

No. 176

April - May 2024

Sparks

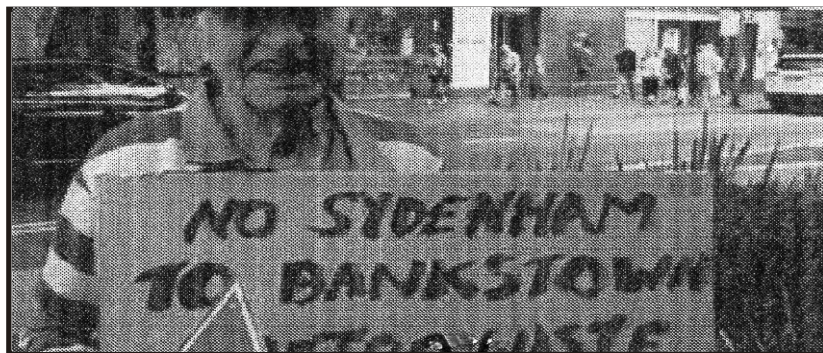
THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

What Sydney Metro Rail Franchising (Privatisation) means:

Long term: 1. Privatisation of existing Public City Rail Network. 2. Loss of rail operations jobs. 3. Ticket prices and public utilities sacrificed for profit making. Short term: 1. Traffic chaos during construction and beyond. 2. Delay the introduction of Electric Buses by use of diesel buses as replacement services over two years. 3. Questionable property development over rail stations. Are the unions going take industrial action to stop the Metro Conversion? Yes or No?

Can we stop Sydney Metro Lines? Yes, like with stopping DOO – rank & file action on the Job!

Technological change should serve the people. not profits!



N.S.W. Railway News p.3; Sydney Buses News p.14; Vic. Rail News p.17; ALP's 'Handsome Boy' ties the knot p.8; French Rail News p.23; Propaganda p. 6; Region 6 Drivers thrown under the Bus! P.14; Sydney's Dirty Little Secret p.4; New XPT's Cover-Up p.3; NZ Bus & Rail News p. 27

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.

Metro Conversion hurls gauntlet down to Rail Operations staff!

Some of the most important news in the NSW Railways has been the upcoming closure of the Bankstown line for the conversion to Metro and later Franchising (Privatisation) of stations from Sydenham to Bankstown. It will have far reaching consequences. Such as setting a precedent for further Metro conversions and major rail jobs losses, thus opening the door to sky rocketing fares and squandering even more tax payers money for corporate profit making.

A previous privatisation style push which ended disastrously was the Public/Private/Partnership associated with the construction and operation of the Airport Link. It opened in 21st May 2000 with the Airport Link Company operating 4 stations on the line with only Wolli Creek station operated by City Rail. In Jan. 2001, the company went into temporary receivership as a result of much lower than expected patronage and revenue because of expensive fares and problems with train regularity. This cost the NSW Govt. and tax payers \$800 Million to bail out the debt. Then in Oct. 2005 a further \$34 million and then \$73 million State Government top-up subsidy. The company operating underwent a series of takeovers over the years. Its now owned by Uni Super.

Other news is a new mainstream media cover-up of the DOO (Driver Only Operation) of the new XPT's replacement and real reasons for the delay in its introduction in services. (See article page 3.)

In this edition we also throw new light on another Media/Govt./Union hierarchy cover-up of serious pollution and OH&S issues in City Circle stations and tunnels. (See article page 4.)

Savage speed up in Region 6 with New Rosters

In this edition with regard to Sydney Buses, we put the spotlight on an important aspect of the Region 6 EBA 2023 and the TWU/RTBU 'parity agreement'. It involves new 'merged' rosters. These rosters have been heavily affected by a new management push known as 'Optimisation' involving a vicious speed up on the job. An important hidden agenda of the EBA and the 'parity agreement' exclusive to Region 6, is a 'divide and conquer' strategy to implement a new wave of speed ups in the job across the entire Sydney Buses network. It follows the management strategy assisted by the union hierarchy with the privatisation of State Transit. It involved a piece by piece tactic, incremental privatisation of different small portions to head off any united industrial resistance by the workers. First went Newcastle depots which were privatised, followed by Region 6 depots, then the Northern suburbs depots and Ryde and finally the Eastern Suburbs depots.

This illustrates again the deception used in enterprise bargaining involving the

Rail Unions EBA claim - Not another failure like EBA 2022? p.3

wages claims and the Region 6 'parity' agreement showing the treacherous back room wheeling and dealing of the union hierarchy. (See article page 14.)

Combined NSW Rail Unions EBA Claim - Not another failure like EBA 2022?
In stark contrast to the Rail EBA 2022 Claim which featured below inflation so called wage increases, this new EBA claim includes 8%pa over 4 years or the rate of inflation which ever is higher, reduction in weekly hours from 38 to 35 with out a pay cut. Continued on page 28.

Sparks welcomes contributions by transport workers. Please sent to PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW or via our web site www.sparksweb.org Subs are \$5 pa. Sparks is published by the Sydney Local of the Network for Democratic Unionism.

N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS

New Cover-up of DOO Push with XPT Replacements

Analysis of Telegraph article "The train in Spain leaves \$70k pain" front page and flow on page 7. Friday March 29th 2024.

One agenda of the article is to divert grass roots attention away from the real reason for the delay for some years of the introduction into service of the replacement for the XPT's. It talks about Transport for NSW boffins going on an expensive junket to Spain to check out 'improvements' to the XPT's replacements and live running in regard to CCTV's, passenger information displays, emergency exits and door controls. However there is no mention of the issue of a functioning guard's compartment on the trains. In reality the XPT replacements were ready to be introduced under DOO (Driver Only Operation) without functioning guards compartments for some years. However, management needs the NIF (New Intercity Fleet) under DOO to be introduced in the context of the holiday period and set precedents for the introduction of the XPT's replacement under DOO. Another agenda of the article is the Murdoch Press waving a big stick at the Minns NSW ALP Government, as they prefer a regime change.

Its Opus Dei Connection?

The reason for the manufacturing of the new trains in Spain would be the need for secrecy in setting up the new trains for DOO. However there maybe another consideration for the trains manufacture in Spain. The manufacturer of the trains is CAF. Is it linked to the Far Right Catholic organisation, Opus Dei? This organisation played a key role in the post WWII Franco Regime and subsequent so called 'Democratic' Regimes in Spain. The previous NSW Liberal Premier Dominic was a

member of Opus Dei as were numerous other NSW Liberal polities when they committed State funds to the 'Spanish Option'.

A Spiders Web of Conspiracy entangling City Rail/Sydney Trains, the Union Office & NSW ALP Government!

An analysis of SMH article 'City's dirty little secret' front page, Tuesday 20th February 2024.

The article refers to the 'sudden' discovery by the SMH of high levels of hydrocarbon particles in platforms and tunnels in the city circle stations. In reality, this hazard has been well known for decades and has been covered up by the corporate media, various NSW Governments and the union hierarchy. With drivers being bribed with thirty pieces of silver in the shape of a special allowance to go through the underground. However guards have

received no monetary compensation. The article plays along with another much more serious cover-up by the SMH, other media outlets, the Government and union bosses of the RTBU at that time, Claassens predecessor, Nick Lewocki was RTBU NSW State Secretary back then and ASU in regard to OH&S issues in City Circle stations.

Olympics Lead up Renovations to Underground City Circle Stations

In the years of the immediate lead up to the Sydney Olympics in 2000, underground stations on the City Circle were renovated to be smartened up for the Olympics for overseas tourists, corporate brass and dignitaries. But there was reported by workers on these stations, additional much worse, OH&S issues than reported in the above SMH article. It involved toxic fumes from the renovations on the stations. Union activists had Work Cover come out to the stations over the complaint. Work Cover people came out to the stations, but agreed with management and the union bosses,

The train in Spain leaves a \$70k pain
Officials' trips to watch tests

EXCLUSIVE
Lachlan Leeming

Taxpayers forked out \$70,000 for transport boffins to fly back and forth from Spain over the past year to watch safety tests and modifications on a blighted train fleet purchased by the NSW Government.

Transport officials have now flown at least five times to Europe in two years, adding insult to injury to the government's purchase of a regional train fleet suspected of already being \$1 billion over budget.

Trips to Spain constituted three of 10 overseas trips taken by Transport NSW staff since March last year, while a trip to Singapore for four bureaucrats to present at a transport forum cost taxpayers almost \$20,000 for two days.

The three Spain trips in 2023 came after Transport boffins also flew to the country twice in 2022 due to a long-running stoush between the NSW Government and Spanish manufacturer CAF over the design of the new trains, which will replace the aged XPT fleet.

The government has made multiple requests for changes to the trains, which will service regional NSW routes as well as long-haul interstate trips, including modifications to their CCTV systems, passenger information displays, emergency exits and door controls.

The Spanish-built train fleet is already \$1bn over budget, according to internal government documents, and is on track to be almost three years

recruits are contained in answers following budget estimates last month.

Shadow roads spokeswoman Natalie Ward ripped into the spend during a cost-of-living crisis and asked whether some of the presentations could have been held over live video streaming services.

"Why are bureaucrats having champagne in the Qantas lounge on the taxpayer's dime while families are struggling to afford a mortgage?" she said.

"When families are doing it tough, surely Transport for NSW can use Zoom or other services, and instead put that money into frontline services like hiring bus drivers."

A spokesman for Transport Minister Jo Haylen fired back at Ms Ward.

"We'd love to be able to send our transport people to Broadmeadow, Lithgow or Kenilba to check on these trains but thanks to the Liberals, they're being built overseas and we need to have direct oversight," he said.

Natalie Ward was part of the government that sent the contract to build these trains overseas. Natalie can run and hide as much as she likes but this is her responsibility and her legacy.

A Transport NSW spokesman said all international travel complies with a "strict, transparent and accountable approval process" including booking the "lowest logical airfare".

He said visits to CAF "allows key Transport for NSW staff and technical experts to in-

action on a large scale amongst station assistants at Central over workers being framed up for the sack to get through staff cuts. Due the large scale of the action, Nick Lewocki RTBU NSW State Secretary at this time intervened. During the AM Peak hour, he approached his ALP comrades in signals to stop the trains to allow the holding of a union stop work meeting at Central to resolve the issue. The action would have affected 100,000's commuters that morning. The stoppage and effect on commuters was totally covered up by the Corporate Media and other parties. The ALP Government and Rail management/union officials were worried about encouraging workers industrial action around the time of the Olympics. It was just like the cover-up of the toxic fumes issue on the underground City Circle stations around this time. According to Lewocki, the action was 'illegal' as it was in breach of the dispute settling procedure associated with the Rail EBA. It normally led to Unions NSW officials intervening into any industrial dispute and heading off any industrial action. Despite the 'illegality' of the action, there was no deducting by management of workers industrial allowance associated with the EBA 'Dispute Settling Procedure' clause.

The article refers to excessively long 12 hour shifts imposed on station staff which



LETTER

Railway Jeffrey

As we continue to navigate the struggles of our workplace, It's important to address the topic of : propaganda.

Here are some common characteristics and techniques associated with propaganda:

1. ****Simplification:**** Propaganda often simplifies complex issues or ideas into easily digestible messages, omitting nuances or contradictory information.
2. ****Emotional Appeal:**** Propaganda frequently appeals to emotions rather than rationality, aiming to evoke strong feelings such as fear, anger, or patriotism to sway opinion.
3. ****Repetition:**** Messages are often repeated consistently to reinforce beliefs and create familiarity, making them more likely to be accepted.
4. ****Selective Presentation:**** Propaganda selectively presents information that supports its agenda while ignoring or distorting contrary evidence.
5. ****Demonization:**** It may depict opponents or dissenting viewpoints in a negative light, using stereotypes, scapegoating, or dehumanization to discredit them.
6. ****Testimonials and Endorsements:**** Propaganda often includes endorsements

from authority figures, celebrities, or trusted sources to lend credibility to its message.

7. ****Bandwagon Effect:****

It exploits the human tendency to conform to group norms by implying that everyone else supports the cause, creating a sense of social pressure to join in.

8. ****Use of Symbols and Slogans:**** Propaganda often employs symbols, logos, or catchy slogans to create memorable associations and simplify



complex ideas.

9. ****Misinformation and Disinformation:**** Propaganda may include false or misleading information, exploiting cognitive biases or exploiting uncertainties to manipulate perceptions.

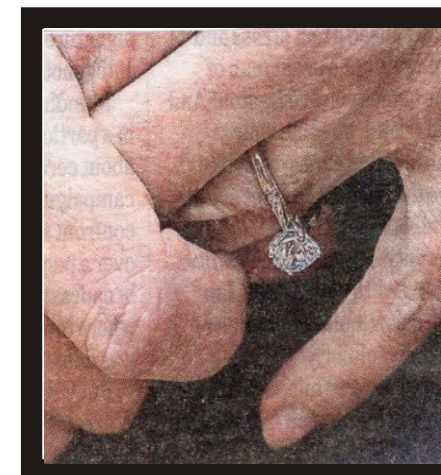
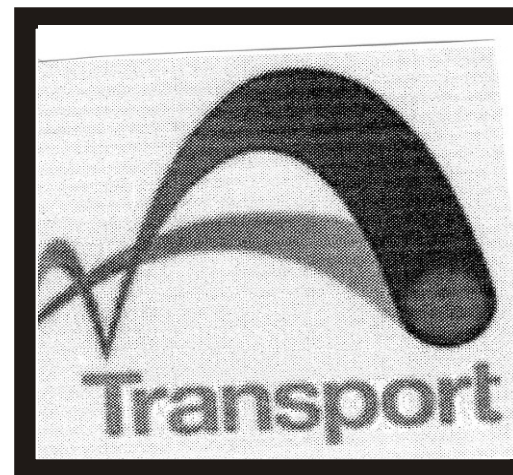
10. ****Controlled Communication:**** Propaganda typically originates from a centralized source or authority, controlling the flow of information and limiting dissenting voices.

Overall, propaganda is a powerful tool that can be used for both positive and negative purposes. Invariably however it tends to be employed to manipulate and deceive, often with harmful consequences. Recognising propaganda and critically evaluating the messages we encounter is essential for maintaining informed and independent thinking.

Propaganda can be recognised in the endless stream of weekly emails and online posts we receive. See if you can spot the tell tale signs in the next email you receive from an alleged leader. The use of the title of leader for any and all roles is itself a form of propaganda designed to mislead.

The recent media debate over 'free public transport' following letters to the editor in the SMH is a case in point. The morning breakfast show on ABC Radio put up various dubious arguments before concluding "we can't afford it." Meanwhile millions are ripped off by dodgy contractors on the Metro Lines.

By Railway Johnny



Tying the Knot for ALP's 'Handsome Boy'
Warning: Political Satire

At 10am on Monday July 8th 2024, at an executive meeting of Unions NSW, Mark Moray Unions NSW Secretary announced to the gathering, the upcoming wedding of Albo and his ALP comrade Jodie Haydon to be held on Sunday 4th August 2024 at 11am. Albo's 'best man' was to be US President Joe Biden who was taking time off his re-election campaign to visit Australia to firm up the bargain basement half a trillion dollars AUKUS killer nuke subs deal. On a 'sour note', Moray confided with the executive that he had heard a whisper from the Unions NSW ASIO/CIA Liaison Officer, that ASIO boss Mike Burgess wielding a media 'bombshell' would also be attending attired with a large fake black beard and dark glasses. He was keeping a furtive eye out for 'former ALP politicians betraying their country!' Moray was shocked to learn Burgess and his spooks and gum shoes are even working now with a certain 'underground paper' that gets around to uproot union corruption and AEC (Australian Electoral Commission) union ballot rigging particularly in regard to the RTBU elections in 2014, 2018 and 2022! It was bizarre, but Burgess had finally come to the conclusion such 'monkey business' is 'illegal' like breaching the clauses of an enterprise agreement and could undermine the 'Australian way of life, having a 'fair go' and assist an unfriendly foreign power.' In the past there had been differences of opinion between the two 'clandestine organisations' on issues of national interest and security, but now they had patched things up. Their CEO's had recently kissed and made up and let bygones be bygones! Now they had liaison officers and were jointly crusading against crime and rorts in the union, bosses and AEC offices!



After hearing the unsettling news about ASIO's new initiatives in a certain section of the trade union movement, RTBU NSW Secretary Claassens nervously announced how delighted he was with the upcoming nuptials. He volunteered his luxurious mansion at Point Piper as the venue for the matrimonial reception and banquet. He assured the audience of union bosses, that his members would be delighted to chip in for the expenses of holding the event. He emphasised to the gathering that with the handsome pay rises associated with the Rail EBA 2022 and the Region 6 Transit Systems EBA 2023, his members could easily afford a special levy in addition to their normal union dues which had been recently increased and they would easily cope with the increased financial burden. In addition, he assured the audience that he would be inundated with offers from his members on their day off that day to be 'flower boys', and waiters and chauffeurs for the esteemed guests attending the festivities. He emphasised that, they are from the lowly working class level of the organisation and certainly not adverse to some good old fashion manual labour and elbow grease.

David Babineau from the RTBU Bus Division impulsively chimed in. He gushed how delighted he would be to volunteer his services for wine tasting and supervising the serving of the finest vintage wines and French champagnes from Alex's 'wine cellar' for the illustrious guests and ALP luminaries. Babineau enthralled the executive with

the sophisticated delights and extent of Alex's vintage wine collection which he had acquired over his many years as a union boss. He commented how his members in the buses couldn't possibly appreciate these delights. Babineau concluded his spiel assuring the gathering that he had acquired years of experience as a wine connoisseur courtesy of numerous State Transit, Trans Dev and Transit Systems luncheons and dinners. Secretary Mark Moray was rapt with Claassens thoughtful suggestion for the venue of the wedding reception and banquet, assuring him that Albo would likely be most enthusiastic with Alex's generous offer.

A few days before the wedding festivities Claassens was interrupted while giving a speech at a union executive meeting, proposing a new special levy on members to cover the union's generous assistance with the expenses for the holding of Albo's wedding festivities, by a call on his mobile from his beloved spouse. She was frantic and in a state of panic. In an anxious and shrill voice she blurted out to Claassens that local council inspectors had stumbled upon huge amounts of asbestos in mulch in their mansion's back yard amongst its extensive flower beds and trees! She frantically screamed at Claassens, "with Albo's wedding about to be held, urgent action must be taken to remove the asbestos from our backyard." Claassens reassured her that the problem was easily fixed and not to worry.

Opportunity for some 'healthy' exercise for members in Secretary Claassens backyard!

At the end of the executive meeting Secretary Claassens called together the loco reps and various other reps and officials for an urgent emergency meeting to be held in his office asap. At the meeting of his 'coven' Claassens updated the reps and officials on the shocking development in his backyard. He announced, "boys, the union needs your urgent help resolving this fiasco. I know you'd give the 'shirts off your backs' for the union when in need. Your assistance will be required with the removal of the asbestos. We're very close to Albo's 'tying the knot' festivities. Unfortunately the union's broke, so we couldn't possibly afford any expensive protective attire or equipment. You've shown how 'macho' you are. You've coped with the hydrocarbon particles hazard when going through the underground on your trains for decades with a few 'pieces of silver' thrown in for drivers as a sweetner and you have assured me and the bosses that you can cope with DOO (Driver Only Operation) with the NIF (New Intercity Fleet) and the replacement for the XPT's despite occasional accidents involving passengers being caught in train doors at stations and being 'hung out to dry' in court for 'thirty pieces of silver'. You can easily cope with this trifling asbestos clean up job in your normal clothes. It'll be a piece of cake! Normally I'd be delighted to pitch in as well, but I have high level negotiations with Sydney and NSW Trains executives to attend. After this little job,

I'm sure you'll be delighted to help out with catering for Albo's big event and the Loco reps would provide a troupe of 'Flower Boys' for the wedding. Remember, boys there's always room at the top for those who prove their worth!"

The wedding held at Centennial Park in Inner Sydney

The wedding site swarmed with the reporters and TV crews from the corporate media outlets desperate for interviews, film shots, and snaps of Albo and his soon to be spouse. The soon to be wed couple had just jetted in on a Dassault Falcon 7X private plane at tax payers' expense. Then had rolled up at the venue on e-scooters! As a publicity stunt for the Minns Government 'alternative public transport' option particularly for the elderly and disabled commuters during the Bankstown line closure. The news media reporters were determined to penetrate Albo's wall of Loco Div. Reps moonlighting as 'flower boys' supplied thoughtfully by Secretary Claassens. There was the usual swarm of members of the high end of town, assorted CEO's from Trans Dev, Transit Systems, Busways, Keolis Downer, Sydney Trains and NSW Trains, and Pacific National CEO's and all the other major companies, the political establishment and the union hierarchy. Even Peter Dutton Leader of the Federal Liberal Opposition turned up sheepishly with a bizarre present. Perhaps aligned with the Liberals next Federal Election promise, a lego set for building a model of a micro nuke reactor! As part of Liberal plans, the mini nukes would be re-branded as 'tanning salons' so as to avoid alarming locals when installed in shopping



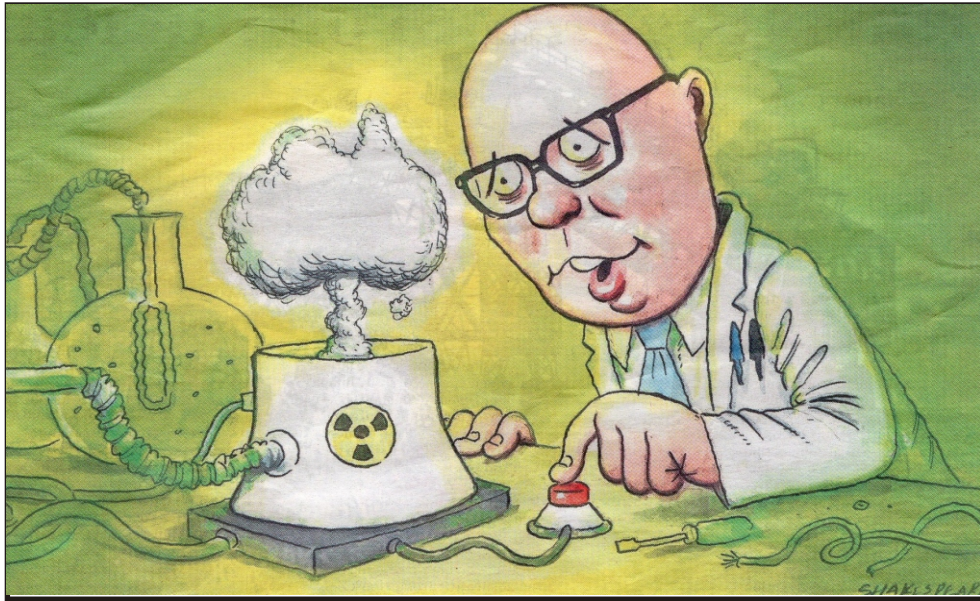
centres and malls! The mini nukes would fit in nicely with the proposed nuke waste dump for the AUKUS, US and UK nuke subs. Foreign Minister Penny Wong provided as her wedding present an anti-Chinese 'attack dog'. Transit Systems CEO Michael Magee's present for the exalted couple was a Swiss made, former 'Transit Academy' Optimisation 'speed up' stop watch! Exalted corporate identities, James Packer 'Archbishop of Corporate Australia' and Rupert Murdoch 'Pope of Global Capitalism' jointly acted as Parsons for the wedding ceremony.

Banquet and Reception at Secretary Claassens modest pad

RTBU officials and reps were stunned by the opulence of Secretary Claassens mansion. They were dumb founded, speechless with some even fainting when glimpsing the expensive luxurious Persian carpets and imported from Italy, ultra expensive Carrara marble floors, columns and even sculptures of various ALP and ACTU luminaries. The reception and banquet commenced with speeches from the illustrious guest of honour Joe Biden, Albo and then the host Secretary Claassens. President Biden after confusing Dutton with Albo, wished the married couple well. He then referred to another 'relationship' down under, the AUKUS nuke subs deal. Biden expressed delight with Albo's assurances that Oz tax payers and others could easily cope with the massive cutbacks to achieve the half a trillion dollars to cover the killer Subs cost, Pt. Kembla subs base and the nuke waste dump. He was sure locals in the Pt. Kembla area willingness to cope with certain risks of nuke fallout in the case of stray retaliatory nuke missile strikes from China or Russia.

Following his 'puppet master' Joe Biden's spiel, Albo rushed to the rostrum. He thanked host Secretary Claassens for the great venue and banquet all covered by his generous members donations and Richard Olsen TWU National and NSW Secretary for providing entertainment for the gathering. However he concluded on a sour note with a call for belt tightening to meet the massive AUKUS subs expenditure.

Finally Secretary Claassens came to the rostrum. He wished Albo well with his new wife. He chuckled that he was certain the parliamentary "bonking ban" would not apply on their honeymoon and in their matrimonial home! He went on to provide a particularly positive spin to the plans for the Pt. Kembla nuke subs base and nuke waste dump. He announced to the audience, "my members would be facing the need for alternative employment options particularly train crews with the further conversion of the conventional heavy rail lines to Metros after the precedent of the conversion of the Bankstown line. However they would be delighted to be retrained for work on the nuke waste dump and its maintenance". He quipped, "if my members get a little toasted from the increased radiation exposure, they would



easily cope with it. They'll even thank me, for providing them with the opportunity for a free tan! They have shown over decades they are made of the 'right stuff.' They coped seemingly without ill effects with toxic hydrocarbon particles when working on the City Circle underground stations and going through the connecting tunnels.”

The TWU Big Band and Choir serenaded the guests while they tucked into spreads of expensive foods including roast game, freshly caught fish, caviar together with numerous expensive other foods and wines, with such hits as the Abba's “its a rich man's world”, the themes from the Godfather Parts 1 and 2, and the Sopranos and finally with the AUKUS nuke killer subs and looming War with China and Russia obviously in mind with that cheery 60's rock hit “On the eve of destruction!”

Just as the banquet was finishing up, Queen Sally McManus of the ACTU dramatically burst into the room followed by a bevy of scantily clad 'good time girls' from the most exclusive establishments, she had talent spotted on her many overseas trade union junkets. Even from the 'choice' Young Blondes of Sydney and Melbourne were in attendance.

Shortly afterwards, the guests departed for Alex's luxury spa and sauna. The troupe of lusty loco reps were given 'right of way' to barge in via the 'tradesman entrance' for the 'members of the lowly working class level of the organisation'. They couldn't believe how hospitable Alex had become! They charged in like stampeding water buffaloes or rouge elephants, wildly stripping off their 'flower boy' outfits with gay abandon!

Cries of outrage came from other reps and low level union officials queuing up. They shrieked, “Preferential treatment!” Luckily Farren Campbell, Loco Div. Sec. Who

had just arrived at the festivities, saved the day, cooling the angry mob down. He lectured them, “Our loco reps would ordinarily give the shirts off their backs for Alex and ALP Godfathers like Minns and Albo! Ordinarily Alex would have them eating out of his hands! I'm sure you will understand, he has to sweeten the Reps up for the new push with DOO (Driver Only Operation) with the NIF (New Intercity Fleet) and replacement for the XPT's toward the end of the year and cave in to the Metro conversion of the Bankstown line and followed by other lines.”

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

Waverley Depot News

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Havoc Wreaked by Privatisation & Transport for NSW at Waverley Depot!

Dear Sparks

Waverley is the busiest depot in Australia. The drivers are burnt out and have no chance in keeping up with these timetables Transport NSW have screwed us.

By the time we pull up at the end of the run the next run has already started.

The timing points are so out. It's nothing but dangerous.

Transport NSW gives us 5 minutes layover breaks and they are hoping that we don't take them and just keep on driving.

As for wages we have become the lowest paid depot.

ACT: \$43.00 ph base pay.

Melbourne \$36.80

Brisbane \$35.90

Newcastle \$34.49

Waverley \$32.47.

Welcome to Australia's busiest depot.

We have been screwed by The privatisation and Transport NSW.

Waverley union bus drivers have had a gut full in trying to get meetings at Waverley.

2022 : 1 meeting

2023 : 1 meeting .

We asked for more meetings and better communications and we got nothing.

The union notice board is empty.

We don't have a voice in Australia's busiest depot.

ITS NOTHING but a burnt out union here at Waverley.

There was a petition circulated to call an Extraordinary Election of the RTBU Waverley Branch some months back. However there wasn't a Emergency meeting held.

The people behind it called it off.

I'm not too sure who was behind that, as there were no names to it.

The buses run well and are clean. I consider there is no problem with them.

Angry Waverley Driver

Region 6 Drivers Brutally 'Thrown Under the Bus' with New Rosters!

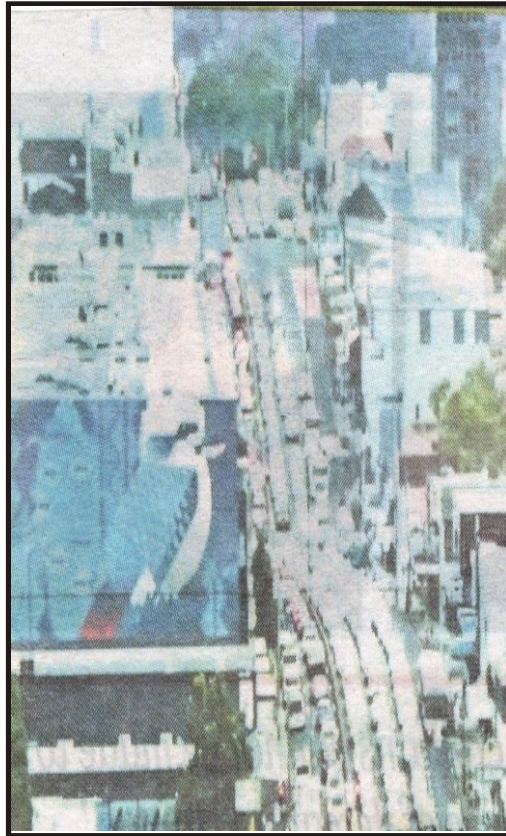
Leichhardt Depot News

Sparks: What's the latest at the depot?

Leichhardt Driver1: Many ex-STA/RTBU members are angry with the new merged rosters, particularly AM shift drivers with their shifts starting much later and finishing much later. Overall TWU members/Transies drivers should overall be happy with the rosters as they are getting better conditions and wages. Their situation has improved 20%, but ex-STA drivers conditions have gone down hill 20%. Why is this occurring? Either it is a deliberate move by management to upset ex-STA drivers or it is just an accident.

Sparks: What is the situation with meal breaks associated with the new rosters?

LD1: There has been a very serious incident involving the meal break issue which has angered us. A driver while out on his runs instead of taking his meal break at the Lee Street meal room, went back to the depot to have his meal. Subsequently he contacted the radio room that he would be late running due to having his meal break. However, they expected that he would have the meal break at Lee Street. He advised he had the meal break at the depot, as his food had to be refrigerated. On his bus there is of course no refrigeration and his food would spoil. As a result he has been



penalised by management. He was given a written warning. He was told to get himself a cooler bag. He suggested, they provide it and he was told maybe we will all get a Christmas gift, 9 months of rotten food yet to come!

'Optimisation'

This new viciousness by management associated with the new rosters may be associated with the 'Optimisation' management approach. It became popular in management circles in the 1990's. It involves using existing rules to cut our conditions closer to the bone. It was tried out at Pt. Botany Depot in the 1990's but it didn't work out. It was also tried out at other Government Enterprises such as Australia Post.

Sparks: What is the situation with the Rozelle Interchange?

LD1: In late March I have noticed much less traffic gridlock in the area. It may be associated with motorists avoiding the trouble spot area or now using the nearby tunnel. There definitely has been an improvement with the interchange, but it still isn't good.

Sparks: LD1: What's the latest with Transit Systems senior management?

LD1: Daniella Fontana has replaced Jamie Sinclair (retired) as General Manager of Transit Systems. She was Leichhardt Depot Manager for 15 to 20 years and I always found her to be fair and reasonable. We'll see. Other news is that management is going on a new driver recruitment push. Lately management has bizarrely put up in buses on overhead rails card board bus driver recruitment material associated with their 'Transit Academy'.

Sparks: What are your impressions of the new merged rosters?

Leichhardt Driver2: We ex-STA drivers are very angry with them. We have noticed meal breaks have been reduced from 50 minutes to 43 minutes. Many meal breaks are now to be taken at Lee St. and Bondi Junction. The Lee St. meal room is just a dis-mountable with just 3 toilets and is completely inadequate. At Bondi Junction, the room is quite inadequate in size with only 4-6 chairs. As a result many drivers have to have their meals in their buses. Ex-STA/RTBU drivers have had their shifts extended to 5 hours 15 minutes to be the same as those for the TWU/Transee drivers. New drivers are continuing to constantly leave the job. In March, 15 new drivers came on the job, but only 9 were left after being on the road and facing its rigors for a short time.

In a nutshell, management is using the new rosters to tighten up our running times and finding further excuses to harass us.

Tempe Depot News

Sparks: What are your impressions of the new merged rosters?

Tempe Driver: With the new merged rosters, management has seized the opportunity to squeeze and squeeze more out of us. The job has become crazy with the tight running times being imposed. Many of us, can't cope with the new rosters and are considering leaving the job. Some however may appreciate the longer shifts imposed with an eye for earning more money.

There is no constancy with the shifts. The shifts are starting at significantly different times and with wildly varying lengths. In the case of some shifts, we are being obliged to drive excessively long hours such as 10 hours in a day.

The bosses have seized on the new rosters to wipe out our layover breaks at the end of our runs due to late running. Meanwhile meal breaks have been cut back to 43 minutes if you are on time with your runs. If not, you have an even more reduced meal break!

The bosses have brazenly thrown basic OH&S considerations out the window with the tightened running times and other cut backs!

Kingsgrove Depot News

Sparks: What's the latest developments at the depot?

Kingsgrove Driver: With the new rosters we are facing a much more difficult situation on the job. The bosses are seizing the opportunity to shorten running times. They are seeking to squeeze more out of us without any compensation. The RTBU and TWU are still represented at the depot but are offering little resistance to this onslaught. Some drivers are working to rule, and not jeopardising the safety of passengers or their bus to meet the unrealistic running times.

Huge Increase in Bus Trips Cancelled in Sydney!

ABC Radio News 27/3/24: Reports there has been a 70% increase in bus trips cancelled in Sydney in 2024 due to bus driver shortages and inadequate recruiting. The report of the dramatic increase has been referred to the Minns ALP NSW Government for consideration about action on the issue. This news item mysteriously was only put up for an hour or so before being deleted!

MELBOURNE BUS NEWS

Sparks: What are your impressions of the situation of bus drivers with Trans Dev in the Melbourne Metropolitan Area?

Trans Dev Driver: We are facing a much worsening situation on the job. As a result of cutbacks to overtime last year, our wages were cut by thousands of dollars. This year we are facing a \$900 cut back in wages. Management is constantly cutting back shifts everywhere. Meanwhile they are constantly bringing in more casuals as drivers which is disrupting things. Our reps are all bosses stooges and don't put up any resistance to the bosses' constant attacks on us.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of Sparks we will discuss West Coast Railway from 1996 to 2000. As in previous editions of Sparks names have been changed.

Sparks: What was the situation in Victoria in June 1996?

Ichabod: The Kennett Government had been returned at an early election in 1996 with a reduced majority.

Archie: At V/Line we were to look forward to the break up of the PTC who were operating all Government Public Transport in Victoria. Two Government agencies were to be set up as Metro Trains and Metro Trams to be eventually privatised.

Sparks: What was to happen to V/Line?

Forsyth: Four lines operated by V/Line were to be put out to tender. These were Melbourne to Swan Hill, Albury and Sale. Also Frankston to Stony Point.

Rastus: This would have decimated V/Line. V/Line was to be only an operator of Commuter Services. The Union made it known that they opposed any further break up of V/Line.

Ichabod: West Coast made it known they would be tendering for these services when tenders were let. V/Line employees were hearing rumours about West Coast that they wanted to operate most of V/Line. At the same time West Coast was given accreditation from the Victorian Government to operate Special Trains all over Victoria. It seemed when West Coast asked for extra funds they seemed to get everything.

Roscoe: Another rumour circulating was if West Coast was the successful tenderer, the Government would allocate some rolling stock to West Coast. It was also rumoured that State Treasury was opposed to breaking up V/Line.

Ichabod: As for the tendering of the four country lines by March 1997, no tendering

had occurred, but an incident happened at Sale.

Sparks: What was that?

Ichabod: The V/Line Station Officer at Sale was working in the office when two West Coast Directors turned up and asked to be shown around the office. When asked by the Station Officer why they wanted to look at the office, they informed him that if they won the tender to operate the line, they wanted to know the layout of the



office. The Station Officer told them to leave the building and come back if they were successful with the tender.

Rastus: In March 1997 a new EBA was being registered. The union had been leaked information that the PTC was to be split into two train companies, two tram companies to operate services in the Metropolitan area. There was no mention of V/Line. In fact PTC managers did not know of these plans. Privatisation was officially announced in April 1997.

Ichabod: The main issue was Superannuation and working conditions to be rolled over to any EBA. As a result, negotiations broke down and a 48 hour stoppage was called for the Grand Prix weekend March 1997.

Archie: One result of the stoppage was that Kennett said he would take the RTBU apart piece by piece.

Rastus: The union held a number of stoppages over the Superannuation issue and the dispute was eventually settled in November 1997 with a new EBA which was further rolled over in 1998. So when privatisation occurred all conditions were to be protected.

Forsyth: In April 1998 the Government announced that the PTC was to be broken up into five business units. These business units were two tram companies, two train companies for Metropolitan services and for Country services V/Line was to be a retained in its present form. These companies were to be corporatised then in 1999 to be privatised as various franchises. V/Line Freight was to be sold.

Ichabod: West Coast was to keep Warrnambool until the mid 2000's. In 1998 they obtained a Steam Locomotive and from October 1998 this train commenced operation. This train will be discussed in a future issue of Sparks.

Archie: It is now early 1999 and there is a reshuffle of Directors at West Coast. One of the Directors is paid out. This was one of the Regional Directors who was a former senior V/Line employee. It was rumoured the other Director used him to gain his knowledge.

Forsyth: Late 1998 and 1999 a number of West Coast employees jumped ship and obtained positions at V/Line.

Sparks: What was the reaction of West Coast?

Forsyth: West Coast did not like their employees going to V/Line and when they gave notice, one office employee was terminated. V/Line said that the employee could start at V/Line straight away.

Clarence: In September 1999, Victoria went to an early State Election. Kennett had called the election hoping to gain an increased majority. One of the policies of the Labor Opposition was to rehabilitate the lines to South Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Traralgon plus extra trains. It was this issue and Compulsory Competitive Tendering in Local Government which led to the demise of the Kennett Government.

Rastus: It can be said that from this day West Coast Railway appeared to be on borrowed time.

Roscoe: We all thought so but a locomotive shortage amongst Freight operators resulted in West Coast being able to lease locomotives to these operators. This resulted in increased revenue.

Sparks: Again we have run out of space. In the next issue we will discuss the years 2000 to 2003.

In this issue of Sparks we will discuss EBA negotiations and ongoing issues on the Albury Line. Once again Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff will discuss these issues. As in previous issues of Sparks names have been changed.

Sparks: What is the current situation regarding the EBA?

Cecilia: The answer is nothing!

Cedric: There have been six four hour stop work meetings from 3am to 7am over the dates of December 16, January 25 and February 12, 16, 19 and 23.

Sparks: Have these stoppages been effective?

Jethro: These stoppages have been effective. No train has operated before 8am and the disruption has continued well into the evening peak.

Sparks: What is the main issue of this dispute?

Cecilia: Job Security. This has been described in the STOP PRESS in the last issue of Sparks page 22.

Rastus and Roscoe: Drivers are negotiating a separate EBA to traffic staff so they are holding stop work meetings. If our negotiations fail, then we will hold stoppages.

Clarence: The best time to hold a stop work would be March 21st to 24th.

Sparks: Why?

Jethro: The Australian Grand Prix will be held over these dates. V/Line staff think this would be the right time to pull a stoppage.

Sparks: What about non-unionists?

Shem: They haven't been game to turn up at work. If they do they will be scabs. With Salaries Staff, the ASU members will front up as they are not in dispute with V/Line.

Ichabod: The main issues are job security and also the same wage rise at Metro Trains. Over the last five years in Regional Victoria full time jobs have been replaced by part time jobs. It makes myself sick when I hear the V/Line Chief Executive say extra jobs have been created.

Cedric: What the Chief Executive does not say is these jobs are part time.

Archie: Because V/Line is a Government Department the board of V/Line has to abide by Government Wage decisions. The Government wants to keep wages below inflation. If the Government loses this dispute the 17% over 4 years wage claim will flow to other State employees. *(Editorial Comment: given the current inflation rate it would be below inflation, doesn't take account of increases in superannuation deductions to 12% and therefore a real wage and money in the hand cut. How is this an acceptable part of a log of claims?)*

Ichabod: What has not been mentioned in any media release is management maybe preparing V/Line for privatisation. If they tried it on employees then it will be easy for foreign companies to walk in. We may have a State Labor Government but what is stopping a future Government from privatising V/Line?

Cecilia: V/Line is trying to change the culture in the workplace.

Sparks: We must move on. What is the situation regarding the Albury Line?

Rastus and Roscoe: The main issue is with the Velocity trains suffering from mechanical issues.

Cedric: Station staff are sick and tired of these breakdowns. Take last Christmas Eve. The 16.30 Melbourne to Albury train was replaced by buses.

Jethro: The passengers were waiting at 14.30 hours and no train was on the platform. The Control Room only announced at 14.40 hours the train was still coming from the yard. By 14.50 hours it was announced the train was to be replaced by buses.

Cecilia: This was bad public relations. On other occasions the 12.00 Melbourne to Albury has been reduced to three cars instead of six cars. It is like a circus when this occurs. People board the train and the conductor has to explain to passengers who had booked seats in the front unit to proceed to the coach terminal for replacement road coaches. Some passengers refused to travel by coach and of standing in the train to Albury.

Sparks: Is there any solution to this problem?

Roscoe: The answer is NO. One manager's solution to the problem is to remove the Buffet schedules, replacing them with extra seating. This manager told one of the

drivers of this proposal.

Rastus: Common sense would tell you to put another Velocity Train on the standard gauge.

Archie: This issue has been a problem since the Passenger fares were lowered in March last year. Compulsory Reservations were introduced in July and have been made permanent. As for any extra tourism, the answer will be NO.

Sparks: What about the conductor who 'dobs in' drivers and other V/Line employees?

Cecilia: This individual has received a promotion. This person now works as a trainer.

Rastus: This means that this SLUG will be training full time and informing them that it is okay to 'dob in' your work mates.

Cedric: This is part of V/Line's long term plan to change work place culture. It is my opinion they will not succeed.

Sparks: Once again we have run out of space. We hope you win the struggle for a new EBA. It will be interesting over the next few months.

Cecilia and Roscoe: In having the final word by having industrial action we hope to achieve a superior EBA. As for buses on the Albury line, V/Line employees have no confidence with V/Line Management as regards over crowding on the line. Finally running Buffet Modules for extra seating on Velocity trains is taking the easy way out. An extra Velocity train is needed for the Albury line.

STOP PRESS 18/3/24

As this issue of Sparks goes to press industrial action at V/Line is hotting up. There have been stop work meetings from 3am to 7am on January 25, February 12, 16, 19 and 23. There was a stop work from 3am to 4am on March 8 and a rally of V/Line workers outside V/Line Head Office. Further stop work meetings are set for March 22 and March 28 Easter Monday. One disappointing feature of the stoppage on March 8 is that a certain number of employees at V/Line decided to work. This occurred at various depots around the State particularly conductors and customer service staff. Further details in the next issue of Sparks.

STOP PRESS 5/4/24

Industrial action was cancelled from March 25 to Easter Thursday due to State Government intervention. Negotiations are being continued with a representative for the State Government at the negotiating table. Also with the stoppage on March 8, a certain group of V/Line workers who are union members decided to work. It is causing a fair amount of tension on the job.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' NEWS FLASH

Decline in Quality of French Railways

An incident, which occurred on the night of January 19 to 20, 2024 in very cold weather, caused talk of the Paris-Clermont railway line: while this journey is supposed to last three hours, the breakdown of a locomotive left 700 travelers without water, electricity or heating for eleven hours. A "nightmare" which, widely relayed by social networks and the media, led the Minister of Ecological Transition Christophe Bechu to summon the CEO of SNCF (French State owned railways) Jean-Pierre Farandou to ask him for a "plan of concrete and immediate measures"... within fifteen days. He can always dream.

"Is the SNCF Paris - Clermont-Ferrand line really the worst in France?" This line frequented by nearly 2 million travelers was already one, in 2011, of the 12 "sick, saturated or problem lines" listed by the SNCF itself; in 2023, it counted 121 delays of more than one hour, 33 of more than two hours and 38 train cancellations. In addition, the latest spectacular incident on this route did not beat its record, established in 2019, where a train took fourteen hours to complete it. On the other hand, what has changed - at the national level, and no longer just locally - is that delays have lost their exceptional character in the eyes of everyone. Thus Frederic Aguilera, vice-president of the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region in charge of transport, admits: "Today the equipment is so rotten that it is a mess."

And the general director of Intercites adds: "The equipment is so exhausted that every day we bet that it will hold up[1]. And the SNCF spokesperson admits: "There are so many under-investments that have not been made for years that we pay the price at some point.

According to the collective "Clermont-Paris train users", the repeated material breakdowns on this section are due to "the obsolescence of the railway infrastructure" and "the failure of the equipment", the trains being over forty years old and locomotives over thirty years old. But we can draw the same assessment from other lines since, again according to the SNCF spokesperson, the Paris-Clermont connection in fact only occupies third place among French "galley lines". In first position, there is Bordeaux-Marseille, with 26.6% of trains arriving late at their destination last year; then we find Lyon-Nantes, with 21% delays. And, after Paris-Clermont, he cites Paris-Limoges-Toulouse (see the following article).



But what is behind this decline in "SNCF quality" - and in particular on the Intercites lines? Above all, the progressive reorganization by the SNCF of its "main line" services around the TGV alone. Before the appearance of this "high-speed train", the Intercites lines formed the backbone of the railway network, and they were an important regional planning tool by connecting the populations of metropolises and those of medium-sized towns[2]. Their disappearance in favour of more expensive routes which erase the stations by no longer stopping the trains conversely constantly reinforces territorial segregation.

In addition, the SNCF has organized its own competition, now offering car to home services, car pooling, regular coaches, etc. By diluting the railway activity in a more global "mobility" offer, it has aligned its policy with the "Road rather than rail" consensus in vogue in ruling circles.

On February 15, 2018, Jean-Cyril Spinetta, former CEO of Air France, presented Edouard Philippe, then Prime Minister, with a report on the future of rail transport[3]. He recommended, among other things: the refocusing of rail transport on TGV services between the main French metropolises; the modernization of "everyday trains in urban and peri-urban areas"; examining the maintenance of small lines with regard to their cost; a new status for the SNCF - the previous one dating from... 2014; the gradual disappearance of "railway workers" status, with

plans for voluntary departure for two years.

The recommendations in this report were not surprising: they were inspired by "recipes" previously applied to other public companies - from France Telecom to EDF via La Poste. The government immediately took them on board, and announced the opening of a period of consultation with the unions with a view to their implementation. SNCF became a public limited company; the railway lines, and even the management of the network, have been opened to competition; the end of the "railway workers" status has been planned, as well as the elimination of services deemed unprofitable[4]...

From the Thatcher years to the Blair years, the United Kingdom set an example in terms of privatization and liberalization of public services. Water, rail, telecommunications, gas and electricity, post office, urban transport, prisons... everything has been there, apart from the national public health service, the NHS. From the 1990s, the former public service British Rail was divided into pieces which were sold; the railway network and the management of the lines were dissociated, and the management of the lines itself was divided into several regional concessions; the train fleet has been entrusted to separate companies, which rent them at high prices to the line operators, providing their shareholders with millions in guaranteed profits from year to year...

But the privatization of the British rail network quickly degenerated: problems of coordination and loss of expertise led to numerous incidents - until the Hatfield train disaster which, in 2000, cost the lives of four people. The government found itself forced to re-nationalize the network in 2002, and it never attempted to re-privatize it. The repeated bankruptcies and scandals did not stop there, because they also concerned the management of the lines themselves. Indeed, although train prices in the United Kingdom are among the highest in Europe (according to the British Department of Transport, they have increased by more than 23% since privatization in real terms, therefore taking into account the inflation), the quality of the rail service is as bad as that of the service provided in France by the SNCF: delays and cancellations of trains, crowded and dilapidated wagons... Also, in a 2017 survey carried out for the "We Own It" campaign ("It Belongs to Us"), which pushes for the re-nationalisation or re-municipalisation of public services in the United Kingdom, 76% of British respondents said they were in favor of a return to public control of the railway system as a whole.

In France, the leaders did not opt for an all-out privatization of the former public monopolies, but for their transformation. Air France, France Telecom, EDF-GDF, La Poste, SNCF, etc., have become commercial companies placed under more or less diluted control of the State, and which have profited both from their rent-seeking situation in France and government protection to expand abroad, including acquiring services privatized by other countries.

The law for a new railway pact passed in June 2018 thus enabled the "financial consolidation" of the SNCF Group: the State took over its debt to the tune of 35 billion euros "in order to increase its investment capacity in modernization and renovation of the railway network. This law organized the opening to progressive and differentiated competition, the end of status recruitment[5] and the negotiation of a "new social contract".

Since 2020, SNCF has been made up of a holding company and five limited companies: SNCF Réseau, SNCF Gares & Connexions, Rail Logistics Europe and SNCF Voyageurs. The latter manages all of SNCF's passenger transport activities, including Ouigo (see box). SNCF forms, with the companies Keolis and Geodis, the SNCF Group. The State is the sole shareholder of SNCF, whose capital is non-transferable; and since 2010 it has also been the organizing authority for the so-called "territorial balance trains" (TET) that are the Intercities.

Coming back to the Paris-Clermont line, the State has launched a modernization program concerning it, with work on the network financed to the tune of 1 billion euros and with the arrival of new trains, called "Oxygene", delivery and commissioning of which are planned for 2026. However, there are already reports of major delays in the production of these trains and in the operation of this line...

Finally, as a large part of the investment for the "global regeneration of the network" must be fueled by the profits of SNCF Voyageurs, and as the SNCF must increase its contribution in the next four years, it finds itself confronted with contradictory injunctions. For 2024 alone, the State is requiring an investment of around 1.7 billion euros, or 70% of its profits in 2022[6]. The SNCF will therefore have to run more trains with fewer resources; maintain Intercity rates; ensure (unlike its competitors) a larger part of the investment in the network while assuming the dysfunctions which are the responsibility of the State. At the same time, it has still not specified how the famous "100 billion euros" plan for rail by 2040 that former Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne announced on February 24, 2023 will be financed.

On January 14, 2024, LFI MP Clementine Autain foolishly attributed, on her Twitter account, the delay of a train she was on to the "privatization" of the SNCF. Immediately mocked for her blunder, she corrected the situation by declaring that, of course, the SNCF was not privatized, but that "opening up to competition and liberalization led to a deterioration in traffic", and that the SNCF was "forced to prepare for profitability because it was opening up to competition".

It is my opinion that our travels will hardly improve...

Vanina

Notes:

1. "Clermont-Paris train: "We cannot cut Auvergne off from Paris for so long", waiting for concrete measures", FR3 Auvergne, January 24, 2024.
2. "When the French state sabotages the train", by Vincent Doumayrou, Le Monde Diplomatique, June 2016.
3. "SNCF reform: the aftermath of the Spinetta report", Vie publique website, February 26, 2018.
4. "Dismantling of the SNCF: 30 years late, will Macron repeat the same mistakes as the British?", by Olivier Petitjean, on Basta!, February 20, 2018.
5. The special retirement plan was abandoned on January 1, 2021: railway workers hired after this date no longer benefit from it. SNCF management explains that the occasional daily cancellation of trains is due to a lack of drivers, because many of them have retired.
6. Initially, this share was set at 60%.

New Zealand bus and train workers attend stop work meetings

WSWS Report: 12/4/24 Bus and train workers in New Zealand's capital Wellington stopped work on Monday to attend two-hour union meetings to discuss upcoming contract negotiations.

Tranzurban bus drivers attended a Tramways Union meeting while rail workers attended a Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) meeting. The meetings, which are a legal provision of the Employment Relations Act, are supported. RMTU members employed by Transdev and Hyundai Rotem discussed remits workers submitted to the local branch. Their main demand is for a "general wage increase" with a figure to be decided and pay and allowance increases across the pay scales. Also discussed were improved entitlements such as medical retirement, superannuation contributions, restoring 1.5 previously lost sick leave days, and discounted and free travel privileges.

The workers want to restore claw backs in wages and conditions cut as a consequence of decades of privatisation by governments and councils. Both transport unions have a history of shutting down strike action and imposing sell-out agreements. They have never run a co-ordinated industrial campaign across the capital's bus and train networks.

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.

Only in this way will we see the creation of a democratic, united, fighting organisation which can stand up for the rights of workers and their families against unhelpful union officials, bosses, political parties and governments.

Combined Rail Unions EBA Claim Continued from page 3.

Why are important issues such as opposition to the Bankstown line closure and conversion to Metro and a new DOO push with the NIF buried in the claim? If you don't understand the implications of the the Metro conversion see Editorial page 2 and the issue of DOO has certainly not been settled. Was a key reason for not holding mass meetings to discuss the EBA claim a way to sneak through these issues as done deals? Claassens refusal to put the NIF Deed on the RTBU website/social media indicates no agreement to a functioning guards compartment.

Is another a hidden agenda of the claim, a ploy to defuse workers anger and pressure over the spiraling cost of living by 'letting off steam' with token industrial action set up to fail like with the EBA 2022 campaign?

