

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL



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O'Farrell NSW Govt. "Iron Heel" Threatens Privatisation Rampage, Public Sector Job Losses, Part Time Work! Only Direct Action On The Job Can Halt This Onslaught!



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

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N.S.W. Fire Brigade Union News

Strategy Free Zone

The latest blow to job security for NSW fire fighters happened in June 2011 with little or no critical analysis of what happened or why. In the lead up to the first of two public sector rallies outside the houses of parliament in Sydney, union secretary Jim Casey was the most out spoken union boss. Having become the first union secretary in NSW to accept 2.5% Casey went out of his way to call out as many public servants as possible to oppose the governments wages policy. When asked by the media Casey confirmed fire fighters would strike to oppose the legislation.

Management of the fire service immediately contacted the NSW Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) demanding it intervene to stop the strike. In the days leading up to June 15th and the hyped up stop-work rally, the union was called into the IRC and had to explain to the court why the community would not be at risk. The

IRC was told only a small number of brigades would be involved and the union was directed to confer with management to identify which brigades would be taken off line. A list of 40 brigades was agreed and the IRC was informed that both management and union believed taking these 40 brigades off line would not present a risk.

Oh dear — that wasn't clever was it. Just weeks later Commissioner Mullins told the parliament Sydney had a 'surge capacity' of 20 fire brigades.

On June 15th 40 brigades were called out on a stop-work action, again on September 8th exactly the same 40 brigades were called out on stop-work action. A completely futile exercise, which had a snow, flakes chance in hell of getting government to reverse its legislation. Management now has a document agreed to by the union and overseen by the IRC identifying which brigades can be taken off line with minimal risk to safety. Every single fire fighter should now be asking how could this have happened when Chris Read former union secretary and main advisor sits in the office next door to Jim Casey. What sort of advice are we paying for with 9 industrial officers in and out of the IRC more times than the Flyers goes to code calls.

What's Disgusting - Union Busting

Union busting entered a new era in NSW when the man pulling the strings behind the FBEU (former union secretary Chris Read) convinced Jim Casey to resign the only position he was elected into - NSW Branch Secretary of the United Fire fighters Union of Australia and instead appoint his mate Chris Read to the job. When Casey was first elected the NSW Branch of the UFUA had almost 6 000 members. Today it has less than 1000. Tragically the drive to get members out of the NSW Branch of the UFUA has been the only serious campaigning fire fighters have seen in Jim Casey's three years of office.

The decision to resign from a democratically elected position and instead appoint your mate to the job rather than call another election is a slap in the face for anyone who thinks unions should be democratic and accountable to their members. When Chris Read was installed as secretary he changed the rules of the UFUA NSW to reducing the union's committee of management from 14 members down to just three and gave almost all the union's powers to the branch secretary. Union fees have been pushed up from \$27 per year to \$300 and must now be paid up front every three months. Could there be a more effective way to drive members out of the UFUA than increasing fees by 1000% and cutting members representation.

The decision to set about busting the UFUA in NSW couldn't have come at a worse time for fire fighters in NSW. The O'Farrell government has introduced laws that stop the state labour courts giving public servants more than 2.5% increases in wages. Penalties for unions disobeying the labour courts have been pushed up to \$220 000 per day and government has now announced it will be changing NSW labour laws to reflect national labour law. NSW will soon have the same anti union labour laws as everyone else but will be the only place where courts can't give more than 2.5% increases unless jobs and conditions are sold off.

The only way NSW fire fighters can now get any more than 2.5% without selling off jobs and conditions is to campaign for access to 'Fair Work Australia'. These laws have allowed the UFUA to push Victorian and Western Australian wages up to \$600 per fortnight higher than wages in NSW. The ACTU has also rejected the split in fire fighters unions and ruled the only way NSW fire fighters can re-enter 'Fair Work Australia' is by re-affiliating with the UFUA. Splitting our union is only ever beneficial to bosses.

Thanks to Sparx

Rebel Worker
Web Site:
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N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

MEMBERS' VOICE SAYS

"STOP WORK TO STOP BARRY O' FARRELL AND THE LIBERALS"

and to "SAVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT"

The recently elected Liberal Government has put workers on notice that they are to be punished for the failed state of NSW, even if that proposition is a lie. Successive attacks on workers along with outsourcing and privatisation, have seen the deterioration of public health care, grubby rail stations, franchising of public ferries and falling standards in our schools.

Rail Workers and commuters in NSW face grim prospects because of proposals now before parliament. A task force headed by David Callahan, (Ex Coca Cola Amatil, Ex Price Waterhouse) the architect of the ferry privatisation, is now stalking within RailCorp looking at ways that the rail budget can be cut. Budget cuts usually means job losses. Even before these recommendations can be implemented O'Farrell has started down his road of slash and burn. Amongst the proposals already being implemented are:

- * The removal of Transit Officers from trains and stations to be replaced by a reduced number of Ticket Inspectors and Police. These are jobs that will never come back. As RW goes to print Transit Officers are getting their marching orders. Regular police can now be spotted patrolling stations and standing at ticket barriers.
- * Changes to the NSW Industrial Relations Act (Amendments to Public Sector of Employment) which imposes hefty fines on unions of \$110,000 per day for taking industrial action in wildcat strikes or non sanctioned actions (up from \$10,000) to \$220,000 for a repeat offenses. Just what constitutes a wildcat strike remains rather vague.

- * Changes to train crew rosters and the introduction of part time work for guards and drivers. This has the possibility of allowing management to "split shifts" into a couple each day. The disadvantages of

"split shifts" is that train crew may spend a greater amount of time away from home but only get paid according to actual hours worked.

- * Roving cleaners who clean trains are now being rostered to work alone on trains in transit. This is a safety issue as well as an intensification of their work.

Other cleaners on stations and in workshops have had numbers reduced, yet they are expected to do the same work as before. This is an impossible situation that is

lead to Station Staff working split shifts. They theoretically could be used only in the morning and afternoon peak periods yet have a 12 hour working and waiting day.

The O'Farrell Government is now taking the attack on Public Transport workers, and Public Sector workers in general, one step further. The Government's ultimate desire is to have all Public Sector workers covered by State Awards and covered by NSW Industrial Relations laws. O'Farrell



causing a large amount of stress to the workers involved. Of course stations and trains consequently remain substantially grubby as our customers can attest.

In a weak kneed response from the RTBU in a late bulletin they say "The RTBU requested additional controls but this was all but ignored."

Why a "request", rather than some demands? Why not inform the members and carry out their wishes? Members are upset that no action is being contemplated let alone acted upon. Why would management tell not tell them "go jump", they see no threat from the Union.

All of these changes and others proposed are being done using a re-interpreted 2010 EBA, which in all of its ambiguity leaves rail workers open to attack from the government and RailCorp. This was the main reason Member's Voice opposed a positive vote for the Agreement. The EBA was craftily assembled by management and unfortunately endorsed by a union leadership which still remains weak and politically compromised.

Another round of Station "reforms" leading to more part time workers is a distinct possibility. Part time work itself could

believe that the State Government should control the wages and conditions of its employees. He says that the new legislation plus a wage freeze could save the NSW Government \$350 million over 4 years. His problem is that 50,000 workers, including rail and bus workers in NSW fall under Federal Fair Work legislation. Now he is preparing to apply to Fair Work Australia to have State employees covered under his draconian new NSW Industrial Legislation.

O'Farrell:

"To be fully accountable to NSW taxpayers, it is necessary to achieve consistency across the public sector."

"It is our strong and logical view that where a state makes laws to regulate the terms and conditions of its own employees, those laws and policies should be respected and given effect to by Fair Work Australia as well" says Barry O'Farrell.

An example of the Governments meanness is directly illustrated by their threat to not issue travel passes to new employees. Employees have had a right to travel freely on public transport for some time. The "Home and Duty" Pass was awarded to

Public Transport staff in lieu of a wage rise and was part of an agreement back in the days when workers had to part pay for travel.

By threatening to deny travel passes to new employees the Liberal Government is attempting to modify the awarded working conditions of employees. Yet those same employees are at present covered by a Federal Award. Surely meddling with award conditions is a reason for the Unions to act and stop them in their tracks. Alas, so far there has been no response from the Union leadership.

RailCorp is experiencing momentous changes. The transfer of thousands of employees to what was "NSW Transport" during the Labor term in office is being accelerated under the Libs. The new entity has had a name change to "Transport for NSW" and is administered by many managers from private industry along with the usual transport bureaucrats.

Rail workers and other public transport workers transferred to Transport for NSW had their Federal Awards nullified under the watchful eye of the Transport Unions when they were transferred to a brand new State Award. In effect the unions have overseen the setting up a "greenfield" union agreement for transport workers. Union members have been signed, sealed and delivered into the hands of the O'Farrell

government and will now face the full force of his anti-worker laws. The danger for those of us left in the STA and RailCorp is that if O'Farrell gets his way he can nullify our present Award by simply breaking up RailCorp, changing its name or transferring us all to Transport for NSW under a NSW State Award.

It's time for us all, and especially for the union movement to stand up to the bullying tactics of the O'Farrell Liberal Government or eventually lose face and be decimated. If there ever was a time to take up the baton against Transport Management and the Government the time is now. Negotiations and polite platitudes are getting us nowhere. In fact we are sliding backwards in face of the onslaught on working condition.

There is only one thing that we have at our disposal to stop O'Farrell and that is our solidarity and our ability to withdraw our labour. We hear people say "We can do nothing - the unions are weak. etc". The union leadership may be weak but these statements are totally untrue. More than any other workers, Transport Worker's have the ability to hit the Government where it hurts by bringing the CBD to its knees by stopping buses, trains and ferries. The Progressive PSA (a public service grassroots union) puts it very well on its web page:

"As indicated in the recent PSA Red Tape there is plenty of cheap talk of making 2012 "a perfect storm for the Government". The lack of immediate union action to oppose these anti-union changes hampers our ability to effectively challenge O'Farrell."

Transport workers must support and commence an informed community campaign. It is the commuters and community in general that will feel the brunt of future transport changes in the way of higher fares, a reduction in safety and help, uncleanness, longer queues in a system, that like the motorways, is and will be further geared towards profit.

Calls by the Occupy Movement around the world for everyone to stop work on 1st May in a General Strike, not consume or buy anything could be perfect opportunity for us to link with other Public Servants in NSW in a Day of Action that could provide a turning point for a fightback once and for all, instead of a stepping backwards. We cannot wait, we burn while our union leadership fiddles.

Crimson Coconut

Message to Public Transport Employees from "Anonymous"

Who is "Anonymous"?

"Anonymous" is the name originally given to a group of Internet hackers that use their talents for the good of humanity. They don't enter or shut down computer systems for criminal or personal purposes. They do it to expose the lies and corruption at the heart of Government and Corporations that propagate a system that impoverishes and enslaves large numbers of the general population (the 99%) for the benefit of a small elite (the 1%) who own and control just about everything.

They are also active in the Environmental Movement, Workers Movement and Occupy Movements around the globe.

There is no formal structure to Anonymous, just a code that is understood and followed by those that carry out the tasks in the name of the 99% (the dispossessed and the impoverished).

The anonymity on which they depend gives them great power by hiding the people involved behind an idea whose time has come. The totally rational idea of

emancipation and freedom for all of humankind and saving the planet from the ravages of rampant exploitation and destruction is what they are about.

To find out more about

"Anonymous" see this video at <http://goo.gl/xUiY3>

Regards, RW

The Message for Public Transport Employees from "Anonymous"

It has recently come to our attention that certain managers and employees within the Bus and Rail

divisions of Public Transport have discriminated against their fellow workers through sheer nepotism, corrupt conduct and criminal behaviour. This breaks the solidarity of working people and causes the deep malaise of demoralisation. At a time when working people need to work together against a system that is looking to cut working conditions and jobs these breakers and wreckers are working to-

gether to further their own cause at the expense of fellow workers who are honest and trying to move forwards together. This is criminal.

We warn you that there is nowhere to hide and that you are being watched very closely.

Information is being gathered about your traitorous acts. You will be exposed and punished at every opportunity according to "our" rules. You know who you are! We know who you are! Our tentacles run deep in all spheres of society, including computer networks and international affairs down to workplaces through people that we have on the ground.

Greed has become the dominant culture within all Public Transport groups and in particular RailCorp. When the media and the political system espouses that "greed is good" is it any wonder that workers are at each other's throats while bosses rub their hands because this is the easiest way to control the workforce. This capitalistic aberration pervades all of society. Greed and it's individualistic rather than collective

aspect is a destructive force for working people. It must be eradicated and a new solidarity built amongst working people and in the unions which represent them.

The trade unions which safeguarded workers in the past from the dog eat dog tactics now operating in the workplace are leaving their members to fend for themselves due to poor leadership. The rise of the Occupy Movement, on the other hand and of which we are part, is a new beginning in this regard, because it's organisation is based on mutual respect and solidarity.

Recent events have come to light about promotions and job placements on CityRail's City Circle. Certain jobs were dished out according to your whims and corrupt networks rather than fair processes. This is unforgivable. In particular, recent events at Central Station and other stations on City Circle have left a very nasty taste in our mouths. Certain people in your mutually beneficial networks have had the cream for long enough now through creative rostering and promotion.

The practice of "Secondment" where large numbers of staff are acting in higher graded positions is just an unfair process for promoting your kin. There is no fair process in the allocation of positions these days. Selection panels are loaded, and while they are vetted by following procedural rules, they are really no more than a front to give cover while simultaneously giving a hand-up to the chosen ones. Your networks and procedures leave the door wide open to abuse and selfish behaviour. This is corrupt conduct which does not go unnoticed.

Human Resource policies are contradicted by the latest EBA.

Generally there is an understanding from within HR that all those eligible to act at the higher grade should be given the chance on a rotational basis to improve

skills and enhance promotion. However this sentiment is very rarely practised. The reality is that you may have 2 people at the same grade doing different jobs and consequently being paid at different rates of pay for long periods of time. Merit does not enter into job placement or promotion. This is intolerable.

The EBA does leave the options for cronyism open by stating, under the heading Merit Review, that "In any review of merit selection procedures, Station Managers



will be involved in the process of selecting station staff to act in higher grade." Unions have handed management a blank cheque here to pervert the merit process by agreeing to this clause.

We know that networks of nepotism and probable corrupt conduct reach well up into the upper echelons of RailCorp management to very senior management. The managers in question have gathered around them and promoted people only they can trust. Anyone else inadvertently encountering these processes and rubbing up against the networks of manipulation is fearful to speak out in case they are victimised and so are bound by a self imposed code of silence.

Senior management has formalised this code of silence by forbidding employees from speaking out or from simply having an opinion. Employee's communications are monitored at work and even opinions expressed from home, on the Internet, in newspapers or public events can be used to dismiss an employee simply for having an opinion.

Recently a mid-level manager circulated a directive stating that any fliers, papers, petitions etc, put up or circulated in the workplace which expressed opinion or thought that did not officially belong to RailCorp or Transport for NSW was to be removed immediately.

The code of silence must be broken so that these networks of nepotism lose their hold over employees. Workers on the job must speak out when they see unconscionable conduct or forever suffer the self imposed yoke of quasi criminal style discrimination.

People who speak out must be supported by their fellow workers in large numbers. It may be a good idea to get this support base going before speaking out as this will limit any repercussions. If a view

is widespread it is much harder to destroy.

We at Anonymous are busy with world events and with combating injustice that is unfolding globally. We will do what we can to assist as time and circumstances permit.

However this will not always be possible. For this reason the task must be left to you. The task is urgent.

If you fight we can win.

We are Anonymous. We are Legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget. Expect us

RAILCORP TO SUFFER FROM TOO MUCH "BOOZ"!

by *The Transport Scrutinizer.*

Booz-Allen Hamilton Consultants. A name that evokes hate and resentment in the hearts and minds of State Rail Authority employees whose jobs, lives and financial stability were mindlessly butchered at the behest of these industrial saboteurs from 1988 to 1996. I know. I was there! Now they, Booz-Allen, are about to unleash their cost-cutting terrorism on to-

day's RailCorp employees. As many of you are only relatively new to the Rail Industry please let me fill you in on what Booz-Allen did to those of us who were once proud SRA Employees all those years ago.

1988, Booz-Allen commissioned to trim back the SRA. Recommendations made and presented to NSW Transport Minister Bruce "The Smiling Assassin" Baird who

immediately agrees to present the findings to Premier Nick Greiner. Approval is given by Parliament to act on Booz-Allen's recommendations by mid 1989 and so begins the brutal decimation of around 25,000 SRA Jobs.

From 1989 to 1994 with regard to rail services to the NSW public, we saw the sudden demise of all remaining Loco hauled and self-propelled 600,620 and 900 class diesel passenger services on country services and their inadequate replacement by modern rollingstock on extremely reduced timetables. The wholesale withdrawal of B,H,Y,W and M type single deck and mixed stock suburban electric sets which created a huge rollingstock shortage that

lasted ten years. The total withdrawal of the U type single deck Interurban sets. The full scale privatisation of freight trains came next. More and more rationalisation came until what is now called RailCorp exists. All of this due to recommendations from Booz-Allen.

As I have stated around 25,000 out of approximately 40,000 SRA jobs were abolished. These were achieved by the following cutbacks and closures:

1. Cutbacks-reductions in station staffing and administration(non-managerial) positions, track and loco & rolling stock main-

tenance staff. Transport Investigation Branch. 2. Closures- Transport House, Wynyard, 99 Macquarie St. City, Loco Works & Carriage Works Eveleigh, Train Equipment Section, Suburban Car Works, Testing Lab all at Redfern, Wagon Maintenance Centre and Road Motor Vehicle Works Clyde. Punchbowl Electric Car Sheds, Enfield Tarpaulin Factory. Sydney Terminal Inwards & Outwards Parcels. At Chullora all of the following were closed; ELCAR, Boshops, Loco and Rollingstock Shops, Plant & Equipment Depot, Sigshops, Trackfast Parcels, Apprentice Training College, Per Way 1&2 Work-

shops. At Newcastle we saw Cardiff Loco Works, Honeysuckle Wagon Repair Shops, Broadmeadow Loco Depot Heavy Repair Section all close. At Port Kembla we saw the Loco & Rolling stock Shops close. Likewise at many other locations statewide. Again all of this thanks to Booz-Allen. All current RailCorp employees get ready for the fight of your lives. Only you and the combined Unions can try to stop this from destroying what is left of your jobs.

STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH

Waverley Depot News

Rebel Worker: What are your impressions of the Enterprise Agreement?

Waverley Busie: As preconditions for the 3.25% pa rise, we had various cut backs to our conditions imposed such as the loss of WAD from shifts and new drivers having to pay for their own heavy vehicle licences. In regard to the wage rise, small amounts are still to be paid. Whilst, we have discovered an even more obnoxious nasty affecting the new drivers, due to the sell out of the EA. They have been placed on a new block, relief roster and can be sent to any depot without recourse.

Prior to the EA approval, there had been a provision in their contracts on these lines, but it was never imposed on the new drivers. As a result, they now, often have to travel long distances from their homes to work. At Waverley, we are seeing many new faces, which appear to be new drivers on these rosters.

One new driver, I was speaking to recently, mentioned he had been based at Leichhardt and did have to spend 5 hours per day travelling to work. These drivers can be moved to new depots at the whim of the bosses and face a difficult situation on the job. As unlike, long term drivers, they lack knowledge of the routes and streets. It's a foreign land for them. This is a very unfair situation.

I have to apologise for not taking a stand to get a better deal for the new drivers. The STA could have introduced these new rosters without going through the EBA process. However, cunningly, by having us vote to accept the rosters as part of the EBA, they sought to head off a backlash,

following the rosters being implemented. It also goes to show how incompetent the union officials were in allowing it to go through.

All these attacks on our jobs and conditions I consider to be in line with the bosses' plans for weakening us up for privatisation, later down the road. This whole approach is similar to that of the Liberal Greiner Government in NSW over 20 years ago, which sought to screw the worker as much as they could.

RW: What's happening with the shifts?



WB: The shifts are being less family friendly. Particularly, you can't swap shifts to get weekends off and help out friends. Now if you don't want to work Sundays, management takes over the allocation of the shift. The job has become much more difficult for drivers who are parents. I was speaking to a driver, the other day who was upset that he was unable to swap a day shift for an am shift. It's all about management control! Control! Control!

RW: How is fare evasion?

WB: Drivers have been told to not bother checking passengers' tickets. I continue to notice on my bus, that passengers are only paying \$2.10 tickets, despite going all the way from the Watson's Bay to the City and should be paying \$4.50. As a result, the STA is losing a fistful of money, which could fund our pay rises, without the trade off of our conditions. The other day I was on a bus and saw some kids just walk on and sat down, without paying for tickets. There is a lack of liaising work and communicating with shop keepers by the STA. As a result, there is considerable misunderstanding by the shop outlets regarding the tickets to be sold. Generally, the railways are okay regarding ticket selling. The STA strikes me as completely hypocritical, in its slackness regarding collect-

ing revenue from fares, but viciously slashing into our conditions to save money!

RW: What are your impressions of the depot?

WB: It remains a very soulless place. The intention of the bosses appears to be about taking the spirit out of drivers. There is a lack of comradeship and sense of atomisation. It's stale. We aren't allowed to hold parties as we used to do and drinking alcohol and smoking is outlawed due to OH&S considerations. Rules, Rules and

Rules! Only union meetings are allowed. There is an usual amount of control on our activities at the depot. The bosses are wanting to put more offices downstairs. Why the need for more offices? As a result, it will be cramped, with inadequate space for us to play snooker and table tennis. The depot belongs to drivers. In regard to the institute which drivers have contributed toward its operations. They should also have the say on whether it's to close.

RW: What's happening at Strawberry Hills?

WB: The STA is now having private contractors as trainers for Drivers' Refresher Courses at Strawberry Hills. There seems to me to be a conflict of interest with private contractors running the courses. Whilst there is a set program controlled by the STA. I doubt there is any input from anyone on the job. Again it's a matter of management control! Control! Control!

RW: What's the latest with safety on the road?

WB: We have been told that you can't protect yourself if attacked. You can't push your assailant away. You can only put hands over your head. Whilst the 600 transit police are to be abolished. Instead the police are to take over their role in regard to bus security. It can't work, as the police often have other priorities in their jobs and won't turn up to handle incidents.

RW: What are the latest developments with the O'Farrell Govt's attacks on the public sector?

WB: The other day on the radio I heard a news item about an interim report by Dr Kerry Schott, a former Treasury Official and head of the NSW Commission of Audit. She claimed that the public sector was inefficient and advocated the selloff of assets. I think she was talking crap and just seeking to justify the O'Farrell Govt's privatisation agenda. The O'Farrell Govt appears to have learnt lessons from other privatisation surges and have become quite cunning. In the media, rather than saying on the basis of consultants reports they will privatise certain assets or utilities, they now say that they "could look into privatising." Deceitfully, they have adopted a step by step approach, involving outsourcing small sections of utilities, as part of implementing large scale privatisation and minimising a public backlash and worker outrage.

Recently, I was speaking to a booking clerk who used to work at Edgecliff Station. He mentioned that out of the 4 booking clerks there, Rail Corp is threatening to have only one full time and the other 3 would be casuals. He has also heard that the bosses are wanting to privatise all ticket selling. Deceitfully, the Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian on a salary of over \$250,000 apologised in the media for

the planned elimination of thousands of jobs in RailCorp. She is wealthy. What does she know about the hardship and stress imposed on the sacked workers? This is the typical cold approach of a Scrooge!

RW: What's the latest with the bosses?

WB: They have again embarked on a crack down on sickies. A union ban has been imposed on going into the office, if you are called in over taking sickies. If the bosses take too many sickies, why can't we interrogate them over the issue? Several guys with injuries on compo with injuries have been sacked. Whilst, driver instructors could also be next in line for job losses. This will deny us any career progression in our jobs.

RW: What's the latest with the mechanical sections?

WB: The number of staff at Mechanical sections is being reduced due to the alleged duplication of functions, with Port Botany being the hub for mechanical work in the Eastern Suburbs. It's really all about the STA cutting staff, to save money and it is not more efficient. This corner cutting leaves gaping holes with maintenance work. You will have the "we don't do now, we will do later" attitude toward repairs.

RW: What's news at Kingsgrove?

WB: A memo was issued by the bosses at Kingsgrove insisting that all drivers wear the new uniform. These bosses should get the boot!

Leichhardt Depot News

RW: What's latest at Leichhardt?

Leichhardt Busie: One of the most worrying and important issues is the introduction of "Daily Allocation Rosters". It's one of the cutbacks to our conditions associated which the recent enterprise agreement which provided a 3 1/4% pa pay rise. The STA intends these rosters as a new cost saving measure. No one can apply for them. However, drivers on the holiday relief roster have been placed on them. They are called in to work at any depot on any day. Many drivers on the new rosters are very unhappy with it. As they lack training on the routes of the different depots where they are sent to work. This situation has very serious effects on O.H.S./ (Occupational Health & Safety) grounds. As with this lack of route training, these drivers are more likely to have accidents. With all the travelling time required as part of these rosters, and the associated increased payment of travelling allowances, I can't see the STA achieving much savings.

Mechanical Section News

This is the story of the apprentice engineers at Leichhardt bus depot. All of the mechanical repairs at the depot have been out sourced to a private company on a five year performance contract.

The apprentices are expected to work compulsory overtime on low fixed wages. They are expected to carry out the dirtiest work. If they fail to perform, they are reported to the bosses. Their engineering courses are taught at a technical college out at Rooty Hill. They are expected to pay for the courses. If they pass the courses, the company belatedly pay for them the cost of their courses. If they fail, they pay for the courses and must pass before they can do any more skilled work. The union the AMWU (Australian Manufacturing Workers Union), simply collect their dues. There has never been a union meeting in the depot. *An Engineer*

Burwood Depot News

RW: What's the latest at Burwood?

Burwood Driver: Some of the most important news has been a savage sickie crack-down at the depot. Half a dozen drivers have been affected. However, local union action has been effective in forcing a back down by the bosses. In the case of one driver who supplied med certs for each of the 5 sickies he took, he was called into the office and placed on stage 2 of the sickie review program and banned from taking his normal set days off for 3 months. The union brought the case up to Harry Singh in Head Office, resulting in the bosses having to back down on the disciplinary action. As they provided no warning to the driver regarding the number of sickies taken.

RW: What's happening with the depot fleet?

BD: The bosses have decided to take B12 buses off weekend evenings as they consider not enough mileage is being done. As a result, for Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, these buses are off the road. In place of the B12's, we have to drive the B10's. There are number safety issues affecting the B10's, relating to their length and lack of manoeuvre ability. Whilst there is a problem with displaying destinations. Grass roots activists are getting on to the issue and are referring it to the depot O.H.S. (Occupational Health & Safety) Committee to take action.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In previous editions of RW, issues were raised about the removal of a manager at Spencer Street. In this edition, Drivers, Conductors, Station Staff and Staff from Head Office have combined to talk about this issue. Once again names have been changed.

Rebel Worker: Can you tell us about the new manager?

Clarence: He is young, a bit of a go getter and on a lower salary than the manager, who was forced to resign.

RW: You don't say.

Sheona: When the previous manager resigned, we expected the job to be abolished to cut costs.

Clarence: Anyway he is on a lower salary and he takes his orders from a Woman in Human Resources who is seconded to the station.

Jethro: One of the first moves he made at Spencer Street was to introduce a new journal which Conductors have to split sales from Adult and Concession tickets, on the journal when Conductors' sales are paid in the booking office.

Clarence: This adds more work for Conductors to carry out and these Cashiers in the booking office are on a higher rate of pay.

Jethro: In other words the Cashiers in the booking office will have less work to do. The manager claims this process will streamline the work of the cashiers.

Clarence: It may make the job of the Cashiers easier, but it makes the job harder for Conductors because on weekends, Conductors can sell up to seventy tickets due to stations being unattended. Imagine trying to split these tickets into Adult and Concession.

Jethro: Some Conductors have told management to stick it and they are still working to the old way, as it is easier to pay the money in. The ticket books have Adult Coupons and they can be split into Adult or Concession and balanced up by the Cashier with the aid of Computers. This new journal has been introduced so as to have the Conductors selling ticket and so reduce booking office staff.

RW: What else has this manager done?

Jethro: He has put out a notice saying that you have to wait until sign off time before you can leave.

Clarence: In all the years I have worked in the Railways, once you have finished Conning your train or completed your station duties, you were able to go home, about 10 to 20 minutes early.

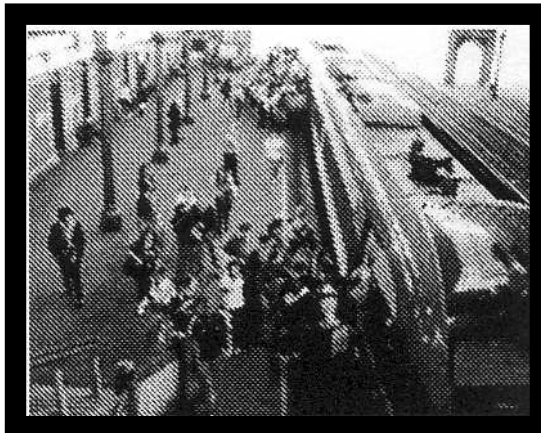
Sheona: This notice was issued because someone was sprung by a Service Officers, sneaking off early.

Jethro: About an hour early.

Clarence: In other words, the majority have to suffer.

RW: In most Railway Companies particularly in workshops, they have time clocks where you are only allowed to leave two minutes before Clock Off time.

Jethro: Yes, but what is the purpose for hanging around? In all my years on the job, most of the Staff Clerks let you go. Also if you came to work on the first train and it



was ten minutes late, you were allowed to sign on at the sign on time.

Clarence: There was good will on both sides and sometimes of something out of the ordinary happened such as a service disruption, a person signing on later would jump up to the next sign on time just to keep the trains running. Now Conductors will refuse to help out.

Jethro: Unfortunately, we have one relieving Staff Clerk who is a bit of a drongo who made the staff know they will wait until sign off time.

Clarence: This person is anti union and would not join the union when they worked in a lower grade.

Sheona: You see these are the types of people Human Resources promote to these jobs. They want an anti-union culture around the place.

Clarence: One Conductor told this Jerk that goodwill has gone out of the industry

and a Service Officer who is also not in the Union reported the Conductor to Human Resources saying the Conductor bullied the Staff Clerk.

Jethro: The Conductor refused to front Human Resources and due to a shortage of Conductors the matter lapsed.

Sheona: You can see the new manager was put there by Human Resources to do as they tell him. He wouldn't have the guts to stand up to them. You see other managers put their names on the notice and they are now running for cover because of the backlash.

Rastus and Roscoe: At this point may we join the discussion. You Conductors and station staff put up a lot with these idiots. We, Drivers do not have to wait around until sign off time, we just ring up our operations section to let them know, we are in position to run the trains. In fact, when we sign off, it is close to sign off time or relieved, we go home and fix the times up the next day.

Sheona: Human Resources would like to smash the drivers.

Rastus and Roscoe: Yes, but we drivers have a rule. "You touch one, you touch all."

RW: Moving on. In issue 140, mention was made about one of the persons who was responsible for removing the previous manager being suspended and as issue 140 went to press, the person was suspended.

Clarence: This person has resigned from the job in a Confidential settlement.

Jethro: Yes, this person has departed – Good Riddance.

Sheona: All I know was this person was determined to return to work. The suspension stretched from June to November. Management had other ideas.

Clarence: The settlement was confidential and includes a monetary figure. Also V/Line will not stand in the way of this person, if they apply for a position with another transport company.

Jethro: This person achieved a fair amount of destruction to the union during their time at V/Line.

RW: In what way?

Clarence: They forced a Union Delegate to resign.

Jethro: This Union Delegate represented the Conductor. He was a strong delegate and everything he fought for, this person was always going behind his back undermining him.

Rastus and Roscoe: The Union Delegate who is elected by the members should have the respect of the members. We, Drivers noted the work, this delegate had done for the Conductors.

Clarence: You are correct, but not only did this person get rid of the Delegate, but also the Conductors roster A & B. The B roster was for Conductors who liked short jobs. You see not all conductors like being away overnight as they have families.

RW: What did this person do?

Jethro: This person took a petition to combine the rosters. This person bullied Conductors into signing a petition to have the roster changed. A ballot was taken and the

vote for a combined roster was carried by a small majority. The rosters were replaced by a combined roster which is not family friendly. The previous Conductors' Delegate was devastated when the vote was carried. He had fought hard for A and B rosters.

Clarence: In a future issue of Sparks, the rosters will be discussed, due to lack of space in this issue.

Rastus: This individual also knifed the previous manager. Well this person achieved what management wanted.

RW: In concluding the sign on and sign off time should be negotiated. This new manager, because he is young, has a lot to learn.

Rastus & Roscoe: Once again in having the final say, this manager has a lot to learn. As for the Conductor's journal, just stay with the old journal. Regarding the sign on and sign off times, goodwill has gone out the door. If Conductors are asked to alter or extend their shifts, tell them NO! As for that cretin who received a Confidential Settlement, "GOOD RID-DANCE", if you try to apply for a job with another train operator, we drivers are ready for you.

SPAIN: BARCELONA TRANSPORT STRIKE SABOTAGED!

On the transport strike, the student strike, and the riots, protests, and sabotage carried out in Barcelona in the month of February 2012, in response to the Labor Reform and the austerity measures, and the role of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists.

The Developing Social War in one Mediterranean City, February 2012

Everybody concerned with the growing social conflict manifesting ever more visibly in the streets of Barcelona had their eyes on the last week of February. Both the custodians of order and those who are increasingly realizing themselves to be a class diametrically opposed to the former knew that the stakes were high: it was the week of perhaps the economically most important convention the city is host to, the Mobile World Congress, which brings together cell phone and other tech companies to show off their latest gadgets.

The Congress is a high status event, bringing millions of euros in commerce to the city and thousands of low paying temp jobs to those who make the city run.

It was also the target of the metro and bus workers who decided to call a 4 day strike for the days of the Congress, from the 27th of February to the 1st of March. The workers of TMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Transit) were on the war path now that the pervasive austerity measures had come to the transportation sector. Since the end of

2011, the users of public transport were already in an uproar against the price hike to 2 euros a ride. The only cities with more expensive metro or bus fares have median incomes two or three times higher, making Barcelona city transit the most unaffordable in Europe or North America. On an almost weekly basis in January, there were popular actions sabotaging the metro or opening it up for free riding.

In February, TMB workers joined the fray, adding two new demands to the users' rejection of the price hike: a rejection of the reduction of services and the cutting of several bus lines; and the upholding of TMB's prior agreements with its workers, particularly the payment of overdue wages and the honouring of an agreement made with bus workers after an important series of strikes in 2008. The bus workers and metro workers agreed in assembly to go on strike for as long as 4 days, to support all protests and solidarity actions called in those four days even if the strike had been discontinued, and to not accept any separate deals with TMB but to continue until the demands of both the metro and bus workers had been met.

Although the history of anarchist struggles in Catalunya is a warning against faith in labor unions, and the most consistently solidaristic sector of the anarcho-syndicalists—the CNT *desfederada*—has no presence in transport or any other industry (as the joke goes,

they are a "syndicate of insurrectionaries"), there was good reason to believe that this conflict would be an important one.

*The major union among the bus workers, and an important one in metro, is the CGT, a 1979 split from the CNT and the largest anarcho-syndicalist organization in the world, even though most of its members do not consider themselves anarchists.

*In 2008, the CGT-organized bus workers went on strike and won their demands after seeking support from a broad swath of society, including anarchists and squatters, organizing blockades, propaganda, talks, and other actions together. A high level of sabotage put around 90 buses out of commission during the days of the strike, and the CGT offered legal support to anyone prosecuted for solidarity actions, worker or no.

*There is a growing outrage against the rich and powerful taking root in Barcelona, and growing grassroots support for increasingly forceful tactics. The pacifism of 15M and the 2009 student movement have largely been marginalized or at least counterbalanced, and many organizers of the transport strike have also been proponents of a general strike.

*At the beginning of the month, the new conservative government in Madrid announced its Labor Reform, which basically makes all work precarious, decreases severance pay, and makes collective agreements with workers voluntary for employers. At the same time the details of the Reform were filtering out, the revolt in Greece against austerity measures erupted across television screens and newspaper front pages and people in Catalunya largely approved. A new graffito quickly went viral: "If you're going to be Swiss [an expression that means: to take part in a fraud or a cover-up], we're going to be Greeks."

*Conflict and sabotage were on the rise in the previous month, and a four day strike in transport, timed to disrupt an event of

great importance for the city's rich and the image-managers in their pay, could be an important stepping stone to a combative general strike.

<http://www.anarchistnews.org/node/21391>

<http://libcom.org/news/crisis-conflict-barcelona-january-01022012>

Anarchists had already been involved in the wave of resistance to the price hikes, particularly in building solidarity within the neighbourhood assemblies and organizing open (non-clandestine) sabotages. They stepped into this new phase of the struggle in transport not as allies but as people directly affected. Meanwhile, the anarcho-syndicalists among the transport workers called for a total shutdown of the city in the workers' assemblies and were met with strong applause.

To add fuel to the fire, students and workers called for a strike in the universities to take place in all of Catalunya on Wednesday, 29 February. Given recent history, a call-out by the students generated little confidence among anarchists. During the 15 October megamarch, when other columns went on to take over the metro system or occupy an entire apartment block for evicted families, the student column carried out a tame, Sunday-only occupation of one university, and in the 2008 struggle against the privatizing Plan Bologna, student leaders enforced a strict pacifism, even kicking out those who tried to mask up in protests, and quickly smothered the movement; nonetheless the announcement added enthusiasm to the build-up for the transport strike.

What's more, a week earlier, police in Valencia brutalized a protest by school students opposing the cutbacks and complaining about the sorrowful situation that had seen entire classes huddle under blankets throughout the winter because the schools could not pay for heating. Spontaneous solidarity protests took the streets of Madrid and Barcelona, and in the latter city demonstrators, many of them students or Valencians, scuffled with police, overturned dumpsters, and damaged some banks.

In the two weeks before the transport strike, bus shelters and metro entrances were covered with posters calling for solidarity and support, urging people to ride for free if they had to ride. From the other side of the line, the TV and radio mobilized selfishness and alienation to portray the Mobile World Congress as the best thing to happen to the people of Barcelona, and the strike as an irresponsible threat to their jobs, their image, and their mobility. Major protests and blockades were pre-

pared for the days of the strike, but the media propaganda gradually wore away at the workers' resolve. What began as a triumphant, daring decision to attack the owners of the city where it was thought they would be hurt the most, the call for a multiple day, disruptive strike backed by protest and sabotage, was quickly drowned in an illusion of realism.

A couple days before the strike was to begin, the metro workers (the most important in any transit disruption, as the metro moves many more people than the bus) held a meeting with a blind ballot and accepted a deal with TMB that did not include the users' demands against price hikes and violated their agreement with the bus workers to negotiate jointly. Late Sunday evening, hours before the strike



was to begin, bus workers voted in assembly to call off the strike for strategic reasons. In the following days, as recriminations were hurled between unions and between the different groups of workers, a number of sordid allegations emerged regarding backdoor dealing by bus workers, including the CGT, that balanced out the more visible betrayal by the metro workers. What became apparent is that the social practice of solidarity has been much diminished by the decades of democracy and television, and that even the workers who remained solidaristic vastly underestimated the importance of social support by calling off the strike.

What these workers did not seem to realize is that with the new labor reform, any tame form of syndicalism is pointless, as employers will no longer be held to their agreements. Any deal they reach with TMB can only be backed up by the social force or threat of disruption they are able to constitute. Now the rich and powerful know exactly how cheaply they'll sell themselves, how susceptible to media pressure they are, whereas people in the streets will not back them up so enthusiastically the next time.

The Monday that should have been heralded by the beginning of the strike was in-

stead greeted by the city's rulers with newspaper headlines announcing, "Mobility Assured". As one anarchist text commented, the mobility referred to was less a question of the punctuality of trains and buses and more an announcement of the prevailing logic of precarity. With the failure of the social movements to withstand even the moralizing of the media, the city elite could bask in the triumph of the new social contract, in which workers can be moved into the unemployment lines, neighbours kicked out of their houses, and tourists circulated through the city to the exact degree demanded by employers, owners, and profiteers.

A number of planned road blockades along with the mass assembly to be held in Plaça Espanya, the site of the cell phone congress, failed to materialize; however in other parts of town there were a number of buses sabotaged or metro stations opened. In the very centre, a group of people suddenly stopped a double bus as it was crossing Av. Paral·lel, spraypainting and breaking its windows, puncturing its tires, and leaving it sprawled across four lanes of traffic. Others distributed texts in the metro, criticizing the workers and the lack of solidarity. Then people settled in to contemplate a week of bitter lessons and another victory for Capital.

But Wednesday morning did not begin so depressingly. Gran Via, one of the main arteries of the city, was blocked in the early hours by a group of masked people setting tires alight. Around the same time, another group heavily sabotaged the Congress metro station, destroying ticket purchasing and validation machines along with cameras and advertisements. Just before noon there was a demo outside the Italian consulate, which apparently had been paint-bombed the night before, in solidarity with the resisters in Val di Susa and particularly with comrade Luca, almost killed by police two days earlier. As the demo wrapped up, people marched to Plaça Universitat to join with the students, blocking roads the whole way down.

City traffic was already snarled up by other feeder marches joining up at University. By early afternoon, the crowd had reached 70,000, including professors, university students, and high school students. The question remained: would they act as they had in the past, as a self-isolating and self-policing single-issue movement or expand to embrace the needs of the day? The apathetic confusion with which they

greeted the Italian solidarity protestors who joined them seemed to indicate the former. Most anarchists, sure of the day's outcome, stayed at home or left early.

At 1:34 in the afternoon, the march reached the Barcelona stock exchange, which was protected by a line of riot vans. Students began to throw a prodigious quantity of eggs, trash, and paint bombs, covering the building and the police vehicles. Shortly thereafter, they smashed and broke into a couple banks nearby. Further on in the march, another group of students responded to a police advance with a major sit-in, slowing the responses of law and order. When the head of the march returned to Pl. Universitat, the riot police charged, making several arrests, but students responded with rocks and burning barricades. In addition to dumpsters, a luxury car was also burned. Police upped the ante, driving their vans at full speed through the crowd, which incited more people to join in throwing rocks. Students kicked in the doors of the rectorate at Plaça Universitat, occupying yet another building (the central university and the Autonomous University outside of town had already been occupied just previous to the strike).

Student politicians attempted to take control of the situation by calling a meeting and asking everyone to sit down. The trap of democracy. This trick must be included in an internal guide circulated by future politicians, because the exact same tactic was used in the past, with devastating effect in a building occupied just before the January 2011 general strike, preventing a riot and allowing the police to arrest the 500 seated occupiers without resistance. This time, much unlike the movement of 2009, students were not so trusting of their leaders. Anarchist students snatched away the microphone and ended the meeting. What started as a small group marching on Plaça Espanya turned into a column of thousands. Police quickly repositioned their forces to protect the congress.

In short time, the students had filled Pl. Espanya. Police had to block the entrance to the Congress and evacuate the mega-mall next door. Anarchist workers inside the congress reported an atmosphere of panic, with the rumour circulating that the city was burning. Students pelted the police with stones, who responded with targeted arrests, generally picking easy targets not involved in the fighting. Subsequent media coverage had to be satisfied with dramatic footage of heroic cops trying out judo moves on frail, geeky students who had been filming events with their cell phones. The media, for their part, also got their comeuppance, with several pesky reporters beaten by cops and others assaulted by protestors. More than one TV camera was smashed, and one journalist was reportedly hospitalized. Protestors chanted: "the press aim, the cops shoot!", an anarchist chant that had generalized after over 20 people were arrested on the basis of media footage for assaulting politicians during a siege on the Catalan parliament the previous June.

At several times throughout the day's fighting, the police had appeared overwhelmed. They were hamstrung not only by the number, unpredictability and disunity of the protestors, but presumably also by higher orders to keep things peaceful and not use a heavy hand, due both to the cell phone congress and the damage caused to the Spanish international image by the brutality in Valencia a week earlier (it was this loss of image that was most bemoaned by those politicians who had criticized police).

Around 5:30, the cops took control of Pl. Espanya and the protestors marched to the police commissary to hold a solidarity demo with the 12 detainees. Just two hours later, a rowdy demonstration pre-organized to travel through the metro system, chanting, vandalizing, and handing out flyers, surfaced at Pl. Espanya. The crowd of several hundred, exultant in the atmosphere of streets that had recently

been liberated, marched back to Pl. Universitat, filling the air with brand new chants, each one more combative and radical than the last. On that note, a new chant that was greeted by anarchists with skepticism earlier in the day proved to be more than just hot air: "Contra les tissors, pedra pedra pedra! Contra el rectorado, guerra guerra guerra!" (Rock against scissors [representing the cutbacks], war against the rectorate!)

When the march reached the university, another pair of journalists were attacked, another TV camera smashed. This time, only a solitary voice could be heard chanting, "Freedom of expression, no to violence!" Word circulated that the student assemblies had decided to continue the occupations for a couple more days at least. A few groups of World Mobile Congress delegates cavorting through the city that night were harassed, spat upon, and had bottles thrown at them. People went home with smiles on their faces. Subsequently, the main platform behind the protests refused to condemn the violence.

In the days after the riot the media succeeded in shaming a large part of society for this outburst, creating the impression, even among some of the same people who were delighted to see the events in person, to believe that something horrible had happened, or that the student protest had been hijacked by professional thugs. A smaller yet perhaps more important group of people overcame their docility, or participated in their first riot, or realized that something vital had been accomplished.

As a possible general strike approaches, important lessons have been learned about the power of the media and the erosion of the practice of solidarity in society. But the faith in movement leaders, be they unions or student politicians, has also been eroded, and in at least some cases people have turned not to apathy and cynicism but to direct action. The future, fortunately, remains unwritten.

Greek Hospital Under Workers' Control!

Hospital workers in Kilis, Greece, have held their local hospital and released a statement saying he was now fully under workers' control.

The General Hospital of Kilis in Greece (Central Macedonia) is now under workers' control. The hospital workers said that the problems of long standing National Health System (ESY) could not be solved. Workers responded to the acceleration of

the regime's unpopular austerity measures by occupying the hospital and declared in full direct control by the workers. All decisions will now be taken by the "workers of the General Assembly." The hospital said that "The government is yet fulfilled its financial responsibilities and, if their demands are not met, they will turn to the local community to have the broadest possible support to ensure the public health care free care and overthrow the

government and all the neo-liberal policies." As of February 6, hospital staff will handle only emergency care as their salaries and the amounts owed to them will not be paid. They also call for a return to the levels of wages they received before the implementation of austerity measures.

The following statement was issued by the workers:

1. We note that the current problems and sustainable ESY (the national health system) and related organizations cannot be solved by isolated or specific requests and on our interests, because these problems are the result of a policy more general anti-popular government and global neo liberalism.

2. We also note, that by making specific claims we actually play a brutal government. This power, to face his enemy - which is made by the people weakened and divided, does everything to prevent the creation of a united front and popular nationally and globally with common interests and demands against the social impoverishment created by the political authorities.

3. For this reason, we place our interests within the general framework of political and economic demands that are posed by a very large part of the Greek people is now under attack from the most brutal capitalism. These claims must be defended to the end in order to achieve, in cooperation between the middle and lower classes of our society.

4. The only way to do this is to question, in action, not only political legitimacy but also the legality of arbitrary power, authoritarian and anti-popular that making great strides towards totalitarianism.

4. Workers at the General Hospital of Kilikis respond to totalitarianism with democracy. We occupy the public hospital and put under our direct control and total. The Hospital of Kilikis is now self-governed and the only legitimate decision-making will be the General Assembly of its workers.

5. The government is not relieved of its obligations Economic staffing and supplies. If he continues to ignore these obligations, we will be obliged to inform the public of this situation and ask the local government but also civil society to support us by all means: (A) the survival of our hospital

(B) supporting the right to health care and free public

(C) the overthrow by a popular common struggle, the current government and other neoliberal policies, wherever it comes from

(D) a substantial and deep democratization, ie democratization which will allow the real society and not to others to make decisions about its future.

6. The Union Hospital of Kilikis begin, from February 6, a strike by failing to ensure that emergency care until full payment for hours worked and the increase in our wages to the level it was before the arrival of the troika (EU-ECB-IMF). Meanwhile, knowing full well what is our social mission and our moral obligations, we will protect the health of people who come to the hospital by providing free health care to those who need it, calling the government to take responsibility, hoping that it will waive the last minute to his immoderate social cruelty.

7. We decide that a new general meeting will be held, Monday, Feb. 13 in the lobby of the new hospital building at 11 am, to decide which procedures are necessary to effectively implement the occupation of the administrative services and perform successful self-governance of the hospital, starting from that day. General meetings will be held every day and will be the primary tool for decision making with regard to employees and the operation of the hospital.

We call for the solidarity of the people and workers from all sectors, with the cooperation of all workers' unions and progressive organizations, and the support of all media who chose to tell the truth. We are determined to continue until the traitors who



sell our country and our people to leave. It's them or us!

The above decisions will be made public through a press conference in which all media are invited Wednesday, 15.02.2012 at 12:30. Our daily meetings starting February 13. We will inform citizens about every important event taking place in our hospital through press releases and conferences. In addition, we will use all available means to publicize these events to make this successful mobilization.

We call

- a) Our citizens to show solidarity with our movement,
- b) Any citizen wronged by our country to act by the actions of protest and opposition against their oppressors,
- c) Our colleagues from other hospitals to take similar decisions,
- d) employees in other areas of public and private sector participants and to trade unions and progressives to do the same, to help our mobilization to take the form of a universal working and popular resistance and uprising, until the final victory against the economic and political elite that now oppress our country and the world.

Letter From Kilikis Workers

Hello all,

Thank you so much for your interest and support.

The occupation of our hospital in Kilikis by its workers started on Monday, February 20th, 8:30 local time.

This occupation is not only about us, the physicians and the workers at the Kilikis Hospital. Neither is it only about the Greek National Health System, which is collapsing, indeed. We are in this fight because what is in real danger now is the human rights and our lives. And this threat is not against just a nation, or against a few countries, or a few social groups, but against the low and middle classes in Europe, America, Asia, Africa, in the whole world.

Today's Greece, is tomorrow's picture of Portugal, Spain, Italy and the rest of the countries worldwide.

The workers at the Kilikis Hospital and at most of the hospitals and health centers in Greece are not paid on time and some of them see their salaries being cut down to practically zero. A fellow-worker of mine was transferred to our cardiological clinic almost in shock, when he realized that instead of receiving the usual check of 800 euros (yes, that is his monthly salary) from the state, he received a note saying that not only he will be paid nothing for this month, but he is also

has the obligation to return 170 euros! Other workers were paid only 9 (nine) or 4 euros and even less for this month! Those of us who still receive some kind of a salary will support them in any way we can. This is a war against the people, against the whole community. Those who say that the public debt of Greece is the debt of the Greek people are lying. It is not the people's debt. It was created by the governments in collaboration with the bankers in order to enslave people.

The loans to Greece are not used for salaries, pensions and public care. It is exactly the opposite: salaries, pensions and care are used to pay the bankers. They are lying. Contrary to what they declare, they do not want a debt-free society.

They create the debts themselves (with the help of corrupt governments and politicians) for their own benefit. They gave Greece a banker as prime minister to ensure that the "job" will be done properly. Our Prime Minister Loukas Papadimos was not elected at all. He was appointed by the ECB and the bankers with the help of European and Greek corrupt politicians. This is their interpretation of the term "democracy"!

The debts are created by bankers who create money out of thin air and collect interest, just because our governments gave them the right to do so. And they keep saying that for those debts it is you and me and our children and grandchildren that will have to pay with our personal and national assets, with our lives. We do not owe them anything. On the contrary, they owe the people a great part of the fortunes they made thanks to the political corruption.

If we do not open our eyes to this truth, we will soon all become slaves, working for 200 or less a month. That is those of us who will be able to find a job!

No medical care, no pensions, homeless and starving, as now is the case with my fellow citizens in Greece. Thousands of them live outdoors and starve.

We have no intention to paint the reality with dark colors, but this is the truth. This

situation is not due to a financial or monetary accident or mistake. It is the start of the ugly phase of a long process following a carefully designed plan, a process that has started decades ago! We have to fight together against this neoliberal plan. And this is what we, in Kilkis and in so many cities around the world, do now.

For the time being, we are not considering the opening of a donations account. We might, however need to do this in a few months or even weeks, if the situation might be worse. What we currently need most of all is moral support and publicity. Local struggles all around the world have to spread and gain massive support if we are to win the war against the corrupt system. If you can think of any additional ways to spread our news and ideas, it would be great!

Again, we can't thank you enough for your kind thoughts and words. This solidarity of yours has a great meaning to us.

You can contact us at the following mail address:

enosi.kilkis@yahoo.gr

Yours

Leta Zotaki,

Director of the radiological department, of Kilakis Hospital

Member of the workers general assembly, President of E.N.I.K. (Union of the Doctors of Greek National Health Care System in Kilakis)

February 26, 2012. Reproduced via – <http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=20120227103334638>

BRITAIN TODAY

Sparks

Electricians in Britain won their long series of actions to stop building employers withdrawing from the Joint Industry Board which would have involved a 35% pay cut and attack on conditions and pensions.

More than 150 workers attended a rank and file meeting in London in the aftermath. They drew up a 20 point document for any future talks on a new agreement. Five of these points were considered non-negotiable, that is they could not be bartered away. These were: 1. Rule 17 to be maintained, meaning direct employment rather than agency work, 2. Increase in hourly rate of pay, 3. No deskilling in any way, 4. Proper apprenticeships, 5. An end to blacklisting and victimisation of militants.

The meeting decided to start weekly protests at big building sites in London to demand direct employment.

On Monday, April 2, about 350-400 ironworkers from the Huta Batory ironworks in Chorzow started a wildcat strike. The reason for this was that the company had started firing people. At the same time, they were employing people through temp agencies. These ironworkers were earning about 1400 net, (350 euros), about half of what the permanent workers were making. The management of the ironworks announced that the company had decided to

Posties Wildcat Strikes

Postal workers in Bridgwater, Somerset went on a 3 hour wildcat strike on March 8th after a worker was sacked for having



“too much time off” on sick leave. Fellow workers insisted that the sacked worker's personal circumstances had not been taken into account. The management agreed that the appeal hearing would be brought forward.

In a separate development management backed down on closing the Royal Mail

POLISH WILDCAT STRIKE

replace staff with temporary agency workers and that the goal would be to have 80% agency workers. Last week alone the company dismissed 50 people.

delivery office in Halsted, Essex after postal workers united with local people to keep the office open in a year long campaign.

Portsmouth Workfare Picket

Anarchists from Portsmouth and Southampton took part in a picket on Portsmouth high street over Workfare as part of the build up to the National Day of Action against Workfare on the 31st March. The day offered a good opportunity for anarchists in the area to make contact and the picket saw support from both Anarchist Federation and Solidarity Federation members.

The reception from the public was good with many people taking leaflets and others stopping to discuss the matter. Workfare is the new government initiative that aims to make people work in order to earn their benefits with various high street stores already signed up to profit from cheap labour. The picket aimed to raise awareness over the fact that people will be forced to work for well below the legal minimum wage and explain how this will also have negative effects on those already in precarious employment.

Thanks to Resistance Bulletin

The workers, who were tired of the union negotiations, went on a wildcat occupation strike and refused to let the trucks with the production (metal pipes) leave the factory. The company decided to hire security squadrons from Bydgoszcz to come and break the strike. Hundreds, some say thousands, of people came out to defend the strikers. Among them were our comrades

from Silesia, from ZSP and FA. When the buses of security arrived and saw the aggressive crowd, they turned around and went back to Bydgoszcz.

The representatives of Alchemia, the company which controls the ironworks, started to threaten the strikers. On April 6, the Warsaw ZSP went to confront Alchemia, which has its seat in Warsaw, but found that the office was closed. (It still made an informational action.) Later in the day (Friday afternoon, at the end of the business day), the company announced that it would close the ironworks and that the workers would lose their jobs. They announced that 110 workers who were considered by them to be the main "troublemakers" would be fired immediately for disciplinary reasons.

The company Alchemia owns a number of businesses, including several ironworks. It is owed by one of the richest families in Poland, Roman Karkosik and his wife Grazyna. (Roman Karkosik is worth 1.8 billion USD.) Alchemia is also looking to make a fortune on pipes for shale gas extraction. Its webpage has a slogan "we smelt profits". At it brags about all the money it makes: on February 20 it published a statement announcing that last year it made an eight-fold increase in profit.

Eightfold increase in profit

Alchemia earned PLN 118.4 million in 2011. The revenues of Alchemia Capital Group rose last year to PLN 1 155 million and were almost two times higher than in 2010. The generated net profit reached PLN 118.4 million or over 700% more than last year (PLN 14.7 million).

- We noted the highest turnover in the history of the company and one of the best results in terms of operational and net profit. The consistently pursued strategy of building a strong pipe group is bearing

its first fruits. Investors and shareholders should have a reason for satisfaction – says Karina Wciubiak-Hankó, President of Alchemia.

In the 4th quarter the company earned PLN 55.5 million with revenues at PLN 108.5million. This is a continuation of the improvement in performance observed since the beginning of 2011. However, the last three months of 2011 were the first quarter of the Group's operations following the completion of a series of takeovers and a broad restructuring. Operating expenses in 2011 were three-and-a-half-times lower than in the corresponding period in the previous year.

- The year 2011 was a time of unprecedented changes in the Group; something that we have worked at for many years became reality – we have built a consolidated steel group in Poland. We started centralizing our sales division, cut costs, restructured our assets. We have achieved the expected synergies – adds Wciubiak-Hankó.

S o u r c e : http://alchemiasa.pl/eng/pub/uploaddocs/alchemia_-4q-2011_results.pdf

It is very clear from all this that these bloodsuckers just want to make more money off the workers' sweat and tears and we simply cannot accept this.

The protests continue at the ironworks. In Warsaw the vampires from Alchemia can also expect to find us at their doors.

PROTEST SENT TO ALCHEMIA (BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF FIRINGS)

SUPPORT FOR THE STRIKERS AT HUTA BATORY

The Board of Huta Batory in Chorzow dismissed 50 people last week alone. It is known that they plan to fire 20% of the staff and that they have plans to change the employment structure so that 80% of the

workers would be employed through temporary work agencies on trash contracts and with much lower pay. This is happening despite the fact that Alchemia finished last year with a net profit of 118.5 million zloties and a 1.16 billion zloty turnover.

The workers are demanding that the company stop the mass dismissals, take back those who were dismissed and honour the collective agreement. They also want to get payments from the social fund for the holidays and want those who are working through temp agencies on trash contracts to be hired by the ironworks.

In a way that is typical for employers, Karina Wciubiak-Hankó, the Director of Alchemia, is trying to scare the protesting workers with dismissals and liquidation of their workplace. „The workers are bringing more risk to themselves related to the possible closure of the metalworks. If there is no wish to have a dialogue on the part of the workers, the Board of Alchemia S.A. will be forced to close the works and transfer production elsewhere”.

The company already tried to break the will of the protesters by force. Only due to the solidarity of the local population was violence on the part of the bosses avoided.

Zwizek Syndykalistów Polski demands that the workers demands are met, that the dismissals are immediately stopped, that the company stop using trash contracts and hire all the workers directly.

The Board can go to work for 1400 zloties! People who read this are would like to support the workers of Huta Batory should send a nasty email to those involved:

biuro@alchemiasa.pl

sekretariat@hutabatory.com.pl

Use your imagination as to the text. But something like you support the workers of Huta Batory would be good for a start.

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Nunzio Pernicone «Carlo Tresca: Portrait of a Rebel» (AK Press 2010)

Carlo Tresca was one of those revolutionary workers whose memory deserves to be honored and this excellent biography of him by Italian historian Nunzio Pernicone fulfills exactly this purpose. Pernicone is the same author who in the past published an excellent history of the Italian anarchist movement (in English the title was «Italian Anarchism: 1864-1892», which was

firstly published by Princeton University in 1993 and then by AK Press), but this work is equivalently interesting to anarchists and other radicals.

Carlo Tresca was the son of a middle class family and was born in Italy in 1879. He soon became a socialist and took an active part in the Italian Railway Workers' Federation before emigrating to the U.S.A. when he was 25 years old. Once he arrived

there he was elected as secretary of the Italian Socialist Federation of North America and participated actively in various class struggles. During this time his sympathy for social democracy was transformed quickly into sympathy for trade unionism, as he soon realised the inherent reformism of social democratic ideas and the importance of immediate action to unionise.

Connected with the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World - US syndicalist union), he took an active part in the strikes of Pennsylvania coal miners before being involved in several, important and often

episodic strikes and other activities. Gradually, his trade union beliefs led him to the adoption of anarcho-syndicalism and he became soon one of the leading anarchists in the U.S., particularly amongst the Italian-American community.

Nunzio Pernicone gives us a picture of a deep, lively, vibrant and charismatic figure who played a catalytic role in many struggles for workers' rights.

He was also a prolific journalist and publisher and edited the Italian-speaking anarchist newspaper «Il Martello» («The Hammer») for over 20 years. It was an excellent and passionate writer, propagandist and organiser as well. He was responding to any call for help in trying to encourage Italian workers to strike and fight back. He played a major role in numerous strikes, including the victorious strike in Lawrence (1912), the textile workers' strike in Little Falls, New York (1912), the hotel workers' strike in New York (1913), the strike in Patterson, the silk workers' strike in New Jersey (1913) and the miners' strike in Mesabi Range of Minnesota (1916).

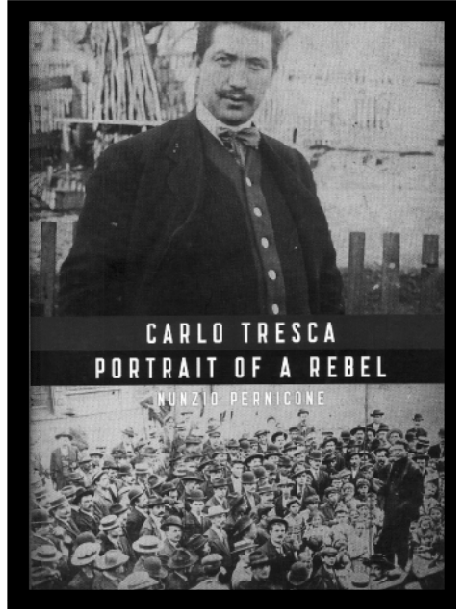
Carlo Tresca played also an instrumental role in the unsuccessful struggle for the salvation of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

Following World War I, Carlo Tresca turned his fire and efforts against fascism, but also Stalinist tyranny. He was the first and an ardent opponent of Italian fascism throughout the USA. His activities caused much hatred by Mussolini and his regime, since Tresca played a key role (both politically and physically) in stopping the spread of fascism within the Italian-American community (this is why he suffered an assassination attempt against him in 1926).

Pernicone goes into great detail about how helpful was the "democratic" American state to fascist Italy by trying to expel Tresca from the country. He tells us also how Tresca sent a telegram to Mussolini on the birthday of the latter. Before emigrating to America, young Tresca had met Mussolini (who was by then one of the leaders of left socialists in Italy), just to in-

form him that his stay in U.S.A. will turn (Tresca) him into a real rebel. Well, Tresca's telegram simply reminded Mussolini that he was absolutely right!

Unlike many other militants of that period, Tresca had no illusions about the Soviet Union. He realised that the Lenin regime smashed the real, authentic revolution in



Russia and he opposed the new "socialist" regime with the same courage that he opposed fascism. During the 1920's, however, Tresca tried to work with all opponents of fascism, including even the communists (because he never doubted about the masses' courage and admitted their willingness to fight against fascism). His efforts to form a single anti-fascist front, as well as the efforts of the Stalinists to put under their direct control such organisations is recounted in detail by Pernicone. These Stalinist maneuvers, along with their counter-revolutionary role during the Spanish Revolution and Civil War 1936-39, made Tresca intensify this struggle against Leninism during 1930's until he finally opposed any form of collaboration with the Stalinists.

Tresca's struggle for freedom, equality and solidarity continued until his assassination at the age of 63 years. Although no

one was ever indicted for his murder, Pernicone presents to us, a quite remarkable assessment of the data and inter-conflicting theories (as suspects include the Stalinists, fascists and the Mafia) concerning his assassination by a member of the Mafia, Carmine Galante.

This biography is the product of work lasting more than 30 years. Pernicone shows in this magnificent work, the advantages and disadvantages of this tireless and fearless champion of freedom and justice, Carlo Tresca. It's a very good book that not only brings to light the amazing story of Tresca, but also lots of aspects of the radical social movement of this era.

One thing that "hits" the reader is how sectarian was a significant part of the anarchist movement at the time. Because, apart from fascists and Stalinists, Tresca also had to his face the hatred of anti-organisational anarchists who at the time were following Luigi Galleani and did not stop the taunting him (much to the delight of the fascists during the 1920's and 1930's). Even the letters of Errico Malatesta, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were unable to stop these personal attacks. A critical review of this book by Anarcho talks about the paranoia that is currently developing amongst anti-organisational anarchists (such as primitivists) which would encourage such attacks. Therefore, it is important to learn some lessons from the past!

In conclusion, this book by Nunzio Pernicone is a very interesting contribution and we strongly recommend it to readers. Tresca's memory should be honored today by all anarchist militants for freedom and equality. Pernicone has offered a great service to our movement by writing this biography of an unjustly forgotten pioneer of the struggle for freedom. Let's be inspired in our struggles today!

Dimitri Troaditis

(MACG)

Syndicalism and the Transition to Communism: An International Comparative Analysis **By Ralph Darlington, published by Ashgate Publishing.**

In recent months ever more evidence has come to hand of the role of the NSW O'Farrell Liberal Government in intensifying the pace of the employer offensive. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, O'Farrell is intending pursuing a "salami tactics" approach toward the privatisation

of the NSW Railways via hiving off small sections before later engulfing the rest, with its con-

sideration of privatising Country Link, the East Suburbs and Illawarra Lines and the City Circle Stations via a Public Private Partnership strategy. It is also pursuing the casualisation and part timing of many train crew and station jobs with associated

job losses. By means of such an attack on public transport, apart from catering for multinational company quest for profitable investments, is encouraging private sector employers to accelerate the restructuring of their work forces to cut jobs, reduce costs and impose intensified speed ups. On the Federal level, Tony Abbott the Liberal Opposition leader and large employers are watching closely the O'Farrell Govt's performance.

However, on the job organisation in public transport can play an important role in checking key prongs of the O'Farrell

Govt accelerated employer offensive drive and turn the tide via hard hitting direct action. It can inspire workers in other strategic and not so strategic sectors to follow suit. Long range ASN activity has played an important role in slowing moves to restructure the NSW Railways for privatisation and assisted the formation of Members' Voice, the first such rank and file workers' movement in NSW public transport for 30 years, which is organising on the job to fight the O'Farrell onslaught. (1)

Unfortunately other groupings which abuse the syndicalist, anarcho-syndicalist or socialist labels are unable to pursue such "strategic organising". In part explained by the social base of these groupings amongst sectors of the middle class, students, workers with high levels of autonomy in their work, long term unemployed, informed by "leftist subculture codes of behaviour" and bourgeois identity politics and associated infatuation with hypocritical "political correctness displays" such as "indigenous welcomes" and "safe spaces policies", influenced by the Stalinist and Trotskyist legacy and in some cases electoral politics.

Practically as a result of this social base, the lack of industrial/class struggle experience and the above mentioned nefarious influences and legacies, contemporary syndicalist sectlets are drawn into very simplistic concepts of syndicalist union building. Such as in the case of the US and UK IWW organising within the framework of the Industrial Relations systems of these countries, focusing on marginal workplaces and theoretically, providing a more democratic version of the corporate bureaucratic unionism. Whilst others are drawn into "tail ending" of workers struggles involving helping out on picket lines and other forms of solidarity activity, often as part of a sect building "recruitment" orientation and aimless "trainings" of militants, without any strategic consideration. Also some of these groups are informed by absurd pretensions to be the nucleus of mass syndicalist union movements. So as to justify getting involved in every campaign and issue under the sun, like the typical leftist sect/vanguard party. They are particularly, drawn into "navel gazing" identity politics fixations to recruit "university students". Certainly, historical mass syndicalist union movements did support various community struggles e.g. rent strikes in working class suburbs, but for the contemporary tiny syndisects to compare themselves to these bodies is a case of megalomania and totally out of

touch with the urgent priority of pursuing the "terrible hard yards" of long range, sustained efforts to facilitate syndicalist organisation on the job in the strategic industrial sectors, which threaten the arteries of the capitalist economy. Not just anywhere..

As well, certain academic works have contributed to this confusion concerning aspects of syndicalism and this sect phenomena in the Anglo world. The book under review which examines various syndicalist union movements: the Irish

General and Transport Workers Union (IGTWU), the Italian Syndicalist Union (USI), the Industrial Syndicalist Education League (ISEL) in the UK, National Confederation of Labour (CNT) in Spain, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) in France and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the USA has contributed to spreading various myths associated with the origins, dynamics, decline of

these movements and the subsequent predominance of Communist parties in the extreme leftwing of the labour movements in these countries.

"Strategic Organising"

The author emphasises the so called "Frontier Origins" of the U.S. IWW, going along with the views of Melvin Dubofsky and his school of "institutional" labour historians. They explain the emergence of the IWW, as the reaction by workers to the hardline industrial relations policies of corporations in the Western states, particularly in the mining industry and the associated harsh working conditions. The author neglects the research of George Carney, in "The Vessel, the Deed and the Idea: Anarchists in Paterson 1895-1908" and Salvatore Salerno in "Red November, Black November: Culture in the Industrial Workers of the World", which shows the important role of the Paterson based immigrant anarchist group "The Right to Existence" in "strategic" outreach activity which contributed to syndicalist union building and influence in locals of the WFM (Western Federation of Miners) and UMW (United Mine Workers). The WFM became the key mass union component of the founding IWW.

In regard to the decline of syndicalist movements, the author views the decline of the most important, the CNT not occur-

ring until the Civil War 1936-39. However, Chris Ealham, in "The Battle for Hegemony in the Barcelona Workers' Movement 1930-36" in Red Barcelona edited by Angel Smith, shows that in the years immediately prior to the Civil War, the CNT was facing a major decline in membership of its unions in its key bastion of Barcelona (According to CNT figures a reduction in membership from 1931 to 36 of 192,064 to 96,981 occurred, quoted in Ealham's essay). Stemming from the effects of massive state repression against the workers movement associated with the insurrectionary cycle of the early 1930's encouraged by the Barcelona based FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) which controlled key CNT newspapers, and union administrative and defence committees. The author goes on to chant the simplistic homily, that "anarcho-syndicalist opposition to all forms of Government led them to reject the conquest of the state by the working class" as the major reason for the CNT's bureaucratisation and collaboration with the Popular Front Government and the success of the counter revolution in the Republican zone as the Civil War progressed. The author fails to consider how the hysteria and underground status of the CNT during the wave of state repression associated with the wild slandering and subsequent purging by the Barcelona based FAI of more coherent anarcho-syndicalist groupings in the CNT and the insurrectionary cycle of the early 1930's, precluded the discussion in the organisation of a more realistic political strategy, than the CNT being self sufficient to the revolutionary project, to incorporate workers and middle class layers outside the CNT via a workers councils state. (2)

The author's discussion of the dynamics of the international syndicalist movement is particularly confused. He fails completely to grasp the syndicalist radicalising process associated with workers participation in "direct action" – workers' direct control of industrial action and its various forms i.e. strikes, go-slows, work to rule, sabotage, etc, without reliance on politicians, union officials or state agencies and associated clashes with forces of the state and participation in expressions of solidarity in this struggle. Instead, the author, in his discussion of the IWW and why he considered it doomed to adopt orthodox bureaucratic ways, if it had not been so hard hit by state repression and vigilante assaults during and after WWI, focuses on formalist/ideological aspects of its organisation. "On the other if they were to build a functioning industrial unions they would have to recruit masses of workers, many of whom might not (at least for some time) understand or agree with the revolutionary programme", Page 214.



On pages 214-215, the author harps on the old chest nut of the IWW being unable to become a viable union movement in certain sectors, as it refused to sign contracts and have dues check off from work places it organised. The author in making this criticism neglects to consider certain aspects of industries which the IWW was organising which made stable syndicalist or genuine orthodox militant union organisation extremely difficult. This was particularly the case in regard to fruit picking, where only at harvest time did the workers have industrial strength and lacking the industrial solidarity of say transport workers, did not have the muscle to maintain subsequently a stable union organisation. The UFW (United Farm Workers) which since the 60's, 70's replaced the IWW in Fruit picking, after initial successful strikes rapidly degenerated into a combination of lobby group, Chavez Family owned business and "cult". (3)

"Boring From Within"

The author is on more firmer ground in his criticism of syndicalist movements strategy and associated dogmas. Again in regard to his discussion of the IWW on pages 210-211, he makes the good point that its faulty analysis of AFL (American Federation of Labor) unions based on the misconception that these conservative craft unions would always be too hostile for IWW activism, led the IWW not to emphasis "boring from within" (working within these bodies to transform them into syndicalist unions e.g. their merger with

other unions in the same industry to form industrial unions, getting "grass roots friendly" union officials elected, constitutional reforms to ensure membership control of decision making, encouraging self confidence and militancy amongst union members, etc.)(4) in certain AFL unions during IWW and the immediate post war crisis. At these times, certain of these unions were likely to be more open to syndicalist activism. Whilst, at this time, 2 million new workers had been drawn into the AFL, with most class conscious workers in the USA being in these unions.

In the author's discussion of the reasons for the eclipse of syndicalist movements by Communist Parties and their labour organisations, he fails completely to discuss the well known issue, of Moscow/Soviet support of these parties particularly via large financial subsidies and other means. These subsidies played a crucial role in helping the emerging Communist Parties weather the Post WWI slump and the depression of the 1930's. It also helped maintain the party apparatus of full time positions, head quarters, newspapers, etc. Additionally, it had the effect, together with other carrots and sticks, of welding together the organisation and prevented major splits from occurring. Such splitting processes wrecked syndicalist and other rivals on the left, during hard times. Whilst, in the case of the Spain, the Communist Party which prior to the Civil War was a tiny organisation, subsequently achieved a mass membership for amongst other reasons, the role of the USSR in the manipulation of the Republican Govern-

ment, its army and war effort via its supply of arms, military advisors, secret police agents, control of key positions, etc, during the Civil War.

In conclusion, the book under review certainly does more to mystify syndicalist movements development, dynamics and displacement by Communist Parties and their fronts in various labour movements, than clarify these aspects. Whilst, the research underlying the volume is grossly inadequate and the author's conclusions appear heavily informed by his "ivory tower" academic situation, lack of experience of the class struggle as a worker and his Trotskyist sect membership.

Mark McGuire

(1) See "Anarcho-Syndicalist Strategy for Australia, Today" in RW Vol.20 No.3 (172) in Archive Section of RW web site

(2) See "The Battle for Hegemony in the Barcelona Workers' Movement 1930-36" by Chris Ealham and "Marxists and the Trade Union Movement in Barcelona 1931-6" by Andrew Durgan, in *Red Barcelona* Edited by Angel Smith.

(3) See "The United Farm Workers from the Ground Up" by Frank Bardacke in "Rebel Rank And File" Edited by Aaron Brenner, Robert Brenner, Cal Winslow

(4) See "Green Bans, Red Union" by Meredith and Verity Burgmann and "Rolling The Right" by Paul True about the rank and file movement in the NSW Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) in the 1960's and early 1970's which pursued a "boring within" approach. It contributed to the BLF developing many syndicalist style features.

A FEATURE REVIEW by Graham Purchase

Part 1 Anarchism, Anthropology and Asia The Art of Not Being Governed An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia

By James Scott

Yale University

Press/Orient Black Swan 2009

Continued From Last Edition and Final Installment

Anarchism, State-Capitalism & Ethnic or Minority Nationalism:

Should anthropologists concentrate their research on stuff like sms used among

teenagers and fossilized skulls and stop wasting their time with primitivist fables and the "incoherence of identity politics"? What then should we say about the myriad of petit nationalist and land/resource battles presently being fought under the banner of one ethnic minority or another all around the world?

Identity politics and tribal resistance to industrial capitalist developments have become a part of the political landscapes of many countries including Mexico, India, Canada and Australia. Capitalist exploitation of natural resources (uranium, aluminium, oil etc.) and tourism has seen the state act in a variety of contradictory ways according to the politics of the region in question. Government when it is the direct owner, sponsor or promoter of ecologi-

cally or socially "inappropriate" commercial or industrial capitalist developments in tribal areas has often led to local rebellions such as occurred in the city of Oaxaca (Sth. Mexico) in 2006 (see Teaching Rebellion, California PM Press 2008).

In 2010 tribal groups in Orissa (N.E.) India won a high court case to protect their lands from aluminium mining. Here the state is acting as the protector of tribal lands against greedy corporate capitalism. (see Padel F. & Das S., *Out of This Earth: East India Adivasis and the Aluminium Cartel*, Orient Black Swan 2010). In Australia and Canada the land rights of indigenous groups and their cultural autonomy is constitutionally guaranteed. Several of the tribal nations in the N.E. India/Burmese border area are engaged in armed struggle to achieve independent nationhood. Such political aspirations involve violence in support of nationalist-racist ideologies for the attainment of statehood. Tribal identity politics is a very mixed bag that can accommodate the whole

See Page 18

Continued From Page 17 range of political positions.

But why (in the Indian context) should relatively very small groups of tribal peoples often in very thinly populated and remote areas be given special legal privileges whilst the needs of hundreds of millions of workers in urban slums are routinely ignored? Ethnic identity politics is a confused category of politics that caters to the special 'needs' or requests of a particular local group who claim traditional ownership, guardianship or rights over land or resources upon the basis of a shared and unique ancestry and exclusive membership of a minority race. On the face of it this isn't a promising basis for progressive

and inclusive social institutions. Fostering ethnic identities perpetuates perceptions of difference and ethnic division that can all too easily rapidly descend into ethnic divisiveness and then outright hostility as expressed in racism.

It seems to me that aboriginal land claims and ethnic minority identity politics are a Trojan Horse for a host of other anxieties, concerns and causes especially the conservation of agro-biodiversity, ecologically sustainable lifestyles and local or community knowledge bases. Traditional environmental knowledge and practices are now often seen as valuable in themselves regardless of the particular ethnic group or population in question. Preserving endangered environments many contemporary

environmental activists believe can best be accomplished through the preservation of local cultures and life-ways. Unfortunately, important locally and socially complex environmental debates and issues too often become fogged over by a shroud of quasi-religious romantic-mystical nonsense exalting the false values and facts of "sacredness" and "primitivism". Scott does a great job of undermining any anthropological support for these pervasive expressions of intellectual degeneracy currently plaguing environmental and radical political thought and activism.

U.S.A. - NEW YORK FARE STRIKE

This morning 28/3/12, tens of thousands rode the New York City subways for free in a Fare Strike organized by Occupy Wall Street in coordination with rank-and-file transit workers.

Fare Strikes are one of the most effective ways for transit system employees to fight in solidarity with working class riders without stranding them in heavily transit-dependent cities like New York. And it hits the bosses where it hurts the most, at the fare box. Some comrades attempted an indefinite Fare Strike in San Francisco in 2005 with mixed results, although revenues went down in the tens of thousands of dollars during the first two days — despite the hike in fares and it being the first week of school. These kinds of social strikes work, so hopefully the Occupy Movement will find other ways to take the class war

on the offensive by making more social services free, while fighting in solidarity with the rank-and-file in the affected sector.

All Power to the NYC Subway Fare Strike!

Occupy Wall Street wrote:

Wednesday, March 28, 2012 — 10:30 AM

Rank and File Initiative

rankandfileinitiative [at] gmail.com

Twitter: #farestrike

This morning before rush hour, teams of activists, many from Occupy Wall Street, in conjunction with rank and file workers from the Transport Workers Union Local 100 and the Amalgamated Transit Union, opened up more than 20 stations across the city for free entry. As of 10:30 AM, the majority remain open. No property was damaged. Teams have chained open service gates and taped up turnstiles in a coor-

dated response to escalating service cuts, fare hikes, racist policing, assaults on transit workers' working conditions and livelihoods — and the profiteering of the super-rich by way of a system they've rigged in their favor.

Chaining open emergency gates at stations on the F, L, R, Q, 3, and 6 lines during rush hour yesterday morning, the anonymous activists posted signs designed to resemble MTA service-change announcements that read "Free Entry, No Fare. Please Enter Through The Service Gate."

A press release claiming credit for the action said it was carried out by activists affiliated with Occupy Wall Street, as well as by rank-and-file members of Transit Workers Union Local 100, which is currently in negotiations with the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

WORKERS' CONTROL DURING THE SPANISH REVOLUTION 1936-39

A contemporary article in the POUM's journal *La Révolution Espagnole* on the CNT's collectivised taxis during the Spanish Revolution.

Of all the unions controlled by the CNT (National Confederation of Labour — Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalist Union), one of the most important is without any doubt the Sole Barcelona Transport Union.

Installed in the former building of the Bank of Spain in the heart of the commercial quarter, it is, with its twenty-seven sections, a veritable ministry that has under its control absolutely all the traffic of the city and the port.

Thanks to the kindness of Comrade Victor Perret we were able to visit the different services of the union. The most important sections are those of the taxis, which we will soon return to in order to examine its functioning and accomplishments since its collectivization, and those of the subways, the trams and the buses. We then have the sections of the dockworkers, deliverymen, moving men, customs agents, garage workers, porters in the railway stations and markets, delivery services, etc.

We found in his office Comrade Langa, General Secretary of the union, who pro-

vided us with information on the functioning of the union center. Comrades were constantly entering and leaving, the telephone incessantly rang: it was busy as a beehive.

The goal of our union, he told us, is the centralization under one leadership of the different branches of urban transport. We will in this way succeed in avoiding any competition that might arise among them on the subject of the extension of active lines, their extension, and the expansion of services. Nevertheless, each branch maintains its autonomous administration, but through this centralization we will also avoid what occurred under the capitalist regime, where in one neighborhood all means of transport could be found, while others were to all intents and purposes

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News & Notes

Some of the most important news in NSW has been O'Farrell Govt. threats of major attacks on the public sector, particularly public transport. Involving the privatisation of City Rail lines and associated stations such as the City Circle, Eastern Suburbs, Illawarra and Country Link. Whilst there is also a major push to introduce part time work at stations and in train crews, resulting in major job losses. Moves are afoot also to abolish important entitlements of rail workers. To facilitate the re-election of the ALP in NSW, the union hierarchy is rolling over before this onslaught so workers can experience maximum pain from the O'Farrell rampage. The NSW Greens which some have illusions about, are also being quite lame duck in regard to taking any action on the issue. However, the ASN is doing the "hard yards" and working together with militants of Members' Voice, grass roots public transport workers organisation to organise on the job to fight this offensive. (See article page 3.)

An important way that the privatisation surge is being facilitated is via the rubber stamping of the sell offs and outsourcing by the notorious Booz-Allen Hamilton Consultants. In this edition, we provide details of the past record of these consultants in the carving up and down sizing of the NSW railways. (See article page 5.)

In this edition, we continue our expose' of the NSW Fire Brigades Union hierarchy and its machinations. Particularly the harmful effects for union members of its fake militant posturing and stunts. (See article Page 2.)

Help Build Rebel Worker! Your help is particularly sought with its distribution. So why not order bulk copies to distribute. Sell at your local shopping centre on Saturday morning, leave at the lunch room at work and at your local café, library or cinema? Your assistance on the financial plane is also very welcome.

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Workers' Organisation
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Grassland Infoshop

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3011 Vic.

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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deprived
of them.

At less expense we count on being able to organize a network of urban transport which will satisfy all users.

Comrade Langa then connected us with the secretary of the Taxi section. This, as we said, is one of the most important ones, given the place it occupies in the city, and it is also one of the most interesting from the point of view of its collectivization.

Quote:

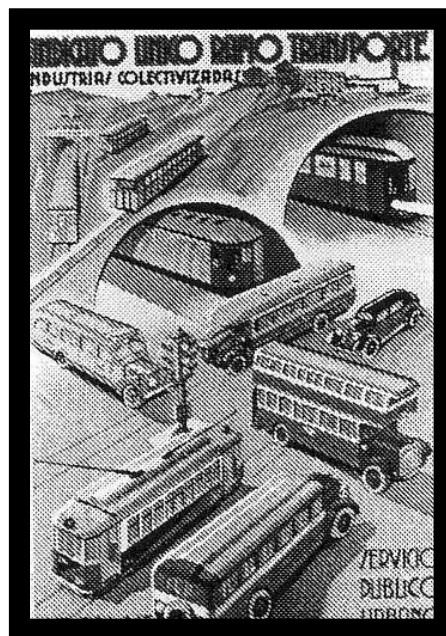
“Before the July movement,” he said, “we experienced a terrible crisis in our corporation. The principal causes were the lack of organization of the bosses and the competition between the chauffeurs, who were paid only 25% of their receipts without any fixed salary. But we also must take into account that almost all of them were affiliated with the CNT and after several years of struggle we wrested from the bosses the eight hour day. Since we reorganized our industry we have done away with work for a percentage and established a fixed salary of eighty pesetas per week.

“Before July our union was divided in to two sub-sections, one of those who drove for bosses or companies, and the other for those who owned one car and who we considered emancipated workers.

“After the victory of the working class in Barcelona and all of Catalonia and the return to normal life in our city, we decided on the total collectivization of the materiel and the annexes of the taxi industry by expropriating without indemnification the former owners and receiving them in the ranks of personnel.

“We found the materiel in very poor condition. This was the logical consequence of the little care and the continual effort it was subjected to and the poverty into which that industry had fallen. In order to repair and maintain the materiel we set up mechanical workshops and paint shops. With the agreement of the garage workers section we requisitioned several garages in

the areas that seemed to us the most propitious. We also set up a telephone central which is in communication with the different garages. For the supervision of these different services, to ensure their proper functioning, and to administer them a administrative committee was created, under the control of the union that directs the taxi



industry.

“Our painting workshops occupy fifty workers and the mechanical one seventy. Through today we have repaired and repainted 800 vehicles, and we hope to raise this number to 1000 before the end of the year, which will ensure work for 2000 or 2500 workers. Before the movement 2650 cars circulated; we found 2350, the rest being used for the war. These vehicles constitute a reserve we can dip into after we eliminate the materiel that cannot be used. We think the cities needs will be met with 1500 or 1600 vehicles and we must, by a rotation and reduction of hours, employ all the comrades who lived off the taxi industry before July 19.

“We also envisage, after the end of the war, the development of tourism, which is an extremely important source of revenue and which will allow us to occupy many comrades.

“This branch until now was in the hands a few unscrupulous profiteers who in a period of prosperity realized great fortunes, to the detriment of their personnel, who they shamelessly exploited. There was also another type of parasites: we are referring to the young people of bourgeois families who didn’t want to work and owned personal vehicles in which they drove around foreigners, living off tourism and various kinds of traffic.

“In summary, we think that we have to work with an overall vision in mind which will allow us to avoid divergences that would lead to an organic upheaval.”

We then visited, under the guidance of comrades from the union, different repair workshops where the mechanics were all busily occupied and the painters were repainting the taxis in black and red, the colors of the CNT. We then saw the immense garages where the currently unused vehicles are stored and which are being fixed so they will soon be able to be used, the vehicles that are in use, and the administrative offices.

These are great accomplishments with which we can credit the Sole Barcelona Transport Union. The comrades of the CNT have realized uncontested progress in the taxi industry.

Our comrades took as their slogan “OUR WORK.” It is, in fact, your work; it is through your syndicalist and collectivist spirit that you were able to carry out the task that was yours.

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