



The Highball

Official Publication of

Railroad Workers United

RWU Holds Second Biennial Convention in Detroit

On Friday, April 23, 2010, Railroad Workers United held our Second Biennial Convention. Like the Founding Convention back in 2008, this Convention was held in conjunction with the biennial Labor Notes Conference, a three day affair that starts on Friday, the day of the RWU Convention, and runs through Sunday. Labor Notes has produced a monthly journal for rank-and-file activists for over 30 years now and has sponsored this Conference for rank-and-file activists for nearly as long. Their slogan is "Putting the Movement Back in the Labor Movement!" and their philosophy emphasizing shop floor struggles, universal solidarity and internal union democracy closely mirrors that of RWU. We are proud to have been a part of this grand conference of union members from across the continent, a record number this year, over 1200 strong!

At the Convention, RWU members elected a new Steering Committee to guide the organization for the next two years (see Page 5 for a full listing of the Steering Committee). We also discussed and debated a series of resolutions, amended the bylaws and heard reports of committees. The Convention set the tone and focus for the upcoming next few years. We heard from a number of important figures in the labor movement including United Electrical Workers Union (UE) Political Action Director Chris Townsend and labor journalist and former Communication Workers (CWA) union rep Steve Early.

In the evening RWU hosted a spirited hospitality suite with an open bar, live music and a sing along of union and railroad tunes with labor troubadour Anne Feeney and newly elected RWU Steering Committee member BLET engineer John Wright from Louisville, KY.

Saturday and Sunday RWU sponsored a table throughout the remainder of the Labor Notes Conference where we sold our T-shirts and hats, together with donated books and CDs -- the works of RWU members Linda Niemann, Sue Doro and John Wright -- to raise money for the organization. We also had various leaflets, pamphlets and back issues of the newsletter available for people to take home with them as well as the new RWU video.

Throughout the course of the weekend, the Labor Notes Conference hosted over 100 workshops on topics ranging

from running for union office to membership mobilization, on-the-job ("inside") strategies to internal union democracy. And of course Nancy Lessin's brilliant workshop on union-based vs. management's phony "behavior based" safety programs. Over 100 international labor leaders and activists were present, along with some of the best labor activists in the USA.

At the Saturday evening banquet "Troublemakers of the Year" were honored, including the UE sit-down strikers at Chicago Windows and Doors and the Rio Tinto miners at Borax. RWU members felt right at home amongst the good company of all these fellow "troublemakers". We look forward to the next RWU Convention in Spring 2012. Hope you can make it too!

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Railroad Retirement Reform Campaign Seeks Your Support!

The national Campaign to Reform Railroad Retirement has hit a snag. RRB labor member Butch Speakman refuses to comply with the request of 12,000 signers of the national petition to complete a full and impartial actuarial study as requested. A full study, one that takes into account the income generated by removal of the caps on the highest paid railroad employees (which includes folks like union leaders, rail managers and executives), would prove that the proposal would be economically viable.

However, Speakman has refused to conduct such a study and insists that the RWU proposal would drive the system into insolvency. And rather than conduct the study, he took the opportunity to editorialize that removing the caps would place an unfair burden upon the highest paid railroad workers. That is a political question, one that should be up to the railroad workers of this country who pay into the system to decide, not our representative to the RRB!

As a result of his stone walling, and the refusal of any of

our unions to grab the ball and run with, it becomes imperative that all railroad workers who support the proposal must move into action. We call on you to work with in your union -- at the local, general committee and international level -- to pressure your union leadership to get behind this campaign and demand a full and impartial study from the RRB.

Just like a decade ago, it is up to the rank-and-file to push the union officials to act. We are way out in front on this issue and it's time for the union officials to catch up. If we have to we must drag them kicking and screaming. Attend your union meetings, pass resolutions of support, demand your General Committee get behind this thing, and bring resolutions before your National Convention. It will take a lot of work but we have done it before. Now is the time for action. Let's get started! Contact Committee Chair Ron Friend at: changerretirement@railroadworkersunited.org or call 206-426-7048.

UTU Leaders and Rank & Filers Fight On Against SMART Merger

After more than two years, the rank-and-file led effort to stop the SMART merger between the UTU and Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA) has unfortunately been brought to an abrupt end due to the recent inconsistent appellate court ruling in Ohio. The legal battle to end Sheet Metal Workers union President Mike Sullivan's openly hostile takeover over the UTU has now moved to a Federal Court in Washington, D.C.

Emboldened by the Ohio court ruling, Sullivan revealed his true intentions when he notified all UTU officers that they could not spend any money, or make any agree-

ments without his approval. He also demanded that the carriers pay all UTU members' dues checkoff directly into the SMWIA treasury. The UTU appears united in opposition and no one is yet bowing to Sullivan's demands, including the carriers. Forty-five UTU General Chairmen and State Legislative Directors have petitioned to intervene in the D.C. case in order to uphold members' rights. No one knows how long the battle will take, but the UTU International, elected UTU officers and rank-and-file members are determined to do whatever it takes to stop the hostile take-over.

Railroad Workers United

Railroad Workers United was organized in April 2008 at a Founding Convention in Dearborn, MI. RWU grew out of decades of struggle within the craft unions for unity, solidarity, and democracy. We are carrying on a tradition of rank-and-file activity which dates back to the 1890s and the time of Eugene V. Debs.

RWU is a cross-craft inter-union caucus of rail labor activists across North America. All rail workers of all crafts from all carriers who support our Statement of Principles are welcome to join in our efforts. Please write, call or email the address below.

Statement of Principles

- *Unity of All Rail Crafts*
- *An End to Inter-Union Conflict*
- *Rank-and-File Democracy*
- *Membership Participation & Action*
- *Solidarity Among All Railroaders*
- *No to Concessionary Bargaining*

Railroad Workers United P.O. Box 1053 Salem, IL. 62881

International Steering Committee

Penny Artis	IBEW #813	NS	Roanoke, VA	
Steve Desavouret	TCU #6608	CN	Chicago, IL	
Jon Flanders	IAM #1145	CSX	Selkirk, NY	
Ron Friend	BMWED #1509	CSX	Marietta, OH	
Robert Hill	BLET #75	BNSF	Vancouver, WA	
Ron Kaminkow	BLET #51	Amtrak	Reno, NV	
Mike Matson	UTU #911	CP	St. Paul, MN	
Ed Michael	UTU #979	BLET #724	UP	Salem, IL
Jen Wallis	BLET #518	BNSF	Seattle, WA	
Matt Weaver	BMWED #2624	CSX	Toledo, OH	
John Wright	BLET #78	CSX	Louisville, KY	

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"Black Shirt Friday" to Honor Those Rails Killed on the Job

Jon Flanders, RWU Co-Chair IAM 1145

On Friday, April 23, Melinda J. Carter was killed in Chicago during routine switching operations while working a remote control (RCO) job. The following Monday, April 26th James Knell, a MTA track worker, was killed in New York City when he slipped in the rain and fell on an uncovered third rail.

These two fatalities are just the latest in a grim string of rail worker deaths in the last several years. Right in the nation's capital, five Washington DC Metro workers have been killed on the tracks in the past year. Layoffs, downsizing and an increased reliance on one person operations are taking their toll on the rail workforce.

After the death of UTU remote control operator Jared Boehlke in the CSX Selkirk, New York yard last Mother's Day, rail workers there decided to initiate a "Black Shirt Friday" movement for the Friday of Father's Day weekend. This idea was taken up and spread by rail workers across the USA and picked up and supported by Railroad Workers United.

At its second biennial convention, held in Dearborn, Michigan this past April, Railroad Workers United decided to support making "Black Shirt Friday" an annual event on Father's Day Friday, to also be known as "Railroad Workers Memorial Day"

Railroad Workers United encourages all railroaders to



Sister Melinda J. Carter is the latest rail fatality and victim of Remote Control Operations (RCO). On June 18th, railroaders will honor her death -- along with other rails who have lost their lives on the job this year -- by wearing black

join together to make Black Shirt Friday and Father's Day Friday, which this year will be June 18th, a day of remembrance for fallen brothers and sisters, and a day of solidarity and unity against the carriers relentless drive for profits at the expense of safety for railroad workers. Please show your support for those railroaders killed on the job by wearing a black shirt to work on Friday, June 18th, and let your fellow workers -- as well as the unions, the FRA and most of all the carriers -- know that you are making a stand against the unsafe practices and policies of the rail carriers.

For a poster and set of flyers about Rail Workers Memorial Day, see the RWU website at www.railroad-workersunited.org to download and make copies for your terminal.

RWU Membership Drive

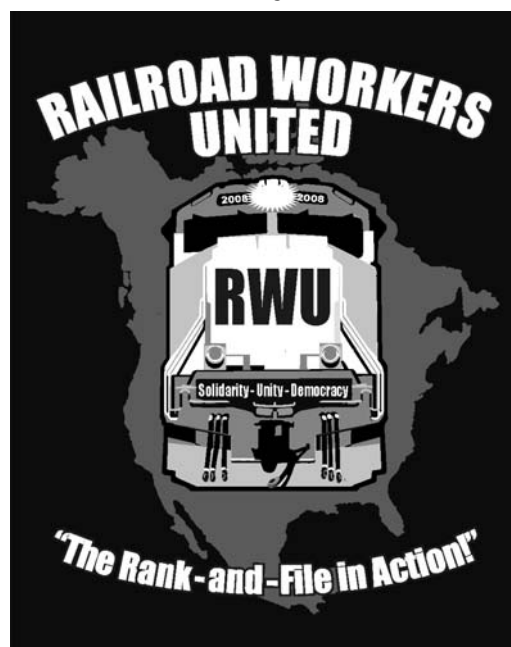
Join RWU and get a FREE T-shirt from now until Labor Day!

Railroad Workers United is supporting a campaign to make Father's Day Friday every year "Railroad Workers Memorial Day". (see article above). If you support this idea we ask you to wear a black shirt to work on Friday, June 18th.

And to assist you, we are offering FREE RWU T-shirts to all those railroaders who join (or re-join) RWU for one year or more from now through Labor Day. The shirts are 100% cotton with the 4 color RWU loco on the front, and are union made in the USA.

Don't delay, join and order your T-shirt today (see membership application and T-shirt order form on the back of this newsletter). Currently we have all sizes available from Small on up through to 4X Large.

Join RWU and proudly wear your black T-shirt on Black Shirt Friday, June 18th, 2010 and stand in solidarity with your brothers and sisters in defense of our jobs, our safety and our lives.



UNION OFFICER ELECTIONS:***BLET Members Will Have a Choice of Candidates This Fall***

Ron Kaminkow, RWU General Secretary, BLET #51

A rank-and-file engineer has announced his candidacy for the head of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen (BLET). Tom Brennan is the Local Chairman of Division 146 and a working engineer on the Norfolk Southern. He has been a member of the Brotherhood for 36 years.

In his announcement to run for the union's top post, Brennan says: "Our union's top officers have lost touch with the members. They're letting management get their way all the time. And corruption is out of control. It's time to win back respect for you and the BLET." Brennan has put forward an "Action Plan" outlining what he will do if elected, including increasing membership representation, cutting wasteful dues spending, and investigating and punishing corruption in the BLET.

In the 2006 elections held at the BLET Convention, Brennan garnered more than 40% of the delegate vote but lost the election there to incumbent Don Hahs. Since that time the BLET membership approved an initiative that gives members the right to vote this Fall in a one-member-one-vote election system, the first of its kind in the BLET. Brennan is the first candidate to officially announce his candidacy for President of the organization.

While Railroad Workers United refrains from endorsing candidates, we support democracy and membership control in our unions. At the RWU Convention in Dearborn, MI April 23rd, the membership voted unanimously to support and defend the union membership's right to vote in ALL rail unions for top officers by utilizing a one-member-one-vote system of elections. RWU is excited that BLET rank-and-file members will have that right to vote this year for the first time in history and will have a choice of candidates in the Fall.

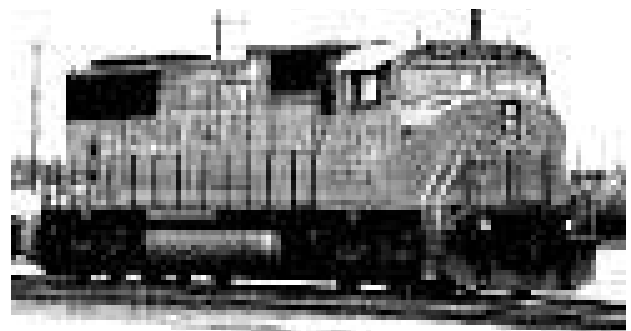
However, some BLET officers do not look favorably upon the membership's newfound right to vote and in Decem-

ber of last year, launched a scheme to take away members' right to vote. Rank-and-file members have been fighting back and hope to thwart this reactionary attempt (see [The Highball](#) Special Supplement on Union Democracy, Volume 3 Number 1 -- Winter 2010).

The election rules have been promulgated and distributed, the election is scheduled, and candidates have now begun to announce. As long as a few discontented BLET officials are thwarted in their desperate efforts to roll back the clock, the rank-and-file of the BLET - every single member in good standing in the union - will receive, and have the right to cast, a ballot in this Fall's election for top officers of their union.

RWU encourages all BLET members to research information about the candidates for office, ask questions, examine the campaign literature, and cast a vote in your union's elections this fall. And we encourage all other rail union members to closely monitor the situation and the results. Maybe it is time for you brothers and sisters in the UTU, BRC, BMWED, TCU and other rail unions to push for a similar system, empower your membership and take control of your unions!

In the coming months, RWU will report on the BLET election -- including information about other candidates as they announce -- in future issues of [The Highball](#), on our website and through the RWU list serve.

***Some CSX Southern Lines Workers Reject Tentative Agreement***

A tentative five-year wage, rules and working conditions agreement between four UTU general committees of adjustment and CSX southern lines was defeated by members of two of the committees -- by ALL crafts on the former Louisville & Nashville (L&N), and by the Conductor craft on the former C&O. These committees must now decide whether to return to national handling. However, CSX has says it will not return to national handling, but wants a specific southern lines agreement.

Apparently at issue are a number of distasteful provisions,

including (among other things) the proposal to implement road "utility conductors" (the beginning of the end of the road conductor); paltry \$1000 lump sum payments for the first two years of the contract; and a possible move to a 10- or 12-hour basic day for yard jobs.

It is hard to say what the future holds for these brothers and sisters, but they are to be commended for having the wherewithal to recognize a bad deal when they see it and vote no. RWU will continue to investigate and provide more on this subject as information becomes available.



Railroad Workers United

Special Supplement to The Highball

“Rank & File Action”

Membership Mobilization -- The Key to Victory

In this issue of The Highball, we focus on the question of rank-and-file action. Traditionally, history is taught from a top down perspective; that is to say, that great leaders (usually men of wealth) create history and make change. While there have no doubt been great leaders of social movements throughout the ages, without the masses,, the rank-and-file ready willing and able to take mass action, there simply could have been no leaders.

Today most of us tend to go to work, pay our union dues and go home. Some might attend union meetings or even hold office in our local union. But all too often, there is no "movement", no collective action on the job at "the point of production". Yes we may engage in letter writing, phone calling and other forms of lobbying. But sadly that is about all the rank-and-file is asked to do by the union leadership. As for bargaining with the carrier, that is usually performed under semi-secret conditions by the "bargaining team" out of sight and out of mind of the rank-and-filer, until such time as a Tentative Agreement is reached on high. Then we are asked (coaxed, cajoled, persuaded, blackmailed) into voting for this agreement as the "best" possible agreement achievable.

In 1877, the nation's first general strike was kindled by a general uprising on the railroad. Breaking out in Martinsburg, WV and quickly spreading from the B&O to the Pennsylvania RR, the strike consumed the entire nation before winding down, spreading all the way to the west coast. It was truly a spontaneous mass uprising, with workers going on strike, burning rolling stock and structures in numerous terminals. A generation later, workers coast-to-coast would once again resort to mass strikes and a national boycott in an effort to defeat the notorious Pullman Company of Chicago. And again in 1922, railroaders would once again

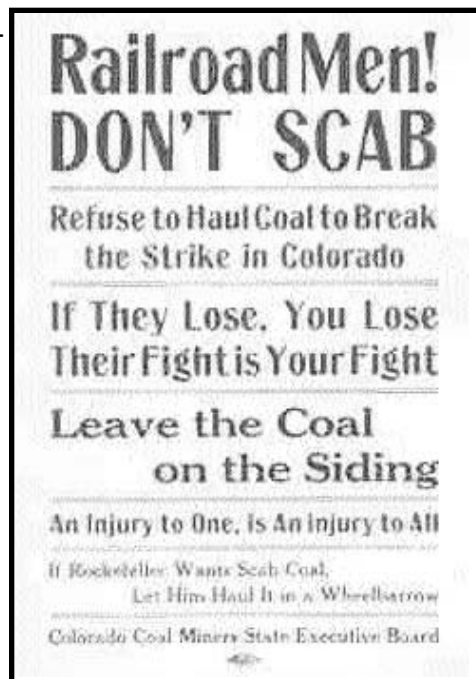
demonstrate their collective muscle when nearly half a million shop workers walked off the job, striking all the major carriers across the nation.

It was these actions and hundreds of smaller ones that forced the carriers to respect us, to bargain with us, to make needed safety improvements, to pay us better wages and treat us with some degree of dignity and respect. And while numerous laws are now on the books to defend and protect our rights, those laws would never have become reality had it not been for these countless struggles waged by rank-and-file railroaders.

Today is a time of relative "labor peace" on the railroad. "Claims" are made to various "Committees of Adjustment" and payments are made (or not made as the case may be) by the carrier to the individual claimant. Disputes are settled mostly by boards of one sort or another depending on the level of conflict. Unfortunately, the rank-and-file has been sidelined from the fight, much to the delight of the carriers, the government and even the unions. We tend to do things "civilized" now. Change must come slowly we are told. It is a process of "give and take", "negotiation" and "compromise".

Nevertheless, workers still take matters into their own hands, with or without the formal blessings of (and sometimes in direct opposition to) their union officials.

We will consider a number of these examples of more modern day rank-and-file struggles. You may even recognize some of them as you read. Should you feel inspired by any of these tales, please feel free to submit your own for future issues of The Highball. We are always looking for examples of creative rank-and-file actions. At its core, this is what the union is all about - workers understanding their common exploitation and taking collective action to correct the injustice. Roll the union On!!



The 1922 Shopmen Strike

A Battle Lost ... But A War Won

-- Will Snell, Retired, IAM Lodge #104, Huntington, WV

I began my machinist apprenticeship on the former Chesapeake & Ohio Railway in Huntington, WV in November of 1965. As I carried heavy tool boxes around the shop, I often heard my journeymen mentors mention the "Strike of 22" with reverence. In those days, apprentices worked day shift with Saturday and Sunday rest days. Accordingly, I was able to take some college classes at night. As a student both at work and after work, I decided to do some research on the "Strike of 22".

What were the issues? There were too many to recount here. However, Colin Davis summed it up in his book: Strategy for Success: The Pennsylvania Railroad and the 1922 National Railroad Shopmen's Strike, when he wrote: "The importance of the Pennsylvania Railroad during the 1922 conflict was highlighted by its position within the industry. The Penn was a giant among giants ... The Penn employed 55,000 Shopmen which constituted 15 % of the nation's railroad shop force. Its executives held important and influential positions in the employer group, the Association of Railway Executives (ARE). Vice President W. W. Atterbury was chairman of the powerful Labor Committee of the ARE. Atterbury, working closely with the Chairman of ARE, Thomas DeWitt Cuyler, pursued a course to undercut railroad labor power. Penn officials were also leaders of the more obstructionist group of railroad presidents who advocated the destruction of unionism".

There are many books written on the subject and most, if not all, conclude that we (rail labor) lost the 1922 strike. Today's shop crafts and operating crafts, may be told by today's management to remember what happened in 1922 when the rank and file stood together to take on not only the railroad corporations but the power brokers in Washington, DC including President Harding. Rail labor lost the 1922 strike they say. One historian wrote, "Ultimately the 400,000 shopcraft workers suffered a humiliating defeat in their national strike." Or did they?

My ragged copy of the Shop Crafts Agreement I received when I went to work for the railroad in 1965 reads, "Effective July 1, 1921". How can that be? Contracts effective in 1921 that are still in effect 44 years after the shop craft unions were "crushed" in 1922? Well, the railroad tycoons won the 1922 battle but they lost the 1922 war. Apparently, the goons and thugs the railroads hired were very talented at busting knee caps, terrorizing spouses/children and similar skills but knew nothing about milling a gear, forging steel, welding, soldering, wiring, bending pipe or any other of the thousands of

skills required to repair a steam powered locomotive.

There is no honor among thieves. The individual railroads started cutting deals on their own to get the skilled shop crafts back to work. The New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroad -- fierce competitors at the time -- each worked to cut deals with the Railway Employees Department (RED) to return to work. Other major railroads at the time also enticed the RED back to the bargaining table to make peace with the unions that comprised the RED at the time.

So one by one the dominoes began to fall. Not only did the C&O Railway Company reinstitute the contract effective July 1, 1921 that I began my railroad career under in 1965, but the contract was amended time and time again over the years to improve the wages and benefits for the Shop Crafts represented by the RED. Eventually, the RED dissolved but united bargaining (in many contracts over the years) continued to achieve better pay and fringe benefits for all railroad unionized employees.

Like my mentors so many years ago, who spoke of the Strike with reverence, we railroaders should pause to thank those who stayed united, including some who literally gave their lives, in a war to preserve the railroad unions and benefits that all unionized railroad workers enjoy today. The Railway Labor Act (1926) and the Railroad Retirement Act (1937) are just two examples of what later came about because so many union workers of all crafts bent but did not break as a result of the 1922 battle. The railroaders of all crafts regrouped, united on common interests and fought on to achieve so many other benefits that rail labor must now collectively stand to preserve day in and day out with our dues, our votes, our conscience and our actions.



Women shopworkers on the Baltimore & Ohio during WWI

The Great Northern Strike: A Great Victory for Rail Labor

A carrier-wide strike in rail labor's early years was able to claim a quick and triumphant victory by using non-violent direct action of the membership drawn from all crafts and all unions.

Throughout the latter quarter of the 19th century, rail strikes were extremely common. Rail labor began to organize first in 1863 and by the 1880s, there were a number of "brotherhoods", organized on a craft basis, designed to further the interests of rail workers of various crafts. However, they were very often plagued by the fact that each union jealously guarded its own "interests" and ignored those of the other crafts, the result being that one union would often "scab" on another to the ultimate detriment of all. The number of strikes and uprisings by the rank-and-file was remarkable, and while gains were made, progress was stunted by the fratricidal nature of the competing craft unions.

In 1893, forward thinking rail union leaders and rank-and-filers of the day founded the American Railway Union (ARU). With its leader, Eugene V. Debs of the Firemen's Union, the ARU set about the task of organizing all rail workers into One Big Union in order to more effectively confront the carriers and win their demands for better wages, benefits and working conditions. The union was quickly very popular among the ranks and soon workers were joining at the rate of 2,000 per week! Within a year, the ARU had hundreds of affiliated local chapters and claimed 150,000 members, drawing much of its membership out of the craft unions. Whole lodges of established craft unions voted to affiliate with the ARU

The first great test of the ARU came when the union decided to strike the Great Northern (GNRR). The GN was the property of James J. Hill, the "Empire Builder", known as such because of his wheeling and dealing. He was the archetypal dictatorial robber baron of the day. In August of 1893 The GN began a series of wage cuts that went on through March of the following year. In April, the ARU called a general strike of all crafts against the carrier.

Strikers showed impressive unity and gained the sympathy of communities along the line from Minnesota to Washington State. All crafts were involved in the strike,



from telegraphers to shopmen, train and engine crews to track workers. The Great Northern was shut down tight. Despite attempts by Hill and the GN to divide and conquer the workers by appealing to the ir respective Brotherhoods to intervene. The 9,000 employees of the railroad were united in their efforts. Every train was stopped, except for mail trains, which moved on Debs explicit orders.

"If the workers of the world want to win, all they have to do is to recognize their own solidarity. They have nothing to do but fold their arms and the world will stop. The workers are more powerful with their hands in their pockets than all the property of the capitaliasts. As long as the workers keep their hands in their pockets, the capitlaists cannot put theirs there. With passive resistance, with the workers absolutely refusing to move, lying absolutely silent, they are more powerful than all the weapoms and instruments that the other side has for attack."

Joseph Ettor, organizer, Indutrial Workers of the World, 1912

As Debs' biographer Ray Ginger noted, "Instead of weakening the new union, the strike was strengthening it ... From one end of the Great Northern to the other, the men had peacefully left their jobs. Not a drop of blood had been shed, but not a wheel had turned., except those on mail trains. Peaceful and united action had proven the key to success."

After just 18 days, the strike was concluded on favorable terms to the workers. Strike leader Eugene Debs commented that, "The one grand achievement of this strike is to prove to organized labor that there is nothing in violence." Practically all of the demands were met and a contract signed with James Hill. Upon conclusion of the strike, Hill actually deined to commend the strike leaders for their conduct of the strike! Railroaders were now joining the ARU in droves. In just one year the ARU had signed up 150,000 rail workers, while the combined strength of the established rail craft unions numbered just 90,000 men. Clearly, the power of united rail labor, combined to act together in solidarity without regard to craft or group, was demonstrated for all to see.

"The greatest tribute that was ever paid to me was that of the section men after the Great Northern strike. As my train pulled out of St. Paul, those men with shovels in hand and happiness fairly radiating from their faces, yet with tears in their eyes - those section men stood at attention. That tribute was more precious to me than all the banquets in the world."

-- Eugene V. Debs 1894

“Shop Floor Tactics”

The article below is adapted from Chapter 3 - Shop Floor Tactics of A Troublemaker's Handbook : How to Fight Back Where You Work and Win! by Dan LaBotz, A Labor Notes book available from Labor Notes at www.labornotes.org.

Many railroad workers believe that the ultimate weapon of labor is the strike. While this may be true, there are numerous reasons - legal, political, structural - while the strike may not at times be a viable option to achieve workers' goals. In such case, there are countless other means by which rank-and-file workers can push their case and pressure the carrier short of striking. The union and its members have a number of options at its disposal including:

- A "Work to-Rule Campaign" in which workers adhere exactly to company procedures and/or to the contract.
- A "Work Slowdown", in which workers reduce output to an agreed upon amount.
- "Making Scrap", whereby the workforce performs poorly and make a product which will not pass quality control
- "Getting Lost", a common practice of warehouse workers, truck drivers and others who work in large facilities or on the streets and are not easy to police.
- Refusing to Donate Time. Many workers "donate" unpaid time to the company by arriving early, beginning work before they are on the clock, working through breaks or lunch, and/or staying after work. If the union organizes a meeting or other action for the 15 minutes before starting time or lunch time, they cut into this unpaid work

Activities that affect production schedules will be taken seriously by management. Meeting a production schedule may be the basis for a supervisor's bonus, for example. The company may lose a customer if it falls behind in its orders. This, of course, is the point.

Therefore such actions must be taken seriously by the union. They require planning, discretion, practice, timing and above all they require the utmost unity and solidarity.



Work-to-Rules

A work-to-rule campaign takes advantage of the fact that management has theoretically one way of doing things ("going by the rule book") but in practice wants workers to take short-cuts in the interest of productivity, on-time performance, getting the yard switched out, etc. In a work to rule, workers abide by the contract and any and all operating rules, air brake rules, safety rules and any other workplace policies and procedures which may apply. Workers take no short-cuts, show no initiative in solving problems, and if any difficulty presents itself, ask management for instructions

By its very nature, a work-to-rule campaign, properly executed, is not a violation of the contract. On the contrary, it is based upon strict adherence to the rules, and this is its true virtue. Management is sending two contradictory signals about how the work is to be done, and no one can blame the workers for choosing the one that benefits them. A work-to-rule can be used as a pressure tactic on any issue, from getting rid of a supervisor to protesting unfair discipline, to forcing the company to make for a safe workplace, to extra persuasion in a contract campaign.

A variant of work-to-rule is the refusal to do out-of-craft work, work which is not included in the job description or the contract. Nurses in Boston City Hospital have found this to be a good way to put pressure on management. "We don't have the right to strike in Massachusetts," explains Enid Eckstein, a staffer for SEIU Local 285, "but we have been able to wage fairly militant on-the-job fights by refusal to do non-nursing functions ... I saw one study that said that 74 percent of a registered nurse's time is spent in non-nursing work, so they've got a lot of power there." Likewise on the railroad, a lot of work that we do at times is out of craft and beyond the scope of our contract. We can collectively refuse to perform these mundane tasks and achieve a degree of power in the process.

Follow Stupid Rules

Sometimes when management institutes new rules without having thought out the consequences, following the rules can show that they are stupid, so stupid that they have to be withdrawn. After a bad wreck in Ohio in the late 1990s, Conrail implemented a rule which stated that all trains must call ALL signals and use the train symbol, locomotive number, track number, signal number and/or name, and direction of movement. Clearly the rule would result in constant radio chatter that would not easily allow for other important transmissions like car counts, emergency calls, dispatchers' mandatory directives, etc. The

Continued on Next Page

“Shop Floor Tactics”

company was adamant that all crews must call all signals and utilize the full script or be subject to discipline. Knowing the rule was ridiculous and in fact unsafe, many crews took the opportunity to drag out the signal calling diatribe as slowly as possible, making the new rule's foolishness obvious even to the company officials. The radio channel was clogged with crew calling signals. Within a short period the rule was modified to reflect the reality of a busy multiple track mainline operation.

Slow Downs

Most work-to-rule campaigns have the effect of slowing down production, but a slowdown may go even further, since it does not take the strict adherence to the rules as its limit. Slowdowns may lead to individual workers being disciplined, to groups of workers being fired, or an entire workforce being locked out. Management's harsh discipline is testament to the effectiveness of the slowdown.



Tim Costello, a long time truck driver in Boston says that in organizing a slowdown you have to be sensitive to the workers involved. "First of all you can't be too hard on them. You have to understand that people do work at different paces. When you go for a slowdown you have to be realistic about what you are going to slow down to. Getting everybody to do it, that's the thing.... And it's very important that you work, you must work. Between us we understood that ordinarily you did twenty residential deliveries and four tank loads. So we just cutback say, to 16 and 3. It worked real well."

Making Scrap

In the rail industry, apart from the shop crafts, we don't exactly produce anything, we move the product. But there are a wide variety of ways that we can "make scrap". It is only human to make mistakes. Trains are often blocked incorrectly ("in-wrongs"); air hoses not properly connected; couplings not properly made; retainer valves not properly returned to "direct exhaust" position; angle cocks left closed. EOT's often fail to link up properly. Getting a loco-

motive consist properly MUed and getting a train's brake pipe continuity straightened out can be time consuming and a huge waste of time, leading to delayed train departures and clogged yards.

Overtime Bans

Many industries and services, including the rail industry, depend on overtime work. Where overtime is voluntary, rail employees can easily organize such an action. Where overtime is mandatory the organization of such a ban will be more difficult - though it is possible.

Sick Outs

Sick outs are particularly common by public employees who by law are not permitted to engage in job actions or to strike, especially federal employees and uniformed services. Police officers or firefighters sometimes collectively come down with a case of the "blue flu". Railroaders across the country have been known to engage in such activity to protest all sorts of things - from lack of time off, to harsh attendance policies, to short staffing. Once again the trick here is to get everybody to do it, as there is safety and effectiveness in numbers. A sick-out is really a strike, but calling it a sick out can sometimes get you through the law.

Conclusion

In real life, the tactics discussed above - from ridicule to group grievances to overtime bans - will not be used alone but in combination with each other, and in combination with other tactics such as use of the media and community support. Our unions and the rank-and-file members have some powerful tools at their disposal to fight back with. We need to discuss these ideas and others with our co-workers and begin to build a culture of activism within our workplace. Yes we need to file our claims, we need to submit bargaining suggestions, attend our union meetings and all the rest. But we need to bring the union into the workplace and practice solidarity and action every day we go to work, for here is where the union's real power lies.

"By Direct Action is meant any action taken by workers directly at the point of production with a view to bettering their conditions. The organization of any labor union whatsoever is direct action. Sending the shop committee to demand of the boss a change of shop rules is direct action. To oppose direct action is to oppose labor unionism as a whole with all its activities..."

Frank Bohn, Solidarity, May 18, 1912

“Direct Action Gets the Goods!”

Shop floor struggles can be waged on a national scale and include tens of thousands of workers, or be waged on a much smaller scale and include just a single terminal, department, or shift. Here we will briefly examine five rank-and-file struggles, starting with an example of an extremely localized fight of just a few workers in a single location, then a struggle at the terminal level. Next we will move through a fight back at the carrier level, on to one at the national level, and finally present how a rank-and-file fight can look at the international level.

From *Trains Magazine*, a story of three yard crewman and their yard shanty cat. The cat was their unofficial mascot and keen mouser who kept their lunch room free of mice. One day, management unilaterally decided to remove the cat and take it to the Humane Society. The crew was outraged and had one demand, "Give us back our cat!". The company, Canadian Forest Products, refused to get the cat back, the union rep was unhelpful and the Ministry of Labor inspector said the workers had no case.

The train crew revolted. The locomotive was bad ordered with flat spots on one wheel, worn brake shoes, faulty sanders, and air brake issues. The spare yard goat was trapped in the shed. After diesel machinists repaired the locomotive the next day, the crew went to work... but the track structure on the chemical lead



had excessive cross level in the curves. Anyway, you get the idea. By the third day the mill's pulping process was coming to a halt, and a mill-wide shutdown loomed. That night the general managers retrieved the crew's cat from the family that had already adopted him from the animal shelter for an undisclosed amount. This tiny episode in the history of North American rail labor relations is as fine an example as any that workers can achieve victory, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant the issue, by sticking together and taking collective on-the-job action.

Moving from small to medium, consider a struggle at a large midwestern rail terminal a few decades ago. Switch crews, angered by the carrier's attack upon their working conditions, engaged in a work-to-rule campaign that was well received by other crafts in the yard and shop as well. Together, through creative activities on the job, the cross-craft coalition was able to effectively get their message across to the carrier that as long as the company engaged in unilateral changes in work rules to the detri-

ment of the workforce, then the carrier could expect less production, long delays in the receiving, class and departure yards, a clogged terminal and delayed trains.

It should be noted here that while workers can and have achieved a high level of solidarity and success with such actions at the terminal level, it is vital for these workers to make contact with the fellow workers at other facilities and terminals across the system, lest they risk having their terminal played off against another, with the work transferred to nearby "Terminal B", whose workforce is not involved in the action and could conceivably "scab" on the action of their brothers and sisters in "Terminal A".

Now we move on to some larger struggles systemwide that included far more workers and involved more locations. In 1999, Conrail was carved up between two other major eastern carriers. One of them sent decrepit power from the deep South, old GP-38s and SD-40s, north to former CR territory. These locomotives lacked toilets and sidewall heaters, they had cracked and missing door and window seals, and besides being beat up and antiquated in most every way, were unfit for service in the likes of Cleveland, Chicago and Toledo, where they were no match for the harsh winter weather.

The former Conrail train & engine crews were outraged. But perhaps worst of all, the seats on the locomotives were torture devices - "toadstool" seats, that were no more than a glorified stool with a hinged back, no armrests, no ability to recline or in anyway adjust for comfort. And this from a railroad that "cares" so much about safety and health! Engineers and trainmen complained to their unions, who promised to bring the whole issue to the joint safety meeting. Nothing happened. Tempers flared, and studies were promised. Then, one by one, the devilish seats -- usually held onto their post by a single pin on a chain - began to disappear. They turned up along the right-of-way where welders found them convenient to use as knee padding when welding on frogs and such. Crews would go to the diesel shop, find their road power and give it a once over before heading to their trains ... and all the trailing units would have their seats missing! The company was beat and they knew it. What could they do but replace the seats, and not with the same ones or they would sure meet the same fate. The carrier broke down and put in more modern seats, granted not the best, but a vast improvement over the toadstools. Train crews could have waited through endless rounds of negotiations and countless studies (and no end of visits to the chiropractor!) for years before something was done to correct the situation. Instead, they took "direct action" and won a clear and decisive victory far sooner.

Continued on next Page

“Direct Action Gets the Goods!”

Now, let's consider an example of direct shop floor action on a national scale. Probably the classic example from U.S. rail labor history is the Pullman Strike of 1894, led by Eugene V. Debs and the American Railway Union (ARU). Workers at the Pullman works in Pullman, Ill. went on strike after the owner of the company, George M. Pullman, cut wages but maintained the same rents for his workers, most all of whom lived in company housing. The workers began to join the newly formed ARU - a union for all railroad workers - and appealed to the union for assistance. The end result was a nationwide strike and boycott of Pullman cars by rail workers in solidarity with their brothers and sisters at Pullman. Utilizing a tactic that was bound to succeed, the ARU train crews refused to handle Pullman Palace cars in their trains, and switched them out of the consist. Pullman stood to be defeated in short order as the company would not have been long able to shoulder the economic costs leveled by this action of the gallant train crews. Unfortunately, the U.S. President Garfield conspired with the carriers and Pullman, breaking the strike and boycott through violent intervention by the police and militia, on the pretext that the workers were obstructing the delivery of U.S. mail. Nevertheless, the great Pullman Strike and Boycott provides a text book example of shop floor direct action where workers across the nation, and across craft, trade union, and carrier, used extremely effective mass shop floor creative tactics to press their point.

Finally we will look at an example of creative on-the-job tactics at the international level. For this we turn to the longshore industry worldwide. On the morning of July 3rd 1979, port workers refused to cross a picket line at the west side of the Saint John harbour on the day they were supposed to ship a load of heavy water to Argentina for the CANDU nuclear reactor. Heavy water is a principal moderator that allows a nuclear reactor to operate with natural uranium as its fuel.

The picket had been organized by the NO CANDU committee, the New Brunswick Federation of Labour and the District Labour Council. With signs and buttons stating “NO CANDU FOR ARGENTINA” and “HOT CARGO”, the protesters demanded the release of 17 political prisoners from the prisons of Argentina, most of whom were trade unionists.

The action came in response to the brutal anti-union military dictatorship that took power in Argentina in 1976. The picket line was joined by members of many local ship, unions, including the Canadian Paperworkers, the United Auto Workers, the International Association of Machinists, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

As a result of the protest and refusal to load the ship, most

of the 17 political prisoners were soon released. While this example is not from the rail industry, it is easy to see how railroad workers in, say, the U.S., Mexico, and Canada could some day engage in such effective actions of international solidarity and mutual support by refusal to move struck or boycotted goods.

So whether it be local, regional, system-wide, national or international in scope, direct action by average everyday working people on the job is one of the most powerful weapons in labor's arsenal to fight back and win!

And Always, Keep Smiling.....

It was 1985, in the last days of the old Milwaukee Road in the Menomonee River Valley underneath the 35th Street viaduct, workers were grasping at any fight back they could find. The Soo Line had finally stepped in and bought the last breaths of the Milwaukee. There was nothing left except waiting until the doors actually locked us out...And yet we organized to show support and solidarity with each other...all the workers...in all the shops...and of course when there's really nothing left to be done...what better way is to laugh through the pain. This is one of the ways we did it...This poem is one from "Blue Collar Goodbyes"...Sue Doro

Shop Humor

Anonymous cartoon appears
Is quickly copied at lunchtime
On the machine in the main shop office
Flies like smoke from a diesel
Traveling at ninety miles per hour
Decorating tool benches
Lunch tables
Passed hand to hand
Contagious as a smile
Day before a holiday
American eagle labeled "SOO LINE"
Taking up the whole page
Wings spread talons extended
Bearing down on a little grinning mouse
"MILWAUKEE ROAD" signing its t-shirt
Holding a clenched paw up to the eagle
Middle finger pointed straight in the air
"LAST GREAT ACT OF DEFIANCE"
Reads the caption
Anything to get us through
Another dreaded day

Sue Doro is an RWU retiree member and former machinist, IAM Lodge ??? Milwaukee Road shops, Milwaukee, WI.

Building Rank & File Power on The Property

You have a problem in your terminal. Why not simply file a claim? Perhaps the word "file" is the clue. Ask any successful union activist. It's a mistake to simply rely on the contract and the claims process to settle problems.

Successful organizing requires rank-and-file action, visible organizing on the shop floor in confrontation with management. For example, when the Local Chairman goes into the office to deal with a renegade Trainmaster, s/he may want to bring along as many members as possible to accompany him/her. One the TM realizes that it is not just the LC and a single member making the complaint but the whole shift, the TM will be a little more cooperative.

Claims and grievances must of course be filed, but they should also be fought for by backing them up:

- Make them visible and public, so that all members (and others) are aware of what is taking place;
- Make them collective; that is involve as many members as possible in the process;
- Make them active, getting the members themselves to take action to support the claims;
- Make them confrontational, so that members are mobilized to face the company officials who are causing the problems and have the power to resolve them.

Management's kind of power rests on control from above. When the employees organize themselves from below, and take initiative, that undermines management's control. Any sort of unified action by workers seems to erode management's authority, even if it is only a symbolic action like wearing the same color T-shirts.

Ridicule

Management's power requires hierarchy, hierarchy requires authorities, authorities have to be serious, and seriousness leads to pomposity. The boss becomes a pompous ass, and ridicule becomes a tool to deflate a self-important supervisor. The railroad, with its top heavy bureaucracy and out-of-touch managers is especially vulnerable to this method of worker empowerment. Hardly a day goes by that rail workers don't see the absurdity and hypocrisy of policies and procedures, rules and regulations that abound. Poking fun at the Carrier deflates their lofty position and builds comradeship and solidarity among the workforce. Use it liberally where you work!

The Group Grievance or Petition

To make a collective protest over an issue that concerns a number of co-workers, the union rep can file a group grievance together with a petition with as many names as possible from the department/terminal/etc. The petition can then be presented to the management official, ideally with as many workers as possible present. Again, this tactic unites the workers and deflates the power of the boss.

The Group Protest

In a group protest, a worker or union rep gathers other workers together and they go as a group to visit the management official. This type of action has several advantages: it tends to interrupt production; it can have an element of physical intimidation; and if planned discreetly and carried out suddenly, it has the added advantage of surprise. In addition, having the workers themselves confront the boss as a group is invigorating and empowering. The presence of the union is clearly felt by all.

Pulling Out of Management Run Programs

Often big corporations like rail carriers put great stake in their charitable contributions to organizations like United Way, and attempt to get employees involved. The union may elect to pull out of participation and encourage its members to boycott the program if the company refuses to concede on whatever issue may be at hand. (Members can be encouraged to make donations, etc. but not go through corporate channels).

Joint union-management safety programs are another target that can be successfully boycotted. Numerous locals, divisions, and lodges from various rail unions have refused to participate in these sham programs if/when the carrier refuses to address real safety issues and meet the union on equal terms.

Pickets and Outside Pressure

Sometimes political pressure on the carrier needs to come from both inside and outside the workplace simultaneously. While a campaign of action may be taking place in various forms on the property -- mass claims, group protests, petitions, and various on-the-job actions (see pages 4-7 of this issue) -- the situation may demand other external pressures be applied as well in the form of informational picketing to alert consumers, community members, customers, passengers, auxiliary workers and others to what's going on. In addition to all of the folks listed above, various union leaders and members, religious, political and community leaders can be solicited to enter the fight on our side.

Conclusion

Workers have a vast array of weapons in our arsenal to combat the employer. This special issue of The Highball has outlined just a few, from the simple to the complex, from struggles involving a few workers to hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions. What tactics and what strategy are selected will be determined by you, your co-workers, and your leadership. What plan of attack we employ is limited only by our imagination. Roll the union on!

RWU Elects New Steering Committee for 2010 to 2012

The Railroad Workers United International Steering Committee (ISC) has evolved into a diverse group of railroad workers from coast-to-coast. The new Steering Committee has a number of new faces, including two new members who work BNSF, an NS diesel shop electrician, a CSX track worker, and two female members. Seniority among the group ranges from 6 to 41 years. Crafts represented include: engineer, conductor, switchman, clerk, car inspector, machinist, electrician, and track worker. The ranks of the ISC is drawn from fellow workers from the following unions: UTU, BLET, TCU, BMWED,

IAM, IBEW; and from the following carriers: Amtrak, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, CSX, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific. In addition, we now have Steering Committee members from ten states: Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Illinois, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Virginia and Washington. Below is a complete listing of the RWU Steering Committee for 2010-2012. Please email RWU at info@railroadworkersunited.org to contact any of the ISC members.

RWU International Steering Committee (11)

Penny Artis	IBEW 813	NS	Roanoke, VA
Steve Desavouret	TCU 6608	CN	Chicago, IL
Jon Flanders	IAM 1145	CSX	Selkirk, NY
Ron Friend	BMWED 1509	CSX	Marietta, OH
Robert Hill	BLET 758	BNSF	Vancouver, WA
Ron Kaminkow	BLET 51	AMTK	Reno, NV
Mike Matson	UTU 911	CP	St. Paul, MN
Ed Michael	UTU 979 / BLET 724	UP	Salem, IL
Jen Wallis	BLET 518	BNSF	Seattle, WA
Matt Weaver	BMWED 2624	CSX	Toledo, OH
John Wright	BLET 78	CSX	Louisville, KY

Steering Committee Alternates (3)

Herbert Cole	TCU 1523	CSX	Jacksonville, FL
Jim Eubanks	UTU 656 / BLET 182	UP	Little Rock, AR
Chet Whyers	UTU 979	UP	Salem, IL

RWU Executive Committee (6)

Co-Chairs (3)

Ed Michael	BLET 724 / UTU 979	UP	Salem, IL
Jon Flanders	IAM 1145	CSX	Selkirk, NY
Robert Hill	BLET 758	BNSF	Vancouver, WA

Recording Secretary

Jen Wallis	BLET 518	BNSF	Seattle, WA
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General Secretary

Ron Kaminkow	BLET 51	AMTK	Reno, NV
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Treasurer

Chet Whyers	UTU 979	UP	Salem, IL
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RWU Trustees (3)

Mike Matson	UTU 911	CP	St. Paul, MN
Matt Weaver	BMWED 2624	CSX	Toledo, OH
John Wright	BLET 78	CSX	Louisville, KY



Jon Flanders



Robert Hill



Ron Kaminkow



Ed Michael



Jen Wallis



Penny Artis



Steve Desavouret



Ron Friend



Matt Weaver



Mike Matson



John Wright

Rail Fatalities Demand A Coordinated Worker Response

In the wake of numerous unnecessary rail worker fatalities in recent months, we have barely heard a peep out of rail workers and our unions. The union leadership merely acknowledge the tragedy, offer condolences to the aggrieved family members, and encourage their members to remember to be vigilant. We have bought the "behavior based safety" model hook line and sinker. What will it take before railroad workers and their unions protest when one of our brothers or sisters is killed in the line of duty?

EDITORIAL

In February, a spectacular train wreck in Belgium resulted in Train drivers across the country staging a wildcat strike to protest that poor working conditions that may have contributed to the accident, in which 18 were killed (including the driver) and 171 injured.

The day after the wreck, machinists and technical workers blockaded depots across the country. Train drivers and signal workers also observed the strike. The Belgian Rail Company (SNCB) acknowledged that 85% of its depots were affected by the strike, which led to the cancellation of the flagship international services Tales and Euro star as well as countless domestic services. Workers protested against the attacks on working conditions that they are undergoing; which they say are no doubt a contributing factor to accidents like the disaster on February 15th.

In Great Britain, the Rail, Marine & Transport Workers union (RMT) has balloted its members in support of strike action against the company Network Rail for what RMT General Secretary Bob Crow calls the company's "reckless gamble with rail safety". Network Rail plans massive job cuts and work reordering of signal maintainers and maintenance-of-way workers. And in Scotland, RMT members struck in opposition to efforts by rail operator Scotrail to impose driver-only operated (DOO) trains on new services. Both drivers and guards (engineers and conductors) joined the strike for three days in mid-April.

What all these actions have in common is that the workers and their unions are holding the carriers accountable for safety, blaming job cuts and consolidations, unsafe technologies, fatigue, work schedules and other unsafe company practices -- not simply blaming one another.

Yet here in the U.S., whether it be a spectacular head on collision like the Metrolink wreck in 2008 at Chatsworth, or the tragic loss of lone RCO operator Jared Boehlke on Mother's Day 2009, or the most recent RCO death of Melinda Carter in Riverdale, Illinois April 23rd, rail workers suck it up and redouble our efforts to "work safe". Amidst the cacophony from the carriers - instantly echoed by the

FRA and the rail unions -- to "stay focused", to maintain "situational awareness" and to "follow the rules", the issue of what hazards may have been present, what precursors may have contributed to the accident, are all too often pushed into the background. The latest fatality, that of Sister Carter, has hardly been mentioned at all. The UTU "News Flash" was just two paragraphs and failed to make any reference at all that she was working an RCO job.

When a fatality occurs on the railroad, it is most often the case that a number of contributing factors have led up to the situation, perhaps going back days or weeks or even years. Is the terminal adequately staffed? Are there enough workers on the extra board



Heather Boehlke, with her daughter Coral on Labor Day last year, widow of Jared, killed in an RCO accident on Mother's Day 2009.

to ensure that employees have gotten adequate and proper rest? What does the RCO training program consist of and are new trainmen receiving the necessary on-the-job training? Are employees properly qualified? What physical hazards are present that could have been eliminated had the company taken action? Are workers being forced to work out of craft? What technology is available but was not used that could have prevented the injury/fatality? And for that matter, what technology is in use that compromises adequate staffing and safety?

It's time for railroad workers in North America to stand up and refuse to be complicit in this "behavior-based safety" charade. When one of us falls in the line of duty, instead of simply asking, "What did this fellow worker do wrong?" we need to also ask the question, "What did the company do or not do that contributed to -- or outright caused -- this fellow worker's death?" It's time to stop pointing the finger at ourselves while we let the carriers off the hook. When one of us falls in the line of duty, we need to say, "No more business as usual!" Perhaps, like our fellow rails in Belgium, England and Scotland in recent months, we need to stop work - all of us - in recognition of the tragedy, and take the time to pause, reflect and investigate what went wrong before we agree to go back to work.

On June 18th, rail workers across North America will wear black shirts to work. RWU encourages all railroad workers to take part. It's time for a show of solidarity, a show of strength, and a demonstration that we are fed up with the state of affairs and will no longer accept business as usual.

No Inward Facing Cameras on Railroad Locomotives!

Ron Kaminkow, RWU General Secretary, BLET #51 & Ed Michael, RWU Co-Chair, BLET #724/UTU #979

The National Transportation Safety Board's ruling this past winter on the need for cameras recording locomotive engineers as they work is an attack upon all working people. Besides raising basic constitutional issues with the regard to the right to privacy, it is highly debatable whether or not implementation of such video cameras would diminish the likelihood of railroad accidents.

COMMENTARY

To begin with, we believe most railroad accidents are not caused simply by operator error. And those that are in fact caused by the operator, more often than not, are caused by things such as miscommunication, poor judgment, fatigue, improper training or lack of qualification-factors that video recorders in the cab of the locomotive are not going to correct or alter in any way. In fact, focusing on the individual worker rather than these systemic conditions misses the forest for the trees.



The Safety Board said the cameras would be "for use by management in carrying out efficiency testing and system-wide performance monitoring programs." The fact is that management of Class I railroads already carry out massive amounts of efficiency testing of train crews -- most do more testing than what is required by federal regulations-- and have already put in place system-wide performance monitoring programs. The current efficiency testing is done in the field under real-time conditions and specific to operating rules. How could it be better to replace that with a manager sitting at a desk staring at a monitor instead? Additionally, railroads already monitor, on a regular basis, the data from on-board "black box" recorders. They use computer programs to scan and analyze the data for violations of operating or train-handling rules.

All transportation workers should view the decision recommending train surveillance with alarm. If this decision is the right one for railroad workers, then why not truckers, airline pilots, ship captains and pilots? Why stop there-- why not observe the dispatchers, track workers, machinists, ground support staff, dock workers and others whose behaviors could result in an accident? Taken to its logical conclusion, perhaps all workers should be constantly under surveillance, since failure to do one's job in accordance with safety and security rules 100 percent of the time could potentially result in an accident or injury. All workers -- in fact all human beings -- have the potential at any time to make a mistake, to become distracted, or otherwise perform imperfectly. Why not wire every workplace, every street to ensure that workers and the citizenry at large conform to "the rules" all the time? That way, if and when there is an accident, we will know exactly who to blame. Think of the savings for big business, insurance companies and corporate America!

Constant audio and video surveillance has disastrous consequences for workplace morale, solidarity, worker rights, and in fact, upon safety itself. Because when employers can more easily pin blame upon individual workers for individual acts as the root cause of safety infractions, it lets the company and government regulators ignore the underlying causes of accidents. If blame now rests squarely on individual worker behavior, there is little incentive for the company to make the necessary investment to address systemic factors -- dangerous conditions, lack of safety devices, overwork, low morale, poor training, worker fatigue -- that are the real underlying causes of most workplace accidents and injuries.

Editor's Note: RWU takes this whole camera issue extremely seriously. We have passed a series of resolutions in the last few months against inward facing cameras on locomotives and have suggested a number of common sense, proactive, cost-effective, non-intrusive alternatives to cameras on locomotives. Technologies are available that are far preferable and far more effective in dealing with the cell phone issue. Please check the RWU website at www.railroadworkersunited.org for a listing of resolutions on this subject and others. Or contact us at info@railroadworkersunited.org or call 206-984-3051 and we will mail you copies of the RWU resolutions.



Railroad Workers United

Membership Application

Railroad Workers United needs you! If you believe that our unions should fight the carriers and not each other, then RWU is for you. If you believe that the carriers' "Behavior Based Safety" Programs do more harm to us than good, and If you want real union-based safety committees built upon cross-craft solidarity and rank-and-file control, then RWU is for you. If you want to help reform Railroad Retirement; if you wish to see an active, informed and mobilized union membership -- of all rail labor -- then RWU is for you.

**JOIN RWU BETWEEN NOW AND LABOR DAY
AND GET A FREE RWU T-SHIRT!!**

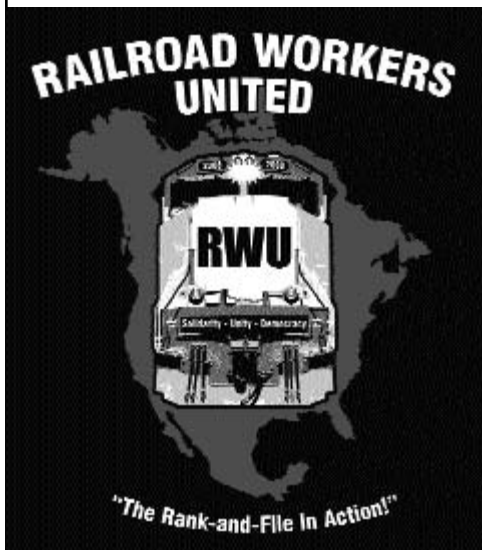
Name _____ Date _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
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 Union _____ Local # _____ Employer _____
 Terminal _____ Craft _____ Years of Service _____
 Union Position (if any) _____

I'd like to join for (check one):

1 year \$50.00 2 Years \$90.00 3 Years \$120.00

Clip and mail together with your dues to:
Ron Kaminkow, RWU Secretary P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV. 89505

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