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Sparks

THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

**O'Farrell Govt. "Iron Heel" Threatens Privatisation,
Part TimeWork, Job Losses! ALP Union Hierarchy
Escapes into its Burrow! Members' Voice Organises
on the Job To Fight Back With Direct Action!**



STA BUSIE NEWS;

RAIL CORP & STA CORRUPTION;

"WORKERS' CONTROL"

LETTERS;

RAILCORP TRAIN CREW NEWS;

VICTORIAN RAIL NEWS;

MEMBERS' VOICE REPORT;

TOO MUCH RAIL CORP BOOZ;

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.

Some of the important news affecting train crews is a push by Rail Corp to change ETR Guards' duties, as a big step toward imposing DOO (Driver Only Operation). Following a brazen cave in by Union Head Office on the issue, there was outrage amongst many guards. Resulting in the union hierarchy pledging full support for any guards facing disciplinary action due to watching the train onto the station for safety reasons and so adhering to the previous procedure. Consequently, this procedure remains in place per guards section union advice and until an Official General Order comes out regarding the new procedure. (See article Page 3.)

The O'Farrell Govt is pursuing a range of attacks in Rail Corp particularly in regard to introducing part time work, cut backs to important entitlements, job losses and is making ever more threats of privatisation. Whilst the ALP union hierarchy is resorting to ever more lame duck responses. Members' Voice is organising on the job for direct action to meet the O'Farrell onslaught. (See article page 6.)

An important way the O'Farrell Govt. "Iron Heel" is being imposed in public transport is via the "rubber stamping" of various aspects of outsourcing and privatisation by the notorious "Booz" management consultants reports. (See article Page 8.)

One of the most important ways solidarity amongst the grass roots in the fight against the bosses and union hierarchy sell outs is undermined is via the spiders web of corruption which enmeshes some workers and sections of the bosses and union officials via direct participation or by "turning a blind eye". In this edition, we examine an important way to tackle this serious problem. (See article Page 3.)

In State Transit, more nefarious aspects of the enterprise agreement are coming to hand. In this edition, we look at how new rosters imposed on new drivers as part of the EA is posing a serious threat of increased accidents and a slippery slid down the STA disciplinary procedure for them. (See article Page 10.)

Sparks welcomes contributions in the shape of poems, articles and cartoons by transport workers. Please send to Sparks PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW or via our web site www.sparksweb.org

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SPARKS WEB SITE -

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Rail Corp Train Crew News

The most important news with train crews has been the outcome of the notice of dispute issued to RailCorp over the guards watching the trains onto the platform. Guards have felt union head office did not provide the support it deserved. The outcome of the Conciliation by the Industrial Court was that in regard to operating doors on ETR Trains: "Crew cab doors must remain closed until the train is within the platform and the speed of the train has reduced to walking pace. For guidance, walking pace is approximately 5 km/h". We have been very unhappy with the decision. Other news is that Rail Corp wants to change the position of the guard on inter urban trains from the rear to the 4th and 5th car on certain locations. The union is approaching Rail Corp to explain its reasons for the change. Some Train Guards consider we should be paid a First Aid Allowance. Whilst in regard to trains based at Flemington, the cabs are reported to be quite filthy. As a result of the reduction in the number of cleaning team members from 2 to solo.

Concerned Guard

RAIL CORP & STA CORRUPTION!!!!

Message to Public Transport Employees from "Anonymous"

Who is "Anonymous"?

"Anonymous" is the name originally given to a group of Internet hackers that use their talents for the good of humanity. They don't enter or shut down computer systems for criminal or personal purposes.

They do it to expose the lies and corruption at the heart of Government and Corporations that propagate a system that impoverishes and enslaves large numbers of the general population (the 99%) for the benefit of a small elite (the 1%) who own and control just about everything.

They are also active in the Environmental Movement, Workers Movement and Occupy Movements around the globe.

There is no formal structure to Anonymous, just a code that is understood and followed by those that carry out the tasks in the name of the 99% (the dispossessed and the impoverished).

The anonymity on which they depend gives them great power by hiding the people involved behind an idea whose time has come. The totally rational idea of emancipation and freedom for all of humankind and saving the planet from the ravages of rampant exploitation and destruction is what they are about.

To find out more about “Anonymous” see this video at <http://goo.gl/xUiY3>

Regards, Sparks

The Message for Public Transport Employees from “Anonymous”

It has recently come to our attention that certain managers and employees within the Bus and Rail divisions of Public Transport have discriminated against their fellow workers through sheer nepotism, corrupt conduct and criminal behaviour. This breaks the solidarity of working people and causes the deep malaise of demoralisation. At a time when working people need to work together against a system that is looking to cut working conditions and jobs these breakers and wreckers are working together to further their own cause at the expense of fellow workers who are honest and trying to move forwards together. This is criminal.

We warn you that there is nowhere to hide and that you are being watched very closely.

Information is being gathered about your traitorous acts. You will be exposed and punished at every opportunity according to “our” rules. You know who you are! We know who you are! Our tentacles run deep in all spheres of society, including computer networks and international affairs down to workplaces through people that we have on the ground.

Greed has become the dominant culture within all Public Transport groups and in particular RailCorp. When the media and the political system espouses that “greed is good” is it any wonder that workers are at each other’s throats while bosses rub their hands because this is the easiest way to control the workforce. This capitalistic aberration pervades all of society. Greed and it’s individualistic rather

than collective aspect is a destructive force for working people. It must be eradicated and a new solidarity built amongst working people and in the unions which represent them.

The trade unions which safeguarded workers in the past from the dog eat dog tactics now operating in the workplace are leaving their members to fend for themselves due to poor leadership. The rise of the Occupy Movement, on the other hand and of which we are part, is a new beginning in this regard, because it’s organisation is based on mutual respect and solidarity.

Recent events have come to light about promotions and job placements on CityRail’s City Circle. Certain jobs were dished out according to your whims and corrupt networks rather than fair processes. This is unforgivable. In particular, recent events at Central Station and



other stations on City Circle have left a very nasty taste in our mouths. Certain people in your mutually beneficial networks have had the cream for long enough now through creative rostering and promotion.

The practice of “Secondment” where large numbers of staff are acting in higher graded positions is just an unfair process for promoting your kin. There is no fair process in the allocation of positions these days. Selection panels are loaded, and while they are vetted by following procedural rules, they are really no more than a front to give cover while simultaneously giving a hand-up to the chosen ones. Your networks and procedures leave the door wide open to abuse and selfish behaviour. This is corrupt conduct which does not go unnoticed.

Human Resource policies are contradicted by the latest EBA.

Generally there is an understanding from within HR that all those eligible to act at the higher grade should be given the chance on a rotational basis to improve skills and enhance promotion. However this sentiment is very rarely practised. The reality is that you may have 2 people at the same grade doing different jobs and consequently being paid at different rates of pay for long periods of time. Merit does not enter into job placement or promotion. This is intolerable.

The EBA does leave the options for cronyism open by stating, under the heading Merit Review, that “In any review of merit selection procedures, Station Managers will be involved in the process of selecting station staff to act in higher grade.” Unions have handed management a blank cheque here to pervert the merit process by agreeing to this clause.

We know that networks of nepotism and probable corrupt conduct reach well up into the upper echelons of RailCorp management to very senior management. The managers in question have gathered around them and promoted people only they can trust. Anyone else inadvertently encountering these processes and rubbing up against the networks of manipulation is fearful to speak out in case they are victimised and so are bound by a self imposed code of silence.

Senior management has formalised this code of silence by forbidding employees from speaking out or from simply having an opinion. Employee’s communications are monitored at work and even opinions expressed from home, on the Internet, in newspapers or public events can be used to dismiss an employee simply for having an opinion.

Recently a mid-level manager circulated a directive stating that any fliers, papers, petitions etc, put up or circulated in the workplace which expressed opinion or thought that did not officially belong to RailCorp or Transport for NSW was to be removed immediately.

The code of silence must be broken so that these networks of nepotism lose their hold over employees. Workers on the job must speak out when they see unconscionable conduct or forever suffer the self imposed yoke of quasi criminal style discrimination.

People who speak out must be supported by their fellow workers in large numbers. It may be a good idea to get this support base going before speaking out as this will limit any repercussions. If a view is widespread it is much harder to destroy.

We at “Anonymous” are busy with world events and with combating injustice that is unfolding globally. We will do what we can to assist as time and circumstances permit.

However this will not always be possible. For this reason the task must be left to you. The task is urgent. If you fight we can win. We are Anonymous. We are Legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget. Expect us.

MEMBERS' VOICE SAYS "STOP WORK TO STOP BARRY O'FARRELL AND THE LIBERALS" and to "SAVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT"

The recently elected Liberal Government has put workers on notice that they are to be punished for the failed state of NSW, even if that proposition is a lie. Successive attacks on workers along with outsourcing and privatisation, have seen the deterioration of public health care, grubby rail stations, franchising of public ferries and falling standards in our schools.

Rail Workers and commuters in NSW face grim prospects because of proposals now before parliament. A task force headed by David Callahan, (Ex Coca Cola Amatil, Ex Price Waterhouse) the architect of the ferry privatisation, is now stalking within RailCorp looking at ways that the rail budget can be cut. Budget cuts usually means job losses. Even before these recommendations can be implemented O'Farrell has started down his road of slash and burn. Amongst the proposals already being implemented are:

- * The removal of Transit Officers from trains and stations to be replaced by a reduced number of Ticket Inspectors and Police. These are jobs that will never come back. As Sparks goes to print Transit Officers are getting their marching orders. Regular police can now be spotted patrolling stations and standing at ticket barriers.

- * Changes to the NSW Industrial Relations Act (Amendments to Public Sector of Employment) which imposes hefty fines on unions of \$110,000 per day for taking industrial action in wildcat strikes or non sanctioned actions (up from \$10,000) to \$220,000 for a repeat offenses. Just what constitutes a wildcat strike remains rather vague.

- * Changes to train crew rosters and the introduction of part time work for guards and drivers. This has the possibility of allowing management to "split shifts" into a couple each day. The disadvantages of "split shifts" is that train crew may spend a greater amount of time away from home but only get paid according to actual hours worked.

- * Roving cleaners who clean trains are now being rostered to work alone on trains in transit. This is a safety issue as well as an intensification of their work.

Other cleaners on stations and in workshops have had numbers reduced yet they are expected to do the same work as before. This is an impossible situation that is causing a large amount of stress to the workers involved. Of course stations and trains consequently remain substantially grubby as our customers can attest.

In a weak kneed response from the RTBU in a late bulletin they say "The RTBU requested additional controls but this was all but ignored."

Why a “request”, rather than some demands? Why not inform the members and carry out their wishes? Members are upset that no action is being contemplated let alone acted upon. Why would management tell not tell them “go jump”, they see no threat from the Union.

All of these changes and others proposed are being done using a re-interpreted 2010 EBA, which in all of its ambiguity leaves rail workers open to attack from the government and RailCorp. This was the main reason Member’s Voice opposed a positive vote for the Agreement. The EBA was craftily assembled by management and unfortunately endorsed by a union leadership which still remains weak and politically compromised.

Another round of Station “reforms” leading to more part time workers is a distinct possibility. Part time work itself could lead to Station Staff working split shifts. They theoretically could be used only in the morning and afternoon peak periods yet have a 12 hour working and waiting day.

The O’Farrell Government is now taking the attack on Public Transport workers, and Public Sector workers in general, one step further. The Government’s ultimate desire is to have all Public Sector workers covered by State Awards and covered by NSW Industrial Relations laws. O’Farrell believes that the State Government should control the wages and conditions of its employees. He says that the new legislation plus a wage freeze could save the NSW Government \$350 million over 4 years. His problem is that 50,000 workers, including rail and bus workers in NSW fall under Federal Fair Work legislation. Now he is preparing to apply to Fair Work Australia to have State employees covered under his draconian new NSW Industrial Legislation.

O’Farrell:

“To be fully accountable to NSW taxpayers, it is necessary to achieve consistency across the public sector.”

“It is our strong and logical view that where a state makes laws to regulate the terms and conditions of its own employees, those laws and policies should be respected and given effect to by Fair Work Australia as well” says Barry O’Farrell.

An example of the Governments meanness is directly illustrated by their threat to not issue travel passes to new employees. Employees have had a right to travel freely on public transport for some time. The “Home and Duty” Pass was awarded to Pubic Transport staff in lieu of a wage rise and was part of an agreement back in the days when workers had to part pay for travel.

By threatening to deny travel passes to new employees the Liberal Government is attempting to modify the awarded working conditions of employees. Yet those same employees are at present covered by a Federal Award. Surely meddling with award conditions is a reason for the Unions to act and stop them in their tracks. Alas, so far there has been no response from the Union leadership.

RailCorp is experiencing momentous changes. The transfer of thousands of employees to what was “NSW Transport” during the Labor term in office is being accelerated under the Libs. The new entity has had a name change to

See Page 27

RAILCORP TO SUFFER FROM TOO MUCH “BOOZ”!

by The Transport Scrutinizer.

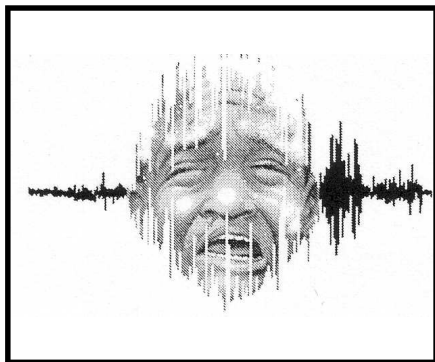
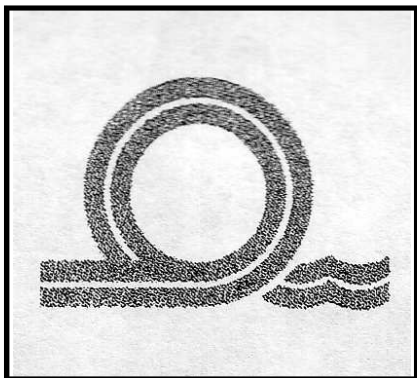
Booz-Allen Hamilton Consultants. A name that evokes hate and resentment in the hearts and minds of State Rail Authority employees whose jobs, lives and financial stability were mindlessly butchered at the behest of these industrial saboteurs from 1988 to 1996. I know. I was there! Now they, Booz-Allen, are about to unleash their cost-cutting terrorism on today's RailCorp employees. As many of you are only relatively new to the Rail Industry please let me fill you in on what Booz-Allen did to those of us who were once proud SRA Employees all those years ago.

1988, Booz-Allen commissioned to trim back the SRA. Recommendations made and presented to NSW Transport Minister Bruce “The Smiling Assassin” Baird who immediately agrees to present the findings to Premier Nick Greiner. Approval is given by Parliament to act on Booz-Allen's recommendations by mid 1989 and so begins the brutal decimation of around 25,000 SRA Jobs.

From 1989 to 1994 with regard to rail services to the NSW public, we saw the sudden demise of all remaining Loco hauled and self-propelled 600, 620 and 900 class diesel passenger services on country services and their inadequate replacement by modern rollingstock on extremely reduced timetables. The wholesale withdrawal of B,H,Y,W and M type single deck and mixed stock suburban electric sets which created a huge rollingstock shortage that lasted ten years. The total withdrawal of the U type single deck Interurban sets. The full scale privatisation of freight trains came next. More and more rationalisation came, until what is now called RailCorp exists. All of this due to recommendations from Booz-Allen.

As I have stated, around 25,000 out of approximately 40,000 SRA jobs were abolished. These were achieved by the following cutbacks and closures:

1.Cutbacks-reductions in station staffing and administration(non-managerial) positions, track and loco & rolling stock maintenance staff. Transport Investigation Branch. 2.Closures-Transport House, Wynyard, 99 Macquarie St. City, Loco Works & Carriage Works Eveleigh, Train Equipment Section, Suburban Car Works, Testing Lab all at Redfern, Wagon Maintenance Centre and Road Motor Vehicle Works Clyde. Punchbowl Electric Car Sheds, Enfield Tarpaulin Factory. Sydney Terminal Inwards & Outwards Parcels. At Chullora all of the following were closed; ELCAR, Boshops, Loco and Rollingstock Shops, Plant & Equipment Depot, Sigshops, Trackfast Parcels, Apprentice Training College, Per Way 1&2 Workshops. At Newcastle we saw Cardiff Loco Works, Honeysuckle Wagon Repair Shops, Broadmeadow Loco Depot Heavy Repair Section all close. At Port Kembla we saw the Loco & Rolling stock Shops close. Likewise at many other locations statewide. Again all of this thanks to Booz-Allen. All current RailCorp employees get ready for the fight of your lives. Only you and the combined Unions can try to stop this from destroying, what is left of your jobs.



STATE TRANSIT EARTHQUAKE!

Deep within the mantle of State Transit, the first tremors of an earthquake of privatisation are being felt. Caused by massive international pressures of neo-liberalism building up under the NSW O'Farrell Govt. and super charged by the insatiable profiteering of multinational companies. Only some drivers and certain economists have detected these initial subtle vibrations.

Nick Greiner, Minister for Infrastructure, he is at the helm and is assisted by corporate lawyers in sharpening the knives for privatisation, which he was unable to complete when he was last in power in NSW, over 20 years ago. In those days, we also faced a major management crack-down. We were being fined \$10 to \$100 for petty reasons, such as minor accidents anywhere.

The first vibrations of this earthquake are being felt in the middle crust of the STA amongst middle management, who have come under ever more pressure to control drivers. Depot manag-



ers have taken back the allocating of Sunday overtime, rather allowing drivers themselves to swop Sunday shifts. An exception is at Pt. Botany Depot, where recently the manager put the issue to a vote by drivers. The ballot result, was that the drivers overwhelming voted for drivers to control the allocation of these shifts. Only a very small minority voted to have management control the shifts allocation. Whilst BOT 2 & 3's have less work as new drivers have to get their own heavy vehicle licences. The nastiest bosses and most ruthless stay on and cut closest to the bone.

These vibrations gyrate down to drivers, with more people leaving the job and some mechanical sections being privatised and new drivers who can be transferred to any depot at the whim of the bosses, sitting in the corner not knowing where to go.

The explosive result, will be a lot pain for us and a tsunami wrecking houses, marriages, job security and a lower standard of living.

S.T.A. BUSIE NEWS

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

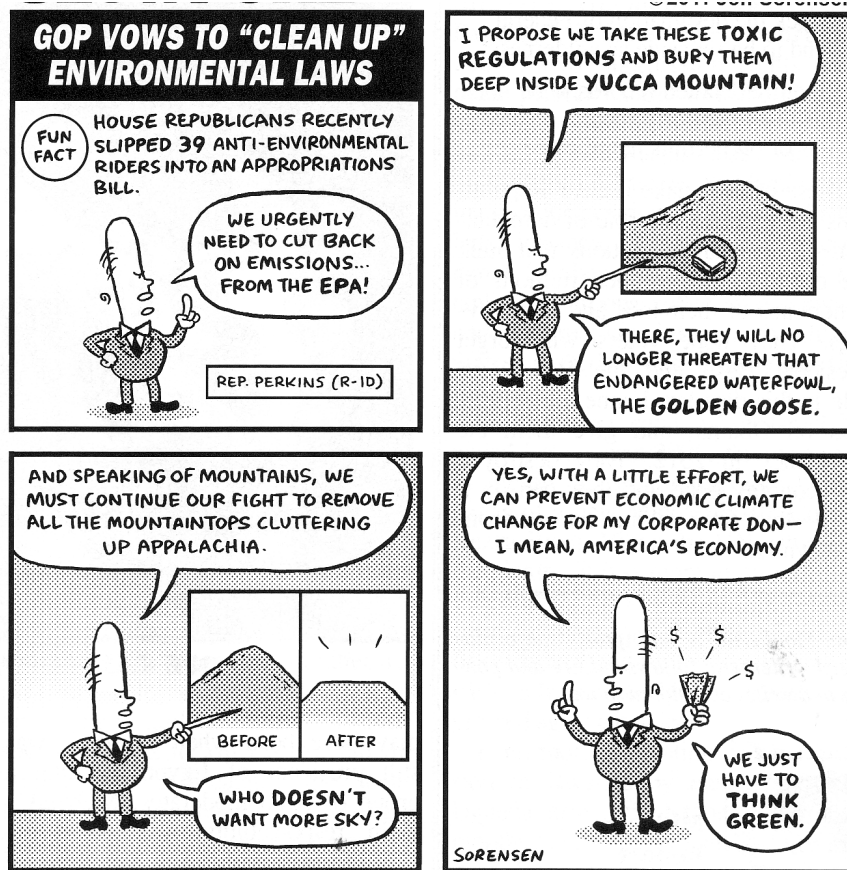
Sparks: What are your impressions of the Enterprise Agreement?

Waverley Busie: As preconditions for the 3.25% pa rise, we had various cut backs to our conditions imposed such as the loss of WAD from shifts and new drivers having to pay for their own heavy vehicle licences. In regard to the wage rise, small amounts are still to be paid. Whilst, we have discovered an even more obnoxious nasty affecting the new drivers, due to the sell out of the EA. They have been placed on a new block, relief roster and can be sent to any depot without recourse.

Prior to the EA approval, there had been a provision in their contracts on these lines, but it was never imposed on the new drivers. As a result, they now, often have to travel long distances from their homes to work. At Waverley, we are seeing many new faces, which appear to be new drivers on these rosters.

One new driver, I was speaking to recently, mentioned he had been based at Leichhardt and did have to spend 5 hours per day travelling to work. These drivers can be moved to new depots at the whim of the bosses and face a difficult situation on the job. As unlike, long term drivers, they lack knowledge of the routes and streets. It's a foreign land for them. This a very unfair situation.

I have to apologise for not taking a stand to get a better deal for the new drivers. The STA could have introduced these new rosters without going through the EBA process. However, cunningly, by having us vote to accept the rosters as part of the EBA, they sought to head off a backlash, following the rosters being implemented. It also goes to show how incompetent the union officials were in allowing it to go through.



All these attacks on our jobs and conditions I consider to be in line with the bosses' plans for weakening us up for privatisation, later down the road. This whole approach is similar to that of the Liberal Greiner Government in NSW over 20 years ago, which sought to screw the worker as much as they could.

Sparks: What's happening with the shifts?

WB: The shifts are being less family friendly. Particularly, you can't swop shifts to get weekends off and help out friends. Now if you don't want to work Sundays, management takes over the allocation of the shift. The job has become much more difficult for drivers who are parents. I was speaking to a driver, the other day who was upset that he was unable to swop a day shift for an am shift. It's all about management control! Control! Control!

Sparks: How is fare evasion?

WB: Drivers have been told to not bother checking passengers' tickets. I continue to notice on my bus, that passengers are only paying \$2.10 tickets, despite going all the way from the Wat-

son's Bay to the City and should be paying \$4.50. As a result, the STA is losing a fistful of money, which could fund our pay rises, without the trade off of our conditions. The other day I was on a bus and saw some kids just walk on and sat down, without paying for tickets. There is a lack of liaising work and communicating with shop keepers by the STA. As a result, there is considerable misunderstanding by the shop outlets regarding the tickets to be sold. Generally, the railways are okay regarding ticket selling. The STA strikes me as completely hypocritical, in its slackness regarding collecting revenue from fares, but viciously slashing into our conditions to save money!

Sparks: What are your impressions of the depot?

WB: Its remains a very soulless place. The intention of the bosses appears to be about taking the spirit out of drivers. There is a lack of comradeship and sense of atomisation. Its stale. We aren't allowed to hold parties as we used to do and drinking alcohol and smoking is outlawed due to OH&S considerations. Rules, Rules and Rules! Only union meetings are allowed. There is an usual amount of control on our activities at the depot. The bosses are wanting to put more offices downstairs. Why the need for more offices? As a result, it will be cramped, with inadequate space for us to play snooker and table tennis. The depot belongs to drivers. In regard to the institute which drivers have contributed toward its operations. They should also have the say on whether it's to close.

Sparks: What's happening at Strawberry Hills?

WB: The STA is now having private contractors as trainers for Drivers' Refresher Courses at Strawberry Hills. There seems to me to be a conflict of interest with private contractors running the courses. Whilst there is a set program controlled by the STA. I doubt there is any input from anyone on the job. Again it's a matter of management control! Control! Control!

Sparks: What's the latest with safety on the road?

WB: We have been told that you can't protect yourself if attacked. You can't push your assailant away. You can only put hands over your head. Whilst the 600 transit officers are to be abolished. Instead the police are to take over their role in regard to bus security. It can't work, as the police often have other priorities in their jobs and won't turn up to handle incidents.

Sparks: What are your thoughts regarding the STA's approach toward PR with drivers?

WB: They don't use it for workers. They are just interested in cutting our conditions. Intriguingly in the private sector, there has been a very good example of PR. In Melbourne recently, the owner of a private transport company sold the firm, and from the proceeds he gave \$17 million back to his workers! This "gift" may in reality have been a tax dodge, but still, it's a nice gesture, which you couldn't expect from the STA.

Sparks: What are the latest developments with the O'Farrell Govt's attacks on the public sector?

WB: The other day on the radio I heard a news item about an interim report by Dr Kerry Schott, a former Treasury Official and head of the NSW Commission of Audit. She claimed that the public sector was inefficient and advocated the selloff of assets. I think she was talking crap and just seeking to justify the O'Farrell Govt's privatisation agenda. The O'Farrell

Govt appears to have learnt lessons from other privatisation surges and have become quite cunning. In the media, rather than saying on the basis of consultants reports they will privatise certain assets or utilities, they now say that they “could look into privatising.” Deceitfully, they have adopted a step by step approach, involving outsourcing small sections of utilities, as part of implementing large scale privatisation and minimising a public backlash and worker outrage.

Recently, I was speaking to a booking clerk who used to work at Edgecliff Station. He mentioned that out of the 4 booking clerks there, Rail Corp is threatening to have only one full time and the other 3 would be casuals. He has also heard that the bosses are wanting to privatise all ticket selling. Deceitfully, the Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian on a salary of over \$250,000 apologised in the media for the planned elimination of thousands of jobs in RailCorp. She is wealthy. What does she know about the hardship and stress imposed on the sacked workers? This is the typical cold approach of a Scrooge!

Sparks: What’s the latest with the bosses?

WB: They have again embarked on a crack down on sickies. A union ban has been imposed on going into the office, if you are called in over taking sickies. If the bosses take too many sickies, why can’t we interrogate them over the issue? Several guys with injuries on compo with injuries have been sacked. Whilst, driver instructors could also be next in line for job losses. This will deny us any career progression in our jobs.

Sparks: What’s the latest with the mechanical sections?

WB: The number of staff at Mechanical sections is being reduced due to the alleged duplication of functions, with Port Botany being the hub for mechanical work in the Eastern Suburbs. It’s really all about the STA cutting staff, to save money and it is not more efficient. This corner cutting leaves gaping holes with maintenance work. You will have the “we don’t do now, we will do later” attitude toward repairs.

Sparks: What’s news at Kingsgrove?

WB: A memo was issued by the bosses at Kingsgrove insisting that all drivers wear the new uniform. These bosses should get the boot!



LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

Sparks: What's latest at Leichhardt?

Leichhardt Busie: One of the most worrying and important issues is the introduction of "Daily Allocation Rosters". It's one of the cutbacks to our conditions associated with the recent enterprise agreement which provided a 3 ¼% pa pay rise. The STA intends these rosters as a new cost saving measure. No one can apply for them. However, drivers on the holiday relief roster have been placed on them. They are called in to work at any depot on any day. Many drivers on the new rosters are very unhappy with it. As they lack training on the routes of the different depots where they are sent to work. This situation has very serious effects on O.H.S/ (Occupational Health & Safety) grounds. As with this lack of route training, these drivers are more likely to have accidents. With all the travelling time required as part of these rosters, and the associated increased payment of travelling allowances, I can't see the STA achieving much savings.

Mechanical Section News

This is the story of the apprentice engineers at Leichhardt bus depot. All of the mechanical repairs at the depot have been out sourced to a private company on a five year performance contract.

The apprentices are expected to work compulsory overtime on low fixed wages. They are expected to carry out the dirtiest work. If they fail to perform, they are reported to the bosses. Their engineering courses are taught at a technical college out at Rooty Hill. They are expected to pay for the courses. If they pass the courses, the company belatedly pay for them the cost of their courses. If they fail, they pay for the courses and must pass before they can do any more skilled work. The union the AMWU (Australian Manufacturing Workers Union), simply collect their dues. There has never been a union meeting in the depot.

An Engineer

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

Sparks: What's the latest at Burwood?

Burwood Driver: Some of the most important news has been a savage sickie crackdown at the depot. Half a dozen drivers have been affected. However, local union action has been effective in forcing a back down by the bosses. In the case of one driver who supplied med certs for each of the 5 sickies he took, he was called into the office and placed on stage 2 of the sickie review program and banned from taking his normal set days off for 3 months. The union brought the case up to Harry Singh in Head Office, resulting in the bosses having to back down on the disciplinary action. As they provided no warning to the driver regarding the number of sickies taken.

Sparks: What's happening with the depot fleet?

BD: The bosses have decided to take B12 buses off weekend evenings as they consider not enough mileage is being done. As a result, for Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, these buses are off the road. In place of the B12's, we have to drive the B10's. There are number safety issues affecting, the B10's, relating to their length and lack of manoeuvre ability. Whilst there is a problem with displaying destinations. Grass roots activists are getting on to the issue and are referring it to the depot O.H.S. (Occupational Health & Safety) Committee to take action.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In issues 139 and 140 of Sparks, issues were raised about the removal of a manager at Spencer Street. In this issue Drivers, Conductors, Station Staff and Staff from Head Office have combined to talk about this issue. Once again names have been changed.

Sparks: Can you tell us about the new manager?

Clarence: He is young, a bit of a go getter and on a lower salary than the manager, who was forced to resign.

Sparks: You don't say.

Sheona: When the previous manager resigned, we expected the job to be abolished to cut costs.

Clarence: Anyway he is on a lower salary and he takes his orders from a Woman in Human Resources who is seconded to the station.

Jethro: One of the first moves he made at Spencer Street was to introduce a new journal which Conductors have to split sales from Adult and Concession tickets, on the journal when Conductors' sales are paid in the booking office.

Clarence: This adds more work for Conductors to carry out and these Cashiers in the booking office are on a higher rate of pay.

Jethro: In other words the Cashiers in the booking office will have less work to do. The manager claims this process will streamline the work of the cashiers.

Clarence: It may make the job of the Cashiers easier, but it makes the job harder for Conductors because on weekends, Conductors can sell up to seventy tickets due to stations being unattended. Imagine trying to split these tickets into Adult and Concession.

Jethro: Some Conductors have told management to stick it and they are still working to the old way, as it is easier to pay the money in. The ticket books have Adult Coupons and they can be split into Adult or Concession and balanced up by the Cashier with the aid of Computers. This new journal has been introduced so as to have the Conductors selling ticket and so reduce booking office staff.

Sparks: What else has this manager done?



Jethro: He has put out a notice saying that you have to wait until sign off time before you can leave.

Clarence: In all the years I have worked in the Railways, once you have finished Conning your train or completed your station duties, you were able to go home, about 10 to 20 minutes early.

Sheona: This notice was issued because someone was sprung by a Service Officers, sneaking off early.

Jethro: About an hour early.

Clarence: In other words, the majority have to suffer.

Sparks: In most Railway Companies particularly in workshops, they have time clocks where you are only allowed to leave two minutes before Clock Off time.

Jethro: Yes, but what is the purpose for hanging around? In all my years on the job, most of the Staff Clerks let you go. Also if you came to work on the first train and it was ten minutes late, you were allowed to sign on at the sign on time.

Clarence: There was good will on both sides and sometimes of something out of the ordinary happened such as a service disruption, a person signing on later would jump up to the next sign on time just to keep the trains running. Now Conductors will refuse to help out.

Jethro: Unfortunately, we have one relieving Staff Clerk who is a bit of a drongo who made the staff know they will wait until sign off time.

Clarence: This person is anti union and would not join the union when they worked in a lower grade.

Sheona: You see these are the types of people Human Resources promote to these jobs. They want an anti-union culture around the place.

Clarence: One Conductor told this Jerk that goodwill has gone out of the industry and a Service Officer who is also not in the Union reported the Conductor to Human Resources saying the Conductor bullied the Staff Clerk.

Jethro: The Conductor refused to front Human Resources and due to a shortage of Conductors the matter lapsed.

Sheona: You can see the new manager was put there by Human Resources to do as they tell him. He wouldn't have the guts to stand up to them. You see other managers put their names on the notice and they are now running for cover because of the backlash.

Rastus and Roscoe: At this point may we join the discussion. You Conductors and station staff put up a lot with these idiots. We, Drivers do not have to wait around until sign off time, we just ring up our operations section to let them know, we are in position to run the trains. In fact, when we sign off, it is close to sign off time or relieved, we go home and fix the times up the next day.

Sheona: Human Resources would like to smash the drivers.

Rastus and Roscoe: Yes, but we drivers have a rule. "You touch one, you touch all."

Sparks: Moving on. In issue 140, mention was made about one of the persons who was responsible for removing the previous manager being suspended and as issue 140 went to press, the person was suspended.

Clarence: This person has resigned from the job in a Confidential settlement.

Jethro: Yes, this person has departed – Good Riddance.

Sheona: All I know was this person was determined to return to work. The suspension stretched from June to November. Management had other ideas.

Clarence: The settlement was confidential and includes a monetary figure. Also V/Line will not stand in the way of this person, if they apply for a position with another transport company.

Jethro: This person achieved a fair amount of destruction to the union during their time at V/Line.

Sparks: In what way?

Clarence: They forced a Union Delegate to resign.

Jethro: This Union Delegate represented the Conductor. He was a strong delegate and everything he fought for, this person was always going behind his back undermining him.

Rastus and Roscoe: The Union Delegate who is elected by the members should have the respect of the members. We, Drivers noted the work, this delegate had done for the Conductors.

Clarence: You are correct, but not only did this person get rid of the Delegate, but also the Conductors roster A & B. The B roster was for Conductors who liked short jobs. You see not all conductors like being away overnight as they have families.

Sparks: What did this person do?

Jethro: This person took a petition to combine the rosters. This person bullied Conductors into signing a petition to have the roster changed. A ballot was taken and the vote for a combined roster was carried by a small majority. The rosters were replaced by a combined roster which is not family friendly. The previous Conductors' Delegate was devastated when the vote was carried. He had fought hard for A and B rosters.

Clarence: In a future issue of Sparks, the rosters will be discussed, due to lack of space in this issue.

Rastus: This individual also knifed the previous manager. Well this person achieved what management wanted.

Sparks: In concluding the sign on and sign off time should be negotiated. This new manager, because he is young, has a lot to learn.

Rastus & Roscoe: Once again in having the final say, this manager has a lot to learn. As for the Conductor's journal, just stay with the old journal. Regarding the sign on and sign off times, goodwill has gone out the door. If Conductors are asked to alter or extend their shifts, tell them NO! As for that cretin who received a Confidential Settlement, "GOOD RIDDANCE", if you try to apply for a job with another train operator, we drivers are ready for you.

QLD RAIL NEWS

Queensland Rail expects commuters on the Sunshine Coast to use platforms infected with wood rotting fungi. Although academics have indicated that there is a strong possibility that

the infected platforms will give way, Queensland Rail has deemed them safe for use.

Crews have attempted to repair some of the platforms, but the fungi persists. The platforms are only intended to have a twelve to eighteen month lifespan and it appears that they are due for replacement. But Queensland Rail hasn't made any move to do so.

Noam Chomsky & Workers' Control

In November 2011, world famous linguistics professor and activist Noam Chomsky visited Australia to accept the 2011 Sydney Peace Prize.

I was part of a group of five people who interviewed Chomsky during his stay. We were representing Jura Books in Sydney, which secured an interview with Chomsky after much haggling with the Sydney Peace Prize Director Stuart Rees.

We met up with Noam on Melbourne Cup day at the Observatory Hotel in The Rocks. As we introduced ourselves he asked each of us in turn about the kind of activities we were involved

in. “I’m involved in workplace agitating and rank and file organising” I said. Apart from myself and my partner Michelle there were three others in our group connected with Jura Books - Claire, Nina and Sid.

Following the introductions the topic of conversation turned to the Occupy movement. Noam was keen to examine the links between the unions and the local Occupy movement. “Has there been any co-operation by the labour unions?” “What is their attitude?” “Do they participate in rallies?” We confirm that links between Occupy and the union movement had been established.

“What role do the anarchist groups play in the Occupy movement?” asked Noam.

“There are a lot of anarchists there and they argue for open platforms and non-hierarchical structures” replied Sid.

Noam Chomsky developed a strong sympathy for anarchism very early in his life. For Chomsky anarchism is a body of thought and a practice that challenges all hierarchical systems of power that seek to dominate and control others. In particular he is an advocate of anarchist-syndicalism, a philosophy of workplace and union organising that seeks the elimination of elite rule by a class of corporate and state managers over the workforce and the population. Rather, Chomsky sees workers’ control of production and workers’ self-management of industry and the economy as the basis for a more truly participatory democracy.

“So they’re talking about the process, rather than the...” his voice trailed off without finishing the sentence. I wondered if he thought that there was something wrong with focusing on process. Did he think anarchists should be focusing on other things? He soon clarified his views.

“Process, yeah”, responded Sid.

“That’s pretty much the same with the other movements, the anarchists as far as I can see are mostly influential on the process, which is kind of interesting to see.”

“Do you think that’s an area where anarchists could enhance the debate?”

“Yeah I think so. I think it’s right to try to construct non-hierarchical forms of interaction and struggle. That makes perfectly good sense, people learn from it, they internalise attitudes, make associations, but if it’s going to be a lasting force it’s going to have to confront real issues. In the United States one of the issues that can be dealt with and is real is workers taking over closed factories.

“A multinational may typically decide to close some particular enterprise which is working fine but just because it is not profitable. There is a case right outside of Boston now in fact where a reasonably high tech manufacturing enterprise which is successful but not profitable enough for the multinational that owns it, they don’t bother with it, so they want to close it down. The workforce and in this case the union, which is a pretty militant union, offered to buy it and just hand it over to the workforce to run. They didn’t win unfortunately but if something like the Occupy movement had been going on at the time and could have provided the popular support for it they might have won.”

“If you look back, in the early ‘70s there was a very militant group of young workers, a lot of them coming out of the social movements of the ‘60s, carrying out very important strike ac-

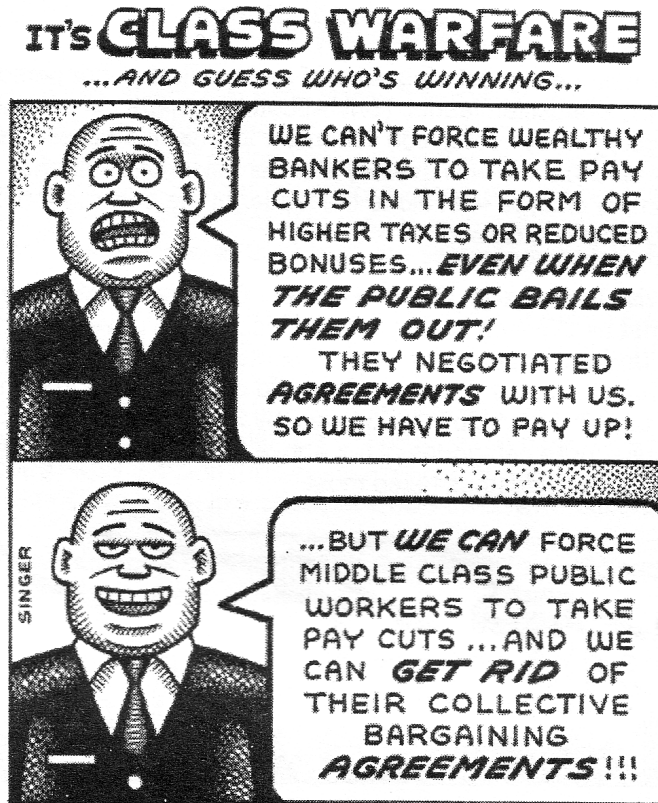
tion, industrial actions, but not just on the usual labour issues like wages and benefits but on control of the workplace.

“This was a time when, you may remember Lordstown was the famous example, when they were trying to robotise everything. It was a young workforce and they just rejected being turned into automata, they wanted control of the workplace. It was pretty interesting, it was mostly beaten back but not entirely. There was a major case in Youngstown Ohio. The US steel, big industry, wanted to shut down one of their main facilities in Youngstown Ohio. Steel had sort of built the whole

town; it was one of those rust belt areas where everything was around the industry, the workforce, the community, so it was going to destroy the community.

“Instead of just giving up, the workers and the community organised to try to take over the plant and they were getting some pretty conservative support, like from the Republican Governor and others who wanted to just keep something there. It would have been, if it had worked, a community run worker installation. Worker owned and worker managed of course are two different things but it could have gone on. Well they didn’t win it, it went to the courts and they lost in the courts but it left a kind of culture of self-management and it has spawned in Ohio lots of small, some not so small, enterprises, from laundries on to bigger things. There’s probably hundreds, maybe thousands of them by now which are worker owned, sometimes worker managed, forming networks of various kinds.”

Noam then went on to discuss the nationalisation of the US auto industry under Obama following the financial crisis and posits that an alternative to just handing it back to the rich 1%, which is predictably what happened, was handing the factories over to the workforce, something that the Occupy movement could have pressed for, had it existed at the time. Industry



under worker self-management argues Noam would enable it to produce things that are socially useful rather than simply what is most profitable. Chomsky describes how the US is desperately in need of high speed transit, i.e. rail, being 40 years behind the rest of the world in this regard.

“If this had have been done a very substantial part of the industrial system would have been collectivised and it would also be doing something useful instead of wasteful, like more gas-guzzlers. It wasn’t an option because it wasn’t part of popular consciousness but I think that’s the kind of thing where anarchists could have an effect.”

For Chomsky one of the key aims for Occupy should be to sustain a long-term movement always aiming towards future goals.

“If it’s going to survive it’s going to have to go on to constructive efforts to achieve some goal, not just have the right process, and in formulating those goals anarchists could be pressing for thinking through the kind of society we’re trying to reach.

“One of the interesting things that’s happening in the States is what they’re calling “Occupy the ‘Hood”. Poor communities – black, Hispanic – are trying to take over part of the neighbourhood; that’s starting to happen. The Occupy movements tend to be white, educated, middle class, sometimes pretty radical but they don’t reach out, so there’s kind of a race issue, not clearly, but just implicit. If that can be overcome through the ‘Hood movements, that could be pretty powerful.

“And there’s a lot of important things happening, like one thing that was quite successful in Boston was there was a major anti-foreclosure march, you know, poor people are getting smashed, [people being evicted from their homes] which ended up in the banks. That has to keep going.

“Whatever you thought about the old Communist Party, there was a lot of flaws with it but there was one good thing about it, they knew you were not going to win victories tomorrow. So you’re going to try and maybe make some progress and you fail but you’re going to be around anyway and you continue the process. Like the civil rights movement in the United States, it didn’t begin in the ‘60s, it began in the ‘30s, and the Communists were way in the front of it.

“You lose a lot of things but you gain something from the losses too; you’re ready to go forward the next time and finally you can make some progress. I don’t know about here [in Australia] but in the United States by now that continuity has been lost, everything starts anew, mostly with young people who of course don’t have the experience themselves and there isn’t enough continuity there.”

“So the implication is in linking something like Occupy and workplace organising that we need to develop anarcho-syndicalist structures”, suggested Sid.

“In the 1930s in the United States what really drove the New Deal forward was sit-in strikes, business was terrified by it. As soon as the sit-down strikes started you just get real terror because a sit-down strike is one step before just taking over the factory and saying good bye to the bosses and that’s when you start getting the New Deal legislation through.”

“It’s a bit like the Wobblies’ idea of building the new world in the shell of the old”, commented Sid.

“And you know the Wobblies [members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a revolutionary union organisation that began in the US in 1905] were very frightening, in fact that’s why they were crushed by Woodrow Wilson, because they were just doing too much. They were organising a militant workforce, so the power of the state came down really hard”, said Noam.

“Yeah, same in Australia, they were brutally crushed. My grandfather went to jail actually, for being a member”, I said.

“As a Wobbly?” Chomsky asked.

“Yeah”

“My father was in the IWW, I think we were probably the only father-son members. He didn’t understand it, he was a poor immigrant who came off the ship and didn’t know any English and working in a sweatshop and he joined the IWW. I asked him later: “Why did you join?” He said: “some guy came around...” he didn’t understand him, “and he seemed to be for the workers”, Chomsky chuckled as he recounted this family story.

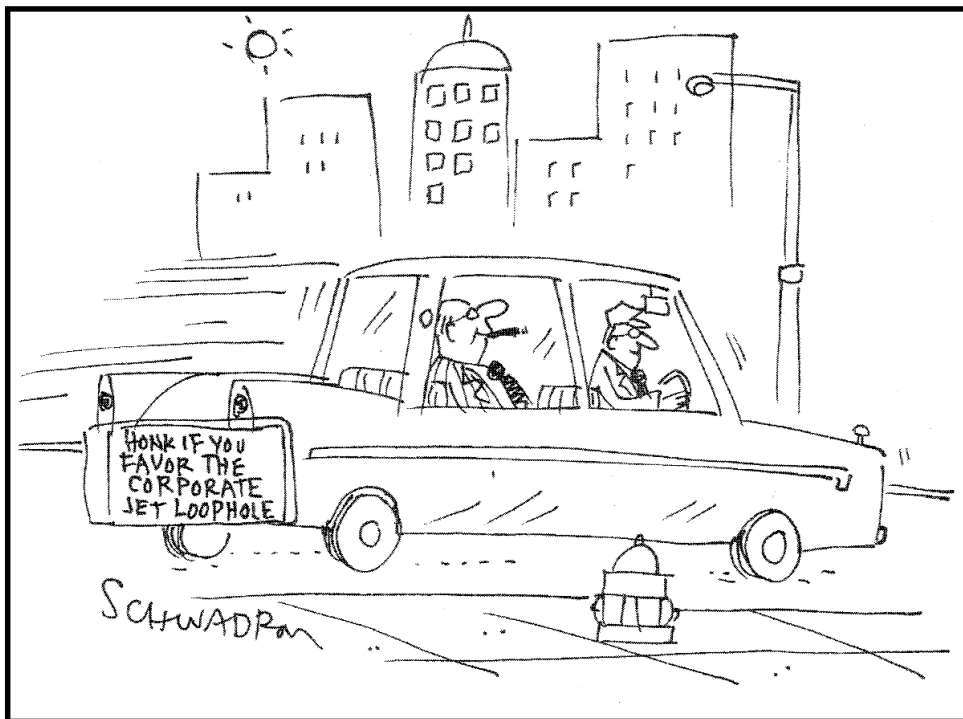
“It was just the union that showed up” I added.

Noam has always been a strong proponent of unions as the main social force contributing to improved conditions in society but I was curious about how, as an anarchist, he viewed some of the obvious limitations of unions.

“Presumably you see the Occupy movement linking up with the unions as a positive development but to what extent is a union’s capacity to organise restricted by a layer of bureaucracy and control?” I asked.

In response he talked about the period of union militancy in 1970s and the experience of young workers and marginalised communities such as women workers and Chicanos whose efforts at organising in the US were opposed by union leaders who, for example, broke picket lines of striking secretaries.

“The labour movement leadership believed, falsely of course, that they had a compact with business. You know, “We’ll manage the workforce for you, you’ll give us decent jobs and benefits”. What they don’t understand is the business classes are very class conscious, they’re always fighting class war. They’ll use the compact when they can, but if they don’t want it any more and they want to ship factories to China, they’ll do that. But the labour leadership assumed that they basically had the perfect system, and for them it wasn’t bad. They were pretty corrupt, they lived well, you know, just like other executives, they just managed the workforce. So when labour movement militancy comes along they were usually opposed to it. And the militancy can be as something as simple as secretaries organising or nurses organising because it wasn’t done – “It’s not the way we do things”. I imagine it’s not that different here [in Australia].”



Sid confirmed that it is indeed very similar and added that in Australia “there is also an escalator for some union bureaucrats to get into Parliament and into the Senate. I don’t know if it is the same in America”.

“They just become part of the... it’s good for them, it’s a stable system, it works for them, they don’t want it changed. But a lot of labour militancy has always been against the labour bureaucracy. There are sometimes pretty good democracy movements inside the unions. You know, ‘Teamsters for Democracy’, ‘Steelworkers for Democracy’, really quite good people.”

“We’ve got the same in Australia. There’s a number of rank and file groups organising within unions and becoming...” I said before Noam continued, “I mean some of these rank and file groups could be the kind that would go on to do things like what they tried to do at Youngstown and achieved partially elsewhere: worker owned, worker managed factories and enterprises.”

“Well, we’re hopeful”, I said.

We move on to discuss the issue of the Carbon Tax, something which Chomsky sees as very flawed but none-the-less “a step forward” asking “what are the alternatives? The Carbon Tax is not a great idea but it’s a lot better than going backwards and building more coal-fired plants.”

I mention that many activists are critical of the Carbon Tax for relying on market mechanisms.

“It’s good to avoid market mechanisms but in favour of what?”

“Environmentalists have argued in favour of investing in renewable energy and moving away from fossil fuels” I suggested to which he said,

“Yeah, but these are not contradictory. You can have a Carbon Tax and say ‘Ok, let’s use the income for renewable energy development’. We need to get around the inherent problems of markets but you can’t pretend we’re not in this world. We’re in this world whether we like it or not and we’ve got to deal with things within it.

“There are inherent reasons, deep reasons, why any market based system is going to almost necessarily have negative environmental consequences, just because in a market based system you are essentially disregarding “externalities”; market transactions don’t consider effects on others. That doesn’t change the fact that in the “semi-market” system that we have, it’s not really a market system, it’s a “semi-market” system, using some of its mechanisms may be the only way to prevent worse disasters. You still want to get rid of it in the longer term but maybe that’s the best thing you can use for the moment.”

This view about reforms within the system laying the ground work for more far-reaching changes is consistent with Chomsky’s long held views about “expanding the floor of the cage”, a metaphor he has borrowed from the landless peasants movement in Brazil.

“You can say “I’d like to get rid of the state” but you really need the cage, you need the state to protect you from worse enemies. Take a really old, venerable, anarchist journal like, say, “Freedom” in England which is a good, serious, anarchist journal. Take a look at the columns. I mean most of them are dealing with what you call ‘reformist’ issues – protecting the workplace, safety and health – and that’s right, that’s what you should do, and the only institution that can do it is the government which you have at least some influence over, you have no influence over the corporations. So it’s part of the protection that you have to go forward.”

As the agreed one-hour time limit arrived I handed Noam a recent issue of “Sparks” as I clasped him on the shoulder and we said our goodbyes. Our group headed to a nearby pub to debrief, going over some points of interest and agreeing that we had performed our task rather well. *by Max Stirner*

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS’ NEWS

Wildcat Railway Strike Strands Israelis at Stations

2012-02-14

Thousands of Israeli commuters were left stranded at the stations on Tuesday, as Israel Railways workers and their union announced a wildcat strike the previous evening.

Despite a National Labour Court injunction on Tuesday morning directing the workers to return to their posts by 9:00 a.m. (0700 GMT), by noon rolling stock remained silent in stations

from Haifa on the northern coast, down to Beersheba in the Negev southlands, Army radio reported.

Railway management said they were “waiting and hoping that the railway employees board would respect the injunction.”

The judge gave workers’ representatives until 4:00

p.m. to appear at a hearing, otherwise the police would be instructed to arrest the leaders and force them to come, the radio said.

Workers committee’s officials, however, said that management was responsible for the strike as well as the general state of disrepair of the railway cars and stations.

“The management is leaving maintenance work to those same companies that are responsible for all of the trains’ malfunctions over the last two years,” according to a statement issued by the committee, the Globes news site said.

“It (management) is continuing to refuse to hold negotiations with the employees board and is perpetuating the miserable economic conditions of hundreds of railway employees who have to receive welfare payments due to their low salaries,” the report said.

“Israel Railways is a proud place to work. It is a company that provides good service to the public,” workers committee member Daniel Ben-Shimon said, adding that “If that were not the case, no one would care that there are no trains today. We’re exercising our rights to take industrial action, because until now we have not received answers that we could respond to. We respect the court, and we’ll see what can be done to move forward on the matter.”

A joint statement by the workers committee and the federation said that, “Israel Railways management insists on continuing its destructive policy of trampling employees’ rights and exploiting their weakness.”

“The management refuses to hold talks for the signing of a collective agreement. Israel Railways has over 600 employees earning a meagre salary and forced to receive social benefits to make it up to the minimum salary,” the statement added.

The strike came days after the end of a nationwide public sector strike over wages and working conditions for contract workers, in a deal reached between the federation and the Finance Ministry.



LETTERS

Dear Sparks

We are facing our biggest challenge in history. The majority of flagging and barriers to become part-time. Salary i.e. sales to be decimated, dm reduced and possibly no weekend. We must fight and now.

Concerned Rail Corp Employee

Dear Sparks

In the City area, in late 2011, a duty manager has been working on weekends and public holidays in breach of the Enterprise Agreement. In a move to save money, he has also been covering the jobs of higher grade workers when they go on recreational leave by lower grades. Rather than covering these jobs with higher grade workers.

Station Assistant

Members Voice Meeting Report Back

A meeting of the RTBU Members Voice rank and file group was held at Petersham on 4 March. Issues discussed included:

- * inaction by the union leadership in regard to the looming threat of privatisation and cutbacks to public transport by the O'Farrell Government
- * the potential for a rank and file initiated campaign of on the job actions, organising and awareness raising aimed at combating the Government's privatisation agenda
- * a "log of claims" by members posing a positive alternative to privatisation and cutbacks
- * log of claims could include increasing investment in public transport infrastructure, more jobs and increased job security, increase in real wages (i.e. breaking the Government's 2.5% wages cap), etc
- * building grassroots organisation by active members
- * the possibility of linking up with the Occupy movement to help protect public ownership of public transport services, jobs and conditions
- * possible action by members to support the roughly 450 RailCorp Transit Officers who are slated to lose their jobs
- * Members Voice platform regarding the RTBU delegate elections scheduled for the end of this year
- * Members Voice to support any candidate who supports the goals of Members Voice, i.e. regular consultation with members and accountability of officials, membership driven campaigning, building the industrial power of the union, fighting RailCorp policies and management directives that undermine rights and conditions, etc
- * possible introduction of part-time train crews and station jobs

Continued From Page 7 “Transport for NSW” and is administered by many managers from private industry along with the usual transport bureaucrats.

Rail workers and other public transport workers transferred to Transport for NSW had their Federal Awards nullified under the watchful eye of the Transport Unions when they were transferred to a brand new State Award. In effect the unions have overseen the setting up a “greenfield” union agreement for transport workers. Union members have been signed, sealed and delivered into the hands of the O’Farrell government and will now face the full force of his anti-worker laws. The danger for those of us left in the STA and RailCorp is that if O’Farrell gets his way he can nullify our present Award by simply breaking up RailCorp, changing its name or transferring us all to Transport for NSW under a NSW State Award.

It’s time for us all, and especially for the union movement to stand up to the bullying tactics of the O’Farrell Liberal Government or eventually lose face and be decimated. If there ever was a time to take up the baton against Transport Management and the Government the time is now. Negotiations and polite platitudes are getting us nowhere. In fact we are sliding backwards in face of the onslaught on working condition.

There is only one thing that we have at our disposal to stop O’Farrell and that is our solidarity and our ability to withdraw our labour. We hear people say “We can do nothing - the unions are weak. etc”. The union leadership may be weak but these statements are totally untrue. More than any other workers, Transport Worker’s have the ability to hit the Government where it hurts by bringing the CBD to its knees by stopping buses, trains and ferries.

The Progressive PSA (a public service grassroots union) puts it very well on its web page:

“As indicated in the recent PSA Red Tape there is plenty of cheap talk of making 2012 “a perfect storm for the Government”. The lack of immediate union action to oppose these anti-union changes

hampers our ability to effectively challenge O’Farrell.”

Transport workers must support and commence an informed community campaign. It is the commuters and community in general that will feel the brunt of future transport changes in the way of higher fares, a reduction in safety and help, uncleanliness, longer queues in a system, that like the motorways, is and will be further geared towards profit.

Calls by the Occupy Movement around the world for everyone to stop work on 1st May in a General Strike, not consume or buy anything could be perfect opportunity for us to link with other Public Servants in NSW in a Day of Action that could provide a turning point for a fightback once and for all, instead of a stepping backwards. We cannot wait, we burn while our union leadership fiddles.

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:

1. That no person employed by the union should earn more than the average income of the membership.
2. The Spokespeople should have no executive power - all decisions should be made by the union membership in the course of 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.

MEMBERS' VOICE

WEB SITE

[Http://users.tpg.com.au/retepsni/membersvoice](http://users.tpg.com.au/retepsni/membersvoice)