groups populated by university students either, although good on them.

I'm wondering if there are any anarcho-syndicalists about who are actually involved in some real workplace organising, or looking to build and organise? I understand there is the ASF-IWA (Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation of International Workers Association), IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) and Black Flag but to be blunt none of them seem to actually be organising work. I am not looking to spend time on a propaganda projects.

I would be interested in contributing to or helping to build a real anarcho-syndicalist union in Australia, as a viable form of organising for actual

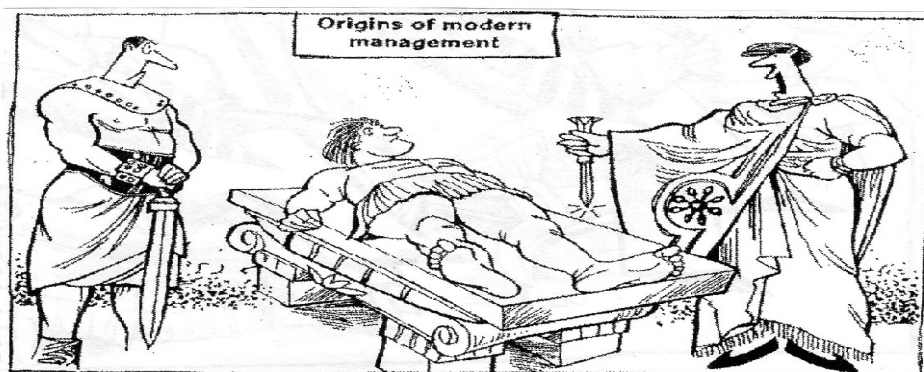
working people. Is there anything like this going on currently?

If not, thanks for the issues of Rebel Worker I read years ago -- they made a difference to me and my way of looking at the world.

Solidarity,
J

Dear J.

In regard to your questions - there are other allegedly syndicalist groups in Sydney such as the IWW, but do not engage in syndicalist oriented activity to my knowledge. They are very much in the orbit of the corporate unions interwoven with tentacles of the ALP Octopus eg involved in the 'smoke and mirrors' performances by the corporate union bosses/ALP



"Officially this, isn't a human sacrifice.

We're simply outsourcing your body parts."

during enterprise bargaining and lockouts to facilitate management attacks and the neo liberal push, eg some of them were involved in the Hutchinson Ports dispute and the union bosses fake 'community picket line' see report in RW edition in 2015. Also they are involved in solidarity network type stuff. Helping small groups of workers in peripheral sectors. Effectively copying the corporate unions on a micro level. They occasionally do help workers out, but this IWW activity in no way threatens the corporate unions base of support and role in facilitating enterprise bargaining and the big sell outs and the neo- liberal push particularly privatisation. Also I have noticed on their social media - support for nefarious ALP/Corporate union

stuff eg the 'Change the Rules' campaign of the ALP when Bill Shorten and former AWU union boss was their leader. It meant so called 'industry bargaining' and in reality more devastating in sell outs than 'enterprise bargaining' and would not involve campaigns of industrial action based on mass stop work meetings. It would be ultra bureaucratically run by the union bosses to let off steam, 'rallies' and involving back room dirty deals by the union bosses. (Albo's Federal ALP Govt. is pushing something similar.) Probably similar to the wave of industrial action 'set up to fail' by the ALP aligned union bosses in NSW recently in public transport, nurses, teachers. It's Sydney Local has recently adopted indigenous identity stuff into their name emphasizing their leftist sect building orientation toward 'recruiting' students and middle class layers

drawn into the leftist milieu and divorce from serious syndicalist industrial organising. They have also been promoting on their web site the disinformation of the union bosses of the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) regarding their current set up to fail enterprise bargain campaign in the NSW Railways. It in reality will deliver massive wage cuts in the context of spiralling inflation and a major step toward privatisation. Pointing to a continuing rightward shift of the Sydney IWW similar to many of the Trot groups.

In this way the IWW in Sydney and probably elsewhere is similar to the Trot groups eg Socialist Alliance/Green Left Weekly, Socialist Alternative and Solidarity. I believe this orientation of these Trot groups

maybe explained in some cases by pay off's from ALP/union boss fronts. I don't think this is the case with the IWW. I believe they are "unconsciously" influenced by the Trot groups and a social base amongst middle class elements - workers with high levels of autonomy in their jobs/students from the left subculture and demoralised workers seeking a "pseudo church" and have a simplistic notion of how we tackle the problem of corporate unionism and establish mass syndicalist industrial unionism. I have noticed with them a disturbing "anti-intellectual" climate. Like a lack of interest in studying the history of international syndicalism and various historical precedents for the process leading to the emergence of mass syndicalist unionism. Such studies would assist them in developing a more realistic approach to building mass syndicalist unionism than the sect building fantasy of "join us" we are the nucleus of the new syndicalist union confederation and their aping on a micro level of the corporate unions. Interestingly in the early 20th century apart from the Chicago line "Direct Action" IWW there was a Detroit aligned (linked to the Socialist Labour Party) IWW. A bit similar to the above Sydney IWW re pseudo church attracting demoralised workers, but they did have a big focus on weekly socialist/Marxist study circles and churning out socialist tracts and distro at the Domain and various speakers corners. Interestingly with the big rise in international class struggle around the end of WWI and the Russian Revolution of 1917 - many moved from their 'sect' pseudo church ways to being an important force for 'workers control' associated with the "boards of control" movement in the meat industry union in Nth Qld and South Australia.

The ASF is very similar to the IWW "sect" phenomena as outlined above but very inactive - attracted to the romantic past of the IWA (like those in the IWW today are attracted to the IWW - Chicago line - romantic past and important role in the class struggle of the early 20th Century - but failing to grasp the complex factors which led to this role which are different from today in Australia). They in particular have

an unwholesome interest in massaging the macro bureaucracy of the IWA and like the IWW have a grossly simplistic view on building mass syndicalism in Australia and fail to grasp the obstacles we face. In Melbourne the ASF is similar but much worse - influenced by the ways of the Stalinist Legacy like the Trot groups with a 'cult' guru resorting to duplicity and extreme "formalism" having unwholesome fun with the group's micro bureaucracy and of course lascivious massaging of the IWA macro one. See on web site archive section www.rebelworker.org review of pamphlet "Anarchism in Australia Today". It looks at this formalism problem. Also they have been involved in Melbourne many years back in the Domino workers campaign. Acting as a lobbyist and community picketing for these workers claim over back wages similar to the IWW in Sydney. Aping the corporate unions on a micro level but due to the Stalinist/Trot legacy giving the false impression in particular to overseas people and IWA sections that it had something to do with direct action/syndicalist activity.

In regard to the ASN, its not in this 'sect' spectrum of the above groups, but a catalytic network. An informal grouping - the 'yeast' of the workers of movement to facilitate a syndicalist direction. Providing 'outside the job organisation' to assist 'on the job organisation'. The ASN is particularly focused on the transport front and very active there. Involved in innumerable campaigns for decades in the buses and railways. You would have been affected by ASN activity as it has played an important role in assisting militants defeat various privatisation pushes in the railways. This has led to major industrial action perhaps affecting you on your way to work eg in Dec. 1997 a large wildcat strike at Central Station involving station assistants and signals stopping trains in morning peak one day affecting hundreds of thousands. It was totally covered up by the corporate/fringe media. That action should be seen in the context of ASN activity for some years. In Sept. 1999, the ASN assisted militants to defeat a privatisation push in the railways. The

corporate media of course never said anything about privatisation but it was about setting up the basis for carving up franchises. To out manoeuvre militants, the union bosses called a state wide 24 hours lightning rail strike affecting millions. Also in March 2004 Drivers for Affirmative Action in NSW railways direct action 'work to rule' for 4 days affecting possibly millions was intimately associated with ASN activity over the years. This action won bonuses for the drivers. The above actions were of course all in breach of enterprise bargaining and 'illegal' according to the union bosses. Since this time the ASN has been active in assisting militants in defeating other privatisation pushes in the NSW railways by out manoeuvring the union bosses and helping ignite wildcat action.

In the early 1990's at the dawn of enterprise bargaining, the ASN played a key role in the defeat of big attacks in EBA's in the public service DSS (Dept. of Social Security) and now Centrelink through national oriented campaigns which had important flow on effects for EBA's in other Departments. (See review of 'Suff the Accord! Pay Up!' in RW Vol.39 No.1 (228) May - June 2021 on RW web site.)

The ASN was active in the 1990's assisting militants in manufacturing with a workplace paper for a couple of editions, similar in the postal industry in the 1980's for many editions, and in the NSW Fire Brigade in the 21st Century with a workplace paper and contributing to a blockade of NSW Parliament by fire trucks. The ASN to my knowledge is the only left group which has done anything of major impact on the industrial front since the 90's! It just goes to show how hopeless many groups are and also the issue of the "rightward" shift of many Trot and other leftist groups since the 90's and being drawn into entanglement with the tentacles of the ALP octopus.

A Realistic Anarcho-Syndicalist Strategy for Australia, Today

The ASN perspective on establishing

mass syndicalist industrial unionism - is about getting the strike wave movement going. One sector eg say rail taking direct action to inspire workers to take direct action in other sectors. (Some thing like that was in the early stages with Drivers for Affirmative Action - train guards were close to coming over to direct action. In France in late 1986 to early 1987 and December 1995, direct action in rail spread on a massive scale throughout the public sector associated with the emergence of grass roots co-ordinating committees). In this context you could get major splits from the corrupt corporate unions and transitional steps toward a syndicalist union confederation. This is a more realistic perspective than the fantasy of the IWW and ASF as the nucleus of such a confederation. Also in the case of the 1999 strike, it was part of a very bureaucratic manipulated strike wave at that time also affecting Sydney garbage workers and nurses, to influence an ALP conference and assist

union boss machinations at it on the weekend There was also grass roots initiative and activity as well assisted by the ASN. In the current ultra bureaucratically run strike wave particularly focusing on NSW associated with the Ukraine War and spiralling inflation, the ASN has played a certain role in out manoeuvring the union bosses in the transport sector in getting it going. You just can't build an anarcho-syndicalist union in just one sector such as your industry. It must occur in the context of the above strike wave and expanding movement wiping out the base of corporate unionism. Otherwise such an initiative would face isolation and being crushed by the combined forces of the union bureaucracy, the State and employers. Such a scenario occurred with the NSW BLF (Builders Labourers Federation) in the mid 1970's. It was the closest we have come in recent years to an Anarcho-Syndicalist union. Despite formally bureaucratic

structures it was very much run by the grass roots and resorted to direct action. (See RW review 'Green Bans, Red Union' in archive section of RW web site.) Syndicalist transport workers would also play a critical role in new syndicalist union organising drives in many industries. Launching strikes and blockades at busy times. Avoiding long drawn out union recognition struggles involving picketing which mostly end in disaster. (This is how the mass syndicalist Spanish CNT (National Confederation of Labour) in its heyday in the 20's and 30's organised the Barcelona catering industry. This became a major base of the CNT.)

Its important to make a study of various historical precedents to this strike wave phenomena eg the Strike wave in Turin in 1943, strike wave in France in 1947, events of May 1968 in France etc. It will assist you to develop a better grasp of how we can build mass syndicalist unionism today and how to tackle various obstacles. Ed.

NEWCASTLE WORKERS' CONTROL CONFERENCE & 1973 FORD BROADMEADOWS STRIKE & RIOT

Personal recollections of Vincente Ruiz (hijo) about anarcho-syndicalist attempts to intervene in the 1973 Workers Control Conference in Newcastle, and the 1973 Ford Strike.

Workers' Control Conference held in Newcastle during Easter weekend in April 1973.

From Melbourne Terry and John (....) representing the Melbourne Anarchists, and myself representing the Local Federation of the CNT (National Confederation of Labour - Spanish anarcho-syndicalist union confederation) in Exile, attended the conference that was principally organised by certain elements of the Communist Party of Australia in conjunction with the NSW branch of the BLF (Builders Labour Federation now part of construction division of the CFMEU - ultra bureaucratic 'yellow' corporate union) and its secretary Jack

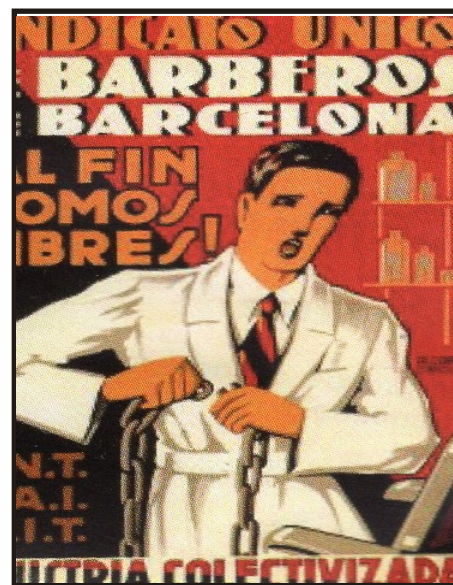
Munday being the main spokesperson due to his well-known participation with the green ban issue at the time.

Following some discussion the three of us agreed that it would be an interesting conference, and that it would also be a great opportunity to expose the concept of workers control from the anarcho-syndicalist point of view.

We did not intervene in any way during the first day, with the Agenda flowing fairly smoothly representing the different Marxist-Leninist points of view of how workers control should evolve and be put into practice. Although the theme was constantly repeating itself, just like a scratched record, "the cadres of the so called revolutionary party would be in charge". On numerous occasions the industrial actions being taken at the time by the NSW BLF branch were upheld as examples of workers control together with the joint resident group community green ban actions.

It was in the afternoon of the second day when question time was opened that I took the opportunity to ask

permission to address all those present and ask a question. I of course introduced myself as a member of the



Spanish anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T. in exile and followed up by sighting the examples of successful collectivisations that occurred following the military coup of the 19th July 1936 in the major industrial townships around Spain as well as the agricultural lands in the regions of Extremadura, Andalucia, Levante, Cataluña and Castilla, a process that

operated in many areas right up to the last minute in the early days of 1939. I then proceeded by seeking clarification as to whether the proposed concepts of workers control would be subject to the direction of an "avant-garde central committee" that would dictate production, working hours as well as remuneration, or, would real self-management prevail with all members of the work place being the ones to determine both social and economic policies by which their daily working lives would evolve.

Needless to say that during the course of my address numerous attempts were made to shut me down. If I recall and my memory does not betray me, the clarification I was seeking was never answered.

The Ford Broadmeadows 1973 Strike

One must understand the environment we were dealing with, to begin with the majority of the work force were immigrants with little or no command of the English language who in turn were the lowest paid, working under the worst conditions you could ever imagine.

Quite a number of the Spanish immigrants I knew worked at either Ford or Holden and some of the stories they would relate about their working conditions were quite horrendous. In summer extreme heat and in winter the complete opposite. They would also tell me that their remuneration was calculated under the model of "piece work" which they use to pronounce as "piss wick", when prompted to explain what they meant they would tell me that they would get paid by piece or task they had to constantly repeat day in, day out. This method of operating a production line meant that if any worker was slower than the person next to him, that other persons earning capacity would be affected, causing on many occasions confrontations amongst the workers. Many of the workers suffering severe injuries in their endeavours to maintain the required momentum, injuries that would eventually lead to the loss of

their employment because they could not keep up with the pace the company wanted the production line to operate at. And although there was a history of strikes at both Ford and Holden the union bureaucracies always managed to convince the workers to accept the offers put forward by the employers which always was the minimum increase in wages and diluted conditions of employment with the underlying threat of "you do not want to create a situation where you could lose your employment".

If my memory does not betray me it would have been either at the end of March or maybe early April 1973, there was an attempt for a substantial



increase in wages but most of all the 17.5 % loading on annual leave that already existed in many other industries. After innumerable goings and comings by the union bureaucracy a meeting held in May saw the Ford worker walk off the job. Some weeks later the union came back to the striking workers calling a mass meeting at the Broadmeadows Town Hall and strongly advised that the striking workers accept a \$3 a week pay raise.

A number of the Spanish immigrants and in particular Luis Costanza a libertarian militant, conveyed to me what was the course of events that transpired from this moment on.

A vote was taken, and the workers rejected the offer put forward by the

company, however the union secretary declared that the vote went in favour of accepting the offer from Ford and he ordered the workers to return to the shop floor. As Luis explained to me the secretary had just dug his own grave, and he was very lucky to get out of the town hall alive.

It was two days thereafter that the factory at Broadmeadows was attacked. Luis pointed out that the frustration of the striking workers could be seen, however their desire to take control of their destiny was stronger, without the support of the union they produced numerous leaflets, they organised picket lines, as well as quite a number of meetings where decisions were made by the striking workers on the picket line as well as informing all present of the events happening.

Luis Costanza who had been distributing anarcho-syndicalist journals and magazines for quite some time, grabbed the opportunity to organise a meeting of the striking workers to explain how they could organize themselves in a non-bureaucratic way, where they could control their own decision making process and take the necessary direct action when required. Three of us were invited as speakers at this meeting Terry Hutton, John (?) and myself, we spoke to those gathered in English, Italian, Greek and Spanish, explaining the organisational process of revolutionary syndicalism. We spoke for almost 1 hour and then answered questions for approximately half an hour. A lot of interest was shown by those present in having a better understanding of organising in an anarcho-syndicalist way, but in particular how decisions were made and how votes on issues at hand were taken. When we explained that it would be the shop floor that would each and every time make the final decision, and that there would never be the influence of union bureaucrats all those gathered erupted in applause.

By what Luis indicated, the Geelong factory also went out in solidarity.

Unfortunately the union leadership had already put into process the betrayal of the striking workers. A

NEWS & NOTES

In this edition we focus again on the 'set up to fail' EBA (Enterprise Bargain Agreement) campaign in the NSW railways waged by the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) officials. Its been run in a very half hearted manner designed to 'let off steam' and exhaust the grass roots. Similar to the EBA campaigns of other NSW public sector corporate unions. Important objectives of this sabotage with the aid of the corporate media in the railways is a cumulative massive wage cut over the course of the EBA. Perhaps rivalling or greater than the first 10 % pa wage cut of the 1930's depression which coincidentally commenced in the NSW railways. Another aim would be a major step toward privatisation associated with implementation of DOO (Driver Only Operation) on new trains. The ASN is doing the hard yards on the job to assist militants to expose the nefarious aspects of the EBA campaign and agitate for grass roots committees to take over the running of the campaign and link up with the grass roots in other parts of the NSW public sector to smash the NSW public sector wages cap and fight any rail lockout. (See articles page 3.)

An important recent victory won by militants in the NSW railways assisted by the ASN which has flowed on to the rest of the NSW public sector is the reinstatement of those stood down and facing the sack who refused to be vaxed regarding COVID-19. (See page .page 6.)

A NSW Parliamentary Committee Report has concluded that the Privatisation of STA (State Transit Authority) buses was a disaster for commuters and others. In this edition we throw new light on the role of the union bosses of the RTBU again 'setting up to fail' their so called 'anti-privatisation' campaign in the Eastern Suburbs STA depots and entanglement in the web of the privatisation conspiracy. (See article page 7.)

Help Build RW! Your help is particularly sought with distribution. Sell at your local shopping centre on Saturday morning, leave at the lunch room at work, at your local cafe, library or cinema. Your assistance on the financial plane is also welcome.

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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.

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number of the Spanish workers from Holden informed Luis that the worker at Holden had collected money to help out the striking workers at Ford. When the Ford strikers asked the union

bureaucrats where the funds collected were, they expressed no knowledge of such fund.

By the end of July a lot of the families on strike were having financial difficulties, the arbitration commission ordered a return to work, even Bob

SPAIN: CABBIES' NEWS

19/9/22 From the taxi section of the CNT (National Confederation of Labour) Various Trades Union of Barcelona, we denounce all the abuses allowed by the Metropolitan Taxi Institute (IMET), which we detail below:

Salaried taxi drivers, in order to have a decent salary, need to work exhausting shifts of more than 12 hours every day, some salaried taxi drivers even work 16 or even 24 hours for entire weeks. There are even taxi workers who sleep and eat in the vehicle. All to be able to reach 1100 euros per month.

These long working hours are due to the fact that the salaried worker receives a commission, from that commission VAT, social security and personal income tax are deducted. They do not pay overtime, night shifts or holidays.

In August they give us 700 euros and we cannot take vacations, the extra payments are 350 euros each. We always charge the same percentage in any circumstance, if it does not reach

the minimum, the employer deducts it from the payroll, so he is forced to work as much as it takes to be able to support his family, on many occasions having to accept money that it is won in black and that every day takes a little more life from us. For this reason, we are forced to work endless hours to compensate for all these deficits, with the consequent negative effects on our health and the danger that comes from being tired after so many hours behind the wheel.

Meanwhile, the floteros spend their lives raising money with the health and lives of employees, hiding it under the mattress. Huge amounts of black money that no one controls.

These long and exhausting days endanger our lives: we want to remember the serious accident of a salaried taxi driver that occurred in Terminal 2 of the Barcelona airport a few months ago.

We also want to remember the long list of salaried taxi drivers who suffer from anxiety attacks, tachycardia, heart

Hawke the president of the ACTU strongly suggested that the workers return to work. The strike regrettably capitulated under the false promises that the workers issues and concerns would be looked at.

Thanks to Red & Black Notes

attacks... and are on medical leave, due to the pressure, harassment and mobbing to which they are subjected by companies, floaters and taxi agencies in Barcelona.

We point directly to IMET as responsible for allowing this situation, and for ignoring what happens in the taxi companies, because according to them it is a business and union problem and is not their responsibility.

We point directly to the department of labor and the labor inspection as being responsible, as they do not act if there is no prior complaint and when they do act, they do so after 5 months when the worker is on sick leave or dismissed. Both self-employed and salaried taxi workers are tired of years of abuse and impunity from taxi companies and a mafia of floaters that impose their own laws in an authoritarian and martial way, without anyone holding them accountable.

We are several people who, tired of not being able to earn a living with a minimum of dignity by offering citizens the taxi service they deserve, have organized ourselves to change this situation. It is time to fight for our rights.