

# BUILD GRASSROOTS UNIONISM

SPRING 2012

For a non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian solidarity movement.

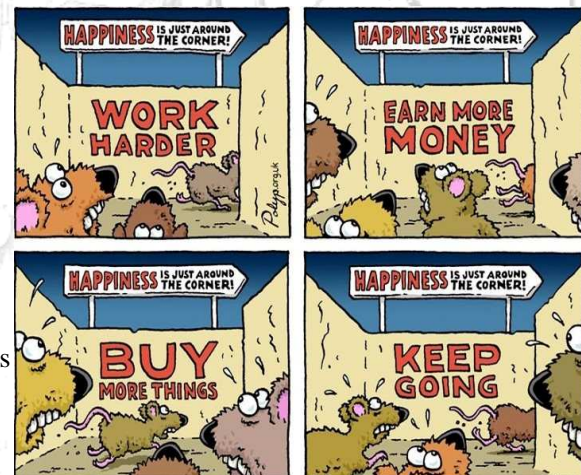
Look through the mainstream newspapers this month and you'll see hundreds of articles accusing workers and the unemployed of being thugs, greedy, lazy, unlawful, unreasonable and unfair. Despite all the cuts to jobs, services, the arts and health (all the while funding bullshit, like \$200,000 for the Big Brother show), the bosses press seem to think that they are the ones who are being thrown onto the scrapheap. *The Australian* this week for example has a plethora of articles all similarly titled. One article, titled 'Unions hold employers to ransom' for example states, 'Unfortunately, the good times are over. What we have now is a determined push by some construction unions to once again hold employers and the public to ransom using the old tactics of coercion, the pursuit of unlawful claims, illegal strike action and illegal pickets.' Similarly this week Gina Rinehart (who inherited her billions based on the pillaging of Aboriginal land) urged those lazy workers "jealous of the wealthy to spend less time drinking and socialising, and more time working."

All of these stories serve the purpose of building an illusion that workers and employers all stand on a fair and equal basis, and that society is a debating chamber where the most reasonable ideas and arguments are implemented through democratic vote – 'we're all in this together', so they say. This myth also shapes the response of people against the cuts. There's been a lot of talk on the street about the importance of 'winning the argument'. This strategy holds that the best way to go about fighting attacks on wages, living conditions and services is to point out the flaws in the pro-cuts arguments and suggest alternative policies which would avoid the need for cuts. Some even seem to think that if the argument is won, the government will see the error of its ways, stop the planned cuts and everyone can go home happy. It isn't hard to see where this strategy falls down. It certainly isn't the weakness of the anti-cuts arguments; it's been convincingly shown that these cuts aren't 'necessary' at all (see for example the *Workers Audit*, which points out that the cuts follow an agenda of massive privatisation, of a state that increases an onerous burden of work on its employees, that sells off more assets and pulls away the provision of services to the majority of people – and one that focuses on the 'sustainability of the State's capital program' (p205) which reading through the lines we can understand as building and maintain infrastructure for the benefit of mining interests...With the financial crisis, the state was left with a debt that was made worse by natural disaster. Now, the LNP government exaggerates that debt to enact an agenda of privatisation and austerity. This will please banks and mining companies stand to gain too. But we all lose..")

No, the mistake in this strategy is the belief that society is based on rational arguments in the first place. **Our society is not a debating chamber, but a power struggle between different groups and classes with competing and opposing interests.** We are *not* all in this together. The bosses interests as a *class* (the never ending pursuit to squeeze out more profit) are not the same as ours. The all devouring planetary work-machine that is the market society, with its constraints demanding subservience to profit and hierarchy, is intent on locking us all down.

The government are making these cuts because they suit the rich, the wealthy and the powerful – that small section of society that control the means of production, distribution, exchange and communication. They can get away with it not because they are right, but because they hold power. They won't be swayed by argument, because from such a position of strength all arguments can be safely ignored. If necessary they can enforce their decisions using the media, police and courts (or by other means - Grocon managers this week were accused of using bikies to intimidate striking workers). The ruling class has its own global and local networks of solidarity and uses its own direct methods to secure its interests and maintain its privileges – so why shouldn't we? The legacy of rights and social gains which we enjoy today weren't granted as gifts from above— they were won and forced upon the system through popular struggle and have to be maintained through struggle. Everything we've won in the past through grassroots struggle they want to take away. The tenants rights sector, support for LGBT communities, the right to strike, abortion rights, the health of our communities and environment...If we don't get organised we basically give those in power a blank cheque to do as they wish. Direct action, strikes, occupations, economic blockades: the government attempts to force its decisions upon us, so we must force our collective decisions upon them

Despite the hopeful recent upsurge in industrial action, as workers we're starting from an incredibly low point. We are a 'lost generation'—most people aren't unionised and many consider the union's presence irrelevant. Most of us haven't participated in a strike or experienced any real victory through organised struggle. There's such a history of defeat in Brisbane, and no real avenues for older militants who were involved in successful struggles to pass on their lessons. That doesn't mean that those of us with limited experiences have nothing to offer. There are lots of things bubbling under the surface and we need to start finding ways to pass on basic, nuts and bolts organising tactics. Turn the page for upcoming events and some of the things you can choose to get involved with.



The tendency to obey comes from systematic socialization of society that obedience constitutes correct conduct.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## REINSTATE DOMINOES PIZZA DELIVER WORKERS WAGES DAY OF ACTION:

19% removal of wages agreed to on entering employment simply by decree overnight is not 'Fair Work'. Stand up for casual workers and support the formation of the General Transport Workers Association - revolutionary union. The ASF is calling on friends and supporters to take protest action around the world on September 15. 7pm at the Domino's in NewFarm

## STOLENWEALTH GAMES COMMEMORATION

From 5-7th October the Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy will host a series of events to honour this important historical event. For more info phone: 0408064900, 0438781121 or 0400720757

## BSN OPEN DISCUSSION NIGHT

Direct Action: what is it and why is it important? Direct action means to struggle independently without intermediaries - it means winning gains from a position of power rather than through relying on the ballot box or appeals to political or economic representatives. Open discussion night Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> of September 6:30pm @ Freedom House 69 Thomas Street West End.

## STATEWIDE DAY OF ACTION

Wednesday 12th September 2012. Queensland Unions will be holding a Day of Action including a march and rally on Wednesday the 12th September 2012 commencing at 12:15, assembling at Queens Park (between Treasury Casino and the Casino Hotel), then marching to Parliament House.

## BRISBANE ABORIGINAL SOVEREIGN EMBASSY EVENTS

This Friday (7<sup>th</sup> of September) we are launching our new publication 'Brisbane Blacks Monthly'. Launch of issue 1 6pm Friday 7th of September Brisbane Sovereign Embassy 121 Cordelia St South Brisbane.

At 7pm there will be a film screening of 'Mad Bastards' - come along!

## BRISBANE WORKERS ASSEMBLY

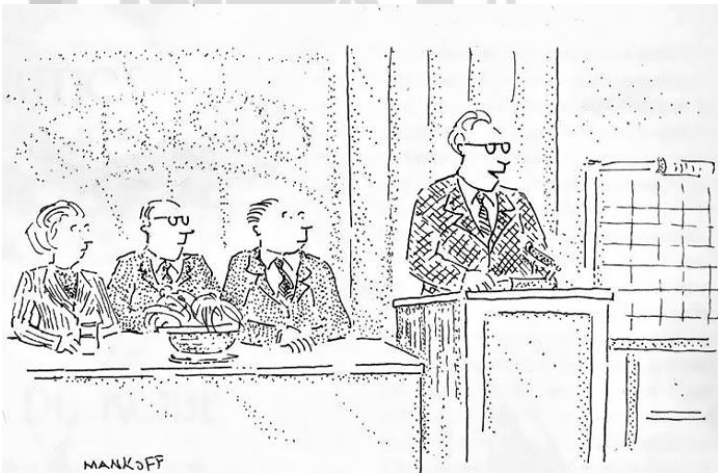
Recently a callout was released to form a 'Brisbane Workers Assembly', which basis itself on people supporting their workmates, talking about their conditions, and sharing these experiences with workers in other industries. Work groups currently getting off the ground in Social work/support work, University staff and students and Queensland Rail. Get in touch at [bwa@riseup.net](mailto:bwa@riseup.net) for more details

## BRISBANE ANARCHIST SUMMER SCHOOL JANUARY 2013

Brisbane is set to host an Anarchist Summer School across 12-14th of January, 2013. Represented will be a variety of speakers, stalls, workshops, DIY and grassroots revolutionary projects. Updates (venue, billets, transport, program etc) as they become available will be posted on: [anarchistsummerschool.wordpress.com](http://anarchistsummerschool.wordpress.com)

## FOOD NOT BOMBS

Australians continue to throw out three million tones of food every year - the equivalent of 145 kilograms for each and every one of us. *Food not bombs aims to intercept this cycle of waste.* We currently have a party with free food out the front of Small Park ('People's Park') on Boundary Street West End, opposite the Lizard statue every Friday night. We serve around 6:30pm till 9pm. Cooking starts at around 4 at the Waiters Union Kitchen at 69 Thomas Street West End.



*"And so, while the end-of-the-world scenario will be rife with unimaginable horrors, we believe that the pre-end period will be filled with unprecedented opportunities for profit."*

**DENIED BOND?**  
**UNFAIRLY FIRED?**  
**PLACE INFESTED?**  
**REFUSED REPAIRS?**  
**UNPAID WAGES?**  
**UNFAIR TREATMENT FROM A BOSS OR LANDLORD?**

**DON'T FIGHT ALONE!**

We are a volunteer network looking to support each other, build solidarity and defend our rights through mutual-aid and collective action. Being kicked around by your boss or landlord and want to do something about it? There are people out there willing to support you! Don't fight alone!

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email: [bsn@riseup.net](mailto:bsn@riseup.net)  
phone (leave a msg): 07 4422 0238