

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Sydney, Australia

Vol.35 No.3 (230) Dec. 2017 - Jan. 2018

Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

NSW GOVT. PRIVATISATION OF STA BUSES WILL HAVE A DOMINO EFFECT ON THE NSW PUBLIC SECTOR! ONLY DIRECT ACTION ON THE JOB WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT CAN STOP THE FALLING DOMINOS!



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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

P.O. BOX 92

BROADWAY 2007 NSW

E-mail:

Via Web Site www.rebelworker.org

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

AUSTRALIA: \$12 a year

OVERSEAS

\$25 (Aus.) by Air

\$20 (Aus.) by Sea mail

Free to Prisoners

Supporters Subs. \$40 pa

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Pamphlets as published.

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Inner West Council Vs S.T.O.P. on fighting STA Bus Privatisation

Morning Jefferson

I just wanted to make sure that you were aware that Cr Byrne moved a Mayoral Minute in October opposing bus privatisation. I drafted the letter to the Minister myself and we are chasing them for a reply.

He also continues to stand in complete opposition to WestConnex, as he did prior to Amalgamation.

A copy of the Mayoral Minute is included below.

Regards

Kate

Addendum sent Sunday 17/12/17

To Kate Walsh,

Media and Communications Officer at Inner-West Council...to be forwarded to the Mayor and other Councillors...with the original correspondence

Kate...

I won't comment on Mayor Darcy Byrne's so-called opposition to West-Connex but to remind him of his mentor Anthony Albanese's response to two exact same questions prior to the last Federal elections. Darcy chaired both community meetings. The first at Balmain Town Hall Albo said "An ALP Govt will not contribute one cent of Federal money to West-Connex". At the second meeting, a week later in Rozelle at the Hannaford Centre, in response to the same question, Albo responded "A future ALP Federal Govt will not spend a cent MORE on West-Connex". Implied here...then the \$billions already committed by the Libs at the Federal level to West-Connex would be honoured in the breach by a post-election Shorten Govt if it had got up against the Turnbull Liberals(2016). But they didn't. So Albo was spared the embarrassment of double back-tracking on his original pro-West-Connex funding at a Federal level the previous election campaign(2013) which the Daily Telegraph and other papers duly exposed. Being Albo's 3 day a week employee in Marrickville...while he was supposed to be employed in Leichhardt Town Hall as "Mayor of Leichhardt" with rate-payers money, lap-dog Darcy would have been tarred with the same hypocrite brush as Albo, one suspects? But I will let those who are focused on the West-Connex campaign argue the toss about Darcy's former Mayor credentials here...They have the dirt, not me...apart for the knock-back of a full time campaigner on the issue from the first IWC post-Administrator meeting...which speaks heaps to Darcy's sincerity?

Bus Privatisation

I wrote a letter to the Inner-West Courier in November on behalf of STOP announcing we would be mounting community pickets at all Sydney STA Bus Depots commencing on Monday December 4th 2017 between 8-9am until the Transport Minister Constance policy on bus

privatisation was reversed. The letter was published where, like the previous letter published on the subject, the specific reference to an invitation to Mayor Darcy Byrne and local State member Jamie Parker were edited out by the paper's editor. However the original drafts were "blind cc'd" to both Mayor Byrne and State Member Parker. Separately a press release was forwarded to the media and the Councils announcing the community picket invited all politicians, community leaders and the commuting public. Again Bcc'd to Byrne and Parker.

Please note that I personally emailed the Mayor five times with a request for his presence at the first Leichhardt Depot community picket against privatisation on December 4th. I also visited the Federal Office of his former employer Anthony Albanese (who I believe have a hot line to his mobile phone) to invite both Albanese M.P. and Mayor Byrne to speak at either Tempe or Leichhardt Depot on December 4th. I also invited him with the same invitation across the roadway in Marrickville Rd at State M.P. from the ALP Jo Haylen, Opposition spokeswoman on Roads, Maritime, Transport and Freight in NSW and State Member for Summer Hill, only to be told she was pregnant and could not attend. I then invited her to nominate a staff member to attend and to extend yet another invitation to Mayor Darcy Byrne (via her ALP hotline).

The following Tuesday I attended the Inner West Council meeting at 6pm at Ashfield Town Hall and gave out invitations to all councillors (including the Mayor) via Councillor John Stamolis (after the heavy-handed security guard told me you are not allowed to hand out information to individual councillors prior to or at council meetings...another one of Mayor Darcy Byrne's limitations on free speech at Council meetings...along with "fill in a form if you want to ask a question or make a statement...24 hours

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ASN APPEAL

The Anarcho-Syndicalist Network requires suitable cost effective Permanent premises. A\$750,000 is urgently sought to buy premises for The proposed Rebel Worker Anarcho-Syndicalist Media Centre.

Please make out Cheques to Black Cat Media & Send to P.O. Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

EBA, What Agreement?

Never before have we needed a more active rank-and-file movement in our unions than now. With privatisation looming on all fronts, not just on the buses, but the whole of the rail network and workplace agreements limiting wage rises to two and a half percent P.A. over the last decade, something drastic needs to be done.

The Leadership of our unions seem to be clutching at straws and has run out of ideas. The latest Enterprise agreement in New South Wales rail is a prime example where they are bereft of solutions to combat management's onslaught. The filing of a dispute in relation to management "failing to bargain in good faith" with the Fair Work Commission shows that they are ignoring the real force that they have with the membership. Do we really believe that management would bargain in good faith, ever? Are Managers not to just out to further their careers and to save money for the New South Wales government? They've never given a s*** about workers in all the years that I've worked there. So why would they listen to a bunch of union delegates when there is so much more at stake for them. Unionism is not about niceties, it's about getting the best deal for members by members.

The differences between the union leadership and us is about the way we go about getting the best deal. They say, "well you elected people to represent you, they make decisions on behalf of you".

We say that true leadership is about taking the membership with you and giving them a voice, being guided by the membership, respecting the wishes and thoughts of membership and lastly building trust and solidarity so that you always get the best possible outcome using the strength in the collective will that they exert.

At the moment the Union is divided up into separate entities, often with their own budgets, their own leadership, acting autonomously only for a narrow range of disparate groups.

The whole of the membership in our industry, acting in solidarity, could bring much more pressure to bear. This has never really happened due to the sectional interests where guards and drivers issues are going to be very different to those working in the customer focused areas. This is to say nothing of the chasm that ex-

ists between those workers on the buses and ferries and those charged with the day to day running of trains. It's a case of "Never the Twain Shall Meet".

That's why it has been easy to get rid of Booking Clerks, Cleaners, Station Managers, Duty Managers and the like. Guards and drivers may have cared, but they never were organised to be part of a much larger industrial campaign. They never cared enough. Once again sectional interests as well as self preservation was the driving force. Likewise many station staff counted themselves lucky when they saw others, rather than themselves, on the chopping block.

My question is Why? When management has more tools in it's armory than ever before, why are we not bringing the whole of our industrial workforce to bear on out-



comes that affect us all? We have much more in common across the various sectors than is commonly realised or acknowledged. Privatisation, for instance, affects us all.

At stake in the latest EBA is the loss of free travel for public transport employees that get moved over to the private sector. At the moment this proposal is only targeted at employees who will be part of the privatised companies that run the railways, from what I can gather. However there are no guarantees that the removal of free travel will not be carried across the workplace for all public transport workers.

The Facilitation Clause should be struck out of the agreement altogether. As it currently stands, the clause, if included in the Agreement, would allow management to bring in workplace change without proper consultation and without fair compensation. The union believes that the current proposal will cut them out of negotiation for workplace change. All management would have to do is hold a ballot to bring about the changes they needed. Seeing that no workplace change has been positive over the last few decades I don't see why we need to accommodate this clause at any level. Let's not give them this right.

We know that in the future these changes will pave the way for privatisation if they go ahead. How many of the current permanent jobs will just disappear into the privatisation ether. Metro Trains on the

Bankstown and Epping Chatswood line will employ fewer station staff than at present. Also guards are certain to be cut from the "driver only" operation that Metro Trains uses. In the future even the jobs of train drivers is precarious.

If you are unlucky enough for your job to be abolished in the privatisation lottery then under present proposals your redundancy payments can be reduced from the current 65 week maximum payout. What they are planning in terms of redundancy is yet to be spelt out in full. What is on offer however is far a less generous redundancy package than you have now. You also will

never be guaranteed to be taken on by the new private transport owners.

Management want to use Labour Hire companies to supplement the workforce. This is an attempt to weaken the unions operating in the workplace. It is basically the contracting of a non-union workforce in an attempt to water down the working conditions of existing employees. Wherever Labour Hire companies have operated in the workplace it has led to lower wages and much lower conditions of the existing workforce.

So now the Unions have sought a Protected Action Ballot from the Fair Work Commission umpire who decides what actions can be taken, when they can be taken and for how long. Strike action is a distinct possibility because of the intransigence of management but as in the past it is highly unlikely.

What the actions of the union's leadership do however is put the blame fairly and squarely at the feet of the employer. If the Commission on the other hand decides that enough is enough and calls a halt to any action then the unions can say that they are hamstrung and throw their hands in the air, like they have in the past, with exclamation "We've done all we can".

Resorting to systematic processes rather than organic organisation at the grass roots level does not serve us or the struggle well. There is no substitute to the pressure that can be applied from the ranks when it is done democratically and well.

We urge all members in the public transport industry to get together and organise themselves as one. We need to be bold, we need to work together, we need to build strong roots, we need bonds that cannot break under the pressure of Management.

This cannot be done by appealing to hierarchical forces within the bureaucratic Union leadership. We need totally new ideas, only you can provide that. However it is much better if you all are working together to achieve the same goals, with strength, determination and utter solidarity, rather than sectarian, narrowly politically focused, opportunism.

Sparks wishes you all the best in the New Year and a successful struggle against the worst aspects of your Enterprise Agreement.

Calling all Aspiring Journalists

Sparks magazine which is published several times a year needs people at the shop floor level to tell us of their experiences in the workplace. Sparks tries to encourage people who believe that the best way to win the industrial struggles is by helping yourself and your colleagues by organising in solidarity on the job.

The best source of information about what is happening on the job comes from those who work on the front lines. We want to

know about your struggles, your frustrations, your wins or losses against management, or your opinion about the ways the struggle can be improved. This is about you and your work colleagues. This is not about waiting for a union delegate, that usually dismisses your grievance, to come and save the day for you.

Sparks needs to know about struggles that are happening in your workplace, so that the experiences can be shared across the board spectrum of sectors from buses, ferries, trains, stations, offices, trams, workshops and all manner of workplaces. Drop us an article if you work in public sector transport or even in private sector transport.

To save yourself from reprisals you can even use a nom de plume (pen name) Sharing our experiences helps build solidarity, something that is sadly lacking.

So grab your pen or computer and send us your thoughts. Our shared experiences enrich us all and makes us stronger together.

Contributions can be sent to: PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW and Email: rebworknet@y7mail.com

State Transit Newsflash

KINGSGROVE DEPOT NEWS

RW: What are your impressions of the Inner West depots 24 hour strike on 18/5/17 over the privatisation announcement?

Kingsgrove Driver (1): The union is a joke at the depot. On the day of the strike I was out on the road doing my runs when I heard on the ABC News that I was supposed to be on strike for 24 hours! The union rep didn't even bother to be at the depot when I and other drivers arrived for work that day to advise us about it! I am thoroughly pissed off with the union. But recently the union delegate at Kingsgrove has had a change of heart and realises that the union hierarchy is the main problem. He is angry with them for selling us out.

RW: What are views on the role of the union officials in the fight against privatisation?

Kingsgrove Driver (2): After the lightning strike and free fare day, Fair Work Australia Commission imposed a 3 month block on the union taking industrial action. When this period ended, Chris Preston the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) Bus Division Secretary held a press conference at Leichhardt depot where he advised the

media that he was not ruling out further industrial action over the NSW Govt's proposed Inner West Region 6 depots privatisation. Our impression is that this announcement by Preston was a ploy by the union officials to find an excuse for not waging further industrial action on the issue. We are very angry with the union officials over their treacherous and ineffectual role in the fight against privatisation. There is tremendous interest amongst us in building the campaign for the picketing of all the depots in December advocated by STOP (Sydney Transport-users Opposing Privatisation).

Recently on two occasions Chris Preston and a local member of the NSW Parliament have come out to the depot to hose down the enthusiasm for the campaign.

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

RW: What are the latest developments following the privatisation of Newcastle STA buses?

Waverley Busie: In contrast to Transport Minister Constance promises that there would be no changes for drivers, trainee drivers now employed by Keolisdowner which has taken over the STA routes are

getting \$6 per hour less than the non-trainee drivers in wages, in contrast to the STA, where the trainee's wages were \$2 per hour less. As the new owner is trying all lurks to cut wages and increase profits. It's certain further down the track they will impose more savage attacks. It goes to show that privatisation is a device for employers to save money and that the dark clouds are coming. In the past Waverley and other depot drivers had transferred to Newcastle, for a better life due to lower rents and house prices in comparison to Sydney. Now with the advent of privatisation, many Newcastle drivers, including some former Waverley drivers have transferred back to Sydney depots as they don't like the new Keolisdowner management.

RW: What are impressions of changes to routes connected with the privatisation push?

WB: Associated with the new rosters for the upcoming new timetables in late November, there is a significant change affecting the depot. Route 389 which is a long route which we previously shared with Leichhardt, will now be exclusively operated by Leichhardt. It will go from Pymont to Bondi Junction. We will operate a new route the 379. The new route will go from Nth Bondi to Bondi Junction then to Bronte. However the 379 is shorter than the new 389, and as the STA is paid per kilometre of bus running, so with this new run, the STA will receive less income.

There seems a case of favouritism with these changes. Associated with the privatisation push a juicy route for Leichhardt has been provided and more income for its proposed private owner. We appear to be gradually being acclimatised to privatisation.

RW: What are your views on the changes to bus stops?

WB In Region 6, Transport for NSW has removed 90 bus stops. They are using the rhetoric and propaganda of more efficiency to disguise giving a helping hand to the profitability of the bus services under proposed privatisation. Whilst significantly undermining the buses as a community service

RW: What are other ramifications for Waverley from the privatisation push?

WB: There has been an influx of drivers from the Inner West – Region 6 depots. As a result there is much less overtime available. Consequently the pay of drivers at the depot is often lower. There is also strange situation developing with the broken shifts. Now there are often 3 sign on times.

RW: What is the latest news with the Light Rail extensions?

WB: I recently attended a public meeting on the issue at the Masonic Centre in Kensington. There was hardly anyone attending. Only representatives of the Light Rail builder attended. There were no NSW Govt. or Transport for NSW representatives. It was largely an exercise in self promotion by the Light Rail builder. There were no speakers, just a model on a table of the Light Rail extensions. I spoke to an engineer from the builder, who advised that the Light Rail was all about relieving transport problems and an opportunity for the Govt. to spend money on building new infrastructure.

In my view it's a completely unnecessary construction. There is a similar situation with the Metro rail line. It's completely unnecessary and will require 25 bridges to be replaced or modified. The hidden agenda of the project being the opportunity to construct apartment towers in the area. In the case of the West-Connex outlet at St. Peters, the adjacent land near the Princess Hwy which was once used for a brick works and the rail line is having limited height apartment blocks constructed, as a result of restrictions associated with the nearby Airport. In the Marrickville area I recently noticed a massive parcel of land has been flattened for the West-Connex, with the loss of many terrace and heritage homes. These projects will just benefit Liberal Govt. business mates and a small layer of workers employed in such sectors as building and construction.

A disgusting example of favouritism toward business mates associated with the NSW Govt. privatisation push was illustrated by the recent news that in Nov. 2015 the Vales Point power station was sold to Sunset Power International, now Delta Electricity for \$1 mill. This price was allegedly above the retention value. However, now in 2017 the power station has been valued at \$739 million. Through selling off assets to the rich and business mates and stamp duty on real estate, the NSW Liberal Govt. has made ½ trillion dollars in revenue. Whilst NSW has the highest tolls in the world for privately operated tollways, highest parking fines in Australia and highest housing prices in Australia. A new area on the chopping block are 4 TAFEs. These cut backs will seriously affect the number of apprentices and skilled workers. Whilst employers already are now obliged to recruit overseas for skilled workers.

RW: How are drivers responding to the proposed privatisation of the Inner West depots and routes?

WB: Many are experiencing anxiety over the issue. They have serious concerns over

the buses which were privatised are now mainly casuals and part timers. Whilst, the frequency of buses on routes has been reduced.

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

RW: What is the situation with privatisation at the depot?

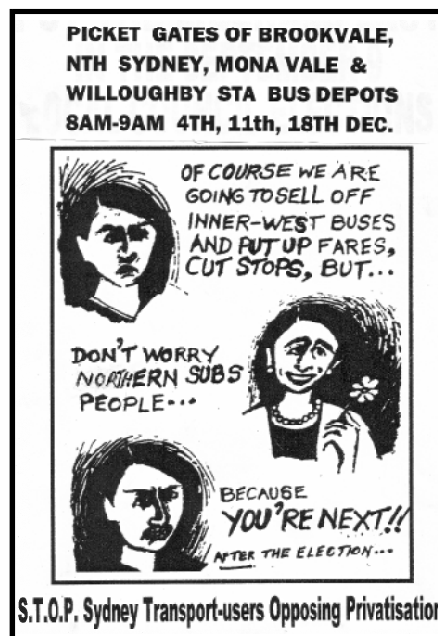
Burwood Driver: In recent weeks, we had a visit from the CEO in the mid afternoon. Apart from the CEO claiming to be on our side regarding privatisation, we received little enlightenment on the subject. There is a general sense of uncertainty with many drivers transferring to other depots and some leaving the job. There are various rumours about the issue, but nothing concrete. Constance seems to be keeping things on the issue close to his chest. Other news is that the STA is intending to get out of the way its Admin. Restructure before privatisation. Its aiming at finalisation by the end of Nov. 2017. In the case of the Staff Supervisor, the current occupant in the job, will have to reapply for the position.

RW: What are your impressions regarding the removal of bus stops?

BD: Like in other parts of the STA there have been the loss of many bus stops particularly along Parramatta Road. In some parts you now have to walk 2 to 3 kilometres to get to a bus stop. Many commuters are angry about the cuts. In the case of the University side of Parramatta Road in Glebe and Camperdown, 4 stops have been removed and replaced with 2 of equal distance. However in Burwood there are bus stops every 50 metres. With the removal of bus stops on Parramatta Road as I mentioned, drivers on AM and broken shifts are finding they can now meet the running times. Whilst there has been serious safety issues with the location of the previous stops. Drivers had complained about it over the years, but nothing was done. Now with the privatisation threat, suddenly the bus stops have been changed. We have heard nothing further from the union on privatisation or the enterprise agreement.

RW: What are your impressions of the so called "lightning" strike over Constance's proposed privatisation announcement?

BD: One the day of the announcement we were told unofficially that it was likely there would be a strike next day. If the strike was called off, we would be advised by phone or SMS. On the day of the strike, there was also no official advice from the union that we were on strike. As a result some drivers did their runs without knowing there was in fact a strike. We believe the whole strike was highly manipulated by both the union officials and the STA.



a range of related issues, such as the impact of privatisation on their super funds, rosters, runs and transfer procedures and availability. They are also concerned that the privatisation of the Inner West depots will encourage the bosses to orchestrate ever more competition between remaining STA depots. There is a lack of certainty of having a job in the years to come. They seem dispirited. Interestingly a recent survey by union groups has revealed that privatisation does not deliver cheaper or better services. In the case of Adelaide, according to a friend there, most drivers in

LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What is the situation with privatisation?

Leichhardt Busie: Latest news is that Keolis Downer has got the contract for the Inner West depots as the other companies interested in the tender have dropped out. As presumably, the Liberal Govt. had promised Keolis Downer the tender. This company however doesn't like working under Govt. supervision in the operation of public transport. Since the announcement of the proposed privatisation, many drivers have transferred to other depots

NEW INSIGHTS ON THE BUS PRIVATISATION CONSPIRACY & HOW TO DEFEAT IT

A fortnight before the announcement by Transport Minister Constance of the proposed privatisation of the Region 6 Inner West depots, there was a union reps meeting at the RTBU office. At that meeting, the reps were advised that Constance was going to make the privatisation announcement on Wed Fortnight from then. At that meeting it was decided to hold a one day strike of all depots in Sydney on the Thursday after Constance announcement. It had unanimous support. However interestingly, the reps were called into the RTBU office again, one week before the announcement for another meeting. At this meeting Mark Morey Unions NSW Secretary or one of his delegates talked the union depot reps into not holding an all Sydney depots 24 hour "fake lightning" strike, only the initially affected 4 depots were to hold the 24 hour strike. Some drivers suspect that the STA/Transport for NSW bosses may have been in on this decision. After all they had plenty of time to organise scab buses from out of town. (Only 4 depots in the strike would have greatly helped the strike breaking and Liberal electoral fortunes in what were the upcoming local council elections.)

Despite Television News reporting quote "a late night union delegates meeting", immediately after the Constance privatisation announcement, no mass meeting of all the Bus Division was held to discuss the industrial campaign. Only a "rally" was held near the NSW Parliament on the day of the so-called "lightening" strike. It appeared on the TV news that only 30-40 drivers were there. Yet hundreds of drivers were affected. No "official" advice was given at the depots of the strike either by union reps or via a union "Strike Bulletin". Only "un-official" ad-

which are supposedly not targeted. In reality all depots will be subsequently sold off. Others have left the job. Other news is that we have had a visit from CEO. He was very uninformative and just talked rubbish.

RW: How are developments with the bus stops?

LB: We have noticed lately a big pruning of bus stops in our area. One of the most important which has been removed is at Leichhardt Plaza. It's likely to make many locals angry. It's all about helping the privatised buses run faster and meet the timetable. We have heard nothing further from the union officials on the enterprise agreement.

vice and media reports. This no doubt contributed to unintentional strike breaking and confusion. Particularly with other depots doing cross-city runs.

BLOCK ON INDUSTRIAL ACTION PLOY?

After the free fare day and so called "lightning strike" the Fair Work Australia Industrial Commission imposed a 3 months block on industrial action by the union. At the end of this period Chris Preston RTBU Bus Division NSW State Secretary held a press conference - where he ad-



vised that "he didn't rule out further industrial action". Whether he intended it or not, this announcement was used by Minister Constance to apply immediately to the Fair Work Australia Commission to impose a further 3 month ban on industrial action. Constance must have been rubbing his hands with glee over the RTBU "mistake".

"RYDE MYSTERY"

According to a marginal Lefty newspaper source who often rely on union bureaucrats for info, Ryde had been added recently to the Region 6 Inner West depots for privatisation. The announcement seemed to be missing from the daily main-

RW: What are your impressions of the changes to bus operations with the new timetables?

Leichhardt Driver: On Nov.24-25 with the new timetables the 440 will terminate at Bondi Junction, as the proposed new private owner does not have the legal foot print beyond Bondi Junction. So now travellers from Leichhardt or Central will have to take catch two buses to travel to the beach. The word coming down from Newcastle is that under privatisation no more coffee cups, water bottles, etc will be allowed whilst on our runs.

stream press. Sparks has checked the Ministry of Transport Press Releases for all of October-November. No mention of Ryde anywhere. So when Chris Preston from RTBU leaked the story to the Inner West Courier and a week later on Friday 10th Nov at 10am orchestrated a lame duck protest outside Ryde depot without any media interest, it is clear that he and the RTBU were the only ones in the know from the Minister himself? Is this what the RTBU calls "mass campaigning"?

There was a very poor advertising of the event and only a small crowd of Local ALP hacks attended. In addition there were drivers from Ryde on their meal breaks who wandered out to the gate in curiosity. In attendance apart from Chris Preston was the Mayor of Ryde and Luke Foley, Leader of the NSW ALP. It had all the appearance of another ALP election stunt, with the union hierarchy looking like they are doing something on the privatisation issue? Some drivers were asking had had a dirty back room deal been made by the union officials to include Ryde now on the chopping block in exchange for Minister Constance reinstating of the industrial allowance. This allegedly occurred 9 weeks(?) after Constance ripped it up in Parliament last June. Why was there no jubilation by the RTBU with the members over the "victory" of the return of the industrial allowance. Their silence on this issue has led to the members speculating of a Ryde depot trade off. Why was there no mention on Bus Express web site of the date and conditions of the return of the Industrial Allowance?

Another much more likely scenario drivers have discussed is that the leaking of the info about the alleged proposed privatisation is a ploy by the union officials to claim a "fake" victory. They can say "We saved Ryde, but unfortunately we couldn't save the Region 6 depots." As Ryde is not targeted just yet, until after the

next State elections. For Ryde to be targeted with Region 6 a new separate tender would need to be made and Constance would have made a press release.

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIONS NSW MARCH & RALLY

On Thursday 16/11/17 Unions NSW organised a combined unions march from Belmore Park to, according to Preston to Parliament House where it would be associated with the second stage of the debate inside Parliament over Bus Privatisation. However, strangely the march was diverted to the "Perfumed Garden" behind St. Marys Cathedral for a rally on workers' rights from a range of industries, but no mention of the buses. No announcement was made by the union officials at the Rally that the bus privatisation debate on was now "delayed" until 4.30 pm on that day.

Drivers around the depots were misled on this point and thought the RTBU were building broader union support for their cause. They weren't. However, commuters who completed the Unions NSW "Save Our Buses" petition were advised about the changed time of the debate and told to turn up by 4pm at Parliament. Given the ALP politicians grandstanded inside, it must have impressed the 80

odd(?) commuters in the gallery. It did not impress Transport Minister Constance who walked out of the debate. The 20,000 workers at the union rally remained oblivious to the busman's plight having already returned to work after a half day stoppage.

Special General Union Meeting

Disgruntled drivers launched a union petition for a special general union meeting to discuss the "Don't Sell Our Buses Campaign". Due to general dissatisfaction with the Union's inadequate response on the industrial front. The petition got 500 signatures. In response, the union officials booked a tiny room in Pitt Street CBD in early Dec for the holding of the meeting. Drivers were advised of the meeting via personal letter, email or text message. It was made clear, that there would be no catering, not even coffee. To attend the meeting drivers would have to use their day off. Some officials said they would attend to field questions. Sparks would appreciate a report of the meeting.

OPAL FREE FARE DAY

On loan to Willoughby a driver headed out at 5.30am only to be abused by the public. They heard on the radio it was an

Opal Free Day. After the third complaint in two bus stops the driver could only say "it's news to me, suit yourself." So much for the depot level union organisation of industrial action that led to a three months Industrial Court ban on industrial action by drivers?

IDEAS FOR ON-THE-JOB ACTION

Some suggestions have come in from drivers on types of on-the-job action to fight privatisation. We neither endorse or oppose these ideas because they fall into the grey area of the law and we cannot take any responsibility for bus drivers facing the consequence of their own actions. But to win this battle the drivers will have take their own initiatives to draw attention to their opposition to privatisation of their jobs and to keep the community on side.

Lightning "union meetings" at choke points in traffic where there is a natural build up of delayed buses, accidentally blocking more than one lane, may draw attention to the essential role of the industry in traffic flows. Obviously drivers would have to discuss their rostered position on the road beforehand to avoid any suggestion that they were intentionally in breach of the law.

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Sydney Ferries News

RW: What has been the situation with the Ferries since privatisation?

Ferry Worker: Sydney Ferries Corporation was privatised on 28/7/12 via franchising involving a 50%/50% arrangement between Transdev Australasia and Broad spectrum. Subsequently the staffing of the Ferries including deck hands, engineers and skippers has been cut in half.

Balmain shipyard which does Ferries maintenance has had 200 redundancies, after the workforce was "battered up" for 1 or 2 years when no staffing cutbacks occurred. After this period fitters and turners have been re-trenched. The bosses also commenced spying on workers at the shipyard. When they go to the nearest pub for lunch, the bosses set Govt. drug testers on them when they return to work. 6 or 7 have been sacked on the spot. As the tests revealed the workers being over 0.05.

RW: What is the state of repair of the Ferries?

FW: Since privatisation the Ferries have become run down. There is a lot of corner

cutting going on. The fleet is not being painted enough. Consequently, passen-



gers have had accidents due to slipping on the boats, particularly near the entrance, where the paint is wearing off.

Prior to privatisation you could book up a Ferry on the repair sheet and it was repaired and back on routes in 24 hrs. Now you can wait weeks or months for it to be repaired. Torn seats are common. Exhaust fumes are leaking into the engine rooms of Ferries affecting workers. As a result of the lack of repair, there are near misses in Darling Harbour.

RW: What are your impressions of the current training in the Ferries?

FW: The training of workers in safety procedures is going by the way.

There are Marine courses at Ultimo and Brookvale TAFES. In the past marine training involved all teachers with 12 years experience as captains with cargo ship experience. They would teach costal mapping, sextant use and other skills. So that skippers with master certificates would be trained by professional and retired captains. Now teachers fresh from university teach the courses.

In the past, trainees were examined by master mariners. Now only paper tests are involved. Consequently, deck hands and mariners have inadequate training. The TAFE sacked the master mariners as it was cheaper to employ uni graduates. The Govt handles revenue and the company cuts back staff.

RW: How is solidarity on the job?

FW: The workforce is divided by membership of three unions, the MUA for deck-

hands, the AMOU for skippers, and the AIMPE for engineers. In the past ferry workers worked as a team but now the Ferry bosses are encouraging divisiveness

by victimisation and workers informing on their workmates. The last stop work occurred as part of a NSW public sector protest last year and involved the deck hands.

Victorian Railway News

In this issue of RW, we will discuss various issues facing V/Line employees. Once again Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff will discuss these issues. As with previous issues of Sparks names have been changed.

RW: I hear that V/Line is being investigated over issues of corruption.

Rastus and Roscoe: The Independent Broad Based Anti Corruption Commission is investigating V/Line.

Denzil: The issue is about a former Rolling Stock Manager and his partner being involved in a scam. In other words these ripped off V/Line.

Sheona: This issue is ongoing and we will have to wait for the final report. There could be prosecution through the courts.

Clarence: I hope the I.B.A.C investigates Human Resources and the way they select employees for various positions.

Peneope: Yes we hope so, as the way Drivers are selected was corrupt.

V/Line Customer Service employees who applied for the Drivers positions as V/Line was not recruiting Drivers due to the Right of Return policy.

Rastus: The Right of Return policy which operated until 2009 was discussed in the last issue of Sparks.

Roscoe: Over the last eight years there has been internal recruitment plus Drivers from the Sparks and Freight Companies. This is the first time no one has been selected from the Sparks or Freight Companies. Drivers are upset.

Sheona: As has been said in a previous issue, V/Line wants a compliant workforce. Some of the persons who have been appointed to become Trainee Drivers are engineers, academics and former executives. No wonder they can pass the selection test.

Denzil: A number of people have applied for internal positions a few times and now they do not obtain an interview.

Rastus: No wonder morale is low.

Penelope: An example was the refurbishment of Buffet Modules. All eighteen Buffet Modules were to be upgraded, but after six modules were upgraded, the project was suspended.

Jethro: In the last State Budget money was allocated for the upgrade of the Regional Carriage Fleet.

Denzil: What should be happening is consideration being given to replace these carriages with Diesel Multiple Units with Buffet facilities similar to the Explorer units in NSW.

Rastus: In the meantime if maintenance is not concluded or a breakdown occurs in the Rolling Stock, on some trains, the carriages for these trains will be replaced by carriages only suitable for short commuter runs.

Penelope: Look at the Shepparton line. In the last six months certain trains have been replaced by commuter carriages.

Denzil: Imagine if you have booked first class to Shepparton and you arrive at Spencer Street to see a notice "NO FIRST CLASS ACCOMODATION" and "NO BUFFET", how would you feel? You get a refund on the difference of fare, but you feel cheated.

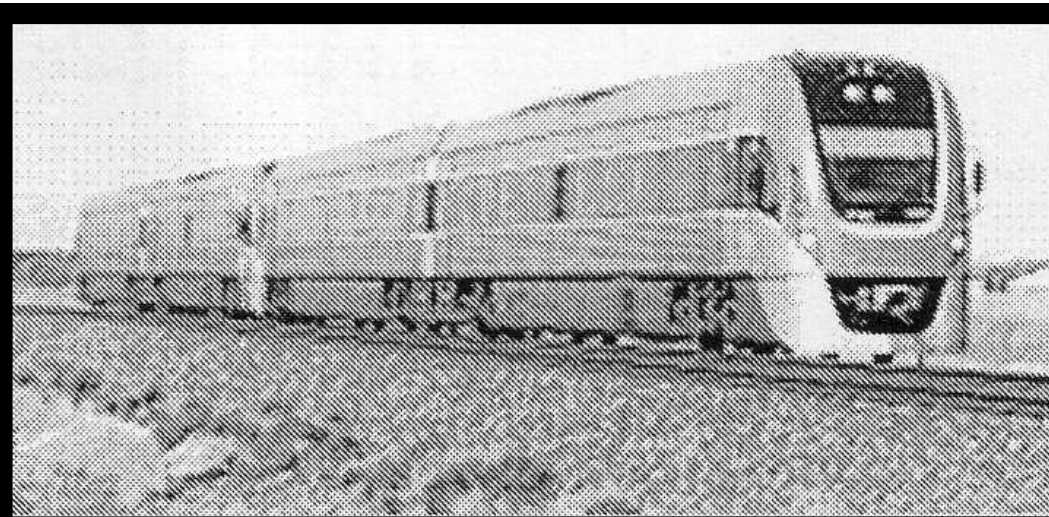
Penelope: If you are travelling economy the journey is rough.

Rastus: V/Line does not care. You see as long as the train is running, they are not fined. If the train was replaced by buses, they would be fined.

Clarence: This is not the only thing to happen. Trains which are operated by Six Car DMU's are sometimes operated in peak hours by a three car DMU. Imagine the crush load in the train.

Sometimes V/Line has buses to back up the train but people want to get home quickly and very few use the buses. Sometimes the conductors working these trains do not know until they arrive at the platform. They are subject to abuse. The reason they run a three car DMU's is because it is a train and they are not fined if it is cancelled. Local Media in country Victoria is getting stuck into V/Line on these issues.

RW: I wonder what is the future of V/Line?



Jethro: So is the way other positions were filled at V/Line.

RW: These issues were discussed in previous issues of RW.

Rastus: The last way they selected Drivers was corrupt.

Roscoe: You can say that again. A number of Spark Drivers applied for the positions and did not pass the selection test.

Diedre: I can say it was rigged. Firstly some of these Spark Drivers were former

RW: We must move on. What is the Rolling Stock situation?

Rastus: It is like a third world railway operation.

RW: What do you mean?

Clarence: Due to budget cuts, which happened under the previous Government, where \$130 million was ripped out of the V/Line budget only maintenance was carried out for the system to operate safely. Hardly any money was spent on upgrades to rolling stock.

Clarence: V/line is a Government Department of Public Transport Victoria.

Rastus: V/Line is supposed to show how a Government Rail Operator is operated, but due to their misadventures over the last few years, they have let the side down.

RW: Once again we must close the interview.

Rastus and Roscoe: Once again in having the final say, we hope employees come forward to IBAC about corruption. Finally we only hope V/Line can improve.

MELBOURNE TO ALBURY LINE ISSUES

In this issue of RW we will discuss problems in the Melbourne to Albury line. Drivers and Conductors will discuss these issues. Once again names have been changed.

RW: What are the problems on the Albury Line?

Rastus: V/Line has had problems with both track and rolling stock.

Roscoe: May we introduce you Arlene and Abner who will discuss on train issues.

Arlene and Abner: We work as conductors at a depot which rosters us on the Albury Line.

RW: What is happening when you sign on?

Arlene: When we go on duty we are informed the train has been cancelled and is replaced by buses.

Abner: We do not go out, but we check passengers' tickets for the replacing buses, copping abuse from passengers then we do customer service duty around Southern Cross until the conclusion of our shifts.

RW: Why the bad track?

Rastus: Originally the line was broad gauge with the standard gauge line running parallel to the Broad Gauge line from Broadmeadows to Albury.

Roscoe: In 2008 after years of deferred maintenance of the Broad Gauge line, the Victorian Government handed over the Broad Gauge to ARTC for conversion to Standard Gauge.

Abner: In 2011 passenger services resumed and by 2012 a full service of three a day serviced the line.

Abner: For these services 3 five car N sets were overhauled at Newport Workshops. Two for the service plus one spare set.

Rastus: These N class locomotives were converted for the service. Two for the service plus one spare locomotive.

Abner: To provide power for the N sets their power vans were converted to standard gauge.

Roscoe: This work of converting the broad gauge line was contracted out and after 12 months mud holes appeared in the line and speed restrictions were imposed. This was the reason it had taken a longer period to restore passenger services.

Rastus: When services resumed and the mud holes reappeared so special restrictions were imposed. As a result springs on the carriages were breaking, thus trains were cancelled due to a lack of spare parts.

Abner: V/Line operated on the just in time principle for spare parts.

Rastus: ARTC controls the line and due to the condition of the track, decided to take back track maintenance in house with their own labour.

Roscoe: Over the last few years a fair amount of work has been done to bring the line up to standard.

Abner: Another reason why the trains are cancelled is due to defects of the rolling stock and a number of times the trains have been cancelled due to no spare carriage sets.

Arlene: Due to these cancellations questions have been asked in State Parliament about these cancellations. So V/Line decided to operate some trains with reduced carriages and sometimes the train was operated with these carriages but no Buffet Service.

Abner: One day the Buffet Cars were operated but due to defects in the cars no buffet service was provided. Free drinks of mineral water were hounded out to passengers.

Arlene: That is not all. When the service was resumed, the Buffet service was continuing but to save money because the Buffet conductor was working a rest job and to save on shift penalties, some Whizz Kid decided to have a crew change midway in the service.

Abner: The Buffet service operates to Echuca and also Seymour where crews change over. As a result of these changes, the Buffet car has to close down between Seymour and Echuca.

RW: Think of the inconvenience to passengers.

Arlene: Because the Buffet cars use a point of service system, the conductor has to close down to balance the takings and check the stock sheet.

Abner: Because of the political toll over bus replacements of trains as on one occasion, a train was delayed up to ninety minutes so as is it is run as a train. Conductors were left in the dark over the delays. No one gave them information and the conductors were copping abuse.

RW: How was V/Line going to solve the problem?

Abner: Some Whizz Kid came up with the idea if a fourth carriage set to be used as a spare set to cover for unforeseen breakdowns.

RW: Where was V/Line to obtain the carriages.

Arlene: Reduce the Albury trains to four carriages but where were they going to obtain a power van?

Rastus: We, drivers heard a rumour that v/Line was to obtain an old air conditioned carriage from NSW. We do not know where the carriage was to be procured from but it was to be converted to a power van.

Roscoe: A number of drivers on locomotive transfers to Newport saw a gutted NSW carriage on a siding in Newport Workshops. One of these drivers asked what this carriage was being used for and was told the car had been stripped to a shell so a diesel engine could be installed.

Rastus: The car was stripped then it was discovered that the carriage frame could not support a diesel engine. You see power vans were built with a stronger frame.

RW: I think of the amount wasted on this project.

Abner: They wanted to produce a power van at least costs. They should have constructed a new power van.

Rastus: They should be looking at new rolling stock for the line. A suggestion would be to build new Velocity Trains with Buffet facilities. The manufacturer of these trains has said they could be constructed.

Roscoe: With the Power Van debacle now V/Line is looking at an option for a new shunting locomotive.

RW: What is that?

Rastus: Obtaining a Locomotive from a defunct Tourist Railway, overhaul it and use it as a shunting locomotive. Drivers have only heard the rumour and have no evidence to back it up. The rumour will be discussed in a future issue of Sparks.

RW: Once again we have run out of space but V/Line should look at purchasing new rolling stock for the Albury Line.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say V/Line should stop wasting money on second hand rolling stock and construct new rolling stock. To Arlene and Abner we thank you for having the guts to have come forward and discuss the issues.

Irish Rail News

Irish Rail workers were out on strike recently. What's going on?

The WSM recently caught up with J, an activist and worker at Irish Rail, to find out. [For background details, see our analysis, "Why Irish Rail workers are right to strike", published here.

WSM: Hi J. So why have workers at Irish Rail been out on strike recently?

J: Hi. Yeah - so workers have been in pay talks with the company through the unions over the last number of months. We've had a pay freeze since 2008 and there have been pay cuts. We have given in terms of productivity and we've just been putting in for pay increases. In the negotiation we were looking for an increase with no conditions attached. The company were saying that there was no money and it was looking like nothing. We were looking for a 3.75% increase. The company were offering 1.5% with about 20 conditions attached to it in terms of productivity.

We were about to secure a deal for 2.5%, I think, within a 12 month period with a 500 euro voucher at Christmas. The CEO refused to sign it. The CEO was not engaging with the unions at all and sent the HR director to negotiate with the unions. When that document was agreed by the unions and brought back for the CEO's signature he refused to sign it. The workers, the unions and the Labour Court were frustrated to say the least. The CEO is overá from the UK, could be described as Thatcherite and does not negotiate with unions. He was brought over with an agenda presumably - privatisation and cuts - and is very anti-worker.

At that point the company started lying saying that we were the ones not negotiating andá that we walked out of talks. They put out there PR spin but at that point we were balloted for industrial action. And the anger of everybody! I think there was 80% or so voted for strike action. We went out then over a series of days.

WSM: What form did the strike action take? What happened?

J: Pickets were formed at each work location. We worked a rota on the pickets of workers doing that duty.

[J later added: The cleaning workers respected the picket and didn't cross it. They

areá members of SIPTU as well. They should get strike pay because they help our strike by not crossing it. But they don't get strike pay. They're down pay and they're low paid workers. It's something we should put pressure on the unions to do].

WSM: Strike action has been called off for now. What have been the latest developments?

J: We were called back in to the Labour Court just before the third day of action. This would have fallen on the day of the Ireland-Denmark match which would have caused the company some disruption. The Labour Court has delivered a recommendation. It's a peculiar one in that it's complicated. You read it back around



to see what they are actually saying.

Basically, they recommended a 2.5% increase over three consecutive years and a 500 euro voucher bonus. (It's in voucher form to avoid the tax aspect of it).

The unions are interpreting the recommendation as saying that there are no conditions attached to that. There are a few - I think they're called initiatives' - that workers will have to comply with the railway safety legislation - you know, things that we would have to be complied with anyway. Then there's a list of further conditions, items to be discussed. We agreed to go into talk again with the company on these items. Some of them are outsourcing and pay roll reform. There's a list of them.[J later added that theá company's initiatives' feature increased æperformance management', including GPS trackingá on the workers' vans].

They are also saying that there is a æno strike' agreement.

WSM: What do workers think of all this?

J: The concern with workers is that those conditions are tied to the agreement. Anything mentioned in the agreement or in the recommendation, we can't strike for. But then you have to go back to another paragraph which says that the company can't bring in those items without - now it doesn't say without agreement', it says without æproductivity discussions' and referral back to the Labour Court if needs be. I suppose, of course, the fear would be that the Labour Court, because it is not impartial, would deliver a recommendation that we would have to comply with those conditions further down that road.

So the unions, on the one hand, can see that it is something over a three year period. They're saying that any sort of productiv-

ity or pay talks that have happened in the past have had a no strike'[presumption]and that hasn't prevented us from acting anyway. Weá take it that there are still ways.

Some workers are saying[...that they would take action...if the company does try to bring in anything unilaterally without our agreement or without some sort of payment attached to each of those conditions. They see it as tying those conditions into payment separate to what we have. If the company tries, then they are, in effect, breaking the agreement. Then we would be able to strike on that basis.

I don't know. It remains to be seen how that will play out. Some people are talking about voting against until it is explained to them more. Other people are saying that they want to take this and fight further battles down the line. They think that these conditions are now tied to something in re-

turn. The agreement did say that no extra costs are to be claimed by the unions but something in return for those conditions would be cost-neutral in a sense.

WSM: Is it difficult being in a union at Irish Rail?

J: No. It's part of the culture. It's a very unionised environment. You're encouraged to join a union.

WSM: What effect has the strike had on the way that your colleagues, fellow workers relate to one another?

J: Between workers who scabbed the strike and those who were on the picket, there is the obvious tension there. Between workers who were on the picket together, you can't beat the feeling of just walking past and there's a 'how-are-ya?' acknowledgement. You know that you have each other's backs. You know the solidarity.

WSM: What would you say to any worker at present - not necessarily those at Irish Rail - who was afraid to go out on strike?

J: I would say that it is scary. The way to overcome the fear is through the collective action.

Find just one other worker who thinks the same as you in order to organise. If it's not

a workplace that is organised, find just that one other person because often times they try to keep you isolated within a workplace. Two great - but even just one other person! You can organise from there.

WSM: Thanks J. To wrap up, what would you say you have learned from this strike?

J: A few things. I've realised my own fear around being on strike. It's not my first strike. I was on strike in 2014.

This time around I've learned that - as somebody on the left and knowing the importance of agitating for revolution - there is also a line as to not patronising workers when they're on strike and not fetishizing us. There would be some people whose support is welcome on the picket but maybe some people overly enthusiastic. You know, leftists asking 'So what's the mood?' and clapping their hands - real enthusiastic when the mood at that particular moment was a mood of fear. We had just been photographed from a window. I think it's a bit distasteful. It feels kinda fetishized, not meeting workers where they are at, or listening.

I've learned that the only way to overcome the fear though is through collective action

and having more people from your own work area around you. In my work location there are workshops and offices. There were more people from the workshops out with me on the first day. On the second day, we got a ratio of about 23 from the workshops and 16 from the offices. You'd feel that bit safer. The only way to combat the fear is through collective solidarity with your fellow workers. You can actually win, I suppose!

Finally, I suppose it's easy for us to get demoralised as activists. What was very clear to me throughout the strike was that the struggles that have gone before are still there, that we're not doing this for the first time, and that it's not just happening in a vacuum. The struggles that have gone before have ingrained in people not to cross your picket. The importance of that is there. That all of the struggles that have gone before still matter and that our struggle now will matter into the future as well. We're building this, passing the baton on through time. What you do now - even though it may feel like something isolated or not having an impact - it does have an impact and it helps continue that on for the future.

These workers are setting a good example. Redundancies and cost-cutting at the expense of workers always need to be met with resistance and too frequently in this country at present they aren't.

If you're anywhere near Rotorua you can go along to the march.

Otherwise you can like the workers' facebook page, sign the petition against the Council moves, donate to the campaign and share the news to your friends, workmates and union.

Show your support: Rotorua Aquatics SOS - Save Our Staff

You can also email your disapproval to mayor Steve Chadwick and the Council CEO Geoff Williams: geoff.williams@rotorualc.nz; steve.chadwick@rotorualc.nz

AWSM note: This article originally appeared at <https://rdln.wordpress.com/2017/12/06/workers-resist-redundancies-outsourcing-and-cuts-at-rotorua-aquatic-centre/#more-19218>

<http://www.awsm.nz/2017/12/08/workers-resist-redundancies-outsourcing-and-cuts-at-rotorua-aquatic-centre/>

WELLINGTON RAIL STRIKE

Rail workers in Wellington went on a 24 hr strike on 16th November, in defence of employment conditions, after nego-

New Zealand Labour News

ROTORUA AQUATICS SACKINGS

Last Friday (December 1) all the staff at Rotorua Aquatics, which is owned by the local council, were presented with redundancy notices. — The Council wants to bring in an outside management company, and is preparing the ground for this with the redundancy notices. The Rotorua Lakes Council is so high-handed that it didn't even bother with the usual employer pretence of "consultation".

The mayor involved in this assault on workers' rights is Steve Chadwick, a former four-term Labour MP — Not surprisingly, the mayor involved in this attack on workers' rights is a former Labour MP, Steve Chadwick. — The Council's over-riding motive is clear - penny-pinching at the expense of the Aquatic Centre workers and the local community who use the centre and whose children learn to swim there. The Council says outsourcing management will save \$700,000 in the first year alone.

What this means is that the new management will hire workers who are less

well-trained and who will work for less. Existing workers can reapply for their jobs, but at the much-reduced rates of pay and worsened conditions.

Sid Warena, a lifeguard at the centre for 29 years, has described what is happening as a "gut-wrenching", especially given Rotorua's unemployment rate. The official rate is 6.7%, notably higher than the national average; while the real rate of unemployment and under-employment is much higher.

Alex Te Kowhai, a shift supervisor at the Aquatic Centre, notes, "Like everyone in Rotorua we've got a mortgage, a house, three young kids- eleven, six and five. . . Although you can apply for those positions, you lose a lot of your terms and conditions that come with it. And what they're offering is minimum wage."

The workers and local community aren't taking the Council's high-handed austerity lying down. Their facebook page already has 800 likes and over 800 followers. They are holding a protest march next Thursday (December 14), coinciding with the next Council meeting.

tiations with employers broke down. Members of the Rail Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) took action which affected all commuter services on the Hutt, Johnsonville, Kapiti and Wairarapa and Melling lines.

This resulted in over 30,000 commuters having to make alternative arrangements. — The strike was called due to the companies that own the Wellington system, TransDev and Hyundai Rotem demanding an end to long standing terms and conditions in the collective agreement with RMTU. Salient among these being the reduction of penal rates for weekend and night shifts and an insistence employees work public holidays.

A strike is a rare phenomenon in today's working environment in Aotearoa (see <https://teara.govt.nz/en/graph/20513/number-of-strikes-1920-2007>). For the past 30 years in particular, workers in various sectors have had to deal with one piece of hostile legislation after another, from the Employment Contracts Act to the 90 Day Act. In this case, the strike is the first time since 1994 that the Wellington rail system has been affected for longer than 2 hours. As such it is surely a step forward for those wishing to maintain and extend the few gains workers have been able to achieve in this hostile environment. We should definitely applaud this action, even a defensive fight is important.

On the other hand, there are disturbing elements in the rhetoric RMTU leadership have used. For example, General Secretary Wayne Buston has tried to play a nationalistic card by highlighting that the companies involved are foreign owned, one being French the other South Korean. Buston was quoted as saying "And they[RMTU members] will continue to take the action until we get Transdev and Hyundai to understand that multinationals can't bully Kiwi workers."

The fact the bosses happen to be domiciled overseas is irrelevant. No matter which faction among the ruling class technically owns the railways, they are all driven by the same imperative to make profits and to bully and pressure workers to conform to their dictates. Rail workers in France and South Korea are pretty much in the same economic position as the ones here. They have to pay rent, food and wonder how they can get by while their bosses are do-

It is the New Zealand government that has set the overall conditions here of course and there have been times in the past when local workers have also had to take on the state itself to defend themselves. Instances of this can be found going back nearly 100 years. For example, during 1920 they struck during a royal visit and the government had to back down. It's worth remembering such things before going down the path of an us/them' division



ing fine thank you very much. A few weeks ago, rail workers on the Korean bullet train went on strike in defence of their pay and conditions (<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2017/09/29/0200000000AEN20170929003300320.html>) and on the same day as the Wellington strike, public transport workers, including rail staff went on strike in France (<http://anglophone-direct.com/general-strike/>).

based on which piece of soil somebody happens to be on, rather than the power relationship operating in the situation.

To conclude, despite reservations regarding the way the strike is being officially framed, we extend our support and solidarity to the workers who have embarked on this action and hope it brings the desired results.

<http://www.awsm.nz/2017/11/19/wellington-rail-strike/>

BRITAIN TODAY

RAIL WORKERS STRIKE FOR PASSENGER SAFETY

9/11/17

Train conductors, represented by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), are on their second day of coordinated strikes on multiple services.

In a dispute that began 18 months ago, five train operators are stripping public safety measures and equal access mechanisms for disabled people and the elderly.

Under a pretence of upgrading infrastructure, train operators Southern, South Western, Greater Anglia, Northern and Merseyrail are shifting safety critical roles from the advantage of hands-on conductors to a system of closed-circuit television screens accessible only to the driver. A hazardous system particularly in low-light and on busy platforms.

Additionally, vulnerable passengers are no longer guaranteed assistance, unless booked 24 hours in advance. On board staff are trained to help elderly and disabled people access rail services in lieu of unstaffed stations - seven out of every ten South Western Rail station is unstaffed, exacerbating this scandal even further.

Although the Rail Delivery Group, speaking on behalf of the operators, condemn the industrial action, only two years ago it said: "It is conductors who are best placed to ensure that assistance is delivered effectively and in accordance with the law. A key risk area is availability of help in getting off a train".

Safety regulators have signed off on the operators' strike-breaking plans. Much of it amounts to haphazardly training people

with no experience to cover for highly trained guards. This comes in light of the recent discovery that Greater Anglia's training of 'replacement staff' was deficient - when a scab replacement guard opened doors on the wrong side of the train October 5th out on to open track.

With operators switching to driver-only operated (DOO) trains, the industry, however, regards the conductor's job obsolete. Even General Secretary of ASLEF and member of Labour's National Executive Committee, Mick Whelan, had been working with Govia Thameslink Rail to extend DOO trains on Southern Rail. The same members of ASLEF striking alongside RMT members are now being bribed with pay rises to sit out the strike although Not

Cash on a previous strike against DOO on Virgin Trains East Coast mysteriously didn't mention 'foreign-owned rail companies' - because of course Virgin Trains is incorporated in the UK. The idea that Virgin Trains subsidises the British economy would be laughable so why make that claim for Abellio and Germany? If TFL started running American rail franchises and investing the profits into the UK rail and tube system would we see complaints from British unions about TFL robbing American passengers?

This comes off the back of TSSA union and Momentum (the membership organisation set up following Jeremy Corbyn's successful Labour leadership election in 2015) argued a similar line earlier this year

against each other. Jeremy Corbyn, while critical of Southern Rail, fell short of condemning Driver Only Operation, instead saying "I would want that franchise brought back into public ownership and the public sector. After all, we provide the rails, we provide the trains and they make the profits from running them". Whether a Labour government would support striking workers while in power can be assessed by looking at Ken Livingstone's record as Mayor of London, when he told RMT members striking against TFL to cross picket lines.

Yesterday, Shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald sent a letter to rail operators saying that a Labour government would put a halt to any future plans to roll out Driver Only Operation. Absent from the letter was a commitment to roll it back, since DOO is already in operation on some services and may be on more if the current wave of strikes are unsuccessful.

We 100% support fights against high fares, underinvestment, overcrowding and all the other problems on the UK's rail network, but reject any attempts to pin this on 'subsidised foreign passengers', the fight is against rail operators and the state, not with the working class of other countries.

What matters in disputes is not the nationality of the capital, or whether the company is nationalised, but the strength of workers against their employers. Meanwhile as the RMT leadership takes a nationalist angle, press coverage as always focuses on disruption to passengers. Not the disabled passengers who'll need to book 24 hours in advance if the changes go through, but commuters facing disruption due to the strike action itself. It has been left to workers and passengers themselves via self-produced media to get this message across.

Only RMT members on Southern, South Western and Greater Anglia will be taking strike action on Thursday 9 November. All these operators run services into London.

photo credit: twitter/@TomHainesDoran
co-written by QQ and MH for libcom



About the Doors has reported that 193 ASLEF drivers on Southern Rail refused to accept the deal.

Unfortunately, General Secretary RMT, Mick Cash, has attributed this assault on conductors to "foreign-owned rail companies" who are "robbing British passengers" shipping profits "across the channel" in order to subsidise foreign passengers. Although these narratives are becoming increasingly common on The Left, it is extremely unlikely that the fate of conductors will have been any different had the rail company been originally incorporated in the UK. A statement from Mick

when they released a video featuring gloating EU citizens describing how they were profiting from British taxpayers subsidising their nations' railways.

Both the TSSA/Momentum video and the RMT statement needlessly use chauvinistic nationalism at a time when millions of EU citizens are currently unsure of whether they'll be able to stay in the country after Brexit. They don't need the left to join in stoking the flames of prejudice.

The trade unions and the Labour Party consistently reach for national chauvinism in order to bolster support for national capital, pitting different groups of workers

action - to win back stolen cash and to improve their conditions. — The first dispute was a group of tenants whose landlord and lettings agencies had left them living in damp, infested accommodation for a year. The landlord switched agencies half way through the tenancy, though both failed to address the problems in the house. After a direct action campaign, the landlord and the two agencies paid out 3900 pounds in relation to the damp issue. Together with the tenancy de-

posit the campaign had demanded to be returned in full, the six tenants received just over 6000 pounds as a result of the campaign.

The second dispute was a tenant who had 510 pounds withheld from her deposit for cleaning and maintenance charges. The tenant had the house professionally cleaned before she left, and had evidence that she had not caused the damaged alleged. The letting agency refunded the withheld amount after a direct action campaign.

The third dispute was a tenant whose landlord left him without a working cooker for

Housing Dispute Campaign

30/11/17

Three groups of tenants organising with Brighton Solidarity Federation Housing Union over the past three months have each secured victories in their disputes.

Working with our Housing Union, these tenants used the everyday tactics of solidarity and mutual support to take direct

a year and a half. The tenant and Brighton SolFed wrote to the landlord about this, and he installed a new, gas safety certified cooker after the threat of a campaign.

We're really pleased about the compensation, refunded deposits, and improved conditions that these tenants have won. We're also really excited that tenants are taking the solidarity that so many of us undertake every day - helping friends with their housing situation, supporting one an-

WILDCAT CROSSRAIL STRIKE

14/12/17

More than 200 workers at the flagship rail construction project have downed tools today in solidarity with more colleagues who have been sacked and locked out.

The dispute blew up after Balfour Beatty made 54 workers redundant at short notice yesterday and a further 50 were locked out, allegedly at the behest of blacklisting-linked boss Gerry Harvey.

The job cuts came just days after electricians at their Woolwich Station in London had filed for an industrial action ballot over pay and finishing bonuses via union Unite. There had also been complaints over the list of who was to be canned, with long-term workers and shop stewards made redundant while new workers were retained.

Around 150 electricians walked out in solidarity today at Woolwich, with more than 70 joining them from sites at Plumstead, City Airport and North Woolwich, according to construction industry and anti-blacklisting activist Dave Smith.

Talking to union-news.co.uk Smith said: "We are told blacklisting is a thing of the past but today's anti-union hostility is plain for everyone to see."

other to stand up for ourselves against the bullying landlords and agencies - and fighting back against the poor living conditions, extortionate rent and fees, and neglect that will be familiar to so many people living in Brighton and beyond. Through direct action and solidarity, we have the power to improve our lives!

We'll have full write ups of these disputes soon - for now, if you're having trouble

with your landlord or letting agency, you can get in touch with us by emailing housing@brightonsolfed.org.uk, or by texting 07427239960.

Like Chelsea says, We Got This!

<http://www.brightonsolfed.org.uk/brighton/brighton-solfed-housing-union-round-up-three-months-three-victories>

One Balfour Beatty worker told libcom.org that the union had called off the picket at 8am and that workers going on site after that time would not be breaking the strike. The worker also told us that it seemed like workers were "going down the appeals route."

Balfour has said the redundancies were part of standard operations, saying "we

engage properly with requests for a completion bonus as work begins to wind down has left "feelings running pretty high." Meanwhile, another Balfour Beatty worker told libcom.org that there were rumours the company planned to replace the sacked staff with agency workers starting from January.

Industry reports suggest that bosses are



have always been clear that our works would start to wind down towards the end of this year" and that consultation had started in November.

Site sources explained however that problems with pay rates had been bubbling since the summer and Balfour's refusal to

keeping a "close eye" on the situation as they fear calls for finishing bonuses could spread to other sites.

A mass picket was held at 6.30am this morning at the Whitechapel station site.

Re-posted from Freedom News, with additional reporting from libcom.org.

Indonesian Anarchism & Syndicalism

The left-wing movement in the Indies clearly emerged through the influence of the Social Democrats and the Dutch Socialists. But only a few ideas about Anarchist are known.[1]Even so one of the first to criticize the colonial system in the Indies was the author-anarchist Edward Douwes Dekker, known by his pseudonym as 'Multatuli' (1820-1887).

He worked in 1842-1856 within the Dutch East Indies colonial administration, where he became acquainted with the brutality of colonialism and made speeches, artworks

and articles that attacked, and tried to arouse public opinion against the invaders. At the beginning of the 20th century, Multatuli texts had a significant influence on Anarchist and syndicalist workers in the Netherlands.[2]

The grandson of Multatuli, Ernest François Eugène Douwes Dekker (1879 - 1950), a mixture of European-Indonesian families, became one of the anti-colonial movement fighters in the Indies. During his journey to Europe in 1910-1911, he established contacts with radical

fighters for the liberation of the colony, including with Shyamaji Krishnavarma India, which later described him as "political anarchist", which carries out the tactics of individual movements and murders. In *Het Tijdschrift* magazine published by EFE Douwes Dekker in Java since 1911, articles from leftist writers and foreign radicals were published, including Krishnavarma and the Indian anarchist Har Dayal. The publisher in the self-emphasis he wrote, reminiscent of the limitations of workers' rights in Europe itself, and he does not believe that parliamentary democracy can be useful as a way to the society he wants to create. He hinted at the possibility of using revolutionary methods of violence, although he added

that the proposed revolutionary path did not always use the method of violence. In February 1913, he publicly wrote that the resistance to colonialism was a moral task, for no matter how "soft" the colonial regime, the system was always based on inequality, injustice and privilege of the rulers, and therefore colonialism is inevitably a form of despotism and tyranny. As a method of struggle, EFE Douwes Dekker mentions demonstrations, agitation, revolutions, passive resistance, strikes (especially in communications and transport), boycott and rebellion. He welcomed the modern revolutionary movement in various countries of the world and, supporting anarchist and socialist propagandists in Europe, welcomed sabotage and syndicalism, condemned reformist socialism. He calls Jesus Christ "a great anarchist" and a fighter for freedom.[3] Nonetheless, in 1912 Douwes Dekker founded E Douwes Dekker mentions demonstrations, agitation, revolutions, passive resistance, strikes (especially in the areas of communication and transportation), boycott and rebellion. He welcomed the modern revolutionary movement in various countries of the world and, supporting anarchist and socialist propagandists in Europe, welcomed sabotage and syndicalism, condemned reformist socialism. He calls Jesus Christ "a great anarchist" and a fighter for freedom.[3] Nonetheless, in 1912 Douwes Dekker founded E Douwes Dekker mentions demonstrations, agitation, revolutions, passive resistance, strikes (especially in the areas of communication and transportation), boycott and rebellion. He welcomed the modern revolutionary movement in various countries of the world and, supporting anarchist and socialist propagandists in Europe, welcomed sabotage and syndicalism, condemned reformist socialism. He calls Jesus Christ "a great anarchist" and a fighter for freedom.[3] Nonetheless, in 1912 Douwes Dekker founded condemning reformist socialism. He calls Jesus Christ "a great anarchist" and a fighter for freedom.[3] Nonetheless, in 1912 Douwes Dekker founded condemning reformist socialism. He calls Jesus Christ "a great anarchist" and a fighter for freedom.[3] Nonetheless, in 1912 Douwes Dekker founded condemning reformist socialism. He calls Jesus Christ "a great anarchist" and a fighter for freedom.[3] Nonetheless, in 1912 Douwes Dekker founded

Indische Partij, there is no anarchism in its program, nor in the activities of this organization. Three couples in Indonesia (Soewardi Soerjadiningrat, Douwes Dekker, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoema). Dock. National Awakening Museum Unions that emerged in the Indies from the first decade of the twentieth century were influenced by Marxist socialists, who in May 1914

formed the Indies Social Democratic Society (ISDV). Members of the association also worked actively in the colonial and naval army, who joined the union were members of the low-lying Dutch East Indies fleet. During the First World War a group that called itself the "Union of Soldiers and Sailors" (Union of Soldiers and Sailors), in November 1918 committed an army and naval rebellion in Surabaya, also undertook the formation of a Deputy Council of Soldiers and Sailors. Apart from the hegemony of Social-Democracy within this movement, there are also references to the anarchist influence in it, though not entirely clear from the source, whether they are proponents of conscious anarchist ideas, or this definition refers only to the sentiments of the anarchist word itself.



There was a report on the actions carried out by sailors in Surabaya, the action took place on May 7, 1916, caused by dissatisfaction of treatment by superiors, nutrition and poor health care, as well as lack of cleanliness and anger because of the torment of the war. Local newspaper, Soerabaijasch Nieuwsblad mentions that: a "very young sailor with a clear anarchist idea" tried to convince his colleagues not to stop the lawlessness. The demonstration was held without the consent of the Sailor Union leadership and led to a clash with police. During the firefight, 5 people were injured. The Social Democrats barely managed to stop the protests. In the next wave of repression, one of the organizers of the movement was sentenced to 8 months in prison, followed by the dismissal of 47 other sailors.[4] The head of the Dutch Labor Union in the lower ranks criticized his branch in Surabaya for not quickly abstaining from the action, and Dutch Social Democratic Labor Party leader Pieter Jelles Troelstra mumbled that there had been a 'loss of control' over his leadership in the union, Union of Soldiers).[6] While the commander of the Royal Dutch East Indies Army, Van

Rietschoten, dismissed the fact that the military joined the unions and associations that made the "anarchist propaganda." [7]

Propaganda works in the Indies were carried out by many Christian anarchists and Tolstoysians who organized the Movement for Clean Life in the Netherlands in 1901. On 1 January 1907, the movement began publishing Levenskracht Magazine on a monthly time scale, edited by Dirk Lodewijk Willem van Mierop (1876 - 1930), who is one of the Union of Religious Anarcho-Communists.

The publications advocate nonviolence, life in nature, natural dress, vegetarianism, and so on. Through the publication, active agitation was also performed in the Dutch East Indies, where in 1923 a branch of the movement was formed.[8]

Chinese anarchists tried to spread the revolutionary idea among the Chinese population in the Netherlands. Zhang Ji, who later participated in the Tokyo Asian Solidarity Society in 1907, spent some time in Java, where he translated parts of an English book, "The History of Java." He also fueled the resistance of Chinese immigrant groups against Dutch colonial rule. His translation was published in the Zhongguo ribao newspaper, published in Hong Kong as part of the Chinese revolutionary newspaper.[9]

The work of Chinese anarchists in the Indies began before the First World War, local activists worked and established close contacts with anarchist-anarchists in China, the Philippines and Malaya (Malaysia). Initially, different revolutionary ideas clustered around the Chinese reading house, which began to open throughout the Indies since 1909 and became a kind of political association against the Dutch and Chinese authorities, then created newspapers ("Hoa Tok Po", "Soematra Po", etc.).[10] After the overthrow of the monarchy in China in 1911, anarchists focused on organizing the workers' movement and spreading the idea of social revolution. They do work, in particular, through the "Workers' Party" (Gongdang /Kungdong), which in fact is not acting as a political party, but rather as a kind of workers association or trade union organization. At the initiative of the Communications Bureau of the South Asian Workers' Party (South East Asia) based in Singapore, its branches were established in Dutch East Indies cities such as Makassar (Celebes), Batavia, Surabaya (in Java) and Kupang (west of Timor Island).[11]

To Be Continued

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Left of the Left: My Memories of Sam Dolgoff By Anatole Dolgoff, AK Press.

The advent of the Trump Administration in the US has witnessed more waves of attacks on civil liberties, more intense police repression, more tax cuts favouring the rich, the beefing up of the military and a range of other onslaughts. Employers have been encouraged to intensify their war path against workers on the job. Whilst an important base of support of the Trump electoral campaign has been demoralised workers in the “rust belt” hard hit by de-industrialisation. Lately Trump has even been whipping up support from ultra rightwing forces by his provocative tweets. The union bureaucracy associated with the AFL-CIO-CIA has typically announced its willingness to “work” with the Trump administration.

The syndicalist movement and the so called anarchist milieu is currently in a poor state, unable to tackle the increased tempo of the employer offensive associated with the Trump presidency. According to a major article in the Summer edition 2017 of “Industrial Worker” paper of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) a major tendency in the organisation is associated with the oppression mongering and enthusiasm for identity politics which is such a feature of the middle class leftist subculture. Interwoven with this tendency is the influence of much Stalinist legacy informed “navel gazing” associated with “safe spaces policies” featuring in many IWW locals and the so called “anarchist” milieu. This tendency in the IWW, however is being confronted by an industrial organising approach.

A major contribution to this unwholesome influence of the former tendency must be seen in regard to the IWW’s resurgence in the 1960s stemming from a major influx of radical students and workers with high levels of autonomy in their jobs associated with the education and the university milieu. Constituting a significant base of its membership. As a result, the resurgent IWW lacked the core of highly experienced militants which played such a dynamic role in its formation and expansion in the early 20th century.

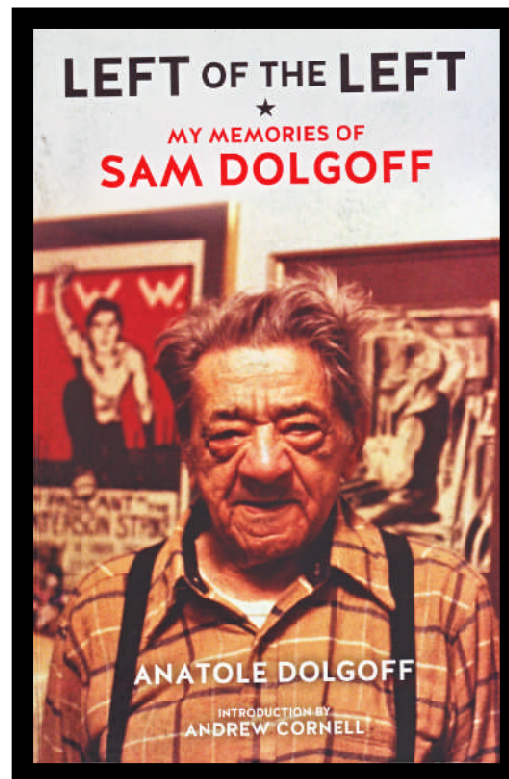
“Incremental Shop” Versus “Strategic” Organising

The contemporary IWW pursues all manner of organising drives in diverse sectors Whilst for many years has engaged in a

sort of incremental organising of mainly small shops oriented toward winning contracts which have had no strike

clauses. Where there has been success in this approach, the result has been a situation similar to shops organised by some sections of the corporate unions with a largely passive membership. Effectively in these shops the IWW had become a micro democratic version of the corporate unions. (1)

Whilst another focus by wobblers and some in the so called “anarchist” milieu has been “solidarity networks”. Where relatively small groups of workers are assisted with grievances. A role performed by the corporate unions on occasion,



which in no way raises the morale of workers on a large scale and plays into the role of activoid super heroes and pseudo social workers. It fits neatly into middle class leftist oppression mongering and guilt tripping, providing excuses for social occasions and has nothing to do with serious syndicalist industrial organising. Again this activity is very much in the orbit of corporate unionism. The corporate unions are effectively having their normal work farmed out to leftist activoids, who do it for free.

In sharp contrast, key militants of the IWW in its early days, displayed an ex-

cellent grasp of strategic organising and the associated deployment of limited personnel and resources in key sectors. Success in this organising would facilitate the winning of major victories in the class struggle raising the morale of workers across industries, slowing the tempo of the employer offensive and turning the tide in the class struggle. Facilitating strike waves and the emergence of transitional steps toward mass syndicalist industrial unionism. This orientation is illustrated with the IWW’s organising drives in the Philadelphia maritime sector up until the mid 20’s and the Detroit auto industry in 1937. This memoir of Sam Dolgoff throws important light on this and other organising issues which are critical to a resurgent mass syndicalist union movement.

This memoir by Sam Dolgoff’s son, Anatole sheds light on his father’s many years of militancy in the IWW and various socialist and anarchist groups. After initially being involved in the Socialist Party, he was expelled as he was critical of the careerism of its middle class and student members and statism. Dolgoff went on to be involved in a range of anarchist and syndicalist groups.

In the early to mid 1920’s he joined the syndicalist IWW. The author shows he became drawn into its strategic organising and associated major organising controversies in the organisation. Dolgoff played an important role in the IWW organising drive amongst soft coal miners in South Illinois in the 1920’s which resulted in the Progressive Mine Workers Union (PMWU) becoming closely associated with the IWW. Dolgoff played a very effective role as a soap boxer helping defeat the well funded and resourced Communist Party United Mine Workers Union attempt to make inroads in the base of the PMWU.

“Taft-Hartley” Pledges

A major organising controversy in the IWW involving Dolgoff discussed in the book which touched on the question of strategic organising versus a simplistic incremental growth in non strategic sectors was associated with the loss of the Cleveland Metal Shops in the mid 1950’s. A major contributing factor to a devastating IWW split in the mid 1950’s. It is discussed in a quote from an analysis by Jeff Stein. It involves the issue of whether IWW shops should sign the anti-radical Taft-Hartley pledges. Dolgoff and others opposed the signing of these pledges due to the obvious contradicting of the IWW’s revolutionary aims. According to Stein this stance propelled this huge chunk of the remaining membership and industrial base of the organisation to leave.

However, the Cleveland shops were all drawn into fixed term contracts in breach of the IWW constitution. These IWW shops were also effectively marginalised, as they were surrounded by the AFL-CIO business union covered shops cemented in place by a vast web of contracts. Consequently the IWW had ceased to be an expanding movement based on direct action on the job and inspiring workers in diverse sectors to follow suit in strike waves. The IWW in Cleveland had effectively become a micro democratic version of the business unions and had effectively left the syndicalist fold. Whilst the original breakthrough in the Cleveland shops stemmed from a spinoff of an unsuccessful strategic organising drive in Detroit auto in 1937. (2)

Sam Dolgoff is most notable in the history of US syndicalism and anarchism in the 20th Century apart from his soap boxing and organising activity on behalf of the IWW, his authorship and editorship of a series of important books and pamphlets on aspects of anarchism and syndicalism, is his involvement in a range of different anarchist groups and publications with mostly an anarcho-syndicalist orientation from the 1920's to the 1990's. The most notable being the Vanguard Group 1932 to 1939 with its paper "Vanguard" and the Libertarian League (mid 1950's to mid 1960's) with its publication "Views and Comments".

"The Vanguard Group"

"Vanguard" was one of the most outstanding on the international plane of anarchist publications. Dolgoff mainly focused on labour issues with his regular "On the Class War Front" column. It was in sharp contrast to today's exotic identity politics and oppression mongering obsessed leftist rags. The key figure in Vanguard who wrote under the pen name SENEX was Mark Schmidt. The author shows how de-

spite being extremely opposed to the murderous policies of the early Bolshevik regime in Russia following the October 1917 Coup, he became drawn into the Stalinist orbit and copied their paranoid conspiratorial ways. Contributed by the panorama of international expanding Stalinism and the rise of Fascism in those years. The author shows these factors together with controversy over whether to support the Allied war effort against the Axis in WWII contributed to the demise of the group and paper. Another factor the author misses is the demoralisation of the international anarchist and syndicalist movements associated with the defeat of the Spanish Revolution of 1936-39.

"The Libertarian League"

In regard to the Libertarian League the author discusses some of the major activities of the group which included solidarity for overseas anarchist and syndicalist militants facing state repression and exposing the authoritarian nature of the Castro Regime in Cuba. The author outlines many of the interesting speakers who featured at the regular forums of the group. However due to various factors beyond the group's control it was unable to break out of being a small circle. The author fails to mention that it was finally dissolved by Dolgoff and his closest collaborators due to an influx of drugs and violence obsessed elements.

A particularly interesting aspect of the memoir is the author's gritty sketches of a gallery of outstanding IWW, anarchist and other radical militants and New York characters which Dolgoff was associated with in his many years of militancy. Some of the most important were Herbert Mahler, Wobbly organiser and legendary campaigner for framed-up strikers; Carlo Tresca, Wobbly organiser and anti-fascist fighter, Murray Bookchin, author of some questionable books on anarchism; Doro-

thy Day, leader of the Catholic Worker movement; Ben Fletcher, Philadelphia Wobbly maritime organiser, David Van Ronk, folk singer; Julian Beck and Judith Malina of the Living Theatre and lesser known figures like Russell Blackwell, Richard Ellington, etc.

In Dolgoff's final years of militancy, the author shows he became involved in the Libertarian Labor Review, now Anarcho-Syndicalist Review group. Its origins being amongst a group of young militants in the IWW involved in the Rank-and-File Organising Committee. They were influenced by Dolgoff's ideas on industrial strategy favouring the IWW linking up with wildcat and grass roots workplace insurgencies. It opposed the IWW focusing on incremental organising of shops based on winning contracts based on the Cleveland metal shops experience of the 1930's-50's and NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) recognition for shop bargaining coverage.

In conclusion, the book provides plenty of food for thought about what serious syndicalist organising should look like and important organising controversies in the US which are also relevant to other countries in certain aspects. Whilst providing plenty of gritty and graphic portraits of US radicals in the 20th Century. However, the book is marred by the author's over indulgence with some aspects of Dolgoff's private life.

Mark McGuire

Notes:

1. See *Discussion on Libcom.org of the US IWW and contracts.*
2. See *"Fellow Worker: The Life of Fred Thompson" Edited and Compiled by David Roediger Published by Charles H. Kerr. For a discussion of IWW organising in the Detroit Auto Industry in the 1930's.*

Fighting the War in Spain

REVIEW BY JEFF STEIN

Joaquin Perez Navarro with contributions from Luis Monferrer. *One Man's War in Spain: Trickery, Treachery and Thievery.* Translated, edited and annotated by Paul Sharkey, 2013. Available online from Christie Books.

Stuart Christie has been providing an invaluable service to the anarchist movement by publishing and keeping available not only anarchist classics but historical biographies of Spanish anarchists able to provide us with eye witness accounts of the Spanish Revolution and its aftermath.

One Man's War is a collection of articles, essays, interviews and historical documents by one such anarchist, Joaquin Perez Navarro, a veteran of the Durruti column and Friends of Durruti.

Joaquin Perez Navarro joined the anarcho-syndicalist CNT Foodworkers' Union in 1919 after becoming a waiter at the age of 12. As he learned more about anarchism and syndicalism, the young Joaquin joined an affinity group of four members that was to play an important role in a number of strikes and direct actions which included a jailbreak of imprisoned CNT strikers. When the Spanish Army revolted against the Republic in 1936, Perez helped storm the Atarazanas barracks, the same assault in which Francisco Ascaso was killed. After the victory

in Barcelona, he joined the 21st Century of the Durruti Column and headed out towards Saragossa with the rest of the militias.

Like many in the Durruti column, Joaquin Perez Navarro, did not agree with the compromises of the CNT in the opening weeks of the civil war. Perez considered the anarchist leaders, including Garcia Oliver and Montseny, to have been bamboozled by offers to share power with the CNT by Companys, Caballero and the Communists. He had doubts about the democratic nature of the proceedings by the CNT leaders (many of whom had been Treintistas) to legitimize the decision to join the government. This collaboration was supposed to get the CNT the arms they needed to fight the fas-

See Page 20

STOP PRESS: New Insights in the Bus Privatisation Conspiracy

Continued From Page 7

Likely Rorting of Bus Tendering?

New information has been received from a very senior executive with thirty years in the private bus industry and was involved as a consultant in bus tendering. He mentioned that there are 6 tenderers for the STA Region 6 routes. Each company has spent approx. \$1 million in developing tenders. The tenderers are Transdev/Veolia, Comfort DelGro a Singapore Govt owned company and parent company of Hillsbus, Keolis Downer and three other companies. He thought if the tendering process was going to be fair and square the likely successful tender would be Comfort DelGro.

However, due to Keolis-Downer having close links with the unions involved in the privatisation of Newcastle STA bus depots and Keolis-Downer's successful tender for Light Rail in the same city, this may tip the balance for them winning the region 6 Sydney bus contract. In Newcastle, last year, the unions caved in completely to

the privatisation imposition without any industrial action. Consequently the existing unions particularly the RTBU, AMWU, etc were assured continued coverage of the workforce and pay roll deduction of union fees. The bus executive informant felt these union officials would provide continued industrial "peace". The perceived more militant TWU, who have general coverage of private bus company drivers coverage of the Newcastle bus drivers was stymied.

The contact also made the point that most Liberals are scared that the privatisation of the Region 6 routes will definitely cause an electoral back lash which will favour the ALP at the next State elections in mid 2019. Resulting in the Liberals losing office. Another point made was that the major reason for the reduction in bus stops in region 6 is associated with the new private owner being able to reduce costs on fuel through avoiding buses idling. The contact also discussed the reason why the proposed privatisation of the new B-Line route on the Nth Shore pushed by the Berejiklian faction was not successful. According to the contact, the proposed tendering of the B-Line was discussed internally in the Liberal Cabinet. However a local Northern Beaches Liberal MP Brad Hazzard and another opposed it on likely electoral grounds. However our contact agreed that only a stay of execution has oc-

curred. As Andrew Constance, the NSW Transport Minister announced in the media that in 15 years time, he expected all public transport in NSW to be privatised. This source also pointed out that the successful tenderer could only make big profits through cutting services (bus routes or frequency of services or by extracting extra efficiencies from the drivers on the job) he gave the example of the takeover of the NSW Ferries generating an extra million dollars a year profit from fuel savings by slowing down the ferry service by 2 KMPH for each and every journey. This affects commuters with a slower service and ferry staff with less turnaround time between trips. Clearly the privatisation of Inner West Region 6 will result in the removal of unprofitable runs and/or fare increases. He made another point that it was difficult for the new owner to attack workers conditions in the Ferries because of the number of unions involved. He said most transport companies aim to whittle away union working conditions over 18 months to two years period as they know they have a 5 to 10 year contract and make the bulk of their profits in the latter years after removing militants and eroding job conditions by attrition. Given the track record of the RTBU, the new owner will erode workers conditions at a quicker rate.

Continued From Page 2 IWC Council Vs STOP on Bus Privatisation

before the meeting"...So much for the Nick Origlass tradition of "Open Council" meetings, eh?)

The following Friday I rang the I.W.C. switchboard and asked to be put through to the Mayor to issue another request for him to attend the second community picket on Monday December 11th at Leichhardt or Tempe Depot as he had ignored and not replied to my endless requests via email or via the ALP "bush telegraph for aspiring politicians" . . . i . e . Albo/Haylen/RTBU/Unions NSW/etc... This time I managed to get through to a recorded message service of his secretary (after a 20 minute phone run-around of "push button1"... "now push button3",,etc etc.... what a advertisement for de-amalgamation the new Council phone message system is???)...On this recorded message I explained to Mayor Byrne his silence was consent on the issue of privatisation (at this stage I was unaware of the IWC October meeting motion and the letter you drafted Kate to the Minister). I warned the Mayor that STOP would have no choice but to expose the Mayor's

inactivity on the issue...beyond the face-saving minute of the August 2017 meeting ...three lines buried in a hundred page document...via a publicity campaign. The publicity campaign is now in full swing. For reasons outlined in the initial reply to you Kate Walsh, I believe your letter to the Minister on behalf of Council will end up in Minister Constance's rubbish bin...which is where he put the 24,000 signatures of the Unions NSW Petition and the 1,000 petitioners signatures on the Jamie Parker petition over removal of bus stops on the 440 route...as evidenced by his walking out of the NSW Parliamentary debate on November 12th 2017.

My campaign to expose the Mayor now is further exacerbated by the Mayor's lame attempts to promote himself as a progressive in the media (Rozelle school kids last Tuesday and Cover boy on December issue of Ciao...and Chinese pushbikes and floating buses, etc).

As an activist in Melbourne in the late 1970s I remember the Fitzroy and Collingwood Mayor's providing hundreds of old bomb cars from the council compound to blockade the F7 Eastern Freeway extension through their inner city streets and leading the struggle where thousands of residents fought to defend their houses and streets from the Liberal Premier

Hamer Government's drafted in police force to remove the blockaders. Locally, I also remember ALP Councillors and Mayors Hand and Cotter's use of hundreds of Council garbage trucks in the late 1980's-early 1990's to blockade the international airport against the Third run-way.

The current Inner West Council October 2017 motion would have more impact if it was passed out the rear-end instead (excuse crudity) and Kate your "blowing in the wind" letter to Constance, ditto.

ONLY DIRECT ACTION involving Councils, commuters, bus depot employees, trade unions and the general public will save our buses from the greedy French and Singaporean multinationals who are competing for a slice of the public sector pie to be carved up "in the first quarter of 2018" as Minister Constance November 12th press release bragged.

Kate and Darcy...you are either with us or against us...but don't pretend you are taking action when you are not.

regards,

*Jefferson Lee, spokesperson for S.T.O.P.
Sydney Transport-Users Opposing
Privatisation. 17/12/17*

News & Notes

Some of the most important news in the NSW Railways is the continuing charade of the Sydney Trains and NSW Trains Enterprise Agreement 2017 negotiations. Some very serious nasties are becoming evident such as Labour Hire firms recruiting for the Railways in the context of privatisation. Whilst the union hierarchy continues to wage a bogus campaign. (See article page 3.)

In this edition we throw new light on the likely roting of the tendering for the STA's Region 6 bus routes and depots. (See article page 18.) Whilst the ASN has been assisting militants to foil the union officials attempt to concoct a fake victory over Ryde Bus Depot's alleged targeting for privatisation, to divert attention from the officials sellout of the Region 6 Depots over privatisation. (See article page 6.)

An important sector of public transport which was privatised in recent years was Sydney Ferries. In this edition, we shed light on how the Ferries and workers conditions have been run down since the selloff. (See article page 7.)

STOP (Sydney Transport-users Opposing Privatisation) has been waging an energetic campaign to fight the privatisation of STA buses in Sydney. This activity has involved petitions, flyers and letters to the media to oppose the removal of bus stops. Lately STOP has been organising the picketing of bus depots. Its serious campaign has been in stark contrast to the feeble efforts of Local Councils, the ALP and the hierarchy of the Greens. (See article page 2.)

Help Build Rebel Worker! Your Help is particularly sought with its distribution. So why not order bulk copies to distro. Sell at your local shopping centre on Saturday mornings, leave at the lunch room at work and at your local café, library or cinema. Your assistance on the financial plane is also welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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www.rebelworker.org

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PO Box 20
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SPARKS

(Anarcho-Syndicalist Transport Paper)
PO Box 92 Broadway
2007 NSW
Web site: <http://www.sparksweb.org>

Members' Voice

Grassroots NSW Public Transport Workers Organisation
Web Site:
Users.tpg.com.au/retepsni/MembersVoice
Email: Membersvoice2010@yahoo.com
Facebook www.facebook.com/pages/Members-Voice-RTBU-rank-and-file-Group/531240043571323?fref=ts

Grassland Infoshop

207B Nicholson St.
Footscray
3011 Vic.

STOP "Sydney Transport-users Opposing Privatisation"

PO Box 703
Leichhardt 2040
Facebook STOP Privatisation (@STOPPrivatisation)

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 to 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 practising co-operation and mutual aid. We have an equal part in the making of 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 these struggles.
5. We are fighting to abolish all authoritarian institutions such as the State (including its communist variety), capitalism, all hierarchical and oppressive divisions between people.
6. We have no country and are organised on an international basis in opposition to oppression everywhere. The ASN is striving to build a viable revolutionary syndicalist movement in Australia as part of a world wide movement able to meet the challenge of the global employer offensive.

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name

Address.....

General Secretary

PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

If undeliverable, return to
PO Box 92, Broadway NSW 2007

Continued From Page 17

cists but the
Republicans,
Socialists
and Commu-

nists had no intention of arming the anarchists. When the order came down to militarize the militias, Perez jumped aboard a truck carrying a number of anarchist militants with their weapons back to Barcelona. Many of these militants later became the Friends of Durruti, an underground organization of anarchists still committed to the social revolutionary ideals of the CNT.

In Barcelona, Perez witnessed the steady erosion of the gains of July and August 1936, as the Communists took control of security, and reintroduced capitalism by withholding supplies from the collectives and favoring private businesses. On May 3, 1937, Communist security forces tried to seize the Barcelona telephone exchange to take it away from worker management. The Friends of Durruti, along with the anti-Stalinist POUM, joined forces and fought back. Within a day the anarchists and their POUM allies had wrested control of Barcelona from the Communists and the Catalanian government. Rather than press their advantage to remove the Communists from positions of authority and

get arms for the CNT military units, the leaders of the CNT, including "anarchists" Federica Montseny and Juan Garcia Oliver, called on the anarchists to cease fire,

as a betrayal. Perez provides supporting documents to show that not only were the anarchists denied weapons needed to fight the fascists, but they were forced to



allowing the government to flood the streets of Barcelona with troops loyal to the Communists.

These facts are well known for anyone who has read the works of Bolleten, Richards and Peirats. What One Man's War provides that these other works do not is the perspective of an anarchist fighter.

Contrary to what the advocates of "circumstantialism" argue, the entry of the CNT into the Republican government was seen by the anarchist fighters at the front

fight under incompetent Communist officers, while they were hunted down in the rear areas by Communist secret police and stooges (some of whom even were allowed to join the CNT) Perez, himself was thrown into the notorious prison of Montjuich and would have been executed had the Communist guards not run away to escape the advancing fascists.

Thanks to ASR (Anarcho-Syndicalist Review)

