



MID-VALLEY ORGANIZER

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INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

Elites Aim To Flatten National Rail Strike, Back Rail Bosses

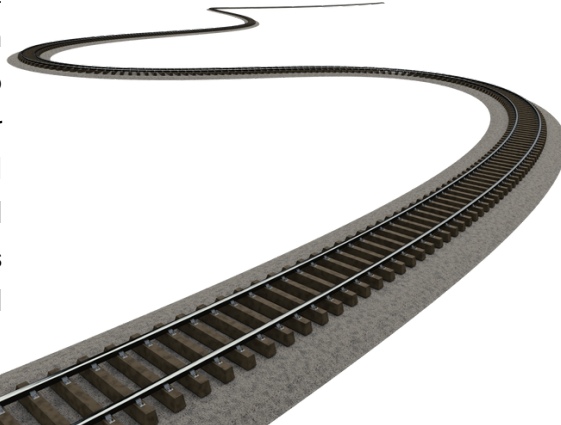
POTUS Joe Biden made remarks this past month on the lingering national rail strike which has support from 55% of members of the 12 railroad unions involved. The 1926 Railway Labor Act authorizes Congress to settle labor disputes when all other options have been exhausted (except for the bosses making any concessions whatsoever, of course). Many believed that the strike was avoided weeks ago due to an aggressive press campaign that claimed a previous tentative deal would likely be the end of negotiations. However, that was not the case, as POTUS is now feeling pressure from corporate bosses to pre-emptively prohibit the strike that would force rail bosses to meet worker demands. POTUS is calling on Congress to legally certify a tentative deal even though a majority of rail workers voted "no." and, if successful, would leave no recourse for the majority of rail workers who voted the tentative agreement down.



tentative agreement. Perhaps the agreement was reached by one side, but it would be a fabrication to claim that both sides reached a deal when a majority of union members rejected the deal.

As expected, the press campaign surrounding this legislation has utilized a flurry of economic fearmongering to appeal to the public. Ironically, the messaging reinforces just how critical these workers are by pointing out the economic devastation that would be felt each day that a strike persisted. Sick days and time off were primary catalysts for the potential strike, yet those demands have been left out of the final tentative agreement. The House of Representatives has passed the tentative agreement along with an amendment brought on by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders which would add 7 days of sick leave to the agreement. Both the TA and amendment passed in the House, though the Senate will vote on the final bill, Thursday, December 1, in what will likely be the final decision on this conflict.

The federal government is poised to force national rail workers to accept a deal that's absent of the primary demand of sick leave while simultaneously highlighting their critical importance by exhausting the nuclear option to stop the strike. Biden has explicitly asked all members of Congress to support the union-busting legislation, even calling out those members who believe that workers need a better deal. "This agreement was reached in good faith by both sides" claimed POTUS in a memo after 4 unions that make up 55% involved rejected the



THE LIFE AND TIMES



OF A BLACK WOBBLY

According to historian Dr. Peter Cole, Ben Fletcher is perhaps one of the most significant members of the Industrial Workers of the World, though he receives few accolades in comparison to early influential IWW figures like Mother Jones, Big Bill Haywood, and Eugene V. Debs. Born in 1890 in Philadelphia, Fletcher would go on to work as a longshoreman on the docks of Philadelphia, where in 1912 he joined the union and in 1913 he co-founded and lead Local 8 of the Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union in partnership with the IWW. Local 8 and the IWW were unique in the early 1900s because they promoted racial and ethnic integration, a concept that prominent business unions like the AFL rejected at the time.

Overcoming oppression, prison time, and the threat of violence in the workplace, Ben Fletcher embodied the 'direct action' that we speak of in this union. World War I unfolded just as Local 8 was experiencing its most effective organization efforts, yet Local 8 was able to maintain influence for years after its end. Fletcher stepped away from the spotlight in the IWW and Local 8 as he grew older, although he continued to be active until his passing in 1949. Dr. Cole's book, *Ben Fletcher: The Life and Times of A Black Wobbly* offers a unique historical perspective of Fletcher's career as an organizer.

Fletcher helped to organize the docks in a manner that combined the strength of diverse workers so that bosses had little choice but to respect their collective power. By 1920, Local 8 had 7,500 workers from the Philadelphia docks on strike for better working conditions



ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP. MAKE FINAL NOMINATIONS!

General Membership Meetings

First Sunday of each month
at 5p.m. PST

Have a submission or inquiry?

Email

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