

No. 173

April - May 2023

Sparks

THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.

Some of the most important news is the railroading of the NSW Rail EBA's. As part of the sellout charade, RTBU NSW Sec. Claassens orchestrated a long drawn out, half hearted campaign, ultra bureaucratically run, set up to fail. Resulting in way below inflation so called pay rises and the illusion of a \$4,500 bribe bonus. Already the nasties in the clauses are being seized upon by management and the union officials to impose job cuts. (See article page 3.)

Other more positive news has been the defeat of a new push for DOO (Driver Only Operation) with the NIF (New Intercity Fleet) bogus 'Deed' in early Dec. Stemming from quick work by Sparks in assisting grass roots militants to expose the con. A new push is likely later in 2023 in late Nov. to early Dec. New light on the management/Govt./union hierarchy DOO strategy has been shown in the following articles in the SMH: 'New Train Fleet \$1b cost blow out' 6/2/23 p.3; 6/2/23 'Over time over budget: train project off rails' p.9 7/2/23. According to the articles DOO is being phased in on different train types around the holiday period. First with the NIF built in Sth Korea, and then the replacement for the XPT's built in Spain, certain to be also 'secretly' designed for DOO. Needless to say the replacement for the Tangaras will also be designed for DOO.

In Sydney Buses, there is growing anger over the harsh conditions imposed on drivers with the long shift spreads, compulsory DOC's and savage demands by Transit Systems management for the RTBU/TWU bogus 'Two Tier' EBA campaign EBA. While severe short staffing of drivers continues, encouraged by clauses of the franchise contracts with the private operators which gobbled up the State Transit Authority. (See article page 17.) In this edition we also put the spot light on the Greens in regard to their hypocrisy in regard to their opposition to Sydney Buses privatisation. (See article page 14.)

It's important for a joint campaign in rail, buses and trams to be pursued to secure wages justice and fight nasties in the EBA's clauses. Grass roots committees could be set up in the depots and stations and then area coordinating committees to wage a joint campaign of direct action in the current more favourable period. Taking advantage of bus driver shortages, new Metros not in service yet and the re-opening of schools, unis, offices and factories.

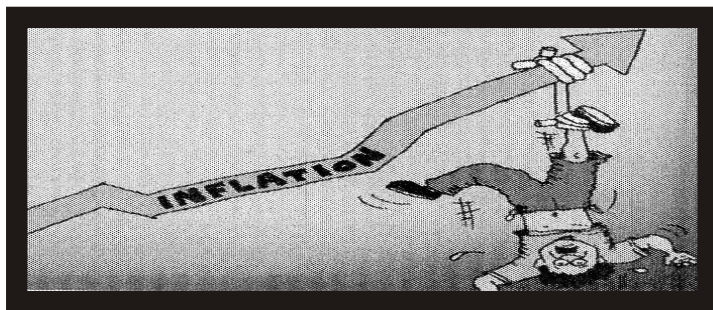
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Fake Rail, Bus and Tram Services for Fake Pay Rises!

Meagre Pay Rises & Bogus Bonuses don't meet Soaring Inflation!

Strike while the Iron Is Hot! Joint Rail, Bus & Tram Direct Action for the 'Real Demands!'

Now with the re-opening of Schools, Unis, Offices & Factories, Severe Bus Driver Shortages & New Metros not in Service Yet!



N.S.W. Railway News p.3; Sydney Buses News p.14; Vic. Rail News p.21; 'The Snake Oil Merchants of Sydney' p.10; UK Rail News p.26; Letters p.9; Vic. PT in the 1990's p. 23; NSW Train Drivers' News p.8; Doing the Impossible p.8; Greens Hypocrisy on Bus Privatisation p.14;

N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS

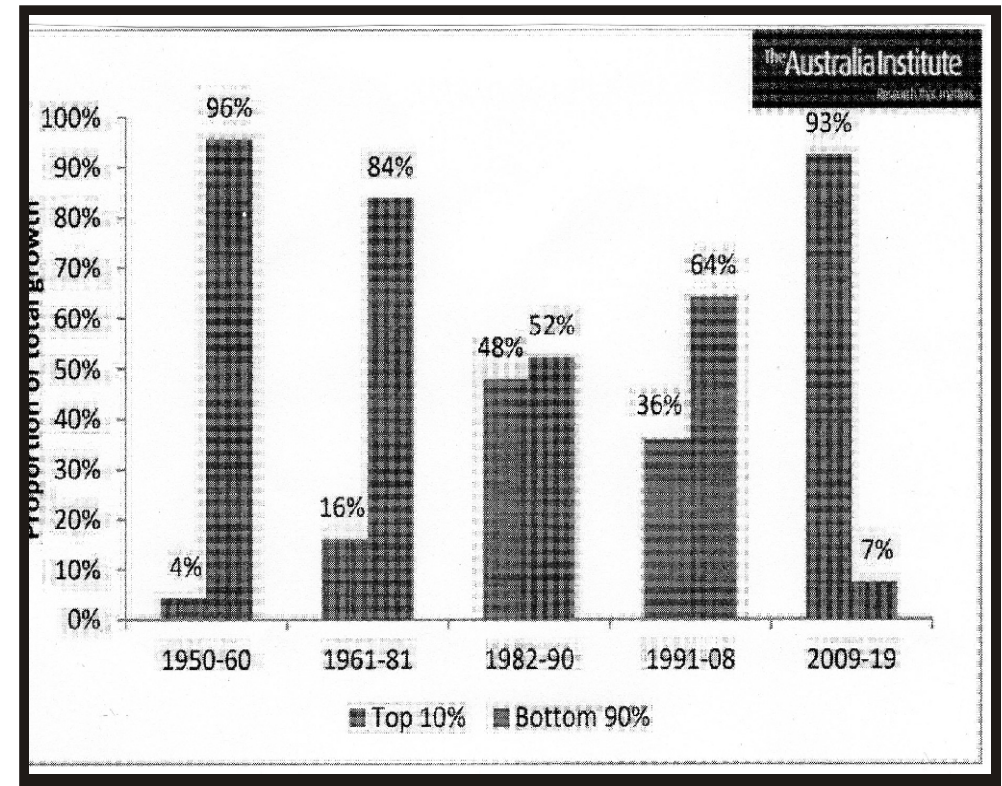
The Cost of Living Crisis is also a Union Crisis

By Crimson Coconut

Australian workers are facing the biggest cost of living crisis in their history. With rising prices and falling wages many people are struggling to make ends meet. This is a situation that was not caused by workers going after wage rises, but by greedy landlords, retailers and bosses who are price gouging. The poverty of consumers and workers do not matter to the bosses and spivs who are ensuring that their profits are at record levels regardless.

A recent paper by the Australia Institute points out just how unequal Australia has become. The top 10% of income earners are reaping 93% of the wealth created by workers. Meanwhile the 90% of us, mostly the workers share, is just 7% of the remaining wealth. That's a massive income gap that is worse than most countries around the world.

There is yet to be a roll out of tax cuts for the high income earners of around \$300 billion which means that most of us will be paying a higher marginal tax rate than someone earning \$millions or \$billions a year. This will add to the entrenched inequality because of forgone spending on services. Against this backdrop we have a new Labor Government in NSW and a newly ratified Rail EBA. It is an illusion that Labor will be much different towards workers than their LNP predecessors. Their record of privatisation while in office each time has seen a wholesale sell off of public assets. Labor's privatisation record stretches from the sell off of the Eveleigh Workshops and Chullora Workshops in the 1980's to Christina Keneally's sell off of electricity's poles and wires and retail sales of electricity to a plethora of multinationals when she was Premier. During the N.S.W. election night coverage, 26th March, on the ABC panel, Labor MP, Penny Sharp was asked whether the 2.5% imposed salary cap for public servants would be dropped. She refused to give a definitive answer saying that "We respect workers unlike the L.N.P." While I can recollect that dropping the wage cap was a Labor promise early on in the election, there now seemed to be hesitance in actually scrapping the cap. When pressed further on the dropping of the wage cap she was non committal, saying that negotiations would have to take place with the union



movement and "we'll see".

The Labor Government's record with public transport workers is not that much different to that of the Coalition. We can hark back to the days when Michael Costa was Transport Minister. Costa fought running battles with public transport workers in his privatisation and productivity drive. He was eventually forced to relinquish the Transport portfolio. The battles ahead still remain with this new government.

Meanwhile we have a new Rail Enterprise Agreement that promises wage rises much less than the inflation rate which is running somewhere near 7% P.A. During the non-campaign, as in the past, the Combined Unions kept most of the bargaining positions close to their chest and failed to have a broader consultation with a majority of union members. The nitty gritty detail of the Agreement is still largely unknown to the workforce. A broad brush has been given to management to make many changes which could be

deleterious to the workforce. These remain relatively unknown to those subjected to the EBA.

The EBA starts out with the following:
“Issues subject to consultation may include, but are not limited to the following:

(a) changes in the composition, operation, location or size of the workforce, or in the duties and skills required; the elimination or reduction of job Opportunities. Considering the lack of consultation during the EBA process, the process of consultation on changes to jobs and job numbers is fraught with danger. Take the recent proposed reduction on job numbers in NSW TrainLink. Despite worker protestations at the shop floor Management is continuing to push ahead with a reduction in jobs. The unions have not lifted a finger either to support the workers affected or to organise a work place campaign.

According to an article on World Socialist Web regarding the EBA:

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2023/02/14/quru-f14.html>

“Although workers had voted overwhelmingly in favour of strikes in January, the RTBU leadership ensured that industrial action was restricted to a handful of partial stoppages and limited work bans. By August, the anger and frustration of workers was such that the bureaucracy was compelled to call more substantive action, but isolated stoppages to individual sections of the network, minimising disruption and avoiding mass action by the broader workforce.”

“Despite the limited character of stoppages by rail workers, Premier Dominic Perrottet and other senior ministers repeatedly denounced the striking workers. At the end of August, Perrottet threatened to tear up the existing enterprise agreement covering rail workers, slashing hard-won conditions and pay, if there was any further disruption to rail service.”

“The unions readily complied with this ultimatum and no further stoppages were carried out, with workers forced to watch from the sidelines as the bureaucracy mired the dispute in multiple court cases.” That’s the real point. The bureaucratic means of obliterating the workforce and union members from the decision making process is taken out of the workplace and held behind closed doors. By resorting to a legal process through the so-called “Independent Umpire” (hardly impartial when it’s the bosses court) the Combined Unions weaken themselves by cutting workers out of the decision making process. Any decision is effectively taken out of the hands of those at shop floor level and



given to Industrial Lawyers.

Having said that, the RTBU called the claim in the original proposal a ‘Realist Pay Rise’.

“What is a realistic pay rise?”

“The Fair Work Commission will now determine what a “fair and reasonable” pay rise is for Sydney Trains and NSW Trains workers. However, we have managed to lock in an absolute minimum figure for each year of the Agreement (2.53% for 2022-2023, backdated at a minimum to May 2022, and 3.03% for May 2023-May 2024). Again, this is a minimum, and we will be pushing in the FWC for more.”

<https://rtbuexpress.com.au/your-questions-from-the-sydney-and-nsw-trains-online-member-meeting-answered/>

It’s OK for the Unions to promise to “push” the Fair Work Commission to grant a higher wage rise. However our beef is that we could gain much more by organising the workforce a a solid mass rather than appealing cap in hand to the bosses court.

The pay off would be a better organised and educated workforce which would be prepared to struggle when the need arose. The ratification of the EBA in the Fair Work Commission did produce a further pay rise. In it's judgement the commission stated that the original deal between the Unions and Rail Management "provided a pay rise of 2.53 per cent in the first year (as well as superannuation backdated to May 2022), and 3.03 percent for the second year (with superannuation backdated to May 1st this year)."

However the FWC "In a 52-page judgement released on Friday afternoon, the Fair Work Commission found the government had not been able to demonstrate that a wage increase past its three per cent wages cap would cause any "discernible detriment" to the NSW budget."

"No evidence has been adduced, nor is it contended, that any wage increase additional to those provided for in the 2022 agreement would cause any difficulty for the commercial or financial position of the rail entities or for the budgetary position of the N S W government," the judgement said. "The FWC then set about granting an extra 1% on top of the 2.53% and 3.03% already agreed to effectively making it a 3.53% and 4.03% rise respectively. In addition workers were to receive a \$4500 "sign on" bonus, obviously a big sweetener to get the deal past workers struggling after the pandemic."

This then begs the question of why the dispute was so drawn out past the use by date of the proceeding Agreement? What more could have been achieved if a proper cross-union campaign had been started from the very beginning without workers' hands being tied behind their backs and left in the dark? The NIF was always a red herring and in the end had little bearing on the final Enterprise Agreement. The Unions should not have entertained the position that the EBA should not have been contingent on the acceptance of the NIF. Although in our opinion the safety issues involved in the NIF are/were worth fighting for, these issues should have been separated out from the general negotiations around the EBA. There was an error of judgement of the union in accepting the premise of these safety issues in the EBA.

They served as a delaying tactic on the overall delivery and negotiations around the EBA and muddied the waters for workers on what the EBA contained therein. The fight for better working conditions and wage rates must continue. The struggle for a greater say in the decision making process against the bureaucrats in the union movement will take organisation and courage. The fight will be no easier now that we have a Labor Government in NSW and Canberra. Just get out there and organise.

N.S.W. TRAIN DRIVERS' NEWS

by Railway Jimmy

NSWT was/is prepared to run a Bullet service YoYo between Lithgow and Orange (change at Lithgow for a fast V-set service to Central which has been in place for some time already). The crew numbers had already been provided at Lithgow. A vocal Rail Action Group in Orange has been saying that isn't good enough and they'd rather not have any train if they can't have a direct one with a buffet car. So they don't have a rail service at all.

Also, plans maybe to reintroduce passenger rail services to Mudgee. These would piggyback on the reopening of a freight line between Point Piper and Newcastle for coal movements. As I understand it, that line is still used to move trains (eg NIF - New Intercity Fleet) around but is not in regular use. Coal is freighted by truck for the time being. The landowners on whose properties the line borders have got the ear of Mudgee Council to oppose the proposal. Of course Mudgee and Orange residents not in the respective interest groups strongly support the provision of passenger trains to their towns.

Doing The Impossible

Governments around Australia have been telling us for decades that privatisation is good for us and that it makes services cheaper and more efficient. The Trade Union Movement has largely gone along with this lie and has failed to mount an effective campaign against privatisation. Unions instead have preferred to agree to privatisation as long as they have had coverage over the residual workforce. We've never believed the hype, especially when we have paid higher prices of privatised electricity and fares.

Now the chickens have come home to roost in South Australia as the new Government there is having to take back ownership and control of trains from the operator Keolis Downer. The original deal of \$2.4 billion for the private operator was touted to save the Government \$118 million in operating costs yet this has proven to be far from the mark. It is believed the contract, instead of saving money, would cost an extra \$120 million over the 12 year life of the project if it continued. Part of this blowout, according to an ABC news article is that 134 rail staff refused to transition to the private sector and were thus still on the Government payroll. (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-01/sa-to-scrap-rail-train-tram->

privatisation-contract/102175772). Maybe the previous Government should have factored that into the overall cost in the beginning.

The original contract with Keolis Downer has a compensation clause exposing SA taxpayers to a \$94 million termination and disengagement clause. The State Government has vowed to refuse any compensation and will move ahead to bring the trains back under their control.

It just goes to prove that it can be done. Privatisation can be reversed if we have the will. We are continually told that it will be too costly or that privatisation saves us money. Nothing is further from the truth. Here in NSW the Unions have accepted the lie about privatisation. Slowly by stealth separated services such as cleaning, ticketing, information, maintenance, catering, Metro etc has been hived off with barely a whimper from the unions involved.

A full public campaign against privatisation is needed. I think the general public would be on our side. Pressuring the NSW Labor government which was so vocal about privatisation during the election would be a good start. That can only happen if we have the public and public transport workers coordinated in a general campaign against privatisation.

As the South Australian Government example has shown, anything is possible when the public is on board. After all Privatisation is theft.

LETTERS

Dear Sparks

A couple of or maybe 3 years ago there was an article in Sparks about 5G and the Internet of Things. That was the only factual analysis (as opposed to one-sided hyped marketing promo) of these topics I have ever encountered. Perhaps this is the case with others of your readers. I wonder if it might be a suitable subject to revisit in a forthcoming issue.

Here is an essay I know is a few years old but which lays out the entailments of this technology even more explicitly:

<https://www.newdawnmagazine.com/articles/5g-the-final-assault>

Are the DOO trains part of this? What network do they use? It would be nice if the 5G/IoT things were showing flaws or not working as expected for any reason. However, uninformed as I am about them I can't comment.

Concerned Sydney Trains worker

Dear Sparks

A issue which has sparked much anger amongst us is the lump sum payment to bribe us to approve the Rail EBA. There is a lot of pissed off staff who were counting on the \$4500, not 2800 - 3000 after tax.

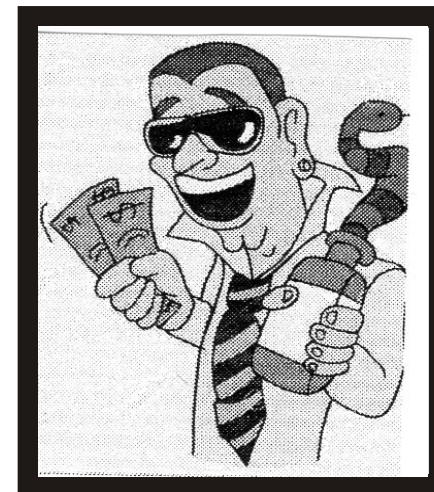
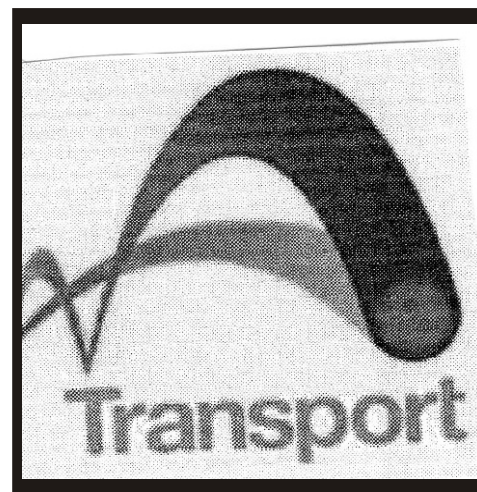
Angry Sydney Trains Reader & Supporter

Dear Sparks

The thing going on with us at the moment is that we are waiting for meetings with the new Transport Minister. Hopefully we can reduce the layers of management in the NSW Railways.

Sydney Trains Reader & Supporter

STOP PRESS: Rod Sharp TFNSW Sec. Has been replaced by Howard Collins, Sydney Trains Boss as acting TFNSW Sec.



‘The Snake Oil Merchants of Sydney‘

Warning: Political Satire

At 8.30 am on Monday 28/11/22 Alex Claassens RTBU NSW State Secretary was picked up in his State Secretary car a mouth watering, brand new luxury BMW sports soft top, with at the wheel, Farren Campbell Loco Division Secretary. As an economy measure considering Secretary Claassens had proclaimed at a recent union executive meeting that the union was now 'broke', Campbell was moonlighting on his day off as union chauffeur. He was certainly not absolutely delighted when Secretary Claaseens threw in some urgently required extra duties on his day off. Such as cleaning and polishing the vehicle to be spotlessly clean so Secretary Claassens could admire his reflection in it, providing 'tender loving care' for its luxurious leather upholstery, refuelling and restocking the very important wine and whiskey mini bar. Claassens had been intrigued by certain management demands for



Meanwhile back at the AEC office.....Electoral Officers take 'seriously' complaints from members about so called 'mistakes' with the sending out of RTBU Elections 2022 ballot papers.

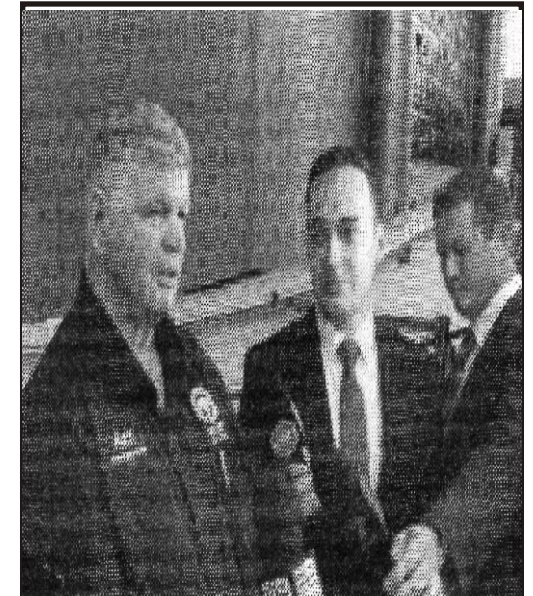
the new Transit Systems and RTBU Bus Division/TWU EBA which had caught his fancy and decided to swipe.

Claassens usual chauffeur was having his day off. Farran had been traumatised and horrified with being dropped to the lowly 'working class' level of the 'organisation', even for the day. Since becoming Loco Div. Sec. he had become aghast at the very notion of performing manual labour. He had even been noticed starting to grow long finger nails like the mandarins of ancient China. The chauffeur job would obviously undermine his prestige as a professional union leader. Secretary Claassens, was unamused by Farran's bemoaning about his new inappropriate duties. "Sorry Farran mate, the union's broke and hard decisions have had to be made," proclaimed Claassens.

'Monkey Business' in the Union Office!

At 9am sharp Claassens arrived at the union offices in Pitt Street Sydney. He was

greeted by one of the union receptionists. He then inquired mysteriously where the 'monkey business' was being held. He was directed to a door emblazoned with the sign 'top secret' guarded by heavily armed security guards thoughtfully supplied by Sydney and NSW Trains. On entering the room he was welcomed by David Babineau RTBU Bus Division Secretary. Claassens was confronted by a bizarre spectacle. The large room was crammed with desks. Seated at each were ALP loyalists amongst the union reps and even the grass roots furiously forging signatures on AEC (Australian Electoral Commission) RTBU 2022 elections ballot envelopes and filling in the boxes on the ballot slips. The ALP loyalists were doing their bit for the 'party' and



Secretary Claassens entertains reporters with an 'old, mouldy railway joke'...."Heard the one about the fake renos on the NIF & bogus NIF Deed?"

'moderate' union leadership before starting their shifts that day or on their precious RDO (rostered day off). Claassens noticed beads of sweat on their brows from their furious exertions with the ballot 'monkey business'. He smiled with satisfaction. In the wee hours of the morning, there had been much suspicious activity around the union office. A car sporting the RTBU logo stuck with sticky tape over the Sydney Trains logo had screeched to a halt outside the union office. While security guards had hurriedly lugged into the union office from the car's boot huge quantities of union AEC elections ballot envelopes and ballot slips stacked in cardboard boxes. The union office door was opened by a certain 'big fella' acting very sheepishly and wearing a large fake black beard which kept falling off. The ballot paperwork had been picked up from the basement of the AEC offices at midnight. Some of the union reps engaged in the 'monkey business' became cheeky and yelled "Alex, we want to claim compo for RSI (Restrictive Strain Injury), over time, penalty rates and even tea money for our strenuous exertions. These ballots are as phony as the renos on the NIF (New Intercity Fleet) you, Perrottet (former NSW Liberal Premier) and former Transport Minister Elliott had trumpeted in the corporate media as part of the NIF Deed and phony 'break through' in Rail EBA

negotiations.”

Claassens announced that he had just come around to see how his ALP 'troops' were faring. He announced, “Boys, you should be aware that with the coming merger with the TWU (Transport Workers Union) we'll be adopting their 'collegiate' electoral system where the grass roots members aren't allowed to vote for important positions and only union reps can vote for these positions. So your efforts today for the union elections 'ballot adjustments' to preserve responsible union leadership will be the last time. Your similar efforts in the RTBU elections in 2014 and 2018 were also much appreciated. For those doing the best job today, they'll be rewarded with attendance at a top secret gala ALP ceremony at Unions NSW offices in Sussex Street. They will be awarded special ALP medals with Mark Moray Unions NSW Secretary doing the honours and attended by sundry other ALP Godfathers and Mega Stars such as Albo, Chris Minns then NSW ALP Opposition Leader (now NSW Premier) and ACTU Queen Sally McManus. Sally has kindly supplied us with free vouchers for the lucky ones to the new ACTU fully owned subsidiary 'Young Blondes of Sydney: Intimate corporate companions for every occasion'. The winners will even be issued with loyalty cards.” After chatting up his troops and spreading the good news of the rewards, he announced to the gathering that he had to urgently head off for a very important meeting at the Goulburn Street offices of the AEC at 10am.

Conference at Australian Electoral Commission Offices Sydney

At 10am sharp Claassens, Farren, Secretary of the Loco Division and part time chauffeur, Babineau and Grech from the Bus Division arrived at the conference room in the AEC offices. Following the obligatory ALP Brother secret handshakes, they were warmly greeted by NSW AEC Commissioner John Schmidt and Mark Moray Unions NSW Secretary and ALP Godfather who were already seated at the conference table. Schmidt opened the meeting with a spiel about how AEC electoral officials were doing everything on their side with the rigging of the RTBU 2022 elections. He was intending to resort to the traditional trick of sabotaging the ballots mail out to members so many don't get their ballots. “We'll present it as all a 'big mistake' and 'innocent' and completely outside of our control!” Claassens complained “that old trick has moss growing on it! You used similar so called 'mistakes' tricks in both the 2014 and 2018 RTBU elections and numerous other occasions.” Schmidt replied, “it worked then to con the grass roots as part of the rigging. It will work again!” Claassens whinged, “we've heard Members First and Hauser who is running for NSW State Secretary is getting massive support on the job”. “No worries, mate we have also conned your members successfully in the past, we can do it again. They are so gullible, naive and trusting. They have such great respect for the neutrality of Government Departments like the AEC. They'll never work out they've had the wool

pulled over their eyes again. They may have heard of the JFK Assassination Conspiracy in the USA, but couldn't believe here in Oz there is a web of ALP conspiracy around the AEC with union ballot rigging,” replied Schmidt.

The discussion then moved on to another pressing item, the Rail EBA ballot rorting. Claassens announced that his worries that members in the NSW Railways will think he'd sold them snake oil with the new rail EBA. He proceeded to lecture the gathering, “In particular I'm concerned about the exposing by a certain underground paper of the fake renos associated with the NIF Deed and fake break through in the EBA negotiations publicised in the Corporate media, and fake EBA so called pay rises. Amounting to massive cuts we have gouged for the bosses and Govt. rivaling the wage cuts of the depression of the 1930's and the meagre 1% pa top up to be awarded by the Un-Fair Work Court. Contributed by soaring inflation associated with the Ukraine Crisis and War and the fake \$4500 bonus bribe which I and the Transport Minister promised on approval of the EBA. Grass roots anger in the train crews over the 'snake oil' together with anger in the buses over the likely fake pay rises and conditions cuts in the looming 'Two Tier' Campaign EBA could explode into direct action. Particularly with the coming favourable period for industrial action with the severe bus driver shortages, the end of the holiday period with factories, schools and unis reopened and of course the new Metros not yet in operation.”

AEC Commissioner Schmidt had a brain wave to tackle Claassens worries. “Alex, we'll cook up the rail EBA ballot results so its 93% who voted for it. We'll publicise it widely in corporate media outlets. So demoralising the grass roots and heading off any push for direct action particularly in the lead up to the NSW Elections and afterwards,” he chimed in. Claassens was unhappy with the brain wave, and announced, “Why not make it 100% approval. The members are easily conned.” “That's a bit rich, Alex,” replied Schmidt. Other union officials also chimed in that Alex's idea was a bit rich and far fetched. So the consensus became 93% approval for the EBA ballot.

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

THE GREENS & THE SYDNEY BUSES PRIVATISATION CONSPIRACY

Dear Jefferson, Sydney Transport Users Opposing Privatisation (STOP),

The Greens will end Inner West Bus Privatisation

Good, reliable public transport is critical for a well functioning society.

But over the last two decades our public transport system has been progressively sold off by successive governments. Privatisation has done the opposite of what it promised, making it harder to get around Sydney, not easier.

Earlier this week, Sydney commuters were warned to brace for chaos as thousands more bus services faced cancellations due to driver shortages. This is the reality of bus privatisation.

Today the Greens announced our plan to fix our local bus services by reversing public transport privatisation.

We have a fully costed plan to bring public transport back into public hands and build a truly world-class transport system.

Our plan backs calls from the Rail, Tram, and Bus Union to reverse the privatisation of our

public transport system.

This sets the Greens apart from both the Liberals, who are backing privatisation, and NSW Labor, who have only committed to set up a committee to 'investigate' the privatisation of buses.

Despite the need for decisive action on public transport both NSW Labor and the Liberals are in a bidding war to provide subsidies to private toll way operators.

Their taxpayer subsidies ultimately only promote more traffic and pollution, and lock people into expensive private car dependency.

A vote for the Greens is a vote to ensure that our community has a world-class public transport system with services across the city that are frequent, affordable, accessible and reliable.

Yours sincerely,

Kobi Shetty
Greens candidate for Balmain



Jamie Parker MP
Member for Balmain

Response to Greens Letter:

The Hypocrisy of the Greens in Fighting the Privatisation of Sydney Buses

"You lay down with dogs. You get up with fleas."

Selling out the anti bus privatisation campaigners in December 2017 where you pulled all support from us (STOP) and collaborated with the lame duck set up to fail anti-privatisation campaign of Claassens (RTBU NSW Sec.) and the ALP machine, lost all credibility for the Inner West Greens.

The Jenny Leong people did not lift one finger to help the pickets at Tempe depot. Only Hall Greenland was at Leichhardt picket and Lee Rhiannon was at the Ryde Depot picket.

And Lynne Saville was at the Willoughby Depot picket. And Alice Mantel and Charles Jago over the petition showed any Greens presence.

Your office while you were overseas in Burma said "no support for your campaign" ... "The Greens are frightened your pickets might turn 'Violent' was what I was told. No support offered any more.

What your office, and presumably you Mr Parker, was a fear STOP would be "Effective" with the 12 depot's picket ...from Mona Vale, to Ryde, to Kingsgrove to Port Botany to Randwick to Waverley, to Leichhardt to Burwood to Willoughby to Brookvale...with rank and file Greens and No support from your party.....4 Mondays in a row at 9am leading up to Xmas and the February 2018 legislation.

If community pickets and rank and file drivers united we may have prevented the February 2018 decision by the NSW Libs to privatise the Inner West depots from July 1st 2018....The Opposition ALP with the backing of Claassens RTBU sellouts and Jamie Parker and The Greens had already caved in. Promoting Petitions to Parliament only. Don't mobilise the community or bus drivers.

Then big note yourself after speaking in Pioneer Park outside Leichhardt Depot on July 1st 2018 at a bus privatisation protest meeting organised by STOP. The first day of PRIVATISATION!

Now it is safe to reveal all the ALP state Conference secret deals with the Libs eh Jamie! After the horse has bolted.

Postscript:

Well you're resigning. I don't think Kobi will get the same trade off deal you did? So

you better get out there and help her paper over the Greens treacherous sell out on bus privatisation?

Yes every depot is at least 50 drivers short (with some depots many times worse) under lower wages and privatisation. No one month depot occupations like Melbourne trams in 1990.

Just a limp petition only campaign from ALP fake Opposition with the Greens pulling the plug.

History records the story of the privatising Greens! Talk the talk. But didn't Walk the Walk when we had a chance of victory in December 2017.

Sincerely.

Jefferson Lee (STOP)

Friday February 3rd 2023.

Edited

Leichhardt Depot News

Sparks: What's the situation at Leichhardt?

Leichhardt Driver (1): In early March things were going from bad to worse. A big dispute with management over rosters blew up last year and is continuing. We are going to face a severe driver shortage resulting in a reduction in trips on time tables. In recent weeks management presented a new proposed EBA and offer associated with the 'Two Tier' RTBU/TWU joint EBA campaign in Region 6. There was massive opposition amongst union members to the proposal. 95% voted against it across Region 6. We were particularly angry with the major attacks on our entitlements and conditions, which the bosses were demanding. In particular we were angry with proposed cuts to sick leave, annual leave and penalty rates. We are awaiting the outcome further negotiations by the union officials and the bosses over the EBA and the impact of the outcome of the NSW Elections held on 25/3/23 with the Minns ALP being elected into Govt.

Sparks: What is the latest regarding the RTBU union rep?

LD (1): Tom our previous RTBU union rep went on sick leave last year due to having an operation and suffering from cancer. He has not returned to the job so far and given the seriousness of his condition we are unsure whether he will ever return to the job. A replacement union rep has been elected. The new rep since he was elected has been doing a good job, such as keeping us informed on developments with the union and the industrial campaign.

Sparks: What are your impressions of the driver staffing situation at Leichhardt?

Leichhardt Driver (2): We are facing quite a crisis at the depot due to drivers

particularly new drivers being unable to cope with the worsening conditions. The depot should have 500 drivers and currently has only about 300 as so many have resigned.

STOP PRESS: According to the SMH 13/4/23 cancellations of bus trips over the last two years are partially caused by Government contracts with the bus companies which fail to penalise these companies for all cancelled services under performance targets. These companies are not penalised until after a certain number of service cancellations are reached each month. These contracts give a financial incentive to these companies to cancel bus services. Government documents show about 28,000 bus services in Sydney were partially or fully cancelled August last year.

Burwood Depot News

Sparks: What is the latest with the EBA negotiations?

Burwood Driver: We have been extremely angered by aspects of management's proposals with the latest EBA offer as part of the RTBU/TWU 'Two Tier' campaign. They are making absolutely outrageous demands such as wanting us to clean and refuel our buses. There are 3 sheddies at the depot involved in this work. They appear to do just quick brooming of the buses and not effectively cleaning them. There is an urgent need to radically improve the spread of our shifts which go up to 12 or so hours per day. Most of us can't handle this spread. Particularly those married with children and living in the far western suburbs. On top of the shifts they have extensive travelling time to the depot each day amounting to several hours. It seriously harms these drivers family life. Those who are single and live nearby to the depot would not be so adversely affected. We haven't had a pay rise for 2 years now and we are being constantly hard hit by the rising soaring cost of living. We are all awaiting the outcome of the coming NSW Elections regarding its impact on the EBA negotiations.

Sparks: What are your impressions of management?

BD: In our buses they have bizarrely put up all these signs about how they support pride and equality in regard to the recent Mardi Gras. This is hypocrisy! There is no equality at Burwood. The ex-STA (State Transit Authority before privatisation) drivers are treated quite differently from the Transees. The bosses are unwilling to come around on the job to meet us and hear about our concerns about workplace problems which we have. They have transferred the 480 and 483 routes to Kingsgrove, but this change has not adversely affected us. Bizarrely despite these bad conditions such as the shift spread problem, the bosses want to retain drivers at the depot.

Other news is we are continuing to face a shortage of drivers at the depot, with most

new drivers not lasting long.

Kingsgrove Depot News

Sparks: What are your impressions of the situation at the depot?

Kingsgrove Driver: We are facing a severe staffing crisis in regard to the driver shortage. It's having a big impact on our rosters. I believe this staffing crisis is occurring across Sydney Buses and elsewhere in the buses and other industries. There are a variety of reasons explaining this crisis such as the low pay for new drivers which discourages the unemployed to seek a job with us and young people not wanting jobs in our industry due to unattractive conditions. Despite the staffing crisis, the bosses have had the depot taking over runs for the 483 and 480 previously operated by Burwood Depot.

TWU Halts Gold - Tweed Coast Bus Strikes to try to impose Sellout Deal with Kinetic

From WSWS: 17/2/23 On Thursday, the Transport Workers Union (TWU) went behind the backs of 650 bus drivers and cleaners/refuelers employed by global bus conglomerate Kinetic on Australia's Gold and Tweed Coasts to call off their stoppages for better pay, conditions and safety.

This is a blatant betrayal. At the very last minute, without any consultation with the workers, the TWU cancelled a 24-hour strike that was due to go ahead yesterday. It announced an "interim agreement" with Kinetic, keeping secret the fact that the deal includes a pledge to prevent further stoppages until mid-year.

The pact with Kinetic is based on the same proposed company enterprise agreement that the workers just voted to reject by 77 percent in a company ballot. The TWU has released no detail about Thursday's deal except that it includes an 8.2 percent wage rise for the current year, which Kinetic had already offered, and which workers have opposed as inadequate.

That increase would take drivers' base rate to just \$30 an hour, and cleaners/refuellers to just above \$23 an hour - far below the soaring cost of living and even the \$35 an hour that the TWU had originally promised to seek last year.

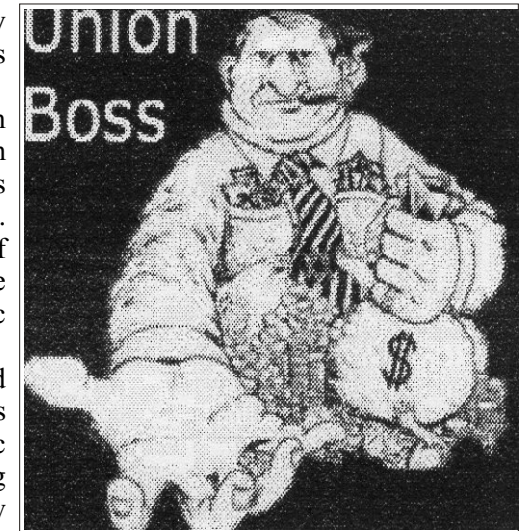
An angry driver told the WSWS: "This is a sellout. The TWU did not take it to their members. I will be calling for a no vote on this deal. Most people are not happy with \$30 an hour."

The driver said the union and Kinetic were drafting a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that retained the company's rejected two-year enterprise agreement. There

was the possibility of an improved pay offer for the second year, but that was not guaranteed.

The TWU's no-strike pledge is an attempt to demobilise and shut down the discontent among bus workers while it continues backroom talks. TWU Queensland director of organising Jared Abbott boasted to the media of an "excellent pragmatic solution" to the dispute.

Kinetic's South East Queensland general manager James Saltmer was equally pleased. He said Kinetic thanked "all bargaining representatives for progressing a new



agreement," with "negotiations continuing."

In an "11th hour" email sent to workers on Thursday, the TWU said it would hold "paid yard meetings with members" next week to discuss "our plan for the future." This would include "ballots for further strike action if an agreement cannot be reached."

Having just voted overwhelmingly "no" to Kinetic's proposed agreement, workers should reject this sellout, resume their stoppages and call for support throughout the working class. They should form their own rank-and-file committees, independent of the TWU, to determine and coordinate their campaign.

Thursday's last-minute cancellation of yesterday's strike at Surfside Buslines, a Kinetic subsidiary, was the second such anti-democratic move by the TWU in rapid succession. Last week, the TWU postponed the 24-hour stoppage, originally scheduled for last Monday, in order to allow the company's ballot to go ahead.

As the WSWS warned, that "postponement" was a forewarning that the TWU was preparing another betrayal, like it inflicted on bus drivers in Melbourne last year, and like it has imposed on transport workers across the country for years. The union bureaucrats are anxious to isolate and scuttle the major struggle on the Gold and Tweed Coasts as soon as possible, to prevent it from winning wider support from workers.

The stand taken by the Kinetic workers - yesterday's stoppage was to be their "third strike" in six weeks - has threatened to win broader backing in the working class, despite the TWU keeping its more than 60,000 members elsewhere in the dark.

On the Gold and Tweed Coasts, Australia's sixth largest urban area, the Surfside

workers are fighting against a transnational corporation that “boasts” of employing, with its partner, Go-Ahead, more than 34,000 transport workers across Australia and on three continents, from the UK to Singapore and New Zealand.

Aided by low wages and cost-cutting, Kinetic is continuing to gobble up bus companies operating lucrative government-contracted services throughout Australia - most recently O’Driscoll Coaches Derwent Valley Link, which operates between Hobart and the Derwent Valley in Tasmania.

The TWU’s deal with Kinetic does not include any restoration of payment for public holidays for workers not rostered on - a clause the TWU agreed to drop as part of its last sellout in 2018. The agreement would also allow management to keep speeding up schedules and maintain poor conditions - from inadequate or non-existent toilet and meal facilities to lack of safety and badly-maintained buses.

As the WSWS has previously documented, Kinetic’s proposal contains a host of onerous clauses. Rosters could be changed with as little as 24 hours’ notice. “Consultation” and “dispute resolution” clauses would be bolstered to help the TWU prevent discontent from erupting. A key clause would commit the “parties” - that is the TWU and other bargaining representatives - to seek to “achieve an efficient and mutually beneficial relationship.”

An “independent bargaining representative” - a group covering Surfside workers dissatisfied with the TWU’s long history of betrayals - was excluded from Thursday’s pact struck by the TWU. However, the group is advocating only a marginally improved version of the TWU deal.

This group, which has registered status from the Fair Work Commission, the federal pro-business industrial tribunal, is working within the anti-strike enterprise bargaining regime, which was first introduced in the 1990s by the Keating Labor government, in partnership with the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

A strong “no” vote at yard meetings would be a first step in halting the TWU sellout. Lessons must be drawn from the repeated betrayals by the TWU and other trade unions. They are enforcing the interests of the financial elite and its political servants, including the Albanese government, which is calling for “sacrifices” from workers amid the inflationary spiral and economic crisis of capitalism.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of Sparks, Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff will discuss current issues at V/Line. As in previous issues names have been changed.

Sparks: What is the current situation regarding Catering and Velocity Trains?

Sheona: In the last State Budget funding has been made available for twelve new Velocity Trains.

Ahmed: Since late November Catering in the Shepparton Corridor has ceased. All locomotive trains have been replaced by Velocity Trains. No employees have been retrenched. The jobs will be removed by natural attrition.

Archie: Some of the job losses in catering have been absorbed by an extra Warrnambool service which started in December. There are now five services per week day to Warrnambool.

Moose: How long will Catering on Warrnambool services last? We wonder.

Sparks: What is the situation regarding the Albury Corridor?

Shem: The Albury service is like a game of Roulette.

Sparks: In what way?

Moose: The services are replaced by buses. Sometimes at short notice.

Ahmed: If it is not the track it is the trains. Due to track defects some trains have been grounded due to defects.

Roscoe: How would you feel if you turn up at Southern Cross and there is a sign saying “No train, proceed to coach terminal”. No reason given, you would either go home or cop a bus trip.

Rastus: Due to train defects or a shortage of Velocity Trains some trains which run as six car trains were reduced to three cars on the Albury line. This also happens in peak hour trains on other lines. We drivers feel sorry for the Rostered Conductors who have to sort out there problems hoping no complaints occur.

Ahmed: Due to over crowding there is a Wyndham Vale train with nine cars during the evening peak. 60% of the time this train is reduced to three cars. What a joke.

Sparks: What about Buffet Modules on the Albury Trains?

Shem: There have been OH&S issues about these Modules from Conductors. This is the first Sparks has heard of these defects but when we find out Sparks will print a full report.

Sparks: We hear that a former CSM has resigned.

Rastus: You are correct. This SLUG was returned to Seymour as a Station Officer as a result of issues at Bendigo. He has resigned and joined Pacific National.

Roscoe: Good riddance but we feel sorry for the employees of Pacific National.

Shem: The depot at Bendigo is now a pleasant place to work since he and a former manager were removed.

Sparks: What is the situation at Southern Cross?

Ahmed: The Management are very good at cheating employees out of overtime.

Shem: If a Customer Service Employee reports sick the shifts are covered by juggling the rosters, altering employee duties.

Moose: The same has happened in the Booking Office where due to staff shortages sometimes the Flinders Street Booking Office is closed with booking office staff

sent to Southern Cross.

Ahmed: Overtime is worked by Conductors when the shifts cannot be covered.

Archie: Employees are still docked even if they are minute late.

Sparks: Is this still happening?

Moose: It is. You see management is under pressure from higher up to cut costs so docking employees or fiddling the rosters is the name of the game. No wonder employee morale is low.

Sparks: Are there career paths for Customer Service Staff?

Archie: In theory yes, in practice no.

Ahmed: A number of Customer Service Staff who have applied for Conductor positions have been unsuccessful in comparison to outside applicants. One employee has applied for Conductor positions over the last five years being unsuccessful. Staff at Southern Cross are of the opinion that Human Resources have it in for this employee.

Shem: Another complaint is that Management fails to place notices advising patrons of train disruptions or future occupations.

Ahmed: The notices go to the Country Stations on the affected lines weeks before these occupations yet at Southern Cross nothing has appeared for a number of the occupations at Southern Cross Booking Office.

Rastus: Do these managers realise there are Commuters and other passengers who turn up and know nothing until they see a sign on the indicators departing from the Coach Terminal.

Ahmed: Management is good at picking on employees for minor mistakes but will not admit these failures.

Sparks: Was there a V/Line Christmas function this year?

Moose: What party? Over the last ten years we have had nothing. This year some employees were lucky to obtain a stale sausage roll.

Shem: Metro Trains had a Christmas function at Royal Park for their employees. We got nothing at V/Line. Not even a thank you. If we have a minor complaint Management wants to throw the book at you.

Sparks: We have run out of space. V/Line takes the easy way out. In 2023 EBA negotiations commence. Sparks wonders what V/Line places on the table.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say we drivers are pleased that SLUG at Seymour has departed.

Public Transport in Victoria during the 1990's

In this issue of Sparks we will discuss events thirty years ago regarding public transport in Victoria. As in previous issues of Sparks names have been changed.

Sparks: What happened in Victoria in January 1993?

Alvin: From late 1991 rumours were circulating that the Liberals were planning massive changes for public transport in Victoria once they were elected. Expressions such as Mode Substitution, Outsourcing and job cuts were being heard. The State Labor Government was on the nose and a Liberal victory was inevitable.

Archie: Public Transport was operated by the Public Transport Corporation of Victoria.

Ichabod: On January 6th 1993 the Victorian Liberal Government issued a report entitled, "Public Transport from a System to a Service", to the media and employees.

Algernon: The report was extensive but the main points of the report were:

(1) V/Line passenger services were not to operate beyond South Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour and Traralgon.

(2) Tenders were to be called by Victorian Treasury and not the PTC for the private sector to operate Trains or Buses on the following lines: South Geelong to Warnambool, Ballarat to Dimboola, Ballarat to Mildura, Bendigo to Swan Hill, Seymour to Cobram, Seymour to Albury, Traralgon to Bairnsdale, Melbourne to Leongatha, Frankston to Stony Point. Private operators having the option to replace these services with buses or trains.

(3) Two suburban train lines were to close. These being the Upfield and Williamstown with the Camberwell to Alamein service to operate during the week day peak periods. The other suburban lines were to be replaced by buses in the outer suburban fringe. Introduction of Driver Only Trains (this will be discussed in a future issue of Sparks).

(4) Operation of Interstate Trains by other State Transport Authorities. This was planned under Labor.

(5) Closure of Tram Routes 82 Footscray to Moonee Ponds, Route 9 Northcote Shuttle, replacement of some Tram routes with Buses after 7pm and all day Sunday.

(6) Elimination of Tram Conductors. The Conductors and Station Staff were to be replaced by Ticket Machines.

(7) PTC operated bus services were to be put out to tender. The PTC was not allowed to submit tenders.

Sparks: What was the reaction of the union and employees?

Alvin: I was not on the job when these changes were announced but the other employees have told myself they were SHOCKED and wondered what would happen. Some said they would like redundancy while others said they hoped they would still have a job.

Archie: Most of the recommendations were compiled by Treasury and when presented to the previous Labor Government were knocked back.

Clarence: The Transport Minister stated that if any industrial action occurred the

report's recommendations would be implemented straight away with no negotiations.

Sparks: Was industrial action planned?

Algernon: The Trades Hall Council was to co-ordinate a planned industrial action but this was never taken.

Sparks: Why?

Alvin: The Rail and Bus Unions were not merged until February 1993 and the Tram Union conducted negotiations with the Transport Minister.

In late January the Media was notified that a deal had been negotiated. The main points were:

(1) Tram Conductors were to be eliminated once ticket machines were installed. Tram Conductors were to be offered positions as Customer Service Staff plus Revenue Protection employees subject to suitability.

(2) No cuts to tram services except the Northcote Shuttle.

3. PTC were allowed to submit tenders to operate PTC bus routes. The tender was to be administered by an accounting firm.

Clarence: The Rail Division did not know of these meetings. Employees were shocked and so was the State Opposition.

Algernon: The Rail Division started negotiations with the Kennett Government and in late March an agreement was reached.

Sparks: What was achieved?

Archie: The Suburban Rail System was to remain intact except for the Upfield Line, Suburban Guards, Station Staff were to be eliminated. Premium Stations were to be placed around the Suburban System. Guards and Displaced Station Staff were to be offered Customer Service Positions and Revenue Protection positions subject to suitability.

Clarence: V/Line copped the brunt of the service cuts.

(1) Country Services to be retained by V/Line were Bendigo to Swan Hill. Seymour to Albury, Traralgon to Sale, Frankston to Stony Point. Two lines were to be handed over to the private sector. These were Melbourne to Shepparton and Melbourne to Warrnambool. The other lines were to be replaced by buses under contract to V/Line. Shepparton was contracted to Hoys Coach Lines. Hoys hired the train from V/Line and used their station staff. Warrnambool was operated by West Coast Railway. The Company will be reported on in a future issue of Sparks.

Alvin: The Transport changes were implemented from March 1993. The irony of Tram reforms was Route 3, Route 57 and Route 82 reverted to Trams on Sundays. With regards to Bus Services the PTC lost all bus routes except services operated by Footscray, Elwood and Sandringham Depots which operated services under the trading name METBUS which was tendered out in 1998. (Refer to previous issues of Sparks.) The Rail Services operated by V/Line were replaced by buses in July -

August 1993. Ararat survived until May 1994. Warrnambool and Shepparton. Interstate Trains were operated until December 1994.

Sparks: Sadly we have run out of space but could you report on the situation in 2022?

Clarence: (1) V/Line is operated by the Victorian Government with Warrnambool and Shepparton returned to V/Line in 2004. Services have been extended to Ararat and Bairnsdale. The lines to Waurin Ponds, Windermere, Bendigo (restored to Echuca) were rehabilitated between 2002 and 2006. These lines plus Seymour have increased services seven days a week.

(2) Metro Trains was privatised in 1989 and is now operated by MTA Hong Kong. The Upfield Line and Williamstown lines have been retained with Automatic Signalling and level crossings eliminated.

(3) The Tramway network was privatised in 1999 and trades as Yarra Trams operated by Keolis. Route extensions are being made to Docklands, Bundoora, Vermont South and Box Hill.

Alvin: In conclusion we hope these kinds of service cuts will never happen again. What we hope for is UNITY in the union movement.

Rail workers struggle in Britain faces the imminent threat of betrayal and defeat at the hands of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) leadership.

From WSWS 7/4/23 - Unless lessons are drawn, and a rank-and-file rebellion organised against General Secretary Mick Lynch and the RMT leadership, the dispute is going down to a devastating defeat.

40,000 workers were initially involved in the action--20,000 signallers and maintenance workers at Network Rail (NR) and 20,000 employed at 14 train operating companies (TOCs). The strike by Network Rail workers was ended on a rotten deal organised by the RMT last month.

The entire dispute has been organised based on the RMT exhausting its members over months in a series of limited and mostly separated strikes. Left to the leadership of the RMT, management will finalise their rout of the entire workforce, having completed half the job at Network Rail.

The World Socialist Web Site warned in March that the RMT's NR sell-out deal, if pushed through, would rapidly become the template for a similar betrayal of its members at the TOCs. In preparation for the Network Rail betrayal, on March 7 the RMT withdrew scheduled strike action by signallers and maintenance workers planned for March 16. A "referendum" - members would be held from March 9 to March 20 on a deal concocted with NR. It consisted of a miles below inflation agreement, with only an "additional 1.1 percent on basic earnings and increased back pay - a deal the RMT had previously rejected as a "dreadful offer".

The RMT executive did not formally recommend acceptance, but Eddie Dempsey, the Stalinist Assistant General Secretary, presented it positively as containing “extra money”. After months of strikes had secured no concessions, and seeing no way forward, on March 20 Network Rail workers voted for the agreement by 76 percent to 24 percent in a 90 percent turnout.

A similar rout is being organised by the RMT with the TOCs. On March 22, the RMT national executive called off strikes at 14 TOCs due to take place on March 30 and April 1. Lynch announced they had received a new proposal from the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), formed in 2011 by the Tory government to lead the attack on rail workers and led by the CEOs of rail companies. The offer he said could lead to a resolution of the rail dispute begun last June - the longest running in the strike wave of the last nine months, through a new “Dispute Resolution Process.”

Stage 1 consists of a pay increase for 2022 amounting to just 5 percent. In Stage 2 the 2023 pay settlement would be agreed if the RMT agree “Work Force Change” items dealt with via Company Council to be negotiated separately in each TOC. A pay deal for 2023 would be settled only if these issues are “successfully addressed.”

The 2023 pay offer was so low Lynch re-entered negotiations for a slightly improved 4 percent, claiming he was seeking further “detail” on the RDG’s “Workforce Change Agenda”. The agenda is almost identical to the attacks that provoked the strikes last June.

The RMT secured its main priority that the Workforce Change Agenda will be negotiated via the existing collective bargaining process, i.e., with the union bureaucracy’s privileges secured as the partners of management.

In a March 22 letter addressed to “Dear Mick,” Chairman of Rail Delivery Group Steve Montgomery, outlined, “This Dispute Resolution Process contains three integral principles - which will be included within the respective TOCs detailed proposals on Workforce Reforms.” These include a massive deskilling operation with the “Introduction of a New Multi-Skilled Stations Grade.” Under the section “General Working Arrangements”, everything else is being considered for attack with seven day working to be standardised, including a “New Improving Attendance Policy; New Technology/Equipment; Rolling Sick Pay Entitlement; 7-day railway; Training, Briefing & Company Health Appointment Arrangement” and “Diagramming, Rostering Parameters for Train crew Safety Critical Roles excluding Train Drivers.”

Montgomery notes “that TOCs are intending to bring forward staffing reviews and reorganisations covering stations, catering, administration, and fleet grades”.

The Network Rail deal allows a cull of thousands of jobs, including 1,900 maintenance workers.

For workers in the TOCs, there is a “guarantee” from the RDG of “No compulsory redundancies within the grades directly affected” but only through to December 31,

What is Democratic Unionism?

Democratic Unionism means grass roots controlled unionism, not control by officials. It also means that workers in one industry should be in one union so as to remove artificial divisions that can cause disunity. Such a union should be fully organised and controlled by the membership.

To achieve this we believe a union should be organised along the following lines:

That no person employed by the union should earn more than the average income of the membership.

1. The Spokespeople should have no executive power all decisions should be made by the union membership in the course of mass meetings.

2. The Spokespeople have no executive power all decisions should be made by the union membership in mass meetings.

3. Spokespeople are only to act as delegates elected by the membership to carry out decisions made by the membership in mass meetings.

4. That a mechanism is instituted for the instant recall of spokespeople/delegates who break the above rules.

5. That all positions within the union be held on a limited tenure, the duration of which will be decided by the membership.

6. That a programme of decentralised decision making be implemented within the union structure, so that we won't need full time officials.

7. All loss of earnings incurred by elected delegates who miss work as a result of carrying out union duties will be reimbursed by the union to the extent of the lost wages.

2024. Another “guarantee” the RDG and RMT are promoting is a Voluntary Leavers Scheme for those employees who are affected by the workforce change programme”.

These are required to facilitate the companies’ plans to terminate thousands of guards’ jobs, making all rail services Driver Only Operation, along with thousands more redundancies with the closure of every single station ticket office nationwide. This is integral to the Tories’ overall plans for a Great British Railways re-privatisation programme, in which the rail network will be deskilled, destaffed and run by an entirely flexible workforce on rock bottom wages.

On Thursday, Lynch issued another briefing, confirming that acceptance of the paltry 5 percent pay offer for 2022 - less than half the rate of CPI inflation “is dependent on the Dispute Resolution Process document being adopted by your union.”

The Guardian reported that after the RDG and government agreed that “no shabby compromise” was ever going to be accepted, Haines said “the strike had ended with a sub-inflation deal, one of the best from the employers’ view in many years, because - the shareholder, the government was prepared to tolerate more pain than in the previous 14 years in terms of disruption and lost revenue.”

