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DIRECT ACTION!

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**The Haymarket Affair and the Significance of May Day | Amazon Labor Union Victory!
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The Haymarket Affair and the Significance of May Day

-Chuck Molotov

During the Industrial Revolution, the factory workers typically worked 10-16 hours a day, six days a week in inhumane conditions. Workers organised and fought their oppressors together, one workplace at a time. Sometimes they won and sometimes they lost, but more importantly, these workplaces noticed they had a common struggle. In each of the industrialising countries, an eight hour day movement was slowly formed. And this wasn't just an issue for factory workers. In 1855 Sydney stonemasons went on strike to win the first eight hour day. This was followed by Victorian stonemasons in 1856. This victory led to an eight hour day movement building across Australia and inspired workers across the world.

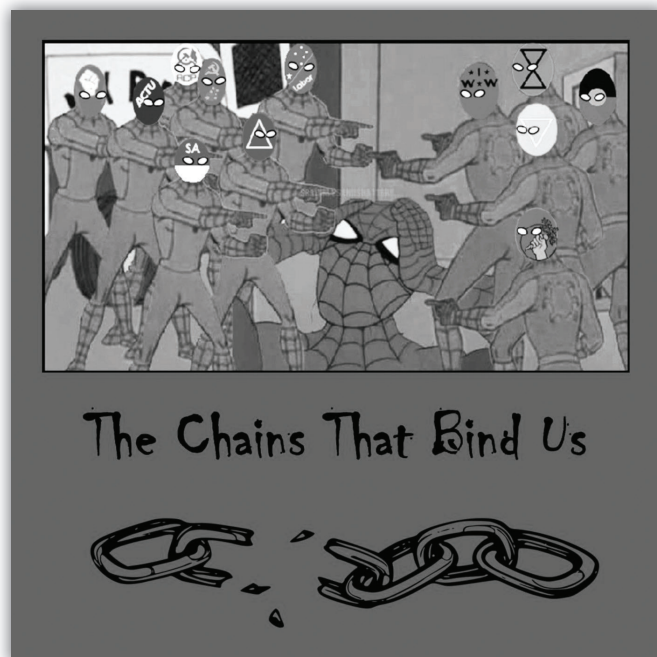
In America, on October 1884, a convention by the Federation of Organised Trades and Labor Unions set May 1st, 1886 as the day an eight hour work day would be set, and prepared a general strike in support of it. Thousands marched peacefully in several cities across America. After a peaceful march organised by anarchist Albert Parsons in Chicago, the centre of the American labour movement, some strikers approached a picket line to confront strikebreakers at a lumber yard. In response to this police, who have always protected the capitalist class, fired openly into the crowd, killing two people. Outraged, a rally was organised by anarchists the next day at Haymarket Square. Albert Parsons, August Spies and Reverend Samuel Fielden, all anarchist labor activists, spoke to a crowd of thousands, with a large police presence nearby.



The Chains That Bind Us

The Chains That Bind Us is a podcast which interviews people from various Sydney and Australian based organisations struggling to create a better world. Despite this shared goal, we see that the left is divided not only by strategies and tactics, but also on other philosophical principles, ideological differences, and in our opinion, occasionally petty reasons.

This podcast aims to explore - not debate - the various perspectives of left organisations to encourage cooperation, and strengthen our ability to work towards a better world together. We hope this podcast will also serve to raise awareness of activist groups and get more people involved. Because we won't be free until we learn that the chains that bind us, bind us together.



Towards the end of a notably calm and peaceful gathering, police stormed in en masse, ordering the crowd to leave. Suddenly an improvised bomb was thrown at the police officers, killing one police officer immediately and mortally wounding six others. Police fired into the fleeing crowd, and it is unclear whether any workers fired back. While four workers were confirmed killed, it is unknown how many were injured due to fear of being further victimised by state terror.

Following was the mass arrests of anarchists, unionists and immigrants who were associated with the the radical labour movement, regardless of their connection to what became known as the Haymarket Affair. Eight suspects were arrested and charged. In addition to the arrests of Spies, Parsons and Felden, who had either left or were exiting the podium at the time, they were joined by alleged co-conspirators Adolph Fischer, Michael Schwab, George Angel, Louis Lingg and Oscar Neebe, none of which were present when the bomb exploded. Despite a lack of evidence, a jury selected based on their anti-union beliefs, found all eight defendants guilty. A judge that displayed open hostility throughout the trial sentenced seven to death and one to 15 years in prison.

Predictably, the mainstream press demonised the defendants during and after the trial, most notably the New York Times. After denied appeals, two of the convicted prisoners had their sentences commuted to life, and Lingg, the alleged bomb maker, committed suicide in prison by placing a smuggled explosive between his teeth. The other four condemned were executed on November 1887. They slowly strangled to death against their nooses.

The identity of the bomb thrower was never discovered, with possible candidates being a paid Pinkerton Agent, who were often used to fight picketing strikers, or Rudolph Schnaubelt, the brother-in-law of one of the defendants.

Despite state repression and demonisation in the capitalist press, the labour movement and their demand for an eight hour work day continued to grow. At a convention on 1888, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) decided to hold

another strike for an eight hour work day on May 1st 1890. In 1889, the AFL president proposed to the Second International to make the struggle global, and May 1st became International Workers' Day. Slowly workers in various countries won their eight hour work day.

And that wasn't all they won. With even more struggle, workplace safety, weekends and welfare programs were won through long and difficult unified industrial agitation, not mention to dampen the increasingly revolutionary spirit of the labor movement.

And then we, the working class of the First World sat back and enjoyed social democracy, our gilded cage. We called ourselves the lucky country and begged our government to stop immigrants from coming and ruining things for us. In our workplaces we compromised, we let union bureaucracy control the union movement, who proceeded to help the politicians screw us with the Accords. The capitalists offshored our entire manufacturing industry to places where they send death squads against strikers and dissidents, and told us to be grateful for all the cheap crap we can buy now!

The government stripped away our right to strike until it was all but meaningless. We saw this and decided to disregard unions instead of fighting the law. And as union membership plummeted our corporate and political overlords are now slowly taking away everything victory we fought for. Wages stagnated and inflation soared, and we blamed the politicians instead of the bosses who set the prices. More and more people work over 40 hours a week to struggle to get by. Even more have casual jobs or participate in the so-called gig economy, with even less rights.

This is not to say that all hope is lost. We got knocked down, but we'll get up again. They are never going to keep us down. In fact, we are witnessing a new wave of labour organising, one which Direct Action has been quite busy documenting.

Manufacturing Dissent are a group of podcasts united by the belief that a better world is possible and worth fighting for, and the aim of informing the working class so we can unite and fight oppression everywhere until we are all free.

What's That Skip?

What's That Skip is a podcast that attempts to explain political economy, ideology and history, one topic at a time. A big problem a lot of people interested in these topics have isn't that of availability, but that of accessibility.

Too many curious students have been told to read doorstopper texts by dead white men and give up before getting past the first chapter. This is not their fault. These are largely texts written by and for academics. Additionally, our lives are filled with work and responsibilities, making people too busy to sit down and read enough to become experts in every single important topic.

In light of this, What's That Skip? attempts to spend one hour a week explaining politics in a way that the vast majority of working people can understand. Season one will begin with introductions to the political systems and ideologies that we believe are essential knowledge, and later we'll explore more specific topics.





Manufacturing Dissent.

-Charlie Foxtrot and Nicki Wilde

One of the most effective strategies the ruling class to maintain its power is to misinform the working class. Through their involvement in government policy and private education they influence the education system.

Through the various forces of Manufacturing Consent they shape media narratives. While the internet has made the publication of dissenting voices easier, the lion's share of media is still owned by enormous corporations and is corrupted by advertising.

If anything, corporate ownership, the influence of advertising and ideology of neoliberalism has become stronger in this century. Here at Direct Action, we are proud to be one of the relatively few voices speaking out on behalf of our fellow workers. We would also like to use our modest platform to promote other who are fighting for the end of oppression of workers everywhere.

Thus, we would like to introduce the Manufacturing Dissent, a new podcasting network started by Sydney members of the Industrial Workers of the World. Manufacturing Dissent aims to shatter the myth of Capitalist Realism. Capitalist Realism is the assumption that capitalism is the only viable political and economic system, and an inability for the vast majority of people to imagine a possible alternative to it. The truth is, capitalism is a blight on humanity, one that may drive us to extinction if we allow it to continue.

The working class is slowly building power again, slowly pushing back, and I am confident that we'll be able to win back those concessions we lost. Hell, we could even take it a step further. Studies have shown that shortening the work week to 20 hours a week actually increases productivity, not to mention the improvements to our mental health and social life. A shortened work week was also predicted by economist John Keynes due to increased productivity rates. Of course, Keynes failed to predict the ability for capitalists to give workers increasingly meaningless and unproductive jobs. Your manager and their manager spends a large chunk of their work day completing these pointless tasks, and you probably do it occasionally too. There have also been more and more calls to expand our social safety nets. More affordable housing, expanding medicare and unemployment benefits are common demands from progressives in many countries.

What I ask, dear readers, is why should we be content with the ruling class' concessions? Why settle for crumbs when we could take the whole damn bakery? We were meant for more than spending our lives working for other's profit. There's a reason why the capitalists and their government and media lap dogs work so hard to build and maintain this ridiculously complicated series of cages we call modern society. All these laws, walls and wars, the corporate jargon and the published lies are meant to obscure a truth that every capitalist knows, even if they never admit it: They need us to keep them rich, and we don't need them at all.

If we organise, all we have to do is stick our hands in our pockets and the capitalists are fucked. Ultimately, this is the true meaning of May Day. A celebration of the immense yet untapped potential of the working class, the key to our liberation.

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold. Greater than the might of atoms, magnified a thousand fold. We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old. For the union makes us strong!

Solidarity Forever,
Chuck Molotov.



Workers' Power, Trans Rights: One Struggle, One Fight

-Vilian Chat

How workers of the NTEU are making gains for annual gender affirmation leave.

Crucial gains for the rights of trans workers has been made by the members of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) in pushing for gender affirmation leave. On the 14th of April, members of the voted to strike for 48 hours on the 11th and 12th of May.

Among the claims of a pay rise, a 40% research workload component and enforced targets for hiring First Nations peoples is a claim for workers to access 30 days of paid leave for the purpose of gender affirmation.

Direct Action has the privilege of speaking to Dani Cotton, a rank-and-file member of the NTEU at the University of Sydney, sitting as the casual representative on the Branch Committee. The views she has stated to us are her own.

What is Gender Affirmation Leave?

The claim at Sydney University is for 30 days per annum of paid leave for workers to affirm their gender legally, socially and medically.

This is to afford trans workers the opportunity to affirm their gender identity without the use of annual or sick leave.



One of the advantages of ALU not involving an established union with a large bureaucracy was that the bosses couldn't accuse the union of being a 'third party' that workers were unaccountable to. The union-busting consultants in Bessemer emphasised this in their campaign, but that didn't work on Staten Island because the union was made up entirely of their co-workers. The ALU's victory is part of a broader organising and strike wave in response to the economic damage and loss of life caused by the pandemic. The ruling class has continued to oppress the working class and allowed COVID to wreak havoc, taking over a million lives in the USA alone. In Australia, this year we are experiencing our highest number of COVID deaths as well as rising inflation coupled by wage stagnation. This lack of wage growth is undoubtedly caused by the decline of unionisation, but also by the defanging of unions and the increasingly passive relationship between the union bureaucracy and the ruling class. The working class and ruling class have nothing in common, and any union leader that acts otherwise should be considered a class traitor. Fortunately, all hope is not lost. Just as the ruling class needs the working class to function, the union needs its rank and file members. In fact, I'd go a step further and say that unions are the organised workers fighting for themselves and each other. If Australian workers follow the ALU's example of grassroots organising and agitation, we'll finally end this trend of stagnant wages and stagnant working class power. The future is within our grasp. We just need to reach out together and take it.

Solidarity Forever,
Chuck Molotov

The role of this claim for trans liberation

"Trans rights at work are one of the most important things we have to win" Dani stated to Direct Action, citing a survey on gender diverse people by Positive Life NSW which found that just over 50% of trans people were in any form of formal employment.

Indeed, this is inline with the findings of an analysis by the thinktank Action on Social Change which found in 2016 that 51% of gender diverse people were employed, only 37% of which made over \$21K p.a. as a result of employment discrimination especially at the moment of transition.

This disproportionately excludes trans people from the formal economy as a consequence of wide spread discrimination and so this fight is beyond the recent reactionary transphobia of the state and federal Coalition governments but tackles the structural roots of a cis-normative economy.

Dani cited everyday occurrences that effect trans people, herself experiencing difficulties accessing her workplace via on her campus staff card due to name discrepancies on government documents, discrepancies that on another occasion had resulted in Dani going without pay for a month.



"Trans rights at work are one of the most important things we have to win"

~Dani Cotton, rank and file union member

“These kinds of little things that seem like little glitches happen all the time because these systems aren’t made for us [trans people] we have to turn them around and so much of that has to happen at work.

“And when you’re going through transition it’s not just about the access to those means, it’s about being socially supported to do that and the truth is that most trans people do not feel supported at work to transition - when people make that choice to transition, they drop out of work altogether and it is so hard to get back in.”

Dani suggests that it is these reasons that we see these trends in trans employment insecurity thus the fight of gender affirmation leave is the inclusion of trans people in the workplace, addressing the downstream economic consequences of economic exclusion that trans people disproportionately face.

Victories won so far

The primary gains for gender affirmation leave have been won at the University of Sydney whose NTEU branch has been spearheading this campaign for gender affirmation leave and advocates seek to push this claim to every university that the NTEU covers.

Members had won an agreement to give a one off 30 days for gender affirmation although this has not yet been confirmed in the award and is thus still vulnerable to be taken off the table.

Dani cites an instance at the University of Tasmania in which 20 days of leave were granted which was then withdrawn from their employees triggering a national partition campaign by members of the NTEU to name and shame the spiteful behaviour of the University.

converting them to their cause, then asking them to talk to their work friends. Many organisers dedicated their days off to hanging out in the break room and answering questions from their co-workers. They also had outside help from volunteers from other unions, socialist groups and the community to phone bank – Where a team of workers would call employees of the JFK8 warehouse outside of work to discuss unionisation of the workplace. There were socialists who agreed to be salts, people who get a job at Amazon for the purpose of organising and voting for the union. She also emphasised the need to not be afraid to fight dirty to show that the union is willing to fight for their fellow workers, and to encourage workers to stand up and fight for themselves and each other. She also emphasised the need to use every tool they could, both direct action and filing official complaints. One organiser emphasised the use of giving food and building social connections to help build a sense of solidarity. After their historic victory, the ALU in Staten Island is currently attempting to negotiate a contract with Amazon. The ALU unfortunately recently lost another election to unionise neighbouring warehouse LDJ5, but I expect more union drives throughout the US and internationally.

So, what can we learn from the Amazon Labor Union’s victory? It shows that the strategies and tactics of grassroots union organising, which have been promoted by the IWW for over a century, are still successful. Australia’s warehouse workers could learn a lot from the ALU, which, like most of Australia, has poor unionisation rates. Notably, Amazon is expanding their presence in Australia. This is concerning, because just as Walmart influenced the rest of the American economy when it rose to power, Amazon is having a similar effect both in the USA and internationally. Previously, industrialisation replaced human labour with unrelenting machines. As capitalism demands more and more exploitation to reap more and more profits every year, Amazon is using its surveillance technology and unrelenting KPI matrixes to turn humans into machines. If workers don’t stand up and fight back against this trend it will spread its reign of terror throughout the industry and the rest of the working class.

so much that NLRB ordered a re-vote. While the vote counting is still in process, it appears that the RWDSU has lost again. Amazon is so dedicated to union-busting because it believes that a victory anywhere will inspire workers in other warehouses to follow suit. Their aim is to kill any and all hope.

At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, organiser and Amazon worker Chris Smalls and others attempted to agitate for safer working conditions. He and one other organiser were fired for alleged breach of COVID safety rules, despite them being impossible to follow while keeping up with their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This is an intentional strategy by authoritarian bosses and governments. If they broaden what can be punishable, and be very selective in who actually gets punished, they can maintain order without worrying about the pretence of fairness. Fortunately, Smalls eventually managed to prove he was unfairly dismissed and got his job back. Amazon's union-busting law firm tried to focus their early anti-union campaign on Smalls, describing him in a leaked memo as "not intelligent or articulate", another pathetic attempt by the ruling class to divide the working class through racism and classism. Smalls has demonstrated that this is simply untrue. As one of the key leaders, Smalls has contributed to the first successful Amazon union drive in the USA, and handles himself well in the many interviews during the campaign and on-going media attention following the formation of the first ALU branch at the JFK8 facility.

While they may not have predicted the increased national discourse on racism following the murder of George Floyd, they foolishly failed to consider that the majority of his co-workers are not white and would not appreciate this racist dog whistling.

As Smalls has mentioned repeatedly, he is only one organiser in the union. So, how did a group of workers unaffiliated with any established unions take on a Megacorp and win? ALU member Justine Medina said they drew from various historical sources, such as William Z. Foster's Organizing Methods in the Steel Industry, The Congress of Industrial Organisers and The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Organisers would start their campaign by identifying social leaders in the workplace and focus on

Branches at other campuses have also taken the University of Sydney's branch's lead such as La Trobe University, Central Queensland University, and the University of Melbourne.

The next step for the members at the University of Sydney is to secure the one off 30 days as a per year accounting for the multiple procedures throughout a trans person's life, further changes in gender identity, follow up appointments, complications, legal appointments, and diagnostic tests.

How they were won

"The number one thing to win anything is rank and file power", Dani stated in regard to the gains made at the University of Sydney, "What [management] really care about is that the group of people behind the claim are significant enough [...] if they think they can get away with shafting the union, they will, if they don't think the claim is representative of people."

In the recent climate of trans rights discourse -be it Mark Latham's bigoted "Religious Freedoms" bill, which would see further discrimination against sexual and gender minorities in schools, or Claire Chandler's proposed amendment to the Sex Discrimination Act, which would have seen the exclusion of trans women from women's sports- trans people could easily be seen as a 'punching bag' minority within political discussion with marginal support.

In this light, Dani asserts that the key to this fight is demonstrating both to the employer and the public at large the amount of support that trans people actually have.

Initially, as the union drafted their log of claims to be brought to the negotiations at the renewal of their contract which included a 20 day per year of gender affirmation leave.

After some review, consulting with others within the trans community and assessing the available research, Dani concluded that the 20 day claim would not be adequate for those who require a surgical pathway and as all means of gender affirmation should be supported. by this claim, that the claim would need to be at a minimum 30 days according to several sources such as ACON's Transhub and the John Hopkins Center for Transgender Health.

An open letter addressed to the union branch executive suggesting a review of the gender affirmation claim and with some internal branch discussion, it was decided that the log of claims be amended to include the 30 days with little resistance. After presenting this log of claims to management did concede the 30 days as a one off though did not give further ground as an yearly form of leave, this concession backed by years of militant union participation and workplace density.



National Tertiary Education Union's branch at the University of Sydney have spearheaded the national campaign for gender affirmation leave.

USA is because the company is openly hostile to unions. In 2018, an anti-unionisation training video for managers was leaked online. It taught managers early warning signs of unionising. Some were obvious, such as union graffiti, flyers and clothing, union representative visitors and people suddenly speaking up on behalf of their co-workers. This training included more subtle 'warning signs': people discussing topics such as a living wage, co-workers suddenly talking to each other more or less, increased complaints, increased interest in benefits and company policy, and groups scattering when approached by management. The video along, with the rest of Amazon's public relations language was full of anti-union double speak. This fits nicely with my 1984 analogy, but is less convenient for the chances of working conditions improving.

The extent of how far Amazon was willing to go to union-bust was first demonstrated in the union election in Bessemer, Alabama by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). Amazon launched a vicious two-pronged attack. At the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Amazon's lawyers pull every trick in the corporate lawfare handbook to obstruct and slow down the unionisation process.

Organisers at Bessemer estimated they lost 60 'yes' votes per week due to high turnover. Within the warehouse, Amazon hired consultants who specialise in union-busting. They arranged 'captive audience' meetings which Amazon workers are forced to attend. The consultants then sow doubt, intimidate workers against unionising and spread misinformation, all while maintaining the pretence of being neutral. If any workers speak out against them, they report them back to Amazon's management. Amazon also brought additional management into the warehouse to increase monitoring and intimidation, and filled the warehouse with anti-union propaganda. These are fairly typical union-busting tactics for large corporations. What wasn't typical was the use of mail in ballots, due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Amazon argued against this safer option, due to wanting to use the opportunity of in-warehouse ballots to intimidate workers. However, the workers collaborated with the US Postal Service, which they have a close working relationship with. The USPS assisted the workers to install mailboxes in the warehouse, to circumvent Amazon's efforts to interfere. However, Amazon was found to have interfered in the election

Centre, for example, is the size of fifteen football fields, and is staffed 24 hours a day in overlapping shifts. Every single aspect of the warehouse is designed to maximise productivity, with little to no regard for the wellbeing of the workers. Most workers are on 10-12 hour shifts, where they are monitored through phone apps to make sure they are meeting their never ending targets. If workers fail to meet their targets they are given a 'disciplinary point', which are used to justify firing workers. Reasons for being given these disciplinary points range from 'idleness', sick leave (even with a medical certificate) and failing to finish their timed bathroom break quickly enough. Because of the immense size of the warehouses, these bathroom are often too far away. In one survey, 64% of workers said they were afraid of using the bathroom during their shift. Leaked manager reports have made reference to discovered urine bottles and even workers defecating in bags in the warehouse.

The unrelenting pace has also contributed to frequent workplace injuries, which are three times higher than other warehouses in the USA and twice as frequent as Walmart, their second biggest competitor. These injuries also tend to be more serious and take longer to recover than other warehouses. This is likely has to do with reports that workers are discouraged from reporting their injuries for fear of repeated harassment from managers. Because workers are constantly worked to the bone and are given orders on their phone app, they work in a very alienating and toxic environment. One former worker reported that they didn't speak to a human while on shift for 3 months. On their scheduled breaks, in addition to traversing the long distance to the break room, workers have to go through 'airport style security' multiple times a day. Within their warehouses they create a dehumanising and oppressive surveillance state, best described as a modern version of the dystopian novel '1984.'

Because of these inhumane conditions, Amazon warehouses have an annual workforce turnover rate of roughly 150%, according to a recent study in the New York Times. To put this into perspective, it would mean that in a warehouse of 1000 people, 1500 people quit or were fired over the course of that year. Given the environment and turnover rate, it is understandable why Amazon workers have had difficulty unionising. However, the most significant reason Amazon has not had a union in the

With this response to the log of claims, the authors of both the open letter and the claim reached out to the university's Pride Network and formed a working group to discuss if the concession given by management was sufficient. Due to the low representation of trans people amongst the staff, it was decided there was no reason why management should not grant the whole claim.

This working group then set out to draft another open letter and began partitioning staff and students within the university as well as people in the broader community to fight for the yearly claim.

As a result, there has been a diverse array of supporters from prominent trans union members to sympathetic cis allies, eventually escalating with a video campaign including many of the partition signatories arguing to management the importance of yearly gender affirmation leave.

"I think that was very important," Dani mentioned, "I think if we didn't have that campaign, it would have been very hard for the union to stay strong. The union so far has stayed true to the original claim though the university hasn't shifted any further."

Dani also stated the importance of community grounds such as Pride in Protest who have been holding regular pro trans events at which NTEU members have been regular attendees.

Obstacles which remain

"I think the biggest obstacle has been the head of the university's boss' union -a group that asserted that gender affirmation leave was an ambit claim which was beyond community expectations which a senior academic said was 'not equitable as it discriminated against cisgendered staff' and so part of that obstacle has been ideological" Dani recounted.

“Just arguing against that and saying as a union we actually fight for equity, we want to fight for everyone to be on a level playing field and that means taking into consideration things like oppression, things like sexism, to fight for things like menstrual and menopausal leave, domestic violence leave, paid parental leave, it means we care about transphobia, it means we’re fighting against racism - it doesn’t mean ignoring these things”

Dani also pointed out the small amount of the University’s staff which are indeed trans and that even if the claim was a yearly allotted leave that it would be a small cost to the university in terms of the staffing budget and that opposition to the claim was primarily ideological.

Another obstacle that has been faced by advocates of gender affirmation leave has been transphobia within the union itself and that the reality is that the union represents all the members.

This has resulted in a discussion within NTEU members about addressing the transphobia that exists amidst the ranks. Discourse about how trans rights and women’s rights are indeed compatible, for example, has brought light to the importance of these frank, internal discussions and as a result these people learned and grew from this campaign.

A distinction was made, however, between those members who had transphobic views -from which their solidarity had to be won over- and so-called “trans-exclusionary radical feminists” (TERF) who would dress up their anti-trans bigotry in the language of feminist advocacy.

“When it comes to people who are outwardly, openly organising against our rights, even siding with the Liberal Party against birth certificate reforms, we’ve had the difficult conversation in saying that as a union we’re against ‘gender critical feminism’ and was one of the hardest fights



Amazon Labor Union Victory!

-Chuck Molotov

It is difficult to describe the immense amount of wealth and power that the multinational technology company Amazon has. It is the world’s largest online retailer and marketplace of an extremely wide variety of products and services. In addition to this, Amazon Web Services (AWS) is the largest provider of cloud storage, making them one of the most important internet companies in the world. AWS is only one of over 40 subsidiaries, including Audible, IMDb, Twitch and WholeFoods. Amazon.com is the third most popular website in the USA, and the 11th most popular in the world. The company competes in multiple entertainment markets through Amazon Prime Video, Amazon Music, Twitch and Audible. They produce consumer electronics, notably Kindle e-readers, Echo devices, Fire tablets and Fire TVs, which also collect data for AWS. Its founder, former CEO and current Executive Chairman, Jeffrey Bezos, is the second wealthiest person in the world currently worth \$164 billion USD at time of writing. With 1.3 Million employees, Amazon is also the second largest private employer in the USA. While this is merely scratching the surface of the vastness and wealth of Amazon, it is enough to illustrate that it is the kind of ‘Megacorp’ that was once only described in dystopian fiction.

There are numerous criticisms of how Amazon has abused its power, but, as the focus of this paper is labour reporting and this article is about the Amazon Labor Union (ALU), I will focus on their horrendous working conditions. Their minimum starting pay of \$15 USD per hour, equivalent to \$21.12 AUD, is above the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 USD, but the incentives end there. Imagine working in one of their massive warehouses: The Staten Island Distribution

for us but it's been really important to distinguish normal people with transphobic views and those who fight against our rights"

The way ahead

The outlook on this issue is promising for the NTEU branch at the University of Sydney as well as the national campaign across different universities in Australia.

There is also a planned national campaign to call out the University of Tasmania in support of the comrades on that campus whose claim was taken back off the table by management.

The NTEU in Sydney is also planning to strike for 48 hours starting on the 11th of May which members welcome others to come stand in solidarity at the pickets, both for workers' rights and trans rights.

Further campaigns can be seen on the horizon for queer rights ranging from toilet access to the names used on contracts - all issues that make life needlessly more difficult for trans people.

Dani also called for the need for a union which is willing to act on these queer issues as well as building and maintaining these LGBTQIA+ networks, reaching outside of the universities and spreading this campaign to nursing, teaching, transport and more.

Implications for the larger fight for trans liberation

To fight for trans liberation at work across all industries will help win trans liberation all across society, that one working class everywhere no matter where you work, we have an interest in supporting each other including in issues such as trans rights.

Dani concluded with this message to us,

“Fighting for our rights at work is really important and we, at the same time, fight for our rights against the state. Many of the issues that trans people experience at work are tied to issues with the state.

“That it is difficult to get your birth certificate changed and that in NSW it requires gender affirmation surgery (which not all trans people feel the need to do) to change your birth certificate gender causes all these hurdles at work.

“We need to fight for anti-discrimination law that protects trans people, we need to fight for Medicare to be protected for trans people.

“But I am quite hopeful, to be honest. We have seen a real turn around for social support for trans people in the last few years and even though there’s a backlash, it may soon be the majority that support trans people.

“That’s a really strong place for us to move forward from if we can stand collectively at work and on the streets, we can win this.”