

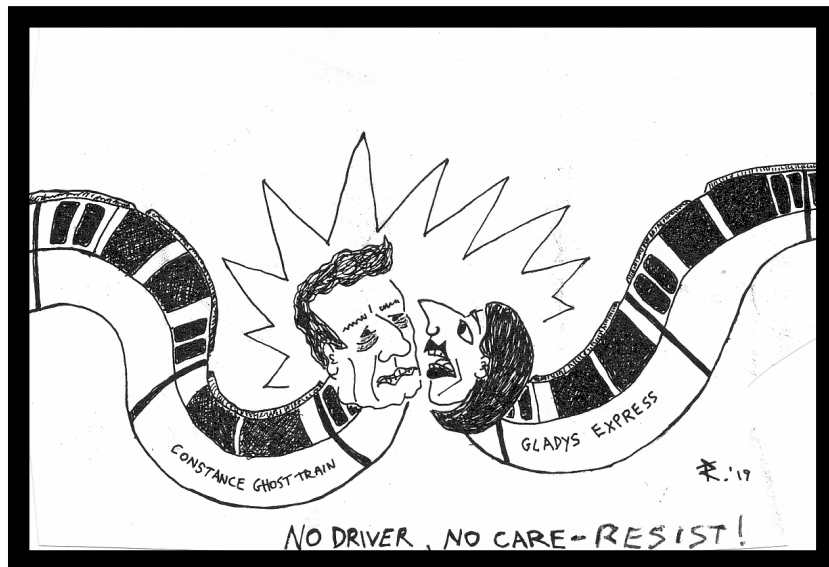
No.163

Aug.- Sept. 2019

Sparks

THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

**THE CONSTANCE AND GLADYS SNAKE HEADED
TRAINS ON THE NEW SYDNEY NTH WEST METRO.
WHAT NEXT? DRIVER ONLY OPERATION OF
THE NEW INTER URBAN TRAINS?**



Sydney Railway News;
The State Transit Papers;
International News;
Workers' Rights;

Sydney Buses News;
Interurban Guards;
International Climate Strike;
Victorian Railway News;

NEAR RAIL DISASTER COVER-UP? SEE BACK PAGE

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.

The ‘Trojan Horse’ of the New Interurban Trains

Some of the most important news in the NSW Railways is the new interurban trains to be introduced next year, originally scheduled for last March 2019, due to alleged ‘technical’ reasons. At the time of the 2018 RTBU elections, NSW State Secretary Claassens proclaimed triumphantly that a deal had been made with the Berejiklian Govt. to retain guards on these trains. Subsequently the corporate media reported ‘vaguely’ on this deal. However, according to recent reports from the union hierarchy and the media, this deal appears to be quite duplicitous and an expedient for the union hierarchy in the elections. As the Govt. is still wanting to change the guard role to customer service and undermining the job’s safe working role on these trains and the industrial muscle of the guards. With the ‘facilitation clause’ in EBA 2018, needless to say, this changed role would be ‘facilitated’ to the Millennials and Waratahs. The sell out of the interurban guards and the ‘charade of keeping the guard job’ is likely to have been approved at one of those ‘top secret’ weekly meetings between the RTBU NSW State Sec. and the NSW Transport Minister way back in 2018 or much earlier. Only direct action, can put a spoke in the wheels of this Constance/Claassens express to the dole queue.

Other news is the upcoming ‘Global Strike for the Climate’ on Sept.20th, we are helping to spread the word on the job to provoke discussion and debate to get industrial support for this very important initiative. (See article page 3.) Other news is the push to privatise the S.A. Railways. (See article page 6.) In this edition we also are putting the spotlight on various management techniques to harass and fit up workers for the sack and issues of ‘management of prerogative’ in the Railways. (See articles pages 7-12.)

In this edition, we are putting the spotlight on more nefarious outcomes of the privatisation of Region 6, such as the bosses creating and taking advantage of new divisions on the job involving the RTBU and TWU. With the latter union members and new drivers being favoured with overtime and shifts. (See article page 15.) Other issues we are focusing on are the running down of bus maintenance under Transit Systems (See article page 18.) and safety issues with the new tramway extensions in the Eastern Suburbs (See article page 17.)

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

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N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS

THE FIGHT FOR OUR LIVES

Crimson Coconut

While the fight for living standards and working conditions is still real, urgent, and on-going, one issue that is confronting all people is about to overshadow any other fight that we've been involved in. That is the fight for survival and the prospect of human and life extinction. Everyday we hear and see new scientific reports that point to the grave danger that we are all in.

This summer in Europe heat records have been broken across the continent. Temperatures of 46 degrees centigrade have been experienced in the South of France while the Netherlands has recorded temperatures over 41 degrees C, an all time record. This heat wave was extensive, moving finally to the Arctic Circle causing the biggest ice melt in human history and destabilising the permafrost that has existed for thousands of years.

Just a review of a few recent headlines should have us all waking up and taking notice:

Drought and climate change blamed for the death of centuries-old sandalwood trees.

Europe's heat wave is about to bake the Arctic.

Today's Climate Change Is Worse Than Anything Earth Has Experienced in the Past 2,000 Years.

The world's largest king penguin colony has collapsed, losing nearly 90 percent of its population.

The accelerating climate crisis due to increasing CO2, and other harmful gases in the atmosphere, leading to global warming is but one of the catastrophes that we face. Species extinction, war, water scarcity and river destruction, logging and removal of native vegetation all threaten our survival.

But why should this be of concern for unionists and workers?

The current crisis of populism, politics and democracy, springs from the same source as the environmental crisis. The elites that control over 90% of the wealth also are the same ones that have access to the earth's natural resources, often for free. The profit motive which drives environmental destruction benefits the few and not the many. Exploitation of nature and workers in a workplace is of the same dynamic. The elites only care about the wealth than they can extract, not about the people or nature that is left as collateral damage.



For example the Adani coal mining project in central Queensland will provide few jobs in reality, yet the multinational company has almost unlimited access to natural resources for a pittance. Australian Governments are pouring billions of dollars into providing infrastructure for the project which will have negligible benefits for the majority of Queenslanders and other Australians. This is money that is being deferred from hospitals, schools, pensions, public transport and all manner of public infrastructure that forms part of the social wage for workers.

The gigantic mining project (447 square kilometers) will perpetuate climate change by continuing the carbon fuel cycle that pumps greenhouse gases into the biosphere. At the same time the Adani Carmichael Mine will have unlimited access to one of the largest underground aquifers in the world, the Great Artesian Basin. The water table is expected to drop up to 300 meters during mining operations. Besides that, local rivers will be drained of 100's of gigalitres of water. The mine itself is expected to add 128 million tonnes of CO2 P.A. to the atmosphere, that's more than the amount produced by a country with a mid-sized economy, such as Vietnam.

Why does this matter for workers?

Because it really will affect us all in multiple ways.

Firstly the uncertain future caused by the ecological crisis will without doubt end life as we know it. The cliché "there are no jobs on a dead planet" really rings true. Fighting for better working conditions still does make sense in such a predicament though. Working conditions also means a plentiful planet for all, not a world with shortages of food, water and scarcity. Ecological devastation usually means the end of jobs, quality of life and alienation from nature itself. Traditional trade unions won't exist if life itself becomes precarious, instead we will probably be involved in perpetual wars over scarce resources with all the misery that will bring.

Secondly, in the short term, our governments are not addressing the issues of the environmental crisis, so we have to be actively involved in changing the political debate, even if that means changing the political and economic system.

At the moment funds are being diverted away from our needs and towards the fossil fuel industry. Huge tax concessions already exist (or no tax at all) for the miners and loggers etc who are provided these natural resources for free. They also have infrastructure built for them at public expense. This impoverishes us, the workers, while those creating the crisis are profiting at the expense of the environment and our living standard. The environmental crisis and global warming is a union issue that will take all the work of human solidarity to overcome.

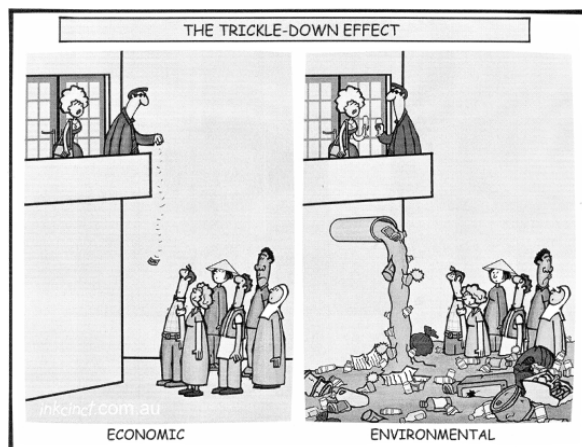
As public transport workers what can we do?

Public transport is a small part of the green solution that reduces our dependence on fossil fuels. Working in the industry should make us proud that we can be part of the solution. However, governments in Australia don't fully appreciate the benefits of public transport so massive expenditures, \$10's billions, continue to be wasted on projects such as the WestConnex Motorway in Sydney or the North East Link in Melbourne.

To get people using public transport the fight against privatisation has to be won. We should examine the possibility and feasibility of providing public transport for free. Private for-profit services usually are less efficient despite government propaganda that tells us that it is necessary to increase efficiencies. Privatisation is purely geared towards profits and will often provide the minimum service. The privatisation of Newcastle buses, and Sydney's inner west buses and now the Adelaide Trains Metro shows so clearly that services are not run for convenience but purely for profit and at great public expense.

So far public transport union officials have not been up to the challenge of mounting an effective campaign against privatisation. We have to convince them that the battle for the future must also include, not just a fight against privatisation, but it's reversal. Where our leadership takes no heed we need to replace them with people who will listen and act.

We simply have to get cars off the roads and people into public transport. This would of course mean pressure for a massive investment program in sustainable public transport. Public transport unions have to change their neutral stance on privatisation and their complacency at getting coverage of private employees. In general, employees in the private sector often have far worse working conditions and wages than public employees.



As the reality of climate change and environmental destruction bite in the very short time that we have left to act we must convince those in our unions and our leadership that the fight for the environment is a union issue. The rich will always find a way to survive while the poorest are already on the front lines of climate change and environmental degradation. For equality and solidarity alone these are union issues.

The fact that the elites are perpetuating climate change denial and that these people are the same ones bankrolling our politicians and suppressing our working conditions makes these issues Union matters. Climate change and environmental devastation is a Class issue. It's the poor that have no say, it's the poor that will suffer the consequences of climate change first and foremost.

In a public transport industry we are in a privileged position compared to other industries as we can offer part of the solution to avert the inevitable catastrophe. We can only realise the full potential of the industry we work in if we are prepared to stand up for a future in the industry. Privatisation will bring about the destruction of public transport as we know it.

Political activists such as Extinction Rebellion are blocking traffic to draw attention to the ecological emergency, yet our union leaders fail to grasp the metal. Political allegiances certainly would be one reason for the inaction on behalf of unions. The ALP does not have a viable policy at this stage to combat climate change. It is the Queensland Labor Government that have bent over backwards to accommodate the Adani, Carmichael Mine project. Meanwhile the Federal ALP, during the last election, also supported the project even though the public throughout Australia was positively against it going ahead.

As union members we need to support the Global Climate Strike in September 20th 2019. The School Strike organisers are calling unions and union members on that day to down tools and join rallies organised around the world to bring attention to Climate Change. See if you can have some effect on persuading your union officials to organise in the workplace and attend this important rally for the future.

Unions such as the RTBU and ASU have “endorsed” the School Strike but so far have failed to call out their members for the Global Climate Strike. This has to change.

A list of unions endorsing the School Strike can be found here:

<https://www.schoolstrike4climate.com/partners>

Let’s get out and support the students that have organised this rally on September 20, they have asked for our support. We have let them down in the past, we can’t let them down anymore, they are fighting for their own futures. We all have a world to win.

More info about the Global Strike for the Climate can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/StrikeClimate/>

Sydney Trains Cleaners’ News

Sydney Trains are using cleaners to perform Customer Service (staffing barriers, handling customer enquires, etc) in times of disruption despite having removed the duties of Customer Service from the designated tasks of cleaners and outsourcing cleaning. Cleaners are employed on a lower wage than Customer Service staff. So Sydney Trains can strip back the number of Customer Service staff to the minimum and cut costs.

The Privatisation of the SA Train Network

http://www.rtbu.org.au/sa_public_transport_workers_launch_campaign_to_keep_our_trains_and_trams_in_public_hands

Unfortunately this will be similar to the failed campaign of the ACTU during the last election. The RTBU don’t know how, or they don’t want to, run a campaign against privatisation. This is a very weak statement from the RTBU SA Secretary. It promises nothing except a campaign up until the next election. By that time the issue will be over. And if Labor doesn’t win you are stuck with the LNP again just like we are federally.

An article in the Guardian today says that the train crews in SA are not guaranteed their jobs under the new owner, which someone has suggested to be SERCO. Train crews faced with

this scenario have nothing to lose, they need to walk out now!. Such a course of action would not be supported by the union as bus drivers in Sydney were quick to discover.

Fair Game (part1)

Following on from A Tale of a Cover Up (Sparks No.162), a brief story of how inept management have been given a virtual free hand to do as they will, including falsifying their timesheets, as long as they toe the line and regurgitate the ‘we’re running a business’ mantra. Today your editor asks the rhetorical question, is the game fair? And of course, the answer is a resounding NO! The deeper question then is, how did the game become so unfair and this is where it gets a little more interesting. It’s all part of a greater plan, let me explain.

You see, it all started about 100 years ago, when politicians began implementing new laws without asking the people. This of course was in direct violation of the Constitution, that requires that before a new law can be created it must first be the will of the people, confirmed via a referendum. The politicians used the turmoil and hardships of the world wars to pass ‘emergency’ laws like taxation to help fund the wars. (did you know that taxation was voluntary? No? well the politicians and the so-called government know). These laws never got repealed and over time people accepted them as simply a necessary evil or something that was always there because that’s how it all works, right! Wrong! The constitution requires that any changes to how the country is run must be put to a referendum for a vote by the people. This was never done and because no one challenged the politicians and the government, they simply continued to create more and more new laws and with each new law they gradually transferred more and more power from the ‘people’ to the government. Politicians and Governments then began to sign international treaties and signing the ‘people’ into membership of the United Nations with the enactment of the Charter of the United Nations Act 1945, allowing the UN to implement it’s created laws to override the Constitution. This was in addition to politicians and government creating laws without a referendum. For those that ask how the UN can tell us what to do, that’s how!

The plot thickens, we have international treaties like the Lima agreement signed in 1975, a deliberate plan to deindustrialise Australia amongst others. In effect a deliberate plan to destroy industries, jobs and of course your standard of living, without a referendum and all for some alleged utopian greater good! The creation of the Australia Act 1986 effectively put an overlay of sorts on the legitimate Constitution, by ignoring it and your constitutional rights in the process, again illegally, without a referendum.

To put it simply. We now have a situation where parliament can create any law it likes, when ever it likes and for what ever purpose it likes without going to a referendum. Laws that “override” Common law and individual Common law rights. These includes laws that transfer public assets (i.e. the Commonwealth belonging to the people) to private corporations, called ‘privatisation’ and/or ‘public/private partnerships’ and selling water rights to private corporations while denying farmers the use of their own dams, claiming that farmers don’t

own the water, the government does! However, without a referendum it's theft by any other name! Government, the servant of the people has now become their master!

Government now claims the right to create smaller clones of itself, because it claims to not need the permission of the people to do anything and it creates local government (councils) and ever-increasing government 'autocracies', like transport, police, courts, hospitals, environment, human services, etc, etc. These 'autocracies' are effectively laws unto themselves and essentially create their own laws, that are simply rubber stamped by whatever politician

happens to be in office at the time. Political parties of course play a role in this as a whole, however the individual politician in most cases is simply the sales person, selling a predetermined agenda, creating the façade of 'democracy' and if they have the sales drive to delude and a capacity for spin they are well rewarded for their efforts, as with all sales people.

The heads of these government ‘autocracies’, however are a different breed. These are the professional suck-ups, the deceitful yes men and now women. The ones who will swallow and regurgitate anything, back stab and betray anyone and anything to get up the next rung of the ladder. These are the ones who play the long game of ‘debasement’ to get to the top and are predominantly

concerned with expanding their power and therefore their capacity to gorge themselves from the public trough. These are the types who tell you they are running a business by spending bigger and bigger amounts of your money. These are the swap creatures of the 'deep state', (yes, we have them here too) the permanent heads of government 'autocracies' no matter who gets 'voted' into parliament. These glorified, pretentious and arrogant suck-up don't like their actions questioned or to be held to account and so claim to have 'management prerogative', in other words the ability to do as they wish. This of course is not the case since their authority is delegated by parliament and parliament's authority is delegated by the people. At least that's the way it was meant to work before the creation of all those laws, without the authority of the people by way of a referendum, as mentioned earlier. These created laws are used as precedent by government 'autocracies' and their management to presume to have 'management prerogative'. By claiming 'management prerogative', management are effectively empowering themselves to interpret and apply law based on their subjective view and even apply the same laws subjectively to different individuals. This includes exempting themselves from the same laws they would use against others!

The game is not fair!

Look out for ‘Fair Game’ part 2, in the next edition, where your editor explains how the union movement has been co-opted to complete the betrayal of the people and the worker. We might even give you a hint at a solution!

Regards,



The 6 Emotions the boss uses against you!

What can destroy our workplace rights, pay and condition, our lives? The emotions lurking inside us, the ones the boss relies on to intimidate and bully you into accepting less than you're entitled to. We've got to conquer these emotions before the boss uses them to destroy us. Here they are:

1. Fear

We are not born with courage, but neither are we born with fear. Maybe some of our fears are brought on by our own experiences, by what someone has told us, by what we've read and heard about. Some fears are valid, like going alone for 'just a quick chat' with the boss! A bad move and you feel fear for good reason, your fear is trying to warn you of danger. You know it's not just an innocent chat! But once we learn to always insist on our right to a support person, that flips the situation, the boss now feels the fear because they're now on the spot of having to justify their actions. We don't need to live in fear of it.



2. Indifference

What a tragic disease indifference is. Some will say, "It doesn't affect me why should I get involved. I'll just drift along." But here's one problem with drifting: We can't drift our way to better workplace right, pay and conditions. The boss relies on your indifference when they incrementally encroach on your workplace right, pay and conditions. Don't be indifferent to these allegedly 'minor changes'. Your rights were never given to you by the boss they always had to concede these rights to workers who had the courage to overcome their indifference.

3. Indecision

Indecision allows the boss to steal our opportunity. The boss will steal our chances for a better

workplace, better pay and better conditions at every opportunity and our indecision gives them this opportunity. We have to purge this enemy.

4. Doubt

Sure, there's room for healthy skepticism. We can't believe that the boss is all bad or that all bosses are all bad. But we also can't let doubt take over and delude us into thinking that the boss has our best interest at heart! Many of us doubt the hard-fought struggles of the past, doubt that in times gone by our workplace rights pay and conditions were won by workers paying the ultimate price, their life. We doubt that the boss could be so cruel, doubt that the

government would allow and even support violent action against workers, doubt the possibility that workers died fighting for workplace right, pay and conditions we have today. Worst of all, we doubt ourselves. Doubt will empty both our bank accounts and our hearts. Doubt is an enemy.

5. Worry

We've all got to worry a little, but we can't let it conquer us. Instead, let it alarm us. Worry can be useful. If the boss suddenly announces that a major change is coming, we've got to worry. But we can't let the boss loose like a mad dog that drives us into a small corner. Here's what we've got to do: Drive the boss into a small corner. Whatever is out to get us, we've got to get it. Whatever is pushing on us, we've got to push back.

6. Timidity

Over-caution is the timid approach. Timidity is not a virtue (unlike humility); in fact, it can and is used to our detriment, by the boss. If we let it go, it'll be used to conquer us. If we're timid, we won't get better workplace rights, pay and conditions. We've got to avoid over-caution. So, we must battle with the boss, battle with fears, build our courage to fight for what's rightfully and lawfully ours, what's keeping us from a secure and safe workplace. We have to be courageous in our pursuit of the things that matter.

The Perception Of Workers' Rights

Most workers feel that their rights are protected by certain instruments such as a Workplace Policy, an Enterprise Agreement, an Award, or even the basic law. But let's see how this plays out in the real world. Say, your manager asked you to do something that breached your conditions under your Enterprise Agreement, so you politely decline the request. Your manager then tells you that you have to follow their request as it is a 'reasonable direction', however, you direct them to the relevant clause in the Enterprise Agreement which clearly shows that their request is in fact 'unreasonable' as it breaches your workplace rights. Let's say, that for now, management have decided that they would let this episode slide.

A couple of weeks later, they again ask you to follow a 'reasonable direction', which in fact is another breach of your workplace rights, so once again you point out to your manager that their request is again 'unreasonable' and again, politely decline their request and refer them to the appropriate clause in your Enterprise Agreement. This time, your manager says that your interpretation of the Enterprise Agreement is incorrect and insists that you follow their request. Knowing your rights and knowing that your interpretation is correct, you escalate the matter to higher management. The higher manager, knowing that you are correct, responds back by saying that they agree with your manager but to not allow the matter to escalate further, they withdraw your manager's request.

Now your manager decides that they cannot allow this behaviour to go unpunished, so they continue to ask you to do things that breach your workplace conditions. Again, knowing your rights, each time you politely decline and clearly state which condition would be breached, however, as it is now clear that the manager wants to make your life as difficult as possible, so you escalate the issue to higher management who simply side with your manager. You see that escalating the matter through the chain of command gets you no-where, so you submit an official complaint to be investigated internally. The investigation consists of referring the complaint to your management who respond by saying no breach has been committed. The investigation is now closed and no action taken against your manager.

As a result, this now emboldens your manager who reverts back to asking you to follow requests which would make your day difficult and breach your workplace conditions, quite simply, they are now trying to 'manage you out'. You, however, are quite aware of this but realise that any action taken internally would not have a positive outcome. So you decide that the only course of action which should have a positive result would be to take the matter to an external body. So you decide that you will submit a 'Stop Bullying'

order against your manager with the

Fair Work Commission. You attend a

pre-hearing, you decide to defend yourself

with a work colleague with you for support

as the matter is simple and clear cut and you

know your rights. They, on the other hand,

have a team of lawyers on their side and

apart from your manager, your manager's

manager also decides to show up, all with

the intent to intimidate you. But you hold

strong, you present your case, you respond

to their false accusations against you and

you expose their lies. Everything is going

your way. **The hearing is adjourned for a**

later date and the Commissioner advises

you to get representation from your Un-

ion. You go back to work, all of a sudden

your manager wants to place you on a

performance plan, you question their

reasons, their response is a load of nonsense, and you place the matter in dispute via

your Union. The matter gets escalated through the dispute process, in the meantime, the

Union declines to represent you at the Fair Work Commission as you did not seek their

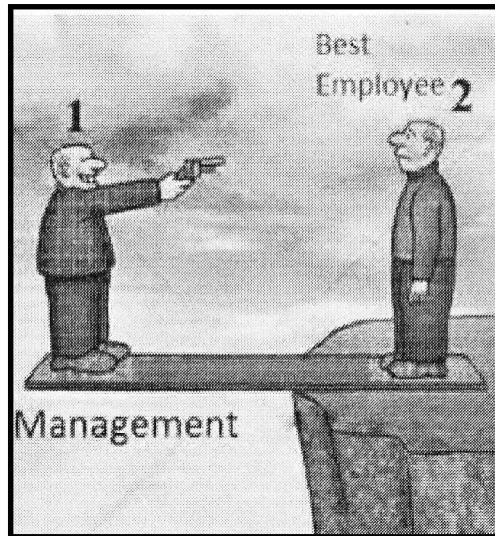
permission when you initiated the Stop Bullying claim. You ask the Commissioner to de-

lay the hearing while you find a Solicitor. You then receive a 'Show Cause' letter from

your employer and are stood down. You reply to the letter, it is decided that your re-

sponse is not good enough and you are dismissed!

As you are now dismissed, your Stop Bullying claim is immediately ceased as there is no longer a threat of bullying. Management have succeeded in their goal. Or so it seems. Your new

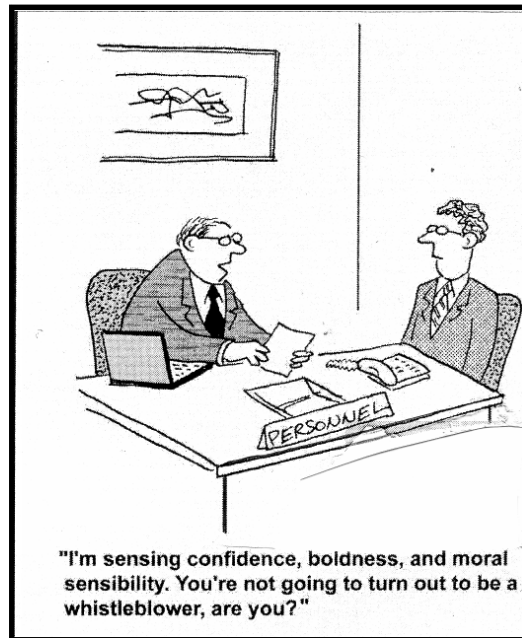


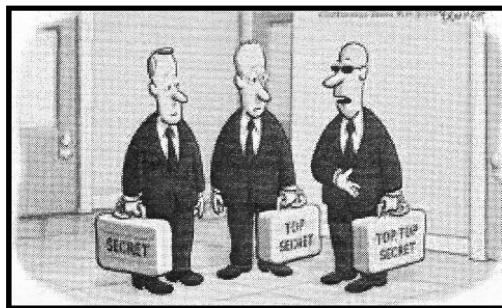
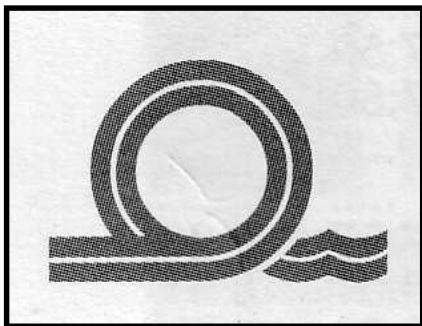
found solicitors advise you that you can now take your former employer to court for 'Unlawful Dismissal'. They entice you by advising you that there is no cap on the amount of compensation you could receive, as opposed to a 6 month cap for an 'Unfair Dismissal' claim. You decide that justice must be served, truth is on your side so justice will prevail!

You start legal proceedings, what should have taken several months is now into its second year and no end in sight until well into the third year. In the meantime, your legal fees are piling up, your barrister wants to get paid and is asking for his money. You manage to find another job, it is worse than your previous job and pays a lot less too, it is too much and you resign. You are now going from job to job to try to keep your head above water so you can pay your bills and your legal team too. All this is placing a heavy strain on you and your family and for what? All you did was exercise a workplace right, that's what the laws are there for, that's why you have an Enterprise agreement, that's why your employer has their policies and procedures, so that everyone plays by the same rules... Right!?!

The problem is, if you have enough money behind you, you don't need to play by the rules. Yes, you may get caught out, but who will hold you to account? An internal investigation? Certainly not. What about our laws? Well if you can prolong the matter long enough, your accuser will eventually run out of patience, if not, then they are sure to run out of money before you do. So it's just a waiting game now. So if you knew from the start that exercising your rights would lead to this, would you speak up? Naturally the vast majority of people would not and this is why management do not have to follow the rules. But what would happen if someone actually decided to follow through? How would our scenario end??? I'll let you know once my court case finishes.

Optional: If you would like to support me and perhaps make a difference to our working conditions, so no-one else needs to find themselves in a similar scenario, please donate by following this link https://www.gofundme.com/f/unlawful-dismissal-legal-fees&rcid=r01-156205011274-637cd49f23854476&pc=ot_co_campm
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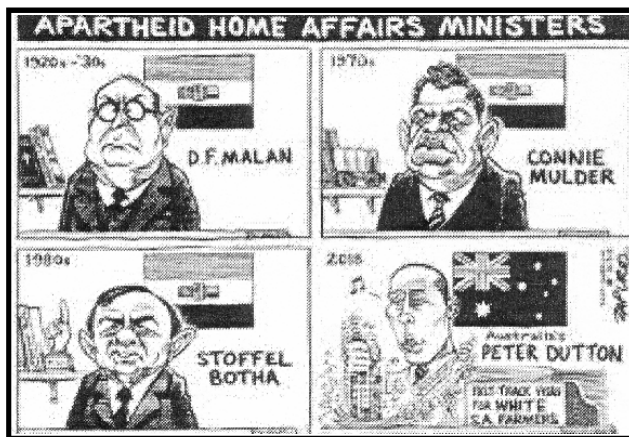




The State Transit Papers

At 4pm on the afternoon of Tuesday 12th June 2019, an AFP (Australian Federal Police) squad raided Waverley STA Bus Depot. By pure chance, they were accompanied by News Cruisers and journos from various media outlets. The AFP cars raced into the depot yard with sirens roaring. Screeching to a halt outside the Admin. Building. They burst into the building. One of the cops collided into the startled STA CEO Stefan Furball, head butting him, and others slammed into 'Madam Lash' together with managers from other STA depots. The bosses had just come out of the conference room where they had been cooking up new fangled ways to cut the wages of older drivers and fit them up for the sack. The AFP 'Stasi Squad' had confused the assorted bosses with off duty drivers and Admin. personnel. They yelled at them to freeze and lie on the floor, as they were 'investigating' the breach of new 'Foreign Interference' laws. They were tracking down and had the dragnet out for 'whistleblowers' which had provided a certain 'underground paper' with extracts of Secret STA documents about the planned privatisation of the Eastern depots.

The cops bailed up 'Madam Lash' in her office, upended and searched her desk drawers. Finding a range of curious 'management tools' including her favourite whips, an assortment of what even the hard bitten AFP cops were shocked to find - perverted sado-masochistic videos, but in fact management training videos such as 'I was Trapped in a State Transit Dungeon' Parts I, II & III, obscene centrefolds featuring the 'madam' in various risqué, contorted



disciplinary poses and a variety of surveillance and photographic equipment. The AFP cops 'put a line through the dots' with the equipment and mag centrefolds. They thought they had struck gold and would become the 'apple of Minister Dutton's eye', finding the source of the leak. Despite the 'madam's' anguished pleas that she just used the hi tech equipment to spy on drivers and 'contributed' to the 'official' STA staff magazine 'We're Moving Sydney' and definitely not to any 'underground' rag. She was strip searched, cuffed and frog marched out of the depot for interrogation at AFP HQ. Later in the day, AFP squads raided her home and that of the other bosses. Breaking into her flat with sledge hammers, ripping up floor furnishings and upending underwear drawers, taking a great interest in her leather corsetry and seizing computer hard drives. Leaving a path of devastation in their wake.

At a press conference held that evening, Minister Peter Dutton of Home Affairs looking like Kojak from that old American TV series, was triumphant. His face beaming in front of the cameras and his bald head reflecting the glare of the cameras. Following the playing of the Australian National Anthem, he began an outrageous lying rant garnished with much 'Clive Palmer Speak'. Along the lines that a certain 'underground paper' which was funded by an 'unfriendly' Asian power, received email and phone intercepts from Huawei, its editors attended lavish receptions and banquets in Beijing, and even had audiences with Chinese President Xi. They had received and published details from 'Top Secret' NSW Govt. documents about plans for privatisation of the Eastern depots as a further carve up of the STA 'Pie'. The AFP had conducted successful raids securing the culprits and ample evidence of the crime, making 'Australia Safe and Great'.

After the press conference, whilst Minister Dutton was trying on the new Stasi style Departmental uniform embroidered with the new Departmental 'Lightning Strikes' logo, he received an urgent call from the NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian. She had received a 'rocket' from STA CEO Furball about the AFP raids. The AFP squads had been stumbling and bumbling gumshoes rather than coldly efficient 'Iron Heeled' jack boots. They had arrested the wrong people, in particular a certain, highly esteemed devilish member of Furball's management team. Minister Dutton nearly had a heart attack when he learned of the fiasco.

Next morning, the Department of Home Affairs and the AFP released a pathetic joint press release along the lines, that a 'mistake' had been made with the raids. As those 'who looked like' they were the 'whistleblowers' who had leaked the secret Govt. papers to an 'underground magazine' had been wrongly targeted and arrested. This magazine continues to be freely available.



Sydney Buses News

Leichhardt Depot News

Sparks: What's the latest at the depot?

Leichhardt Driver1: In regard to the runs, a new leg has been added to route 470. Before starting and ending at the Terminus, it now goes via Leichhardt Market Town. Drivers say it's a waste of time as no one is getting on for this leg. Most commuters going to Market Town are catching the 445 Campsie to Balmain route. So much for 'private enterprise' doing things better. In regard to the 445, this route is coming back to Leichhardt Depot. Is the reason the constant late running in the Kingsgrove Depot area due to bottle necks with often 15 drivers at the depot waiting for their buses? Route 389 which starts at the Maritime Museum at Pyrmont and goes to Bondi Junction is now running out of Leichhardt instead of Waverley depot. We have now plenty of spare drivers at Leichhardt.

The most juicy news has been the sudden appearance at the depot in recent weeks of a "talent scout" from State Transit. The scout was distributing flyers and trying to encourage Leichhardt drivers to resign from Transit Systems, join the STA and come to Waverley depot to work. It appears the STA is no longer training its own drivers, but gearing up for a big cull when the Light Rail opens in the Eastern Suburbs next year. Will the Eastern Subs STA drivers made redundant be offered positions on the Light Rail or will they be put out to pasture? There is also coming up new Timetables in July. We are all awaiting what the changes will be.

Sparks: What is the situation with the unions at the depot?

LD1: We have not seen any RTBU officials for many months. However some woman has become the TWU rep. Other news is that Ryde is being tipped for the next STA depot for privatisation.

Sparks: What is the situation since privatisation?

Leichhardt Driver 2: Since the Transit Systems takeover of Region 6, of the 1200 drivers employed in the region prior to privatisation, 500 have left the job. They have either resigned, taken a golden handshake or transferred. There is definitely a push by management to replace the RTBU by the TWU in the workforce. They are using all manner of dirty tricks. At Tempe depot where drivers are complaining of missing overtime, the real reason is that only TWU drivers are being given it. As according to the TWU Enterprise Agreement, TWU members receive a lower rate of OT, than RTBU members. Currently before the Fair Work Australia Court, there is a dispute between Transit Systems and the RTBU over the issue of payment for Easter Saturday. Under the RTBU EBA, drivers who are aren't driving on that day are also paid for it as a public holiday. In the case of the TWU EBA, payment for this day is only made to those working that day. Transit Systems wants to cease the payment of this entitlement of RTBU members.

I have also noticed that the management style of Transit Systems at Leichhardt is quite different from the STA. They don't seem to have to answer to higher-ups and can get away with mistakes affecting drivers and the public.

Waverley Depot News

Sparks: What is the latest with management at the depot?

Waverley Busie: We are likely to be facing a new vicious attack by the bosses. There is a proposal by them to impose block rosters for taking our holidays. As a result we wouldn't be able to take holidays when we want anymore. It's looking grim. It seems not about saving money, but showing they are in control and softening up drivers to accept privatisation.

Sparks: How is 'Madam Lash' these days?

WB: Again she is upsetting people. She is coming into the meal room to hold de facto "staff meetings". However drivers are not being paid for the 15 minutes attendance at these meetings. Is anyone attending? She is definitely not liked. She seems more of a 'figurehead' for the STA, than a real boss.

Sparks: I understand the STA CEO Steffen Faurby held a meeting at the depot?

WB: In early June, he held a staff meeting at Waverley. He was urging drivers to take all their entitlements such as Long Service Leave. He was also worried that many drivers could leave the job. However, he wouldn't raise the major reason many would leave such as the looming threat of the privatisation of the Eastern Suburbs depots and the Light Rail. Interestingly I was recently speaking to a commuter. She mentioned that on a bus she was travelling, the driver appeared confused about the route and explained to her that he had been recruited to the STA from Adelaide to make up for staffing shortfalls.

Whilst according to Media Reports, the propaganda spread by Transport Minister Constance that Region 6 STA needed to be sold off because of poor running times has proved to be a pack of lies. As a Transport for NSW survey has shown Transit Systems Region 6 buses are much slower, than when the STA was operating them. The two groups running the buses in the city private and public aren't working together. Whilst the division is restricting the opportunities for drivers to transfer in STA and Transit System depots. However there is a case recently where a driver who got into some trouble at the depot, was presented with the 'option' of a transfer to Transit Systems, to avoid the sack.

Sparks: What is the situation with the depot fleet?

WB: The depot is to receive shortly 9 to 10 new buses to replace the old gas buses. The depot's fleet has been steadily getting older and older over the years. There has been only a very slow upgrade of buses. However, in the case of the Railways, the old Silver Set trains are being retired and replaced with modern trains such as the Waratahs and new interurban trains built in South Korea.

Sparks: What are the latest developments with the tramway extensions?

WB: I was recently speaking to a driver from Randwick depot. He mentioned that the bosses have developed a new mad cap plan for buses operating along Anzac Parade when the tramway will be finished at the end of the year. There will be 19 stops for the trams, stopping at

each stop. All buses are to go along the roadway. The buses are to run parallel to the trams on the bus roadway. In one section, the buses can operate up to 70 kmph. On one stop there will be no access for wheelchairs. The driver shook his head. Safety was paramount and he didn't think there was a very high degree of safety. In the past people have been injured and killed on the bus roadway.

Sparks: What is your impression of the 'union'?

WB: Its presence at the depot has greatly declined in recent years. With many seeing no purpose in joining. In the past those interested in becoming the union rep could attend union training courses at TUTA (Trade Union Training Authority). This has all gone by the wayside. It has become quite lethargic in regard to assisting us with on the job problems and to fight the attacks of the bosses and the Liberal Govt. using the excuse of restrictive industrial relations laws.

Sparks: How is the job over recent years?

WB: In recent years there has been a certain 'disconnect' developing amongst drivers. With the introduction of the Opal system, there is now little opportunity to talk with commuters. Whilst there is a growing 'Stasi Climate' with the bosses constantly emphasising the message 'we control you' with intimidating notices they put up around the depot. As part of this strategy, they are also trying to 'micro manage' drivers creating a 'nanny state climate' whereby the excuse of OH&S concerns is used to cut back on various social aspects of the job, such as clamping down on indoor sports. With the loss of many iconic Waverley runs due to privatisation of Region 6, the work has become drab and 'dead'. Many years ago a bus driver had the status close to a pilot, now that status has greatly declined.

Sparks: What are your impressions of the Berejiklian NSW Govt. since the state elections?

WB: Before the elections, the Liberals promised to fund no further "selective schools", however since the elections, the Govt. intends to fund a "selective school" in Sutherland. The initiative looks to be a reward to an inter ethnic community in the South Western Suburbs of Sydney for supporting the Libs in the NSW elections. Another move of the Berejiklian Govt. which was defeated in the Upper House of Parliament was to cut back on NSW public sector workers' long service entitlements. All the Opposition parties combined to vote the bill down. It just goes to show how dangerous this Govt. is. Whilst, Gladys has used a shoddy pretext to boost the enormous salaries of her Govt's Ministers.

Sparks: What is other news?

WB: In recent weeks I was listening to an ABC radio program focusing on the question "Who really runs Australia?" It looked at the key role of big corporations such as real estate developers, mining companies, big pharmaceutical firms, large car companies like Ford, surprisingly the Chemists Guild of Australia and others which have the most powerful lobbyists. It highlighted to me that all workers, their grass roots union organisations and others such as conservation, environmental, and various medical industry groups

need to get together so we can wage an effective fight back. I believe that will happen in the next couple of years.

Sparks: What are your impressions of the ALP?

WB: According to a Greens MP on an ABC radio program I listened to recently, both the Liberals and the ALP are in each other's pockets. Since the State and Federal Elections the ALP seems to have no policies. Definitely the ALP is not on our side and has lost it. So what hope have we got?

NSW State of Un-excitement and Unprecedented Dullness

With the Berejiklian Govt's crack down on late night opening of entertainment venues with pubs being turned into poker machine parlours and the low wages many on the job earn due to the 2.5% pa wages cap, many have little money after meeting mortgage repayments and basic living expenses for entertainment apart from watching TV. A solution would be for all Institutes to cooperate in holding music entertainments on the weekends, off the premises for all drivers from the STA and Transit Systems to attend.

The only thing going in Sydney these days seems to be Berejiklian's 'entertainment quarter'? Since no one has found it as yet! However, Gladys is obviously entertained by all the fleecing of everyone by the banks burning to increase fees, the hiking of her Cabinet members salaries and corporations gouging more profits. Other entertainments are the enormous fees charged for entering the airport, rides on Gladys's 'white elephant' Light Rail, 'self regulated' pokies and her 'neoliberal muse' Transport Minister Andrew Constance as a comedian showing his sense of humour with his ridiculous excuse for the privatisation of Region 6 and his joke about naming the Ferry McFerryface and the union executive and Unions NSW lame comedy act of resisting privatisation.

Burwood Depot News

Sparks: What is the latest with the "Union" at the depot?

Burwood Driver1: We have heard nothing from the union about repaying the 4% loss in wages which we have suffered since privatisation. The union officials never come out to the depot. It is rumoured that one of the newly elected officials had previous TWU connections and since being elected has been orchestrating things for Region 6 drivers to be encouraged to join the TWU. They appear to be handicapped in doing anything to assist us.

Sparks: What are your thoughts on the closure of Randwick?

BD: When we were privatised, we received no redundancy payments as we were just "transferred" to the private company 'Transit Systems'. In the case of the Govt's plan to close Randwick depot, under the law, the STA will have to pay redundancy payments to Randwick drivers as their positions will be abolished. Consequently, the STA bosses are doing whatever they can to encourage Randwick drivers to accept transfers or leave the job.

Sparks: How is the staffing situation Region 6 Transit Systems?

BD: Officially we are supposed to be over staffed. Recently at Tempe depot, on one day there were 18 spare drivers. However I have noticed at Burwood often a driver shortage, due to many leaving the job.

Sparks: What's the situation at the depot since privatisation?

Burwood Driver2: Things have gone downhill in many respects. Now there are no mechanics at the depot on the weekends. We currently have 25 buses in the shed booked off. The bosses are cracking the whip at the new drivers. If they have two accidents they are sacked. There is no retraining. Overall there is a high rate of accidents on the road. This shows the poor standard of training for new drivers. Unlike the STA, the new bosses don't seem too worried about late running. If your bus is late to the terminus they just cut the return run. In the case of the run being cut being your last for the shift, the bosses can save money. In the case of the 420 Burwood to Eastgardens, due to the distance and the traffic, there is always late running with runs cut.

From 28th July, there is a new timetable. We are being kept completely in the dark regarding the changes. The bosses are still employing casuals and new drivers. They are being favoured with our overtime and shifts, as they are paid at a lower rate than old time/full time drivers. Consequently our wages are cut and career progression is being undermined. We also have a shortage of drivers. Our RTBU union rep claims to be powerless and is a waste of time regarding assisting us to fight these attacks.

TEMPE DEPOT NEWS

Sparks: What is that latest at the depot?

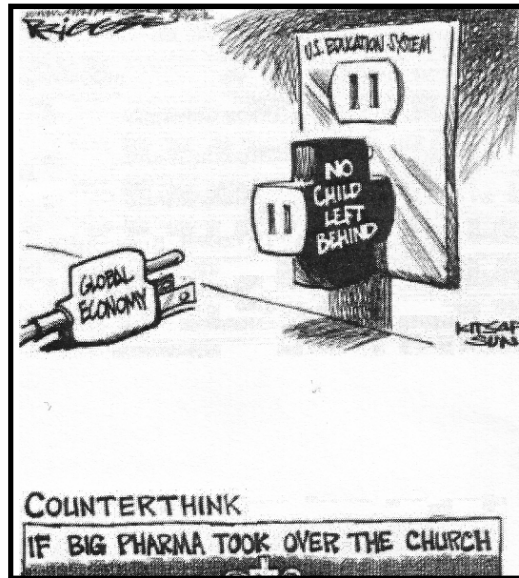
Tempe Driver1: There is a difference of opinion amongst us over whether we are worse off since privatisation. However most of us are up in arms over hours. We are only getting the minimum without overtime. This is supposed to be corrected with the new timetable coming up later in July.

Sparks: What are your impressions of the new timetables changes as of 28/7/19?

Tempe Driver2: I have noticed the bosses have cut many lines of work. Whilst there is a growing and big division at the depot between the new and older drivers. Currently there are approx. 50% of the workforce each, with the older drivers getting higher pay than the new drivers.

Sparks: What happened at the latest depot union meeting?

Tempe Driver 3: The meeting was attended by both the union and management higher-ups. We were told that within two years the entire bus system will be private and State Transit will be no more. With Pt. Botany and Randwick to be the next to go. It is apparent to me the union



bosses have totally caved in. That began with the Newcastle depots sell off without a fight. Its been down hill ever since.

Editorial Comment: These comments may be intimidation for Tempe drivers threatening to jump ship back to State Transit in the East.

Kingsgrove Depot News

Sparks: What is the latest at the depot?

Kingsgrove Driver: We are being hard hit with unrealistic running times. The bosses are seriously screwing us with the rosters. In the case of the 492, it's always running late. Whilst there are often 15 drivers a day waiting for their buses for the second half of their shifts due to late running. Another concern of ours is that drivers from Kingsgrove who are transferred to Leichhardt aren't being given training for Parramatta Road. There continues to be a "divide and conquer" situation at the depot between the RTBU and TWU.

Sparks: What are the latest developments with privatisation?

KD: There has been some 'privatisation by stealth' occurring with the transfer of STA operated runs to Transit Systems. In the case of the 389, which goes from the National Maritime Museum at Pyrmont to Bondi Junction, in the past it was operated from Waverley. Now it has been taken over by Leichhardt. A rumour is circulating that Pt. Botany is next on the list for tendering as part of privatisation. TransDev has been noticed sniffing around it.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

Over the last six months, Human Resources have been stepping up their efforts to sack employees who are on their hit list. Once again Drivers, Conductors, Head Office and Station Staff come together to discuss these events. As in previous issues names have been changed.

Sparks: What makes you a candidate for the hit list?

Rastus: You can make the hit list for a number of reasons:

- (1) Standing up to a Manager over Rosters and Bullying.**
- (2) Applying for internal positions within V/Line and when you are unsuccessful, expressing your opinion about the selection process.**
- (3) Contributing to Sparks.**

Roscoe: That is why contributors to Sparks change their names.

Ichabod: Regarding Conductors and Station Staff it is known that certain Staff who stand up to CSM's, Station Managers and Staff in Human Resources are on the hit list. Also standing for your fellow workmates by refusing to 'dob' them in.

Sparks: What do you know about a Driver who certain Managers tried to set up?

Rastus and Roscoe: Human Resources tried to set up a Driver with the help of a SKID (Drivers Supervisor) who is hated by a number of Drivers saying that when running around a train at a

suburban station that the Locomotive hit the carriages too hard, whilst coupling up to the train. It was alleged a passenger in a wheelchair was injured.

Penelope: The train was terminated at an outer suburban station due to a disruption closer to Melbourne. Before the run around the Conductor checked the train and no one was in the train and he gave the all clear to the Driver to run around.

Rastus: The Driver was stood down and at the enquiry the Conductor said there was no wheelchair passenger on the train when the run around was taking place. As a result the Driver was cleared.

Sparks: It was obvious Human Resources wanted to hang the Driver.

Abner: There was an incident at a Country location where a driver misjudged the length of a train and part of the rear carriage overhanging the platform.

Rastus: The train was locomotive hauled and when the train stopped on the platform, the Conductor released the doors. It was an honest mistake.

Penelope: The train departed and continued its journey. On return to the Country location, the Conductor was stood down and drug and alcohol tested.

Rastus: They went overboard over the matter, but some manager at the location did not have guts to stand up to Human Resources and support the Conductor.

Roscoe: When the train arrived at the station due to a rule, the Conductor was not allowed to look out the van door to see if the rear carriage was on the platform. If they had have, they would have been disciplined.

Abner: Due to a stupid rule that a Conductor is not allowed to observe the train when arriving or departing the platform.

Rastus: It has since been heard another Conductor was stood down over a similar incident but a third Conductor who was a management favourite was not stood down over another incident.

Sheona: The Union got involved and the matter was sorted out and the Conductors were reinstated.

Penrod: This is correct but some clown had to be kept in a job. Think of the stress the Conductors were put through. They just don't care who they hurt but think of the stress the Conductors were under. In all my years as a Conductor, these stand downs have never happened before.

Sparks: What about the Booking Clerk who lost his case at Fair Work Australia?

Sheona: The hearing was held at Fair Work Australia and the Solicitors appearing for the Clerk had to fight six charges. A number of employees from V/Line appeared at the Commission to give evidence in support of the Clerk. Sadly they faced lawyers from V/Line.

Ichabod: At the conclusion of the hearing the case was adjourned for a couple of weeks.



Sheona: A decision was handed down in favour of V/Line and the sacked Clerk lost his case. Legal costs were awarded to V/Line.

Abner: We do not know who is to pay V/Line but knowing V/Line they will go after the lawyers for their costs.

Sheona: Within an hour the other Clerk who was stood down was terminated.

Ichabod: What concerns V/Line employees is will V/Line go after the employees who appeared at Fair Work Australia in support of the Clerks.

Rastus and Roscoe: It would not surprise us if they do. They do not give up.

Penelope: The other Clerk has been sacked has engaged lawyers to fight V/Line.

Sparks: What is the story about a shake up at Human Resources?

Sheona: Two H.R. employees have been removed. We do not know why the first employee was removed but the other employee was removed over the hiring of a trainee driver who was sacked by V/Line five years ago.

Rastus and Roscoe: We will not discuss the incident but the reason he was sacked was that when he was a trainee driver he refused to ‘dob in’ his workmates but we do know that the incident had nothing to do with breaches of Rules and Regulations.

Sheona: Human Resources hate the driving grade and they have set out to dismiss a number of drivers to put fear into the grade.

Abner: What disgusts the Conductor grade is that Human Resources expect Conductors to ‘dob in’ Drivers and fellow Conductors.

Roscoe: The trainee who was sacked obtained a position with another train company and became a qualified driver.

Penelope: Most of the staff at V/Line thought the trainee was treated unfairly by V/Line and were pleased when he obtained the position as a driver with the other company.

Rastus: Due to a Driver shortage at V/Line due to retirements over the last twelve months there has been a large scale recruitment of Drivers both internal and external.

Roscoe: In the last intake of trainees the trainee who had been sacked was in the class.

Penelope: When the Conductors heard the trainee was in the class they were glad to welcome him back to V/Line. They were of the opinion he had suffered enough.

Rastus: The trainee was back in the class but after a few weeks Human Resources got wind he was in the job they conducted a witch hunt within their department.

Sheona: As a result of this witch hunt the HR employee who recruited him was removed.

Sparks: Once again we have run out of space. The way V/Line is going with stand downs the hearing may resemble a court of law but there is one thing missing, a judge and jury but the way things are heading, it may happen.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say both Drivers and other V/Line staff are pleased to welcome the Sacked Trainee back on the job and we give Human Resources a Message. LAY OFF THE TRAINEE! As for the H.R. employee who was removed, we Drivers say the H.R.

employee was removed for SPITE. **STOP PRESS** As this issue goes to Press, word has reached our Correspondents that employees have been 'dobbing in' their fellow employees. This being prevalent around Southern Cross Station. More details in our next issue.

International Transport Workers' News

BRITISH BUS & FERRY NEWS

14/6/19 300 Stagecoach bus drivers based at Chorley and Preston depots in Lancashire went on strike for two days on May 31st -June 1st. They had already been out on strike for four days in May. These bus workers are demanding a 50p an hour pay rise and the decision to strike was backed overwhelmingly. Further strikes are planned for 12th June, 18th June, 29th June, 13th July and 16th July. Meanwhile Stagecoach made a pre-tax profit of £95 million in 2018.

Woolwich Ferry strike

Workers on the Woolwich Ferry in London went on strike on 3rd June over health and safety and pay. The 31 workers went on strike in May for five days, with new strikes set for June 7th, 10th, 14th and 17th. The Ferry bosses have refused to grant a 6 % pay rise and in addition have imposed new duties and have failed to deal with health and safety concerns.

Stagecoach drivers in Lancashire

16/7/19 Stagecoach, the transport company, recently offered the insulting 3p an hour rise over three years to its bus and coach drivers. A strike followed with 150 drivers and their supporters gathering at Preston bus station on 25th June., with a similar number at Chorley bus station. They are prepared to strike for another 15 days this July.

Arriva bus drivers in London

Arriva operates a fifth of London buses in the greater London area. It is increasingly putting pressure on drivers to work on their rest days. This is not just a massive stress on them, but increases health and safety concerns over tired drivers lacking concentration and losing control of their wheels. At 15 bus stations, bus drivers voted overwhelmingly- 1,854 to 69 - to come out on strike. Watch this space for further news.

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:

- I. 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.

NEAR RAIL DISASTER COVER-UP?

According to a passenger on an inward train to the City caught at Stanmore Station, in the Newtown area, track maintenance workers frantically flagged her train to stop.

As it was apparent another train was coming from Central and heading on the same line. She recalls the date as Easter Monday April 22nd of this year between 1pm and 3pm. One train had to back out. Whilst the NSW Govt. has outsourced track maintenance and safety, to avoid law suits. Intriguingly 2-3 months ago, two unpopular Inner West track maintenance supervisors were apparently sacked. Is it connected with the cover-up? We appeal to our readers for any further information on this potentially very serious incident.

Stop Press: According to a Lecihhardt Depot contact, the new bus timetables have resulted in cuts to bus services. Check Financial Review Web Site, 29/7/19 p. 16 re French Rail Companies and the Parramatta Metro and Outer West Metro construction and operation.

What is Democratic Unionism?

Democratic