

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Sydney, Australia
Vol.37 No.3 (224) Dec.2019 -Jan. 2020

Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

FRENCH WORKERS AGAIN SHOW THE WAY FORWARD WITH DIRECT ACTION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST NEO-LIBERALISM!



Striking French Workers confronting riot police during recent massive strikes over Macron Pension cut backs.

**SELL-OFF OF QLD P2; NSW RAILWAY NEWS P3; FAIR GAME PART 2. P5;
SYDNEY BUSES NEWS P6; VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS P10; BRITAIN TODAY:
ORGANISING IN THE GIG ECONOMY11; FRENCH LABOUR NEWS P13; BOOK
REVIEW CORNER P15; DEBATE ON BLOCKADE TACTICS P17; MEXICAN
SYNDICALIST HISTORY P17; NEWS & NOTES P18;**

Rebel Worker is the bi-monthly Paper of the A.S.N. for the propagation of anarcho-syndicalism in Australia.

Unless otherwise stated, signed Articles do not necessarily represent the position of the A.S.N. as a whole. Any contributions, criticisms, letters or

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

P.O. BOX 92

BROADWAY 2007 NSW

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\$20 (Aus.) by Sea mail

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Sleazey Prince Andrew and the Sell-off of Queenslandwith a little help from the ALP and Liberal Politicians. An under-exposed scandal?

By Royal Disappointment

When the British Royal Family visits these shores, Australians roll out the red carpet. But how about when a British corporation (BG Corp.) takes advantage of our royal ties to roll out experimental gas fields on our prime farmland? History shows our leaders rolled over; unlocking eastern Australia for a gas cartel to take hold of our Parliament, land, energy and financial resources. Our leaders (ALP and Libs) acted contrary to the expressed wishes of their electors; and to our environmental and socio-economic detriment too.

Before establishing legally to take our resources, the BG Corp. used the Duke of York (Prince Andrew) to sell Australia's gas to a Chinese government owned corporation — with the assistance of a member of Australia's Parliament, resources minister Martin Ferguson. Ferguson departed parliament and soon landed in a seat on BG's board. The evidence of this came from a recently released letter written from Beijing (dated 25/3/2010) where the head of the BG Corp. in Australia

Catherine Tanna advised the the Qld ALP Premier Anna Bligh that the BG Group -as the parent company to both the Qld Gas Co.P/L and a Chinese Gas importer from Australia - had just signed a contract allowing China to buy 3.6 million tonnes of Qld liquid natural gas. Just how the British BG group got control of these massive resources and more relates back to the four semi-secret visits by Prince Andrew as the roving British Trade Commissioner in the lead up period. Even the British press raised eyebrows. The Daily Mail in London made this point in a cartoon titled "By Royal Disappointment" on 14 March 2011:

To what extent have 21st century Australians been used as cannon fodder to uphold British trade and power? Were the four Royal visits to Queensland between March 2011 and April 2014 an orchestrated public relations exercise to coincide with construction of British gas mining fields? This period stands as an anomaly in the history of visits by our monarchs.

The tax coup of 2010

In March 2010, the BG Group pulled off one of Australia's biggest sales of LNG to China (see below). After the sale, the ALP Rudd Govt's Federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, participated in the overnight June 2010 'coup' that toppled the nation's Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd installing Julia Gillard. The 'coup' prevented a scheduled meeting in Canberra with BG's London chief about the Resource Super Profits Tax Rudd was seeking for Australia. The coup also resulted in Wayne Swan becoming Deputy Prime Minister.

According to The Australian, BG's Frank Chapman had arrived in Brisbane on the corporate jet on Monday 21 June, anticipating collection of QCLNG's signed EIS evaluation report from Queensland Premier Anna Bligh. The coup in Canberra occurred the same night BG's project was signed off in Brisbane: Wednesday 23 June 2010. Queensland's coordinator-general (CG) had been instructed to sign off BG's QCLNG EIS evaluation report that evening. Environmental specialist, and then whistleblower, Simone Marsh, can confirm this, as she had been called in that morning to write the greenhouse gas chapter for the Qld Govt. by mid-afternoon for what was the world's first onshore unconventional gas to LNG project.

When she objected on the grounds of unreasonable time to read material (omitted from the EIS) the Qld Environment Department's project director replied the CG wanted a copy of the report "in his bag" that evening. When she asked to speak to the CG, the project director responded "The Coordinator-General's been told". This was highly unusual as the CG was not under legislated time frames, nor obliged to take such directions. FOI documents reveal the State's Treasurer had received an email on 12 May 2010 from the former director of UK Trade and Investment, Ian Fletcher. In London, Fletcher had also worked as principal private secretary to Sir Andrew Turnbull — UK Cabinet secretary and head of the Home Civil Service during the Blair Government and the Iraq war. Mysteriously in 2009, Fletcher became director-general of DEEDI, the Queensland Department that granted gas-mining leases.

Fletcher's email informed the Qld State Treasurer that the BG Group wanted their approval within weeks: "the drop dead date really is the June board meeting". Regarding the Rudd government's proposed resources super profits tax, Fletcher informs: "the company is quietly confident that their negotiations with Federal Treasury (i.e. Wayne Swan) are going to yield fruit".

Fletcher selects the intriguing terms "Constitutional innovation" and a "Court of star chamber" to describe a means by which BG Group proposed to front a State Cabinet sub-committee, to circumvent environmental requirements and gain unlawful EIS sign-off. We can only assume that Queensland's Cabinet, ignoring separation of powers, morphed into a medieval Star Chamber soon after. Just two days later, Friday 25 June, Kevin Rudd was delivering his farewell speech as PM on national television.

Government paralysis

Australia's Liberal-National Party government following Gillard's term, remained paralysed, incapable of responding what has occurred. The Labor *See Page 18*

A.S.N. APPEAL

The Anarcho-Syndicalist Network requires suitable cost effective premises. \$750,000 is urgently sought to buy premises for the Proposed Rebel Worker Anarcho-Syndicalist Network Media Centre.

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N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

NSW Trains Workers Under Attack

Some of the most important news lately in the NSW Railways, has been Alex Claassens RTBU NSW State Secretary suddenly spilling the beans (See article in SMH 19/11/19) that the new interurban trains are engineered for DOO (Driver Only Operation). Spot-lighting his and the NSW Govt's duplicity with the 'fake news' they spread at the time of the 2018 RTBU elections, that the guards' job was 'safe'. Needless to say he must have been aware of this fact, years before through those 'top secret' weekly meetings with the NSW Transport Minister. In the above article, he engages in

more duplicity, with his Okaying a 'trial' of DOO on the new trains, 'code' for permanent. Courtesy of the 'facilitation' clause he slipped in Rail EBA 2018, DOO will be 'facilitated' to Millennials, Waratahs and Tangaras. In other states an important precursor to privatisation of the railways has been DOO, to cut costs for private operators. With the change of the guards' role to customer service, they become 'dead meat' losing their industrial muscle and easily sacked. Any gossip the bosses have spread that with the Tangara refurbishment that the guards' job is somehow guaranteed for 10 years, must be treated as further 'fake news' as it's not in writing. Another group under attack are Inter-Urban Train cleaners who are facing

the sack due to privatisation. The RTBU officials are resorting to a feeble petition to cover-up their sell out of the cleaners' jobs. Both groups face ending up on the dole queue, poverty, drug testing, and the 'cashless welfare card'! A stop work mass meeting needs to be urgently held to consider an industrial campaign over the issues. With a likely lack of interest by the union officials, 'unofficial' meetings need to be held and an 'unofficial' delegate committee to be elected to co-ordinate the campaign.

Other important developments is the increasing 'state of siege' affecting the NSW Railways with further privatisation pinners and the new Metros.

Organisation is Not a Matter of Faith

The trade union movement is facing some serious issues of faith. Many more potential challenges loom on the horizon. These are not small issues and they require a thoughtful and rigorous debate in the workplace if they are to be overcome.

Among the challenges are the issues of climate change, automation and technological change, privatisation of state owned enterprises, attacks on working conditions, falling working class living standards, casualisation of the workforce, union membership decline, attacks on penalty rates, laws meant to curtail union activity and wage theft.

We have to admit that where unions have been prepared to fight back there have been outstanding victories. However these are sporadic and rely on union leaders tied to a militant rank and file. In most cases though, the union leadership is remote from its members and the workforce in general.

At the shop floor level members seem to understand little of how the top-down union apparatus works nor the implications of disengaging with the industrial processes within the union. This should never be about electing union officials every 3 or 4 years then hoping for the best.

The RTBU's strategy of steering union members, who they see as having potential as Labor Party hacks, towards the Party is a losing strategy.

During the recent Federal election campaign the ACTU actively campaigned for the election of an ALP Government. It has been quoted that over \$6 million was spent



on rallying the troops, door knocking, producing TV ads and flyers and cajoling members to vote for the ALP. What a waste of resources this turned out to be. There was always a chance that the ALP would not be elected and that we could end up with an even more determined LNP Government hell bent on destroying workers rights. That's exactly what happened. The problem for workers is that things are now much worse, we are under greater attack from a Government that has no time for workers or their issues.

Workers would have been much better served if the \$6 million was spent on bringing the rank and file up to speed and get-

ting them involved in a campaign against the excesses of the government attacks and proposed changes to the anti worker laws. That would have put the working class in the front lines armed and ready to defend their entitlements and the austerity aimed at the general community. The leadership of the ACTU was not prepared to take that road as they had their eye on one prize only, the election of another neoliberal ALP Government. The labour movement has been damaged because of that tactic and we have lost a great chance to put the LNP and their cohorts onto the back foot. The ALP, especially under the leadership of Albanese, has been no friend of workers. He is in complete step and agreement with the reactionary anti-worker LNP on a number of issues. "Productivity" is now the new buzzword of both the major political parties. This means squeezing more out of workers in order to keep profits up.

The ALP's recent capitulation on the new Free Trade Agreement angered many union members because it was contrary to what was agreed as the party platform. Some unions threatened to withdraw from under the ALP umbrella, but in the end they did not.

It was the Queensland ALP that scurried down the road to the privatisation of public transport - before long the buses were gone. In Victoria, Metro gained control of the public trains and trams while Transdev grabbed the buses.

Here in NSW the RTBU oversaw the privatisation of the operation of Newcastle's bus services to Keolis Downer which saw the biggest slump in reliability of bus services. At the same time a slimmed down workforce was quickly fleeced of their rightful entitlements. This was all done under the noses of the RTBU officials who had coverage of the workers in that area. All we got from the union executives were platitudes about privatisation being bad for members and the community.

The switch to private operation of government buses in Region 6 of Sydney's Inner West was a similar debacle. Once again no real fight back was organised amongst Public Transport Workers as a whole and only a half-hearted attempt to stop the privatisation of the services ensued. The campaign was directed once again at the election of an ALP Government. Even if they had been elected the ALP leadership was already saying that it may be too late to reverse the privatisation operation.

Now all of the State Transit buses are up for privatisation, just as Sydney Ferries were not so long ago. This is a debacle for public transport services in the State of NSW.

However the union's response to the privatisation is less than flattering. Apart from organising a couple of flag waving days in Mona Vale in Sydney's far north and elsewhere, nothing has been organised in the workplace. A "Keep our Buses Public" rally is planned for Monday the 2nd of December in Martin Place, Sydney. The union seems to have endorsed this action although it is not putting its name to it. Whatever happened to organising the workplace? Whatever happened to getting union members out on the street? While it is important to win the hearts and minds of the public, the two tasks can be undertaken simultaneously by getting those in the workplace involved. The community and the workplace must become familiar with each other by building trust and solidarity if these sorts of campaigns are to become successful. Anything else is only half hearted.

When the second major arm of bus privatisation was announced the RTBU bleated their concerns by warning that "suburban rail services could be next". Well I'd like to inform them that privatisation in the rail sector is well under way. There is a denialism within the RTBU leadership that is hard to fathom. More than half of the rail workforce has been outsourced in the last few years and Metro is set to take over another large chunk of the rail network from N.W. Sydney to Chatswood and Bankstown. A separate privately operated line has been announced to be built between the city and Parramatta. It does not get much more private than that.

As Sparks Magazine goes to press the "Ensuring Integrity" bill is being debated in Federal Parliament. The ACTU and Union Leaders from around the country have been lobbying parliamentarians to not pass this bill which severely curtails the rights of trade unions and workers in the workplace. The ACTU got their fingers burned during the last Federal Election for putting all of their eggs in one basket by taking part in the electoral process for a Labor Government. It is possible that this could be a similar debacle. The ACTU is now just another lobby group that tries to sway the likes of the rabid Pauline Hanson and other Neo-fascists. What ridiculous tactics these are.

They don't trust the rank and file who might exercise a bit too much power and see through their unscrupulous schemes if they became organised.

Our union leaders are deeply embedded within the Labor Party. For instance, right winger, Bob Narva, the RTBU National Secretary is not only Assistant National Secretary of the ACTU but was recently elected Acting Secretary of the NSW Labor Party Branch. The ALP is split in NSW because of the appointment of Narva. His appointment from the Right Faction is a signal that it's business as normal for the NSW Right. There has been no clean-out of the old corrupt guardians and nothing has changed in the party. Many more union leaders have taken up roles within the ALP, not just in NSW, but all over the country.

As rank and file unionists we must ask the question "do we really want our unions to be vehicles purely for partisan party politics"? Or, do we want our union to be a fighting force comprised of its members, for its members, fully informed and armed against the employer.

Lately we are losing battles because no real battles are taking place. Some unions have shown that where members are involved in the struggle over wages and conditions they have a much greater chance of success in winning the dispute.

The whole Woolworths wage theft case was made easy because bureaucrats in the SDA (retail union) made all of the decisions for members. Woolworths even signed new members up to the union because of their cosy relationship with the leadership. They didn't have the same compromised incestuous relationship with other unions that they had with the SDA.

It's important for all members to be actively engaged in the struggles of their union. That means a certain amount of openness and trust must be forthcoming from the leadership.

Unions can't do that if their primary role is focused on being just another arm of the octopus that is the ALP.

One of the most inspiring union wins this year was that of the Chemist Warehouse workers. Rolling strikes took place by 800 members of the NUW for 17 straight days involving the membership. The solidarity built during the strike helped the workers win a 18.75% pay rise over 4 years. They also won better redundancy pay and more permanent jobs. Chemist Warehouse tried to bypass negotiations with the union, yet members stood firm despite the threat of stand-downs and other threatening behaviour. Solidarity between workers always wins the day.

In all future disputes in Public Transport we must stand together and insist that the leadership of our unions mobilise in solidarity, organising as equals in the decisions, involvement and actions that help us win. We have lost too much already. The future is there for us to take.

Fair Game part 2!

In Fair Game part 1 your editor gave you an introduction on why the game is not fair and how it got that way. You will recall that we alluded to the fact that unconstitutional new laws were gradually enacted. Unconstitutional in the sense that they were not put to the people via referen-

dum as the original constitution demands. These laws were then used as precedent for the enactment of even more laws that effectively took power away from the average person, who are in the majority and handed power to an unelected bureaucracy. We also told you how politicians of either political stripe and orientation gradually signed us into international

treaties and trade agreements that on the surface appear to be one thing but in reality, sign away our rights to what used to be the "commonwealth", i.e. belonging to all the people and transferred that ownership to what is known as the government. This means ownership of land, water, minerals and all the resources of the country are effectively transferred to the bureaucracy of government. We also told you that the politician is nothing more than a flashy salesperson, selling you on the idea of

democracy and that privatisation is good when, it is “theft”, Selling you the lie that they are representing you when they and their political parties are actually front organisations for private interest groups, some openly and overtly and others secretly and covertly. All seeking to take from you what is rightfully yours and transfer it to themselves and their various networks of bodies and secret societies.

Having established in the average person's mind and core belief system that the government owns everything, it now claims to be able to do anything! We are told you that the government bureaucracy now claims not to need the average person's, indeed any person's, any citizen's permission to do anything. Government claims the right to create smaller clones of itself, such as councils and claims the right to be able to dictate to you what you can and can't do in your own home or back yard, anywhere in fact. They have established a belief that “Legislative Law” (laws created by parliament/government, often with a political and/or philosophical agenda) overrides “Common Law” (based on precedent and has its foundation in the idea from Magna Carta that there should be limits on the power of the king [state/government].) This is the central principle of the rule of law

- that no one is above the law, and everyone is subject to it.

In a famous 1951 High Court of Australia case where the government of the day sought to legislate against the existence of a group the government of the day did not like, the High Court of Australia held that the Act was invalid. Here are a couple of the reasons cited for the decision:

“The government cannot ‘recite itself into power.’”

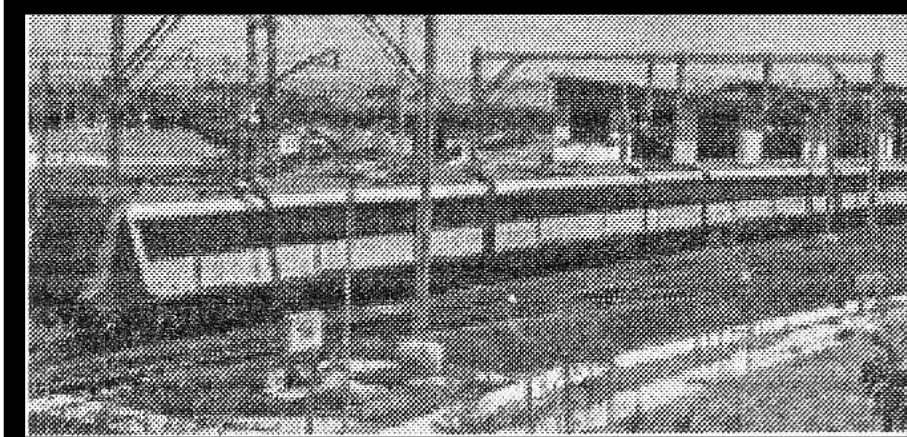
“The validity of a law, or of an administrative act done under the law, cannot be made to depend on the opinion of the law-maker.” To give this quote some context the following was said “a power to make laws with respect to lighthouses does not authorise the making of a law with respect to anything which is, in the opinion of the law-maker, a lighthouse.”

Meaning that the High Court of Australia had sought to define limits to the legislative (law making) power of government to misapply and/or misuse what in fact it was there to do, by giving a simple example of the lighthouse, whereby if the government had obtained via a referendum the author-

ity to make a law about lighthouses it did not have the authority to proclaim that in its opinion any house and/or structure was a lighthouse and therefore make laws about it. It only has the authority to make laws about lighthouses that everyone agrees are lighthouses.

And yet here we are!

The government “reciting itself into power” at every level, federal, state and most insidious of all the local council, police, transport, etc. We will however restrict ourselves to transport. We've seen the disaster of the light rail, disrupting traffic, destroying business (who are suing) and of course over budget and over deadline, exacerbated by wilful negligence, wasting billions of dollars and all paid to a foreign contractor. This in itself is an inversion of reality where the politicians and the permanent bureaucracy have “recited themselves into power” and have become



an autocracy, where they do not feel themselves to be accountable to the people of NSW for the job that they have been given authority to do and that is run an efficient state for the benefit of the residents and taxpayer of NSW and create good, safe, well-paid industries and jobs for the citizens they are meant to represent. Instead these autocrats destroy industry by giving preferential treatment to foreign contractors, who are in fact multinational globalist organisations syphoning billions of dollars out of the economy. The destruction of industry depletes the skill base and creates unemployment, lowering the standard of living and even impoverishing many workers and residents of the state. They certainly do not and did not have neither the mandate nor the authority to do so. They have simply “recited themselves into power” to serve their own ambitions and special interests.

Your editor is loath to use the terminology of these “autocrats”, these permanent bureaucrats, parasites, deceitful liars and arse lickers, who remain in power no matter who is elected and use deceptive terminology to lull you into a sense of

complacency and compliancy, while they destroy your industry, your jobs and standard of living. Terminology like “our people”! When did we become their people? We're not their slaves, they don't own us. No, this is their deceitful language to lull you into a sense of complacency, make you think they care about you, don't worry, stay asleep we look after “our people”. Yeah! You've done a great job, ripped up half a city, destroyed business and wasted billions of our taxpayer dollars paying off a globalist multinational consortium who will of course reward you with a cushy little number in their organisation. The new interurban trains (I refuse to use their acronym NIF because it's again a play on words to deceive you) are another example of deliberate and wilful inversion of their mandate and authority to run an efficient state for the benefit and prosperity of the people of NSW. Instead of using the existing expertise and capac-

ity already available here and keeping the billions of dollars turning over in NSW creating new, safe and well-paid jobs, these autocrats and their political front men do the exact opposite. They place orders with a foreign company and not content with destroying local industry and syphoning off billions of dollars to a foreign company they secretly have the new trains redesigned to remove the

guard. This of course will destroy even more jobs. And how many billions wasted and syphoned out of the state? To the direct detriment of the people and taxpayers of NSW. This is also why they use the deceptive acronym “NIF” to create the impression that these are different to the interurban fleet with guards.

Did the politicians have a mandate or the bureaucrats have authority to deliberately seek out a foreign manufacturer, when the capacity and expertise was available locally and would in fact be to the benefit of the citizens and taxpayers of the state, to use local capacity and expertise? Did these politicians have a mandate or the bureaucrats have authority to deliberately and secretly request the foreign manufacturer to redesign the train so that it “cannot” practically have a guard on it. A deliberate act to destroy jobs, right here in the state that they are meant to represent. In the humble opinion of your editor and albeit a bush lawyer all this is illegal and the bureaucracy is “reciting itself into power”. Because the High Court of Australia said back in 1951 that “an administrative act

done under the law, cannot be made to depend on the opinion of the law-maker” Or put another way, a politician elected to represent the interests of the people who elected them, cannot “legally” then go on to represent the interests of others, based on their opinion.

The metro needs no elaboration, another mess to the detriment of the people and taxpayers of NSW. What is interesting to your editor is the misapplication of legislation to silence or minimise negative media about the project’s failures and malfunctions of a supposedly automated system. And even more interesting is the compliance of the media. This alone should tell you something about the so-called media.

The bus network is now to be privatised when allegedly the politicians gave assurances to the union leadership that it would not be fully privatised. And your editor questions the union leadership, are they asleep at the helm? Have they been lulled into a false sense of complacency and compliancy? Or are these union leaders not leaders at all, but simply followers of an ideology that has totally infested and captured their minds so that they have become victims of a type of “Stockholm syndrome” where they have abandoned their natural instincts for survival in favour of siding with their captors.

Then there’s the slated ripping up of the Bankstown line. Only the in the minds of unrepresentative politicians and the unelected bureaucracy, serving someone or something other than the best interests of the taxpayers and citizens of NSW can something like the idea of ripping up a perfectly good rail line fully integrated with the rest of the network and replacing it with a totally different operation that does not integrate with the existing system make sense. At a cost of billions of dollars, that will blow out by billions more, with missed deadlines and faulty trains, of course. Once again there is no mandate or authority for such outrageous waste and destruction and it only makes sense if you understand who the politicians and unelected bureaucrats really work for.

With the politicians it’s a relatively straight line by following the money and the money inevitably leads to globalist organisations owned by the elite. With the bureaucracy it’s a little more complicated because at first glance the permanent bureaucracy is made up of career yes man/women and suck-ups, unthinking “apparatchiks” as they were called in the old Soviet Union. These types know that you get ahead by sucking-up and not challenging anything that flows down from the higher ups. These are the types that will do

and say anything to get up the next rung and so they are also the types that will push the destruction of their own fellow citizens and the perfect channel by which an unelected autocracy can “recite itself into power” !

The game is not fair!

Look out for “Fair Game” part 3, in the next edition. Unfortunately, your editor didn’t get the time to fully and satisfactorily explain how the union movement has been co-opted to complete the betrayal of the people and the worker, so we’ll get to that next time. If in the meantime perhaps you’d like to know more about the famous 1951 Hight Court case, if so you might like to research the “Communist Party Dissolution Act”. Sounds a little bit like the currently proposed “union-busting laws” the current ACTU “leadership” or should that be Stockholm syndrome victims are complaining about? Rather than squawking about petitions, your editor suggests they’d be better employed heading to the Hight Court. It’s the only language unrepresentative and unelected want to be autocrats understand.

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

The Way Forward to Fight State Transit Privatisation

Some of the most explosive news in the buses in Sydney is of course the decision of the NSW Govt. to selloff the rest of the STA, see SMH 24/10/19. Again the RTBU officials would have been well informed of this move well before the an-

nouncement courtesy of those ‘top secret’ weekly meetings between the RTBU State Sec. and Constance. With privatisation, drivers will face massive pay cuts as a result of management’s tight control of rosters with likely adverse roster changes and later on casualisation. Again the RTBU officials and Unions NSW are taking some feeble measures to help cover-up the brazen sell out and gain some electoral mile-

age for the ALP in the next State Elections. They organised a poorly advertised rally in the CBD on 2/12/19 attracting only a hundred including many ALP hacks and 30 STA drivers bused in. Apart from TV and internet coverage the rally stunt was totally ignored by major print media outlets. ALP polities talked at depots and small flyers/stickers were produced and poorly distributed.

The way forward has to be a campaign of guerrilla industrial direct action and the election of an ‘unofficial’ delegates committee to coordinate the campaign.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST BUS PRIVATISATION 2019-STYLE.

Another Case of Shutting the Gate after the Horse has bolted?

Readers of RW must think the powers that be must think that Public Transport workers and the travelling commuters have no memory whatsoever? How else can we explain the Berejiklian statement at the end of November that she has a “new policy” to reduce the transport chaos of Sydney. How else can we explain the NSW ALP Opposition and the Unions NSW leader-

ship initiating yet another dead-end campaign designed to fail to prevent the remainder of our Public Transport system from the corporate axe?

Let’s remember what happened. In late 2016 the two public bus depots in Newcastle were gifted to Keolis Downer without an industrial fight in Newcastle or Sydney. No “Touch One, Touch All” message from the RTBU Bus Division leadership. Indeed just a comment in the Newcastle Herald that privatisation might fix the system up there. Some 18 months later, during a huge 1,000 strong commuter protest meeting in Newcastle Town Hall the then ALP Opposition leader sat in the audience and told everyone he was just an observer.

Newcastle was used as a precedent to destroy the morale of the Inner-West bus

workers when it came their turn to be “put out to tender” in late 2017. Unions NSW intervened a week after the 12 Sydney bus depot delegates voted for a Sydney-wide stoppage to “save the Inner-West (Area 6) from privatization”. Mark Moray, Head of Unions NSW, later defended this “You’re on your own, bus drivers” sell-out. He confessed to this big-stick warning in a public meeting when he spoke to the Politics-in-the-Pub meeting in Surry Hills some months later.

A so-called 24 hour Sydney wide strike to save the Inner-West was called by the RTBU leadership at a moment’s notice with a fake delegates meeting announced on Channel 9 the night before. No depot meetings to build the momentum. No job bulletins. No nothing. Just a press release

or media comment with conflicting stories. Half the drivers did not know they were on strike. Most did not know if it was just Area 6 (four Inner-West depots) or Sydney wide. The result was Divide-and-Rule with drivers losing their EBA industry allowance across the board and inter-depot solidarity waning or non-existent because of the RTBU leadership sitting on their thumbs for weeks after the “strike”(?). Then the fake Ryde depot picket claiming they were next without even a tender being called by the State government.

Next was the Unions NSW inter union stop work march over super funds control which the RTBU leaders claimed would go to State Parliament to back up the 20,000 signatures on petitions that the ALP presented in Parliament that day, after months of delay, to embarrass Transport Minister Constance. The rally got diverted behind St Mary’s Cathedral into the “perfume garden” and then disbanded. The Unions N.S.W. petitions, posters, stickers and t-shirts were ignored by the media and the Liberal Government.

Next up the ALP lost the Federal election in May 2019, with the stench of Shorten’s A.W.U. wage cut deal with the bosses in

exchange for electoral support for himself, which saw industrial workers desert Labor in droves. With Constance and Berejiklian on the nose, Luke Foley and the ALP lost the unloseable election in June 2019.



Then the Chinese corruption in the NSW Machine crippling the ALP Opposition in NSW as lame duck. In such an atmosphere

why wouldn’t Berejiklian and Constance feel confident they could lie to the electorate with “no more Privatisation” in their election campaign?

And why would we not expect the Liberal Party to capitalize on the ALP weakness and hence bring forward their schedule to sell off the reminder of the Sydney Buses to their corporate mates while the ALP is still on the nose with the public at the State level, or in the wilderness at the Federal level, with Albo’s “listening and talking” show stopper (i.e. no policy on Climate change, pro-Adani back flip and toeing the Murdoch press line).

All we can say to the Unions NSW leadership rally proponents at State Parliament next Monday December 2nd is ARE YOU SERIOUS THIS TIME! Will you build a combined rank and file worker campaign to save what’s left of the public sector? Will you mobilize the public to picket depots continuously so the workers know they have support if they vote for industrial action? Or is it just about reclaiming lost credibility and renewing illusions of action to improve electoral chances in the next State election? We shall see.

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

State Transit ‘Spring Madness’ Sale

RW: What’s the situation since Transport Minister Constance’s announcement of privatising the rest of the STA on Thurs. 24th Oct.?

Waverley Busie: Within days of the announcement the bosses have gone into a truly bizarre frenzy. They held a party upstairs in the depot. To entice drivers along to participate in the ‘fun’ a BBQ with free food was provided. Completely disregarding the serious ramifications of Constance’s announcement for drivers’ job security, conditions and entitlements, STA CEO Stefan Faurby, who was waving around a graph showing various depots ‘performance’ according to different indicators gave a ‘pep talk’. It particularly focused on how Waverley was still out performing other STA depots. When he held these festivities at other depots he probably said these other depots were also winning the performance race! The spiel was redolent with duplicity received rounds of applause! It was unbelievable! As part of the bizarre ‘neo liberal festivities’ the bosses also handed out strange, old Easter Show style paper ‘sample bags’

containing an apron, and some trinkets. If this was a sample of what the STA stands for, it was pretty cheap and nasty! The bag and trinkets probably only cost \$2 to \$3. I have noticed around the depot, the bosses have also put up much ‘achievement propaganda.’ It seemed all about the bosses softening us up for the selloff and being worried about keeping their own jobs. The STA is envisaged as a merry-go-round, with each spin becoming lighter and finally wafer thin, with less staff activity, less training, etc. Everything skilfully planned to downsize the STA to make it easier and cheaper to transfer to the private companies.

All the private transport companies which are in line for a share of the STA gravy have multinational connections and are likely to use tax minimisation practices involving tax havens. A notorious case of a company being caught out over these practices was Wilson Security contracted by the Federal Govt. Constance has also been spreading the lie that drivers won’t lose any conditions for 2 years after the selloff and will all be guaranteed jobs in the private operators. Unless you are doing the wrong things of course you would have a job, but it’s easier to get the sack in a private company. It’s likely the new owners will want to cut immediately Bendi shift allowances from \$25 to \$5 per day.

Don’t Be Conned! Privatisation Means Massive Wage Cuts!

In Adelaide following privatisation over twenty five years ago, bus drivers lost \$10,000 pa overnight. In a little ‘illegal’ magazine which has a strong resemblance to our paper called ‘Information Bulletin’ put out by the STA CEO, the Govt’s ‘vision’ or ‘wish list’ for us under privatisation is presented. The new regime looks to be quite ruthless. The days of highly paid drivers will end. Management will have complete control over our rosters. We will have no choice and could face the immediate robbery of \$15,000 to \$20,000 pa from our pay. Our hourly rate of pay won’t change but the wages gouging will be hidden in adverse changes to our shifts. This is their way to steal from drivers! This is not fair play! Even more savage attacks are likely 18 months after privatisation. Whilst already many driver/instructors have left the STA due to worries about their job security and conditions under privatisation. On Monday 18th Nov. there were 19 drivers down at the depot, it’s likely most will resign. There are also a lot less mechanical and auxiliary staff.

RW: What are your impressions of the new drivers coming onto the job?

WB: With the corner cutting going on, there seems to be a decline in driver quality. Particularly some bad habits drivers have are not being tackled. This issue was highlighted to me recently when I noticed a bus going through a red light. Needless to say the driver was pressed for time to meet running times. However this is certainly not a good thing and adequate training could remove such habits.

What the bosses could do to tackle the problem would be to hold low key training programs at the depots involving the showing of small 'safety program' videos every month. In years gone by groups of drivers were sent to Strawberry Hills STA HQ for training courses and to have group discussions of issues.

RW: How is the situation at the depot?

WB: In the last 2 to 3 years there has been a major decline in social activity associated with the 'Nanny State' attitude of the bosses. 10 to 15 years ago there was some great entertainment and athletics. The message being put out is that the business side of the job is being made prominent. The social aspect of the job is being downgraded by stealth involving a gradual decline. Recently Selina has been giving out cheap orange plastic trinkets to reward and motivate some drivers. In contrast to years ago, the bosses handed out some great stuff in the way of dicast buses and 75 Years Cups as souvenirs, good quality hats and heaps of goodies.

A Falling out of Thieves

Other news is that the 'Spring Madness' has spread to the so called 'unions'. A brawl has erupted between the RTBU and the TWU in and outside the depot. The TWU has been trying to muscle in and has been putting flyers advertising their tacky 'wares' under the wipers on the windcreens of drivers' cars. The RTBU reps have burst into action and retaliated. In an obviously highly synchronised and meticulously planned operation, they removed and ripped up the flyers! Needless to say they are too busy with these antics to assist us to fight with direct action the Govt's planned highway robbery of our wages, conditions and jobs with privatisation! Bizarrely most of the conditions as part of the 20 point program offered by the TWU on their flyers, are worse than those provided by the current RTBU EBA (Enterprise Bargain Agreement). It looks to be in line with the Liberal Govt's 'vision' for us presented in the STA CEO's 'illegal' magazine.

RW: What is the latest with the privatisation of Region 6?

WB: New drivers are particularly being targeted following the Transit Systems takeover. There is much gouging of their wages. This is illegal. New drivers on the job are being paid a lower hourly rate and have less holidays than the older hands on the job. They only get 4 weeks annual leave, in contrast to the old timers who get 5 weeks. This is just greed by the new bosses.

RW: What is the latest with the Light Rail extensions in the Eastern Suburbs and elsewhere?

WB: I have noticed the Govt is moving much faster to ready the Light Rail for completion. Two Tram sets together are being tested all the time which don't make any stops. I saw on the TV recently a short piece about a new type of Light Rail vehicle. It will run on wheels without tracks. It will be much less costly than Gladys gold plated Eastern Suburbs extensions. This project has cost \$2.2 Billion so far and when completed will cost \$2.9 Billion and well over budget. The Govt. will never get its money back. It will be another costly exercise for tax payers and the Govt. It looks particularly to be about Gladys sup-



porting the Concrete, Steel and Cement industries. There has been a phenomenal amount of these materials used in the project. Next stage is to go out to Kingsford and will terminate at South Sydney Juniors Leagues Club.

Tempe Depot News

RW: What is the current situation at the depot?

Tempe Driver1: I've been at the depot prior to privatisation. Lately conflict has developed at the depot and throughout Region 6 and the STA due to the TWU trying to muscle in on the RTBU. The bosses are getting quite nasty and trying to censor what literature we read (this is illegal). Whilst the Fair Work Australia officials recently came out to the depot over the issue of the bosses high handed cutting of the wages of the older drivers. They tried to talk the Transit Systems bosses into focusing away from their big push to save

dollars by cutting our wages and look at other avenues to save money. Other news is that we are continuing to face tight running times. Whilst Transit Systems is likely to be involved in a merger with the NRMA which operates the Ferries.

RW: How are you finding the job under Transit Systems?

Tempe Driver2: As we all know the new drivers are being underpaid with less wages and have worse conditions than us old hands. The bosses are using this situation to put more pressure on us to work harder.

Leichhardt Depot News

RW: What's the situation at the depot lately?

Leichhardt Driver: There is a great deal of atomisation developing amongst drivers. There is little socialising. The approach of many seems to be to sign on, get your work sheet, get out of the room and wait for your bus. It's a battle to just to get through your shift. The Transit Systems bosses are starting to play dirty pool with their pursuit of divide and rule tactics against us. In particular they are turning a blind eye to ethnic discrimination and favouritism. I have noticed this behaviour amongst the guys who allocate buses. The guys who do the job are allocating the best buses to their mates. Those not favoured can end up with the older, less powered gas buses, which are notorious for being difficult to drive up hills. Half of the depot fleet consist of old and poorly maintained buses. At the

end of your shift you can report faults with the bus, but there is no guarantee it will be fixed. Is it the fault of the mechanics or is there insufficient mechanics to do the job, or the age of the depot fleet? These buses are in such a bad state of repair that they should be considered defective and taken off the road permanently. Why isn't this action being taken? Why aren't the unions intervening on the issue? In years gone by at the depot a stop work union meeting would be held and the union officials called in to raise the issue with the bosses. It's difficult just to operate the steering wheel on many of these buses, causing some drivers to develop muscle strain injuries.

In late October quite an incident blew up over this issue. One driver who suffered an injury from these buses, had took a few days sick leave and turned up for work with a large bandage. He was directed by the yardman to drive the worst bus in the depot which caused his injury. He refused

the request and was directed to clean up and drive the 2nd worst bus which was very dirty. He refused on the basis, that bus cleaning wasn't a duty mentioned in his employment contract. Higher level management became involved in the row. The result was another medical examination to determine whether he could operate a bus. When the driver returned and presented the medical evidence showing he was unfit to drive a bus, the bosses placed him on light duties.

Recently four new buses came to the depot, but these buses are only to be operated on weekends. Whilst the bosses have advised that in the new year, all the older buses will be replaced with new ones. As a result of the harshness of the job, 18 new drivers have resigned. Associated with this high turnover of drivers, Transit Systems and TransDev aren't getting enough drivers and are continuing to recruit new ones according to their Web Sites. Whilst the TWU delegate is competing with the RTBU by trying to recruit the new drivers, neither seems to be doing much. Another problem we are having is the crowding of drivers in the sign on room. With dozens of drivers in the room, you waste time waiting for run sheets to be handed out for your shift.

RW: What are the major problems on the road?

LD: We are having considerable trouble with the private school buses parking in our bus stops. It's particularly bad in Darling Street in Balmain in afternoon peak, but occurs elsewhere outside private schools. These buses are quite large and sometimes just carry a couple of school kids. As a result of parking in public bus stops these buses are causing us to have minor accidents. Another problem is we continue to be hard hit by the running times with the first half of the broken shift running early and the second half running late. You can get into trouble with the bosses over running early from stops. However with running late, they accept the excuse of traffic problems.

RW: What are other issues?

LD: The bosses have got a new trick. They have threatened all drivers with the sack if they are caught using their mobiles while driving their buses. However, they are now wanting drivers to sign statements about this threat every 3 months. Many drivers think signing these forms is unnecessary and stupid. They are refusing to comply. The bosses in turn are threatening to have these drivers stood down and are having these drivers chased after by depot staff to sign the forms.

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

RW: How are you finding the situation since the Transit Systems takeover?

Burwood Driver: The situation for us has gone much worse. Initially we were assured that there would be no adverse changes. However, this advice has proven to be duplicitous. The new operator has been heavily engaged in cuts to our wages. In the case of the Easter Saturday, where under the RTBU Enterprise Agreement drivers who don't work it are paid the day as a public holiday and the uniform allowance has refused to pay these entitlements. Constantly dragging out the paying of these entitlements. Until the Union officials took the issue of the Easter Saturday pay to the Fair Work Australia Court. Consequently we are having a 50% driver turnover, with many of the older and best drivers leaving the job. The company is constantly seeking new drivers which they pay on TWU style lower wages and entitlements.

STOP PRESS

Major adverse changes in Region 6 are likely after Xmas with the end of the 18 month so called guarantee by Constance there would be no major adverse changes.

The Truth Behind Greenroads

by Quokka

On the 28th of August 2019, IBM released an impressive article entitled, "The Future is here: How AI builds smarter supply chains."(1) Big tech would tell us that by constructing elaborate, self-learning artificial intelligence (AI) systems, efficiencies in supply chain management can save costs, deliver rapid solutions to recurrent or sudden problems and smooth out the entire supply chain from farm to family.

Now you might wonder what on earth this has to do with bus driving or Transit Systems Australia's rollout of the Greenroads(2) data collection programme. The answer is simple. Transit Systems has, knowingly or not, sold out its employees to the data gods of our current age. If you think that Greenroads is simply about collecting on-the-road data about driver behaviours to improve overall efficiency, safety and cost-effectiveness for the business, you're only half way there.

This is the public face of all data-collection enterprise. "Give us your data, and we'll give you improvements in cost-effectiveness, safety and efficiency,"

they tell us. "Wouldn't it be a wonderful world we could live in if everything worked together in a harmonious whole!" they boast of their futurist AI-controlled utopia. Half-truths have always served the propagandists well since the age of Goebbels. They offer us a carrot, and it is a very real carrot of improvements in efficiency and safety, but they deliberately hide the cyanide.

The other side of the truth is that the power of data collection rests not in the harmonisation of the whole for the benefit of the consumer. Data is the essential ingredient, the digital gold, of the impending predictive abilities of neural network AI, that is, the copying (read: transcending, surpassing) of human behaviour by machine minds.

Companies like Greenroads would not exist if they were not making money from their data collection. So how do they do it? Simple. Our on-road data (and all electronically generated data, in fact) is sold, like the raw and valuable commodity it really is, to AI developers and big tech in-

dustries like Scania, Mercedes, Volvo, Google, Apple, Samsung, Intel, Microsoft, IBM, NSA, D-Wave, Quadrant and so on.

The slew of sensors, detectors and data-input affixed to our buses serve only one ultimate purpose: to feed the machine of impending automation. AI cannot learn how to drive a bus from scratch. It can only copy (and ultimately improve upon) how humans do it. And we're freely feeding the Beast by our complicity with their data collection projects.

Automotive industries are all heading towards the same pinnacle: complete AI-controlled autonomy. The data our driving collects and our company gives to Greenroads "in the name of safety and efficiency" will contribute, ultimately, to the full automation of our industry and the loss of our employment. It will not happen soon, but it will happen. My guess is by 2040 or so.

(1) <https://www.techrepublic.com/resource-library/whitepapers/the-future-is-here-how-ai-builds-smarter-supply-chain-s/> (2) <https://www.greenroads.org>

Unfortunately, ceasing data collection for Transit Systems/Greenroads tomorrow will not prevent the inevitable. All the newer buses come with in-built sensors; every new, black-box-fitted vehicle (like the ones you install yourself for 'cheaper' insurance premiums, not realising your in-

surer is laughing at all the free money they get by selling your data; point rewards programs like Flybuys and Everyday Rewards are the same thing) is already feeding the automation beast, Greenroads or not.

I do not think I have space to detail at length the 5G 'revolution' and the Internet of Things (IoT), but it, too, deserves some mention. This is the system being built up around us right now whereby every individual component in a bus (indeed, all of existence, including our bodies) will eventually be connected to the internet and collecting data for the sole benefit of Big Tech. It should not surprise us that the 'Peoples' Republic' of China is at the forefront of development for the IoT.

When a bus (read: person) has a 'fault', real-time 5G internet-driven AI powered diagnostics can identify the problem immediately (the carrot we are being offered now by Big Tech AI firms) for rectification by a 3rd party (mechanic, doctor, local robot militia/police/army, etc). The goal (cyanide) is the same, however: the future automation and control of mechanics, medicine, police/military, every industry in fact, and not just bus drivers. It cannot be stopped now without a voluntary reversion by agreement of the whole world to a pre 18th century existence. Good luck with that.

The other alternative is for the masses to rise up and demand our fair share for the data we have been mindlessly and gratuitously providing the powers-that-be. Unfortunately the selfsame powers already know this and will tell us on that day, "You want in to our global enterprise of buying and selling data, do you? Take this mark in your right hand or forehead and we will let you participate." Anyone with any Biblical literacy at all should know how that



ends (Revelation 13:16-17).

For those of you who have been on the road for decades, you are the fortunate ones. You will have long retired (and possibly deceased) before mass redundancies accompany the full automation of bus, truck and taxi fleets world-wide, let alone

every other currently human-occupied profession that will get tapped into the 5G-driven, data-collecting Internet of Things.

But the rest of us are left with the rather poignant question: what will become of us and our livelihoods when the machine takes over, not just our employment, but the whole world? For I have not yet even begun to mention the real purpose behind our mobile phones, social media and how our personal data is contributing, right now, to the Sentient World Simulation³ and the digitisation of our very selves for AI to copy, monitor and ultimately control.

For this, indeed, is the ever unspoken end goal of the data gods of our current age. Terminator: The Rise of the Machines (see also The Matrix, Star Wars Episode 3, Minority Report, Upgrade and even Fritz Lang's 1927 classic Metropolis, among countless other psychological mass-media preparations).

These are not just movies. These are the public expression of the formerly unspoken occult ideal of world domination unfolding itself before our very eyes. We are busily building the digital bars of our own prison while most of us remain lulled into our brain-dead, tech-zombie cages of device, entertainment and consumption addiction. Only one question remains. Will humanity wake up before its own impending extinction?

(3) https://www.krannert.purdue.edu/academics/mis/workshop/ac2_100606.pdf

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In the last two years, there has been articles in RW about individuals 'dobbing in' their work mates. These incidents have been increasing over the last six months. Once again Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff have come together to discuss these issues. As in previous issues, names have been changed.

RW: What is happening at V/Line? Years ago no one 'dobbed in' a fellow work mate. It was regarded as unethical.

Rastus and Roscoe: This has gone out the door. The place is toxic. If you have been 'dobbed in' and you confront the person who 'dobbed' you in, these people run bleating to Human Resources.

Archie and Forsyth: We work in Customer Service positions at Southern Cross and we are disgusted at what is going on.

Clarence: Some individuals think that by 'dobbing in' their work mates, they will advance in their career path.

Jethro: Management is using these people for their own ends and when these people are past their use by date, they will get the flick.

Midge and Moose: We are conductors and we are disgusted at our fellow Conductors 'dobbing in' Drivers.

Rastus: A Driver was 'dobbed in' a few months ago by a Customer Service Employee.

Archie: I remember the incident where a Driver was preparing a Velocity Train for service on a platform at Southern Cross. The train was empty but the Driver had the doors on the wrong side of the train opened.

Roscoe: This does happen when empty car trains are parked in the platform. The Driver was testing the doors to see if the train was fit for service.

Forsyth: The Customer Service employee reported the Driver and midway through the train journey, was asked for a please explain.

Rastus: The Driver was cleared as there were no passengers on the train, but he was put under a fair amount of stress.

Archie: This Customer Service employee is alleged to have reported some Shunters over an OH&S breach.

Roscoe: The Drivers do not know what the incident was but we do know the Shunters were cleared of an OH&S breach.

Rastus: A Conductor 'dobbed in' a Driver for allegedly exceeding the speed limit on the Albury Line.

Clarence: The Albury line was handed over to ARTC in 2008 and converted to Standard Gauge. The track is rough and is due to be repaired. There are a number of speed restrictions on the line.

Midge: The Conductor who 'dobbed in' the Driver was not the Conductor running the train but the Conductor working the Buffet Car. The Corridor Conductor did not know that the Driver had been 'dobbed in'. The Conductor was distressed over the incident.

Rastus: The Driver was stood down on arrival where Drivers were changed. The Speed Chart was checked and the Driver was cleared. It was a section of rough track that caused the incident.

Roscoe: The Driver of the train had enough and subsequently retired. As he said after "After forty years what is the job coming to?"

RW: Why are these employees resorting to 'dobbing in' their workmates?

Midge and Moose: When we were doing Conductor Training, an instructor told us it was our duty to report employees who were doing the wrong thing.

RW: What about the employee who is being reported? What these people are doing is destroying their livelihood.

Moose: An employee in the Conductors' Class resisted this matter and one of the instructors told him, if he did not like the job. GET OUT!

Midge: You see V/Line has a Talent Pool and if an employee is dismissed, they draw new employees from this pool.

Moose: Later on we found out the original trainer who trained the Conductors was removed and replaced by a YES MAN.

Rastus: The OH&S Act was changed during the Kennett Years. Under the original OH&S Act the representatives were elected by Union Members. They were known under the Act as Union OH&S representatives. If an employee was in Breach of the Act, fellow employees would inform the Union OH&S representative and the person would speak to the employee.

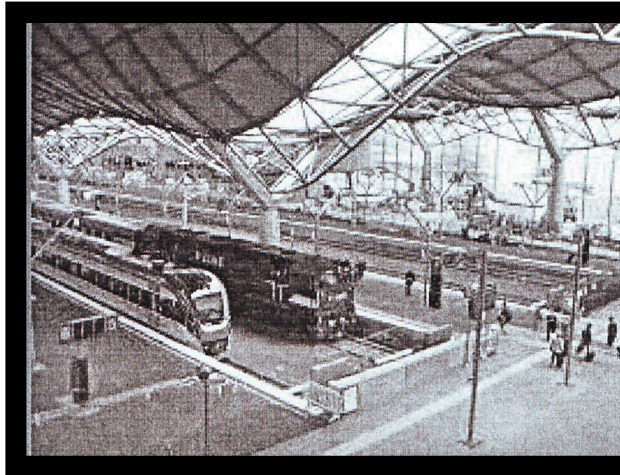
Archie: The Act was changed in 1993 and the Union OH&S Act was replaced. The

Union members were not to nominate a representative and anyone could be elected for the position. Non-unionists included.

Rastus: The Trades Hall runs OH&S classes but V/Line sends OH&S representative to organisations approved by management.

Roscoe: Some people get elected to these positions for their own ends. They are not interested in OH&S, only in advancing their careers and get satisfaction reporting employees.

RW: Part of the OH&S is Duty of the Employee.



Rastus: This is correct and an employee who was mentioned in issue 157 is still reporting Drivers and Conductors.

Roscoe: Have you heard of his latest action? This person was jogging around a lake which passes the Swan Hill Line. An empty Velocity Train passed by. There were two people in the Drivers' Cab. He reported them. We do not know the outcome.

Moose: This person is not an OH&S representative but he still goes around reporting his fellow employees. It was mentioned in issue 157, he still keeps out of the meal room at Southern Cross Station.

Archie: This person is after a promotion but management is using him. He will not be promoted and will stay a Conductor hated by his fellow workmates.

RW: What was the incident over an employee reported over computer?

Moose: An employee was looking at the computer so as the employee could work out his daily roster. A fellow employee observed the computer and reported to management that the employee was looking at pornography.

Midge: This employee thought it was his duty to report the matter which resulted in the employee being stood down while the matter was investigated.

Archie: We do not know who reported the employee but if we find out who it was, we will let him know what we think of him.

Midge: The matter was investigated and the employee was cleared.

Rastus and Roscoe: The Drivers discussed the matter and came to the conclusion that the employee should not have been stood down. Think of the stress he was placed under and his career would have been destroyed.

RW: Once again we have run out of space. Management is working to put fear into the workplace and they have the employees around to help them achieve their aims.

Midge and Moose: Before we joined V/Line, we were both told by employees, it was a great place to work and had a family atmosphere. What V/Line has become is an organisation full of YES MEN, BACK STABBERS and CRAWLERS hoping for a promotion that will never come.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say. To the Conductor who forced the Driver to retire, you are just a scum bag. To yourself and other persons who 'dob in' their fellow employees. GET OUT OF V/LINE! You are not wanted.

STOP PRESS

As this issue goes to press, a manager who was mentioned in a previous edition has been stood down for making inappropriate comments to a female employee. Details next issue.

BRITAIN TODAY: 'GIG ECONOMY' ORGANISING

Internationalist Communist Tendency - The Self-Organised Struggle of Liverpool Couriers Highlights the Difficulties of Organising in the 'Gig Economy'

Deliveroo was founded in 2013 by Will Shu, an investment banker, and Greg Orlowski, a software developer. It was a simple idea whereby customers place food

orders through an app or on the website, and couriers, with the app on their mobile phones, deliver the food from the restaurant to the customer. However, like any technology (no matter how life changing) utilised under capitalism, in practice Deliveroo means exploitation for the workers on whose labour the success of the company depends.

In 2015 Deliveroo began to expand internationally. By September 2017 it operated in 140 cities across the world, employed more than 1,000 full-time staff, and some 30,000 "self-employed" couriers (of these, 15,000 based in the UK).¹ As the company expanded thanks to heavy investment (including from Amazon), it increased its sales but continued to make losses – £30m in 2015, £129m in 2016, £199m in 2017, and £232m in 2018. The model has raised many questions over its

profitability. Meanwhile, courier working conditions get worse, while Shu keeps raising his salary. Deliveroo has become the poster child of the “gig economy”.²

News of first labour disputes circulated as early as August 2016. In response to Deliveroo trialling a new pay structure – £3.75 a drop, instead of an hourly rate of £7 plus £1 a delivery – couriers in London organised strikes and protests. While initially successful, the hourly rate was later done away with anyway. As it stands, couriers are not entitled to the minimum wage, holiday pay or sick pay. Workers can now be paid as little as nothing per hour to £20 an hour, depending on how much traffic there is on the app. The model has been compared to the casual labour prevalent in Britain’s docks in the twentieth century. In Netherlands and Spain as well as the UK, Deliveroo has been taken to court over issues such as employment status, collective bargaining and human rights. Base unions, such as the IWGB, have tried to represent workers both on the streets and in the courts (drawing workers in with the promise of resources and expertise), but much of the workers’ resistance remains outside of the union framework, in informal networks, collectives, and Telegram and WhatsApp chats.

For us, the most interesting aspect of the situation lies in that very resistance. As our comrades in Klasbatalo recently wrote,

“...despite the separation of worker from worker by the increasing elimination of the shop floor, and despite ‘gig’ workers not being registered as employees and thus having little to no protection, class struggle in the ‘gig economy’ pushes the working class immediately into unmediated self-activity such as wildcat strikes. From Foodora workers in Italy, Deliveroo workers in the UK to Uber drivers in Los Angeles, militancy in the ‘gig economy’ is on the rise.”³

Putting to bed all claims that in the digital age the working class no longer exists, or that organising for better conditions can only be achieved through legal channels, what we see in the “gig economy” is more and more couriers behaving like a “class for itself”. Just across Deliveroo, over the past three years we have seen strikes and protests in London, Bristol, Brighton, Manchester, Sheffield, Aberdeen, Nottingham, Birmingham and Newcastle, as well as internationally, in France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. And it is in this context that in Liverpool we came across a self-organised struggle of Deliveroo workers.

A few publications have already hosted articles about the situation in Liverpool, among them the Echo⁴, Nerve Magazine⁵ and Liverpool Anarchist.⁶ Since September 2019 Deliveroo has been trialling a new zone system in Liverpool, the so called “free login zone”, which allows anyone to log in at any time, as opposed to the old “booking zone”, which gave couriers the opportunity to book hours in advance. This change, along with the influx of new riders, has increased competition, particularly hurting those couriers for whom this is the main source of income – some have reported losing up to £100-£200 a week, and having to use other apps (UberEats, Just Eat and Stuart) to supplement their income. This veiled attack on wages inspired a few couriers to get talking, start organising and take action.

Their first public happening took place on 6 October, in the form of an assembly outside the Bombed Out Church. The event attracted around 20-30 couriers and was supported by the Solidarity Federation and

limited at first, is something that all workers could learn from (the IWGB, despite having some members in Liverpool, was absent on the ground).

The couriers never received a proper reply from Deliveroo, except for a questionnaire with pre-determined answers and temporary fee incentives (the timing of both may have been coincidental – or not...). Faced with a faceless company represented only by an app (there is no Deliveroo office in Liverpool, nor any dark kitchens to picket), the core group of couriers deliberated on how to get the attention of their bosses. They made contact with the media, planned an intervention at a screening of *Sorry We Missed You*⁷, tried to establish links with couriers in other cities, etc. But the prospect of taking prolonged strike action, losing money in the process and making themselves vulnerable to dismissal, only to be ignored by Deliveroo and not make a dent in their profits, was on everyone’s minds (as this had already happened in other cities). So was the story of a Deliveroo worker who in October made a

600 mile journey across France to collect signatures for a petition demanding greater workers’ rights, only to be denied entry to the company’s London headquarters...⁸ For many of the Liverpool couriers this was their first experience of organising, and coming up against virtual employers who seem untouchable is a daunting task for anyone.

By November the struggle had lost its momentum. The numbers attending the core group

meetings decreased as did the ongoing involvement of wider layers of the workforce. The core activists identified that decisions of their meetings needed to be better shared with the other activists. There was also concern about how best to use digital networks to achieve better involvement but also avoid company spies accessing the core group membership and discussions. But the struggle is not all over yet. On 26 November the couriers made a small but public re-appearance at the university workers’ strike rally with their own banner (“Different Sectors, Same Struggle”), trying to link their fight to a wider class movement, distributing flyers and speaking on the stage to the assembled crowd. And, on 3 December, they will speak again at a Teach Out at the University of Liverpool together with striking HMRC cleaners, about casualisation and the realities of working in the “gig econ-



the Communist Workers’ Organisation. For two hours the couriers discussed the myriad problems they face at work and the demands that should be put forward, all the while trying to pull in riders that passed by to join them. They settled on the following: a minimum delivery fee (£4.50 for cyclists, £5 for motorcyclists), a guaranteed Living Wage for all and an end to the hiring of new riders. Another assembly was called for 12 October (this time during peak time) at the same spot. That week couriers also addressed a letter to Deliveroo, explaining the difficult situation that they find themselves in. At the second assembly, which saw a similar turnout, the decision was made that a plan of action is needed, and a few couriers volunteered to meet more often. This kind of self-organised action, although naturally

omy". By all means these are just small steps, but it's a start at overcoming isolation. The hated "free login zone" trial ends sometime in December/January. Whatever system Deliveroo settles on may yet spark new controversy – what happens then is still up in the air.

Throughout all this we have tried to support the couriers by attending their events and meetings, spreading the word about their struggle, helping to distribute flyers and making banners. We have also encouraged them to remain independent of the trade union straitjacket and we began to raise some political questions – about class, capitalism, and a future society without exploitation. To that end we produced a flyer, attached below, which we gave out to the couriers and at some of the rallies. Its contents remain relevant, and not only to Liverpool.

Dyjbass

Workers against Slaveroo

When we speak of the working class the image it usually brings to people's heads is still one of a cloth-cap wearing man slaving away in some huge factory. While that industrial working class still exists, particularly abroad where labour power is cheaper, the times have changed and the economy of the UK is more and more based on these so called "services" – of which Deliveroo is a part. When we look at the ways many of us make a living how-

ever, whether it's cleaners, waiters or couriers, we see the face of a new working class: more dispersed, but affected by the same old problems. Low wages, long hours (or no hours!), insecurity. And all to make money for millionaires and billionaires like Will Shu, a class of their own beyond our reach.

Rediscovering the Lessons of the Past

Ever since waged labour first became widespread some 200 years ago, workers have resisted the attacks of capital through organising ourselves and withdrawing our labour. Assemblies (where we come together to discuss our grievances and decide what to do about them), strike committees (which we delegate to co-ordinate our actions) and, ultimately, workers' councils (which at times of heightened class struggle took over the running of whole cities!) – these forms of organisation have resurfaced time and time again whenever workers found themselves at odds with the employing class. In the current mobilisations of Deliveroo riders in the UK, but also internationally (France, Italy, etc.), we see riders rediscovering how to self-organise – mass meetings are held, collectives are formed, and various demands are being formulated. In some places the unions step in, but where that happens they usually bring with them a more legalistic approach (union reps instead of delegates, ballots instead of organic walkouts, etc.), which

over time tend to destroy self-organisation (the miserable response of big unions like Unite, UNISON or GMB to years of cuts and worsening conditions shows how comfortable they have become with their union dues, bargaining over our labour!).

Beyond the Immediate

In order to win the demands, Deliveroo needs to be hit where it really hurts – in their pockets. To that end, the current struggles will have to involve more and more riders across more and more cities, and not just in the UK. Such co-ordinated action may yet force Deliveroo to capitulate. But whether this is successful or not, the self-organisation of Deliveroo riders has already shown the way forwards to all working people – that we don't have to take things lying down, that we can unite whatever our nationality, and that it's through cooperation that we win. Edited Thanks to Libcom.

* 1.bbc.co.uk

* 2.For how capitalism has arrived at the "gig economy", see: leftcom.org

* 3.leftcom.org

* 4.liverpoolecho.co.uk and liverpoolecho.co.uk

* 5.catalystmedia.org.uk

* 6.liverpoolanarchist.wordpress.com

* 7.For our review of the film, see: leftcom.org

* 8.leftfootforward.org

French Labour News

MAJOR RAIL WILDCAT STRIKE

29/10/19 French rail services ground to a halt in parts of the country as workers walked off the job for a third day in a dispute over train staffing levels.

Services in the Paris suburbs, the North Eastern Champagne-Ardenne region and the southern Occitanie region, which includes Toulouse and Montpellier, were particularly affected.

The industrial action involved a spontaneous 'wildcat' strike by grass roots rail workers angry over many other issues such as cuts to pension entitlements, reduced wages and privatisation moves all assisted by the union bosses, begun on Friday. After a train in north-east France slammed into a truck at a level crossing, leaving 11 people injured.

The train driver was himself among those hurt but being the sole employee of state railways company SNCF on board had to help take care of passengers.

Unions said the incident highlighted what they say is a problem of understaffing on trains, notably the absence of ticket inspectors on some lines.

Since Friday, staff have been exercising their "right to withdraw" their labour — a clause that allows workers to walk off the job in case of "clear and present danger to their life or health."

SNCF's management has accused the workers of abusing that right to indulge in a wildcat strike on a busy weekend for train travel, at the start of the mid-autumn school holidays.

It argues that some train lines have not had ticket inspectors for decades.

STOP PRESS: Second Wildcat Strike Late Oct. Hundreds of rail workers at the Chatillon repair yard went on a new

wildcat strike, resulting in only one third of high speed trains on the Western Atlantic Network (TGV-Atlantique) operating.

5/12/19 Rail workers took strike action together with other public sector workers over French Govt. Plans to cut pensions. 82% of train drivers were on strike and 90% of regional train services were cancelled.

HEALTH INDUSTRY CRISIS & INDUSTRIAL ACTION

In spring 2019, a crisis on an unprecedented scale was sparked in French hospitals. The emergency services went on strike in massive numbers. Barely three months from its beginnings on 18 March, in the Saint-Antoine Hospital in Paris, it had spread to around a hundred establishments all across France by July. The movement will not stop spreading as long as the situation remains untenable. In September, the number of emergency services on strike was 239, or more than half of all services. This mobilisation has not died down and even rose to 267 services on strike in mid-October.

The reasons for the strike

The situation in these services is disastrous in terms of lack of staff, increases in working hours and lack of funds. As in the rest of society, the situation is dictated by the drive to profit. This means working in a situation of permanent understaffing... Patients left uncared for have been found dead (e.g. the death of a 55 year old patient found in the emergency ward of the hospital during the night of the 17-18 December; an 11 year old boy found dead shortly after leaving the emergency ward in the Privas Hospital in Ardèche on 6 May; a 56 year old man found dead in the waiting room of the emergency ward in Perpignan; a woman in her sixties who died in the emergency ward in Cochin Hospital on 15 February; etc...). In these hospitals, the drive to efficiency is criminal. It is the symbol of the decay of capitalist society that introduced competition, or more plainly the pursuit of profit, into the domain of care for sick and elderly people.

For several decades now, governments in all countries have been demolishing their public health services (like they have other public services) and imposed financial requirements upon them. Added to this is the fact that the emergency services have become veritable asylums of modern times, crumbling under the weight of growing poverty in society.

The self-organisation of the movement outside the unions has allowed it to develop

A member of the Inter-Emergency Ward Collective (Collectif Inter-Urgences, CIU)¹, Hugo Huon, said in an interview, "We had three meetings with them (the nurses) before deciding, 'Ok, we're going ahead'. The four hospitals, Tenon, Lariboisière, Saint-Louis and La Pitié are joining Saint-Antoine" and have joined the movement.² They created the Collective from emergency service staff of all grades, which developed links with the district, but it came up against the unions every time. The Collective then organised alone and called a demonstration in its name on the 6 June, which was a success. Since then the unions have not stopped hounding the Collective.

Before the summer, relations with the unions soured. Hugo Huon explains that, "You could say that they [the unions] originally wanted nothing to do [with us], but as soon as the movement was launched, they absolutely wanted to get involved and impose themselves on it."³ In reality, this is a constant, the unions prevent the movement from developing but when they are absent, as they are in this case of the hospi-

tals, they chase after it with the aim of steering it back into the garage. Here, the Collective was well prepared, knew how to organise relays throughout the country and took things into its own hands. This was the reason for its initial successes compared to previous struggles.

On this solid basis of struggle, an Inter-Hospital Collective (Collectif



Inter-Hopitaux, CIH)⁴ regrouping staff equally from the whole medical hierarchy, was founded in September to support the emergency staff movement and spread it to all professionals in public hospitals, in association with the representatives of the patrons. The struggle is also spreading to the whole health sector, notably to the "EHPADs" (care homes).

Only through this autonomous organisation outside the frameworks of trade unionism and corporatism in the health sector has this CIH been able to develop up to now. Only by extending it to other sections of professionals can it achieve the realisation of its demands.

The latest decisions of the striking workers and the attempts at recuperating the movement

The movement finds itself at a pivotal moment and to make it spread it will have to go beyond the framework of the public hospital alone, at a moment when numerous sectors are taking up struggle, in the repair workshops of SNCF, the firefighters, etc...

Several hundred doctors and nurses in the CIH decided on Thursday 10 October to organise a "big demonstration" on the 14th November in Paris "to secure an emergency plan for the public hospital".

The first general assembly of the recently created Collective took place in the capital, at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Faculty of Medicine. Two motions were put to a vote and adopted unanimously. The first was to take up the demands that the striking emer-

gency workers and the unions have been fighting for nearly seven months, notably an "immediate net monthly wage rise of 300 euros" and "halting the removal of hospital beds".

The second contained a clarification on the "methods of action" and a call out to join the movement of firefighters on the 15 October and an assembly on the 29 October,

in the event of a vote on the first reading of the social security budget in the National Assembly, then a "big demonstration" on the 14 November, hopefully "with the support of the population".

So no calls to strike, nor even a "journée morte"⁵ as the unions and striking emergency workers announced nonetheless at the beginning of Oc-

tober. However, the IHC proposes a "cease in coding" of medical acts⁶, which would deprive the hospitals of a large part of their financial resources. "It is a political act, not a technical one. We are not playing anymore, we must put an end to the hospital business," said André Grimaldi, former head of diabetology at Pitié-Salpêtrière, in its defence.⁷

And now? In the face of governments which cannot approve anything but poverty, the solution is the generalisation of struggles, taking them into our own hands through our struggle collectives from the outset without the unions. They do not share our agenda and reveal themselves to be more and more useless and disruptive of any class organisation every day.

Olivier

* 1. Website: interurgences.fr, social media: [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

* 2. Interview with Hugo Huon, one of the founders of the CIU, from 30 July. mouvements.info

* 3. *ibid.*

* 4. Website: collectifinterhopitaux.wordpress.com, social media: [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

* 5. "Journée morte", or "dead day", is an on-the-spot strike, where workers may turn up to work but don't do anything.

* 6. Which allows payments for medical procedures to be made by social security.

* 7. fr.theepochtimes.com

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Anarchism and Political Change in Spain: Schism, Polarisation and Reconstruction of the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo, 1939-1979 by Maggie Torres, Published by Sussex Academic Press.

Resurgence of International Syndicalism?

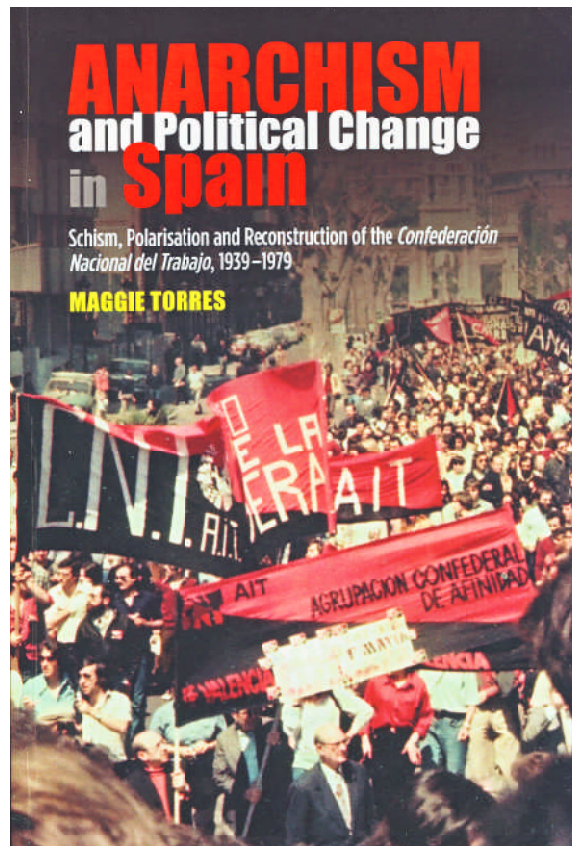
The late 1970's and early 1980's saw what seemed to many of us a resurgence of mass syndicalist unionism, with the reconstruction of the Spanish CNT (National Confederation of Labour) in the late 1970's and an important syndicalist tendency in the early Polish Solidarnosc union movement formed in 1980. Both union movements claimed hundreds of thousands of members. These developments proved to be illusionary, with a cycle of devastating splits affecting the CNT from 1979/80 and a rightward shift in Solidarnosc facilitated by the Catholic Church, Polish nationalist elements and heavy CIA funding. Syndicalist 'unions' in other mainly European countries inspired by these developments which emerged in this period never gained such mass membership, failed to become syndicalist poles of attraction in their respective labour movements and were steadily drawn into the orbit of the corporate unions.

Crisis in the Contemporary CNT in Spain

In recent years the different splits of the CNT with now a claimed overall membership of 5,000 or so has also been increasingly drawn into the orbit of the corporate unions – UGT (General Union of Workers aligned with the Socialist Party) and CCOO (Workers Commissions aligned with the PCE – Spanish Communist Party) relying on lawyers and working in the Spanish Industrial Relations system rather than emphasising the direct action path. Pursuing an 'incremental' approach to rebuilding the CNT rather than a 'strategic' organising approach focusing on one strategic industry aiming at facilitating the generation of strike waves to counter the employer offensive and building an expanding syndicalist union movement across industries. Whilst it has suffered a continuing splitting process. Contributing to this misguided approach is the burden of its historic initials/patrimony claims (CNT assets seized by

Franco) and an associated unrealistic and simplistic strategy for building mass syndicalist unionism. The book under review throws important light on the reasons for this misguided strategy, current worsening marginalisation of the CNT in the Spanish labour movement and drift from the anarcho-syndicalist path.

The volume includes interviews with numerous militants involved in the CNT underground and reconstruction, and allied groups from 1939 to 1979. The author sketches the initially fiercely repressive Franco regime which emerged during the Spanish Civil War 1936-39 and moderated somewhat toward the end of WWII due to Allied victories and in the early 60's



associated with rapid industrialisation. Initially all unions were closed down and replaced with Francoist State vertical unions the CNS (National Trade Union Centre). The author throws light on the spontaneous emergence of the underground CNT in Spain and the role of the Young Libertarians in the organising efforts. With the lessening of State repression from 1943, the CNT was able to

develop as an extensive clandestine underground organisation. Even receiving funding from high-up figures in the Francoist Govt. and employers. This underground union movement became interwoven with a guerrilla movement. By July 1945, it was claiming a membership of 30,000 members and was drawn into collaboration with the UGT. Around this time, CNT grass roots militants together with other underground unions became involved in a strike wave, winning some victories. The 'Interior' CNT became drawn into an alliance with other Anti-Franco groups to restore a Republican Govt. With the expectation of Allied support for a Republican Regime, the Alliance of Democratic Forces was formed in Oct. 1944 and an exiled Republican Govt. set up in Mexico in Aug. 1945. Also in 1945 at the CNT Paris Congress, a split was provoked by the Frederica Montseny (Health Minister in the Popular Front Govt. during the Civil War 1936-39) aligned exile bureaucracy to cover-up corruption and rejected CNT collaboration in a new Republican Govt. and a return to a

traditional anarcho-syndicalist anti-political position. In 1961 at the Limoges CNT Congress the reunification of the Exterior CNT occurred. However the Congress adopted contradictory policies – armed struggle via urban guerrilla action and an alliance with other unions i.e. UGT and STV (Solidarity of Basque Workers – Basque Nationalist Union) – raised morale of militants and was spurred on by gains made by PCE with their domination of the CCOO. Urban guerrilla actions led to massive repression against the CNT in the Interior. It formed the MLE (Spanish Libertarian Movement) effectively a national liberation movement. From 1965 MLE became progressively more bureaucratic and morphed into a 'testimonial sect' – consumed by holding social occasions, pursuing feuds and avoiding any actual industrial organising. The bureaucratic ossification of the Exile organisation was contributed by fear of repression by French State and an Interior CNT, the bureaucracy could not control. Whilst a dissident parallel organisation emerged in Exile and produced the paper Frente Libertario.

The author outlines how the CNT in the Interior was in a parlous state by mid 60's with 16 national committees arrested under the Franco Regime. It became drawn into collaboration with the Falangist (Spanish Fascist) chiefs of the vertical unions even having common tickets for elections in the vertical unions. This collaboration was terminated by Franco. The author shows militants interviewed regarded this move as a serious

mistake – rather than working in the Workers Commissions (another initially grass roots/assemblyist opposition in the vertical unions) and countering PCE domination. This factor the author shows was a major contribution to the instability of the reconstructed CNT after the death of Franco and subsequent cycle of devastating splits. Whilst the Interior CNT had sacrificed a positive strategy of alliances with other unions and forces, to work more closely with the CNS chiefs.

Reconstruction of the CNT in Spain

The author then proceeds to sketch out the complex story of how a re-constructed CNT emerged. Some key factors discussed with the aid of interviews of militants, is the splintering of the PCE from 1963, the emergence of the ‘autonomous’ movement, the manoeuvres of the CNT exile organisation, the development of the New Left in Western Europe from the mid 1960’s, the revival of the Spanish anarchist movement, the cultural ferment associated with the transition from the Franco regime and the social base of the ‘new’ CNT.

The author outlines how the fragmentation of the PCE from 1963 associated with a failed strategy for a peaceful transition to parliamentary democracy in Spain, the Sino-Soviet conflict and the crisis of mass Stalinism in many countries connected with the emergence of the New Left in the mid 60’s and the explosive events of May ’68 in France provided an opening and stimulation for the growth of anarchist currents in different spheres.

‘The Autonomous Movement’

The author particularly focuses on the important ‘autonomous movement’ which played a key role in the CNT reconstruction in the Interior. This movement had bases in the universities, neighbourhoods and industries and was affected by much confusion about anarcho-syndicalism. It particularly emerged in the late 1960’s in the context of rising inflation provoking wildcat strikes. The most important such grouping in Barcelona influenced by anarchism was the Solidaridad Group. Veteran CNT militant Felix Carrasquer played a key role in its emergence. The author shows that these groups developed coordinative structures and became drawn into the project of reconstructing the CNT following the death of Franco in 1975. Solidarity and other autonomous groups were very confused regarding anarcho-syndicalism – focusing on workers self activity and workplace as-

semblies but favouring a revived CNT to be engaged in contract negotiations, much organisational ‘navel gazing’ and an oppression mongering ‘Globalist orientation’ rather than the CNT as primarily a workers’ economic combative organisation. Reflecting middle class/student layers in these groups. The autonomous movement was heavily involved in a wildcat strike movement in early 1970’s. Most important being the successful Harry Walker strike. Greater coordination between ‘autonomous’ groups in industry developed in 1971 as part of an ‘absentionist’ campaign against the vertical union elections. Through the role of CNT veterans in the movement and contacts with the dissident tendency in the CNT exile organisation, the autonomous movement became drawn into the reconstruction of the CNT in Spain.

The Exile Organisation and the Reconstruction of the CNT

The author goes on to look at the complex and disastrous role of the CNT Exile bureaucracy in the reconstruction. She shows that from the early 1970’s, the exile leadership was planning to participate in the reconstruction. Sidestepping the autonomous movement and attracting militants into its orbit using the vehicle of the reconstructed FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation). The exiles had a slim base for the ‘Official CNT’ in Catalonia and the workers movement generally. It gained influence also through providing substantial financial support for the CNT reconstruction particularly important given the unreliability of union dues (however this funding did not match the massive bank rolling of the UGT/Socialist Party particularly by the German Social Democratic Party and in the case of the CCOO/PCE by European Communist Parties) and militants within the revived CNT lacking organising experience. On this basis it attempted to control the CNT reconstruction process since 1972.

The FAI also sought and gained support amongst ‘pasotas’ – inexperienced young people with little knowledge of CNT history and stirred up trouble in the re-emerging CNT with intrigues and scheming for control of committees based on wild slandering of other currents. The author fails to link this orientation with the impact of the Stalinist legacy, which has heavily affected many Post WWII leftist/anarchist groups internationally. These intrigues led to the dropping of an alliance with the UGT and SOC to counter employers and Govt. attacks on the labour

movement. Strategy in the organisation became dictated by the need to keep the CNT together rather than to build up a union confederation.

The author focuses in detail on the false dawn of the re-emergence of the CNT following the death of Franco in 1975. With the holding of massive CNT meetings and the International Libertarian Days Festival in Barcelona in 1977 attracting an estimated 150,000 people. As a result of these gatherings and optimism associated with the end of the Franco regime, many middle class elements and those attracted due to confusing the CNT with an alternative lifestyle/cultural movement and having ‘globalist’ notions about the CNT joined en masse. Whilst the CNT became the main opposition to the Oct. 1977 Moncloa Pact (a series of agreements by the Govt. and political parties supported by the CCOO and UGT. It involved the Govt. recognition of union sections in companies, return of unions assets seized by Franco during the Civil War and an austerity program. The Pact played key role in popular demobilisation.) Around this time the CNT won some important strikes such as the Roca strike and was very active in a massive strike wave in January 1977 which affected most industrial regions in Spain. The CNT seemed to be finding its space in Spain’s union map.

The author outlines how the Govt. reacted with the notorious Scala Bombing affair of 1978 blamed on the CNT by the media/Govt. instigated by agent provocateurs connected with the Spanish Secret Service to repress and further destabilise it. The hysteria and police repression caused significant membership losses. The author omits to mention the role of the CIA in the onslaught.(1)

The author proceeds to look at The Fifth Congress of the CNT, December 8-15 1979. Its holding was aimed at the dissolution of the Exile CNT by Catalan CNT elements. It ended after eight days with the massive walkout of most delegations due to its manipulation by the FAI leading to a major split. Another dimension of this rupture/split the author focuses upon was the conflict between the FAI/Exile bureaucracy holding superficially a more coherent anarcho-syndicalist position involving opposition to fixed term contract negotiations and trade union elections versus the other main tendency favouring the CNT participating in these processes and de-emphasising direct action. Seeking ‘success’ as a more orthodox trade union like the CCOO and UGT. The author sees this devastating rupture/splitting process in the context of the demobilisation and demoralisation of the radical anti-Francoist Opposition.

In conclusion, the author does a brilliant job in her discussion of the complex de-

velopments in the CNT during the period 1939-79. Outlining the major factors particularly the nefarious role of the CNT Exile bureaucracy, internal confusion and State repression which contributed to the instability of the re-constructed CNT following the death of Franco and a cycle of

devastating splits. Resulting in the CNT's current extreme marginality in the Spanish labour movement. However, she fails take account of the impact of the Stalinist legacy on the Exile bureaucracy/FAI and the CIA/Deep State in destabilising the CNT.

Mark McGuire

Notes

1. See *Living Anarchism: Jose Peirats and Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalism* by Chris Ealham.

DEBATE ON BLOCKADE TACTICS

Marty Glaberman wrote:

If teachers or students shut down a school, the school is shut down. But when five thousand people in some small town in Ohio shut down a stamping plant, within two weeks two-thirds of General Motors is shut down and steel plants begin to lay off and railroads begin to lay off and so on. Those workers who have access to that kind of power are aware of that reality.

Mike Harman wrote:

What Glaberman missed in this analysis was the power of workers, students and the unemployed to blockade capital from outside the workplace. When a factory shuts down, it can affect the entire supply chain, but when roads or public transport are shut down, it can affect the ability of capital to flow through an entire city. Following de-industrialisation, with some exceptions such as transport workers, blockades may actually be more effective at disrupting capital accumulation than strike action at many workplaces. After all if you shut down your coffee shop, the coffee shop is shut down but nothing else will be.

Hieronymous:

I wholeheartedly disagree and have to agree with Marty on this one. What's lacking in the latter is agency, and more specifically working class agency.

Blockades are simply a tactic, and in today's world of sophisticated logistics planning a not very effective one. The

2002 lockout of ILWU longshore workers on the West Coast is an example of the bosses using the blockade tactic. Its effectiveness was undermined by air cargo.

Peter V. Hall, an academic in Canada, wrote an excellent critique of the 10-day lockout called "'We'd Have to Sink the Ships': Impact Studies and the 2002 West Coast Port Lockout," which states:



Peter V. Hall wrote:

After the lockout began, firms substituted across transport modes, with various industry sources reporting that the port lockout had been good for airfreight carriers. U.S. air cargo volumes jumped 19% in October 2002 over October 2001.

The lockout had been orchestrated by the West Coast Waterfront Coalition, and amalgam of large importers (like Walmart

and other retailers), who had make extensive preparations and used the lockout to gain advantage over competitors not in their coalition (but its primary

motivation was to crush the master agreement of the union in all 29 ports). But if a massive, coast wide lockout — effectively a management blockade — can easily be undermined by transporting by air, so can an activist blockade.

The movement of goods is multimodal, so if activists block a highway, the goods are rerouted along another highway or surface streets. If, by some miracle, all road bound vehicular transportation is blockaded, logistics planners will revert to rail or movement by water (ship or barge) or air. Which means activists would need to have the numbers and mobility to be prepared to block trains, waterways, and highly-secured airports.

But if workers, even very few, with their intimate knowledge of the production process of their own work sector strategically sabotage the production and distribution process at a key chokepoint, they can cripple the whole global supply chain. And the class-based agency for doing so can ripple outward from sector-to-sector, driven by class consciousness, and paralyse capitalist reproduction. Activist blockades, being a tactic, can't even sustain themselves beyond a few hours or days, let alone make any lasting impact on capital since they lack agency; in an industrial setting they aren't anything more than a tactic of substitutionism.

Thanks to Libcom.

Mexican Syndicalist History

A short account of the syndicalist union Casa del Obrero Mundial and its failure to relate to the anarchistic movements of Zapata and Villa.

The birth of the workers' movement in Mexico was profoundly influenced by anarchism. This movement proclaimed independence from the political parties and the

State. Yet in 1915 a pact was signed with the Constitutionalists led by Carranza. Organise! Looks at why this might have happened.

The workers' movement in Mexico was relatively young and inexperienced. At the time the population counted 11 million who lived in the countryside as opposed to 4 million who lived in urban centres a comparison with Russia during the 1917 Revolution could be made).

The first two decades of the 20th century were marked by a radicalisation of the Mexican workers' movement, with an influx of Spanish immigrants, bringing with them new forms of organising. The traditional forms of organising began to give way to new and radical unions based on the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism.

When Madero came to power in 1911 the legislation workers' organisation that had existed under the regime of Porfirio Diaz did not disappear. However the fall of Diaz had encouraged this movement and strikes of transport workers, bakers and clothes makers and the dockers of the port town of Tampico broke out during that year.

A Colombian anarchist, Juan Francisco Moncaleano, arrived in Mexico in 1912 and with 7 others set up the Luz (Light) Group formed mostly of manual workers. They founded a paper of the same name and proposed the setting up of a free school modelled on the principles of the Spanish anarchist Ferrer. The paper was suppressed and Moncaleano was expelled by the Madero regime. However those remaining set up the Casa del Obrero Mundial (House of the International Worker), the name being also used for a local federation of unions. New papers supported by the Casa began to appear in 1913.

The Casa carried out intense activity, advancing the ideas of direct action and rejected the intervention of the Ministry of Labour created by the new leader of Mexico, Huerta, in conflicts between the workers and the employers.

However, a section of the movement began to ally itself with another contender for power, General Carranza. The Casa building was closed down by the authorities with the planned demonstrations of May 1st 1914 being used as a pretext. With the fall of Huerta, Carranza now intervened and allowed the Casa to establish itself at a commandeered convent.

The Carranza regime inaugurated a period of normalisation into the Mexican revolution. Intrigues multiplied, a whole host of careerists and profiteers inserted themselves into the administration, and norms

were established controlling negotiation with the employers, demonstrations on the streets, political meetings etc. The State now became the legal arbiter in workplace disputes.

In this climate the Casa established a pact with Carranza on 17th February 1915 and workers organised by the Casa in Red Battalions and Anarchist Sanitary Battalions reinforced Carranza's troops. They were used to counter the detachments of the peasant revolutionaries of Zapata and



Villa!! Seven thousand Mexico City workers went to the Constitutionalist military training centre and their participation was significant in victories over Villa and Zapata. The Casa justified this on the grounds of the religiosity and the primarily "agrarian" outlook of the Zapatistas and Villistas, accusing them of being backed by the Church and bankers!! In exchange Carranza gave the Casa some offices and allowed the publication of their papers. Eulogies to heroic Constitutionalist lead-

ers started appearing in these papers with such comments as: "the triumph of constitutionalism is the triumph of liberty"! All of this did not stop Carranza shutting down the Casa H.Q. one year later when the Casa attempted to start organising again in the workplaces.

This appalling mistake was argued against by the Magonistas and by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the USA, and was rejected by the railworkers, the oil workers and the textile workers of Puebla and Veracruz. An attempt was made to set up a revolutionary central of anarcho-syndicalist unions in July 1915, and a little later a worker's conference took place in Veracruz and the CNT (Mexican region) was created. However this organisation was stillborn and after an attempt at a general strike in August 1916 it was savagely repressed by the Obregon regime. This now set up an official union central the Regional Workers' Confederation of Mexico (CROM). This new organisation was completely corporatist, tightly aligned with the State, with a well-paid and large bureaucracy, acting as a direct control by the politicians over the workers. Even a large number of old activists active within Mexican anarcho-syndicalism entered its ranks.

This article originally appeared in issue No 77 of Organise! magazine of the Anarchist Federation

www.afed.org.uk

Continued From Page 2 opposition, plugged in at the highest levels, was complicit. Federal Labor president Wayne Swan, whilst performing the role of Australia's Treasurer, participated in the Rudd coup. Swan subsequently appointed BG's Head, Catherine Tanna, to the Reserve Bank board. Manager of Opposition Business, Tony Burke MP, signed off on the BG-QCLNG export licence at the Federal level in October 2010 during the Gillard reign. Burke's predecessor, Peter Garrett MP, refused to approve the proposal after unambiguous advice from Geosciences Australia. Garrett notes in his memoir that Martin Ferguson and Wayne Swan had been "acutely focused" on the decision (June-October 2010).

Note here, Federal environmental laws required protection of groundwater-dependent listed species and ecological communities, and other matters of national environmental significance (MNES). Burke as the Minister had not explained how MNES were evaluated. There was no information, such as maps of thousands of kilometres of gathering pipeline networks, creek crossings, hydraulic

fracturing locations and baseline studies. Australians have not seen the government's cost-benefit analysis. Hence can only assume it does not exist in what must be one of the largest mining projects ever in Australia.

There appeared to be no objection from Labor when, on 17 September 2013, the post-Bligh era Queensland's LNP Attorney-General appointed David Thomas (a solicitor and senior partner at law firm Minter Ellison, with foreign gas industry connections) as Judge of the Supreme Court and president of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Note, the QCAT reviews decisions made by government agencies. The timing of his appointment is questionable. Justice Thomas was only the fourth solicitor to be appointed to the Supreme Court in 152 years. There was no suggestion of wrongdoing by Justice Thomas. However political appointments and judicial appointments require scrutiny. Justice David Thomas is the brother of Queensland-Texas diplomat Geoffrey Thomas, a former Labor Premier Peter Beattie's special commissioner to North America and "honorary Texan" of George W. Bush.

David Thomas also had a lead role on the board of the Queensland Ballet, where the BG group subsidiary QGC has been principal partner. The Governor of Queensland is patron of the Queensland Ballet. Anna Marsden performed the role of CEO the Queensland Ballet from 2010-16 and worked for lobbying firm Rowland prior to her current role as managing director of the controversial Great Barrier Reef Foundation. In April 2018, the GBRF received a surprising \$444 million package from the Turnbull government during his 2nd term as PM, without a tender process. Anna Marsden in turn, is married to Ben Myers. Ben Myers worked as chief of staff in the office of Liberal Premier Campbell Newman when, in February 2013, the Qld. State's Crime and Misconduct Commission received complaints regarding the approval process for the QGC and Santos CSG-LNG projects. Some would say the timing of Justice Thomas's Queensland judicial appointment is noteworthy in this regard.

Gas prices have trebled as a result of government failure

On 19 September 2013, two days following the Liberal Premier Campbell's swearing in See Page 20

NEWS & NOTES

In this edition of RW, we are putting the spotlight on a massive riot in the mining industry. It involves a major UK based multinational company and their connections with key figures in the Australian and UK ruling classes, a major business organisation, the ALP, Libs and the Federal Govt. (See article page 2.)

Some of the most important news in the NSW Railways is the new wave of attacks on NSW Trains workers, involving DOO (Driver Only Operation) of new interurban trains and the outsourcing of cleaning. The ASN is agitating on the job to fight back against these major new attacks. This onslaught will have major potential flow-on effects. Such as facilitating the carve-up of the NSW Railways for privatisation and increasing the tempo of the employer offensive. Whilst NSW Railways workers are facing an increasing state of siege associated with ever more privatisation pushes and the Metros. (See article page 3.)

The most important news in Sydney Buses has been the announcement by the NSW Govt. to privatise the rest of State Transit. The RTBU hierarchy and Unions NSW are waging another lame duck campaign on the issue to cover-up their sellout of the bus workers and cynically gaining some electoral mileage for the ALP in the upcoming NSW Elections. The ASN is agitating on the job to expose the new sell out of the ALP aligned union bosses and the need for a direct action campaign. (See article page 6.)

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Where we stand:

1. Our aim is to create a free and equal society

2. We are a revolutionary labour movement that uses as its only means of struggle, direct action in all its forms – occupations, strikes, boycotts, sabotage, etc. We are independent from all reformist and hierarchical unions and political parties, and we are creating an alternative to these and to existing society. We do not seek to gain political power, but rather to see it distributed amongst all.

3. We are a network of anarcho-syndicalists practising co-operation and mutual aid. We have an equal part in the making of decisions. Responsibilities within the network are subject to agreement by the members.

4. We are engaged in struggle where we work and where we live, to develop self managed production, distribution and servicing for the world community, to meet human needs rather than profit. We give solidarity to others in these struggles.

5. We are fighting to abolish all authoritarian institutions such as the State (including its communist variety), capitalism, all hierarchical and oppressive divisions between people.

6. We have no country and are organised on an international basis in opposition to oppression everywhere. The ASN is striving to build a viable revolutionary syndicalist movement in Australia as part of a world wide movement able to meet the challenge of the global employer offensive.

TO FIND OUT MORE

I would like more information about the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network. Please send me information.

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Continued From Page 18 ceremony, the Queensland's Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) dismissed complaints in relation to BG's and Santos' CSG-LNG approval processes. The CMC claimed via a media release: "there is no evidence of official misconduct". A retired central Queensland judge, Stanley Jones AO, contracted in May 2013 to assess the complaints, had apparently found "no grounds" to warrant an official inquiry. No signed report has surfaced. Attempts to access the report under Queensland's Right to Information Act have failed, as the material is classified exempt information.

Other bureaucratic connections are interesting. The Hon David Thomas has presided over the Royal Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland since 2011, after serving on its council for nine years. The Governor of Queensland is patron of the RNA. HRH the Princess Royal is president of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth. In June 2017, the then Attorney-General of Australia and L-NP Senator for Queensland, George Brandis QC, appointed The Hon David Thomas as President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and, as a judge of the Federal Court of Australia. Note the AAT reviews decisions made by the Australian Government. Brandis then became Australia's High Commissioner to the UK in 2018, replacing Alexander Downer.

The upshot of all this is that State and Federal approvals for Queensland CSG-LNG export deal with China, in itself worth billions, had a more serious implication for all Australian domestic consumers of energy. The deal effectively removed the shield that had protected eastern Australia's gas price from the international oil-linked price, thereby exposing our economy. Not surprising, soon after our domestic gas price trebled, as the cartel recovered their export project losses from Australia's economy. Our electricity prices have soared as a result of gas price increases. Queensland gas reserva-

tion discussed in 2009 remains unimplemented, and the supply "trigger" of 2017 remains un-pulled. Remember when SCOMO said he would insist that exporters should cover the domestic shortage of gas before meeting their overseas commitments? It hasn't happened.

Senate Estimates confirmed in the second half of 2018 that BG Group's gas bonanza has delivered diddly-squat to Australia in tax – despite claims it would contribute "more than \$1 billion". Whistleblower, Simone Marsh, investigated the crony capitalism behind the Gladstone debacle; the history of how politicians kowtowed to the Duke of York-led British BG Group by pulling strings, shifting guidelines and ignoring public opinion to unlock prime farmland for fracking. Marsh raised new questions about the timing of the spill of former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

OCTOBER 2018 SENATE Estimates hearings confirmed a paltry amount of tax has been paid in Australia by Britain's BG Group of companies behind the controversial Queensland Curtis coal seam gas to liquefied natural gas export development. Greens Senator Larissa Waters queried the Tax Commissioner on what had become of the "more than \$1 billion in tax a year after 2014" promised, on the business pages of The Australian, by then CEO Catherine Tanna in 2011. At the time, Tanna was mining Australia's resources as executive vice-president of BG Group and captain of subsidiary Queensland Gas Company (QGC). Royal Dutch Shell acquired BG/QGC and its \$US20.4 billion QCLNG business in 2016. In 2016, Shell Australia Pty Ltd reported it paid US\$21.7 million in tax to Australia for all company business, including the North West Shelf and QGC.

Tax Office Deputy Commissioner Jeremy Hirschhorn revealed that, while amassing a gross income of \$6.3 billion in 2015-16, BG International (Aust) Pty Ltd paid zero income tax. A second company in the group, BGC Australia Pty Ltd, contributed \$35 million. A third, BG International Ltd, also paid no income tax in Australia that

year. By comparison, BG Group made tax payments of US\$406.4 million to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in the UK, from its global operations in 2015.

Tanna remember is a board member of the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Business Council of Australia. BCA president Grant King had commandeered APLNG, the last of the methane-monster Gladstone triplets, birthed alongside QCLNG. It is unknown how RBA matters may have conflicted with Tanna's business interests over the years, or how such conflicts have been managed. The well-connected Ms Tanna is the daughter of R.G. Tanna of Gladstone Port Authority a terminal with notoriety in international fossil fuel shipping circles. LNG ship Methane Mickie Harper bears the names of her (Tanna's) offspring. Her career in oil and gas includes stints at BHP and Royal Dutch Shell (as executive vice president of gas and power, with responsibility for LNG, gas transmission and power generation in Africa) and involves engagements in China, America and Russia — including a JV with the soviet's Gazprom.

Tanna now heads Energy Australia Holdings Limited, the gas and electricity company owned by Hong Kong-listed China Light and Power. An investigation by michaelwest.com.au, based on data published by the Australian Tax Office, found EA paid no income tax in Australia over the three financial years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 — despite raking in a total income of \$23.9 billion. EA has interests in expansion of coal seam gas — including with Santos in NSW, where the community has been fighting a long-standing battle against gas field invasion.

This article was excerpted from the original by Simone Marsh [Twitter@kangabella] and the Michael West Newsletter of invetigative reporting. Google original at "Australias-2nd-British-Invasion". end.