

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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BRAZILIAN PROTESTS TURN TO DIRECT ACTION ON THE JOB WITH WILDCAT STRIKES, & OCCUPATIONS!



Protesters shut down an expensive toll bridge in Vitoria, Brazil

NSA SPYING & AUSTRALIA; NSW RAILWAYS NEWS; STATE
TRANSIT NEWS FLASH; VICTORIAN RAILWAYS NEWS; GREECE;
POLAND; ITALY; BRAZILIAN PROTEST MOVEMENT NEWS; BRITAIN
TODAY; BOOK REVIEW CORNER; INTERVIEW WITH
HISTORIAN OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION 1936-39; PLUS MORE!

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

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Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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NSA Spying & Australia

Ex-NSA contractor and whistleblower Edward Snowden has disclosed his first set of documents outlining Australia's role in NSA surveillance programs, picking out four facilities in the country that contribute heavily to US spying.

The locations of dozens of the US's and associated countries signal collection sites have been revealed by Snowden, who leaked classified National Security Agency maps to US journalist Glenn Greenwald, which were then published in the Brazilian newspaper "O Globo."

The sites all play a role in the collection of data and interception of internet traffic and telecommunications on a global level.

Australian centres involved in the NSA's data collection program, codenamed X-Keyscore, include Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap in central Australia and three Australian Signals Directorate facilities: the Shoal Bay Receiving Station in the country's north, the Australian Defence Satellite Communications Facility on the west coast, and the naval communications station HMAS Harman outside the capital, Canberra.

New Zealand also plays a role, with the Government Security Communications Bureau facility at Waihopai, on the northern point of South Island, also contributing to the program.

X-Keyscore is described as a "national Intelligence collection mission system" by US intelligence expert William Arkin, according to Australian newspaper The Age. It processes all signals prior to being delivered to various "production lines" that deal with more specific issues including the exploration of different types of data for close scrutiny.

The different subdivisions are entitled Nucleon (voice), Pinwale (video), Mainway (call records) and Marina (internet records).

A spokesman for Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd declined to comment on the revelatory map, saying that it was not government practice to comment on intelligence matters, according to national broadsheet The Australian.

Australia is one of the "Five Eyes" - an alliance of intelligence-sharing countries which include of the US, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

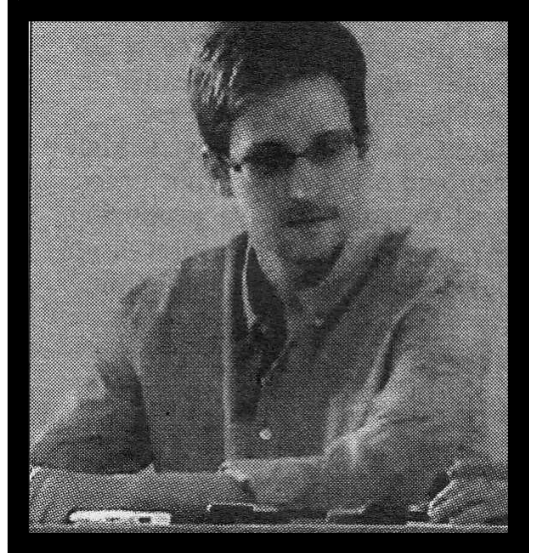
When documents were published pertaining to the British signal intelligence agency, GCHQ's "Tempora" program, Snowden reportedly commented that the other partners in the "Five Eyes" intelligence "sometimes go even further than the [National Security Agency] people themselves."

"If you send a data packet and if it makes its way through the UK, we will get it. If you download anything, and the server is in the UK, then we get it," he said.

In an interview published online last weekend in advance of its printing in German magazine 'Der Spiegel' this week, Snowden argued that the NSA was 'in bed with the Germans' commenting that the organization of intelligence gathering in

countries involved with the organization is such that political leaders are insulated from the backlash, going on to denounce "how grievously they're violating global privacy."

Germany reacted to the report on Monday, with German chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, telling Reuters that the Federal Intelligence Agency's (BND) cooperation with the NSA "took place within strict legal and ju-



dicial guidelines and is controlled by the competent parliamentary committee."

The US and its affiliates have intelligence facilities distributed worldwide in a variety of US embassies, consulates and military facilities. In an earlier report by Der Spiegel, also based on revelations by Snowden, it was revealed that the NSA bugged EU diplomatic offices and gained access to EU internal computer networks.

Thanks to Australian Broad Left Network

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www.rebelworker.org

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

Uniform Blues

By *Crimson Coconut*

Many are unhappy that the Sydney Trains/NSW Trains new uniform is sub-standard. The shirt/blouse being made of a clingy polyester material is ill fitting as it follows the contours of the wearers body. This is not too bad if you have a slim physique, which is not typical of many of us, but wholly embarrassing if you don't fit the stereotypical fit and youthful body shape.

Some wearers of the micro-fiber synthetic shirt/blouse have complained of skin rashes, while others have complained of a definite chemical odour emanating from the material. One staff member said that the material started to unravel in his washing machine. Maybe after some time we may all be wearing rags.

RailCorp is instructing staff with rashes to visit their nominated doctor as they try to get a grip on the causes of the skin eruptions.

The uniform has been introduced in haste despite a consultation period that expired before consultation had finished. We were told what uniform we were getting before the consultation period had concluded, management were pretty adamant what we were going to get from the start.

The NSW transport unions also appointed delegates to the Uniform Committee. Yet if you ask staff on stations who those representatives were, few if any can tell you. This is major failing within the transport trade unions even if it is over a fairly insignificant issue such as the new uniform.

Once again they failed to consult effectively with the rank and file, the ordinary members at the coalface. Many members were making it known that they were not pleased with the uniform, yet this fell on deaf ears.

I do not here want to blame those seemingly invisible representatives on the Uniform Committee for the complete inability to have members views represented and respected by management. After years of going about union business this way it has become the normal way of doing things, if not a most undemocratic way of conducting union business. Those on the committees probably know no better, they are not to blame.

The blame must lie with the union leadership who in it's day to day business feels that the selection of a staff uniform is

rather trivial compared to the big picture of State and Federal politics. This is sloppy trade unionism at best and a "couldn't care less attitude" toward worker representation at worst. This is a leadership issue.

The same attitude was displayed during the more significant issues, such as the last EBA in 2010, the removal of the Station Manager from stations and the continuous reform and division of RailCorp into two new entities, NSW Trains and Sydney Trains. At no stage had or have members on the shop floor been involved, informed, consulted or asked their opinion on any of

tive to do your bidding but about being the conduit through which the members aspirations are articulated and realised. That is what is missing within our representation.

One of the side effects of this top-down "we'll do it right for you" approach is that you actually bypass the members wishes, often signing off on agreements before members get the gist of what the deal is. Consequently, elected delegates are, at a later date vilified by the membership over an agreement which has to be revisited, often with no satisfactory resolution.

It is no longer OK for the leadership to say,



the changes. This is inexcusable, it results in many members wondering why they need to belong to a union at all.

The exact same uniform is to be rolled out to Sydney Trains train crews. Gone are the days of shorts, tattooed arms and legs and broad brimmed hats that made train crews much loved characters. Similar consultation provisions occurred with train crew staff, (ie. none at all).

According to the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) leadership "Unfortunately the Minister for Transport had already decided, on the design and colour of the uniform before there was any consultation with the staff who had to wear the uniform." Can we expect a Train Crew backlash?

Democratic unionism is not so much about appointing or electing a union representa-

"we did our best, but management refused to budge" when you didn't bring in the real force within the union, the general membership. That would be akin to acknowledging that the members exist and have real muscle. The Membership, to the leadership, is a sleeping dragon that must not be woken under any circumstances. Once awake the membership dragon may be difficult to put back to sleep and some may be trampled in the attempt to pacify it.

A side note related to the uniform

It is difficult to comprehend that our union has agreed to the purchase of uniforms manufactured in third world sweat shops, namely Fiji and China. Taking advantage of cheap labour amid the absence of work-

ers rights and an appalling human rights record is unconscionable. This is especially poignant when the peak trade union body the ACTU is actively campaigning for labour rights in Fiji.

An acknowledgement of the horrible working conditions by the transport unions should have been in order, even though a statement falls short of ensuring that the new uniforms were made in such a

way that the workers involved were not disadvantaged. Raising consciousness about the appalling working conditions in the third world clothing industry is an admirable cause. However this is not an issue so far as the RTBU and their members are concerned.

In the wake of the recent deaths of a 1000 or so workers in a Bangladesh clothing sweat shop which collapsed crushing the

poor workers there and previous fires in other factories, also in factories in China which led to large loss of life, the issues of safety and workers rights should have been taken into account by our unions. Failing to do this is a sure measure of where our union leadership is at. Once again this horrid government has been let off the hook.

Fingerprinting For NSW Public Transport Workers?

Should you be worried about fingerprint sign-ons?

Not much has been mentioned recently about the introduction of fingerprint scanning in the public transport workplace. According to management, it is to be used in conjunction with the My Time and Pay system. The real possibility of fingerprint scanning is still on the agenda as the pay system is being rolled out in 3 stages. The third and final phase will include the use of employee fingerprints when signing on and off.

The main humiliating feature of using fingerprinting in the workplace is one of trust. There is a management/government perception that employees are defrauding them or the public by falsifying time sheets. This is despite the fact that no evidence has been yet produced to prove that this is happening at all. We are all considered to be guilty in the eyes of our employers. For that reason many employees will regard fingerprint scanning as an invasion of privacy and a demeaning exercise.

Recent revelations around the world that all of our personal electronic communication is being recorded and stored, despite repeated denials, shows that we cannot take them at their word. They, our would be controllers, have lied in the past and will lie in the future. Companies such as Google, Facebook, Twitter and many others have been passing on information about users to US, UK and other Western government spy agencies without our consent. Private phone calls and text messaging is all intercepted and stored in case it is ever needed to build up a case against individuals. Spying is so widespread that it reaches into every part of our lives. It is all pervasive.

Just think about how much information your employer already has about you. They have your bank account details, they know how much you earn, they know your address, phone number and birth-date. They have your drivers licence details in

some instances, as well as detail of your next of kin. They have your Tax File Number, and your Superannuation Account details. They have your medical records and doctors certificates. They have your references from previous employers and your qualifications and a whole lot more that we have volunteered over the years.

Imagine if much of this information could be married to a fingerprint profile on a database. This is not an impossibility some time in the future. What they would have is instant access to crucial information about you.



So no matter what the assurances are, can we trust the biometric companies with our fingerprints? Fingerprints are a lifetime unique identifier of an individual. Employers should not have access to this information. Fingerprinting or print scans seem totally unnecessary. A temporary identifier such as a swipe card would suffice. Having a unique biometric fingerprint also gives employers possible access to information about a person outside of work. Where do we draw the line on personal privacy?

Another worry is over the increasing widespread use of such techniques as fin-

gerprint scanning in other areas of operation such as shopping centres, getting on and off the bus, clubs, pubs and hospitals etc. Even if the exact image of the fingerprint is not stored in a readable form there is nothing stopping the stored representation being cross matched with other data bases using the same techniques. So that if you were, for instance, using your fingerprint scan to enter a nightclub, a casino or just to pay for your groceries the linked information about an individual could be shared if similar technology was in use. For instance, if your employer using the same fingerprint scan technique as some other owner was to share information on an individuals habits they might learn where they go, what they buy etc.

Well you might say that under Australia's privacy laws that can't happen as this is illegal. No such watertight laws exist. Some people are even above the law – most employers believe that they are. We all remember the Murdoch expose' on illegal phone tapping – despite it being illegal it still was carried out. Phone tapping is still widespread today.

In an article posted in the News.com website Civil Liberties Australia raised the issue of fingerprint scanning to enter licensed venues.

"Civil Liberties Australia director Tim Vines said the machines were overly intrusive and there needed to be national guidelines on their use.

"Facial recognition and fingerprints we consider to be quite intrusive into a person's privacy," Mr Vines said."

People could be barred from pubs, clubs and other venues because a misdemeanour had been recorded against their fingerprint profile. The problem occurs when this data is shared between venues and linked to things like drivers licences or other ID, photos etc. Then there is the question of security of the information. No such guarantees can be given, especially since the smaller holders of the information would

lack the technical expertise and financial capability to secure the data. Could the stored data be sold to employers just like Facebook profiles of employees presently are?

What it all comes down to is that this is one more method of control, all the more important control tool than other methods because it is linked to a unique identifier of individuals. When you add this extra layer of control to all of the others in the Government Transport workplace it becomes a tipping point where workers rights are trampled in the name of security and efficiency. But workers have no such security and no such recourse to justice.

Workplace surveillance has reached an all time high. Your web surfing habits at work are recorded for the sites that you visit and the amount of time that you spent doing it. Web sites are blocked or filtered because some one else has decided that you should not see it or get access. Your email is monitored and is considered the property of the NSW Government rather than your own. In most circumstances your telephone conversations on the job are recorded when we use departmental phones. Once again this is done under the pretext of safety. Yet it's possible for the powers that be to record private conversations, their duration and to find out the identity of the person making the call. This has been standard practice for decades.

Monitoring involves exercising control over workers and control over the data related to specific workers.

CCTV camera's record your every move in public areas and can alert bosses that you are not where you are supposed to be. Likewise random urine and breath testing reaches into the most private areas of your life in another indignity that can be foisted upon you at any time.

Health testing while done in the name of prevention of accidents and OH&S is a whole lot more than that. It is management's attempt to intervene in your lifestyle and lifestyle choices despite whether you agree that the safety aspects are worthy or not.

"Workers are to be controlled and never trusted", that is the message which comes from this type of subtle control.

Fingerprint scanning is the thin edge of the wedge of a whole range of control mechanisms that have been introduced over the past few decades. It is an attempt to criminalise employees rather than regard them as fellow human beings who are trusted and respected. Our freedoms are slowly being whittled away in the name of safety and in the name of security, denying what's best for us.

We must draw a line in the sand over the issue of fingerprint scans as a means of sign-

ing on and off of duty. At the very least the whole process should be voluntary and no one should be forced into giving a fingerprint profile.

Fingerprinting which is definitively used in the workplace to correctly identify employees is an unnecessary technique for ensuring that time sheets are correct. It is a permanent record that can and is forever linked to a persons fingerprint. Your employer should not own you or your data for all time. Temporary identification techniques over the period of employment with that employer would suffice and would be more in tune with the human rights of the employee concerned. Swipe cards or other temporary electronic devices and computer logins etc. are all that is really needed to verify start and finishing times. These should be preferred over permanent records which linked in some way to an employee number.

When they ask you submit yourself for fingerprint scanning to create an identity profile, say NO. You are not refusing work. You are not refusing to submit details of your working hours. However you will be keeping just one more one piece of dignity by preventing management from tightening the screws of control just that one bit tighter. That alone will be satisfying victory of sorts.

STATE TRANSIT - NEWS FLASH

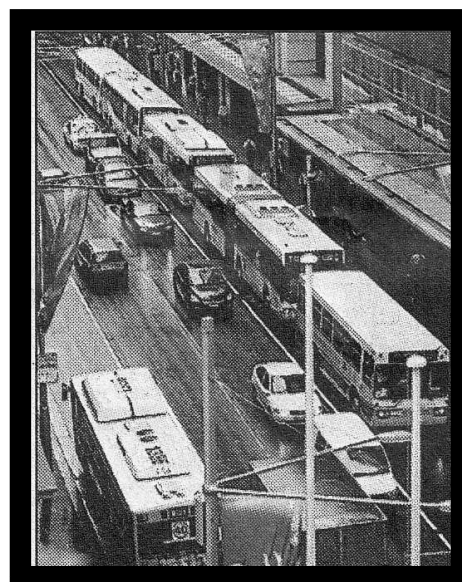
LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

Rebel Worker: What are your views on the new "Optimisation rosters"?

Leichhardt Busie: There has been complete upheaval at Leichhardt over the rosters, since commencement. The new rosters were introduced as a result of a seemingly benign clause slipped into the EBA by the STA (State Transit Authority now Transport for NSW). Similar nefarious, subtly worded, clauses have been common features of previous EBA's. As the introduction of these rosters were allowed by the EBA, union meetings at the depots were not held to approve the rosters, as has been normal practice.

Associated with the new rosters has been major arbitrary changes to the runs we work, causing considerable anger amongst us. One group hard hit are AM drivers, which includes many of the most experienced drivers at the depot. Only at the morning of the next day after finishing their runs are they learning what their runs for that day will be. Whilst 20 of our driv-

ers have been sent to Ryde and 15 drivers have come to us from Kingsgrove. The bosses are providing no adequate training



for those drivers affected by these major changes to their rosters, causing consider-

able confusion. It poses a major threat to safety, due to many drivers' unfamiliarity with the new routes, they are suddenly expected to operate on. The midday shifts have also been cut out. It appears the bosses have demanded that these drivers have to take up new part time positions which have been created, as their previous positions have been abolished. The length of the broken shifts have also been extended.

RW: What do you consider are the next moves of the STA?

LB: These new rosters do not include most of the severe changes, of the proposed rosters informed by the STA CEO's original 10 point list of demands, which appeared some months ago. There has been no removal of Sunday work or the creation of casuals, which were to be given the Sundays to boost up their pay. Whilst there have been no cuts to our time to start and finish work. However, the mid days have been eliminated and it's likely the bosses

will little by little with the help of the union hierarchy, impose other changes they are seeking with the previous proposed rosters, such as the casuals.

A Cage of "Optimisation" Battery Roosters

RW: What are your views on the new Optimisation Rosters?

Leichhardt Driver: The new rosters are particularly creating havoc for those on the broken shifts. The law says that there has to be at least a 10 hour break between the end of a shift and the beginning of another. However, with the extension of the spread of the broken to 13 hours and overtime due to late running, we can be unable to do our next day's shift. If you are not on a broken shift, you can be suddenly be sent to other depots, often quite distant from Leichhardt. Whilst, with many people living in such places as Penrith, our working and travelling times can be quite extended, causing exhaustion and increased tension in the home.

RW: How do the new rosters connect with O'Farrell Govt. plans for public transport?

LD: The bosses strategy with the "Optimisation Rosters", appears to be about using these rosters to help implement Govt. plans for privatisation. It involves creating a new workforce in the buses by drastically worsening our job, so experienced drivers are encouraged to leave. Whilst, rookie drivers who lack experience of better conditions, can be put on the job, who will put up with the worse conditions offered by the private operators.

The union officials who worship the "legalistic road", discourage industrial action to fight this massive attack, by arguing that a clause in the EBA provides for the new rosters and so "official industrial action" would be illegal. Whilst, senior management in introducing the new rosters has not broken the EBA.

On the job, there is widespread anger with the new rosters. Whilst even depot management is angry with it. As they consider the new rosters reduce productivity.

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

RW: How have the new "Optimisation" shifts being affecting people?

Burwood Driver: There has been quite a bit of anger amongst many drivers with the union officials over the new shifts. However, the officials have been trying to cover themselves, by blaming the previous union administration for the new shifts. I have noticed that the PM shifts haven't been negatively affected. However, other

shifts such as the mid days have been affected with many runs being changed and several shifts cancelled. Also the first half of the mid day shifts has been extended to 5 hours with much more heavy lines of work, causing much late running. As part of the "Optimisation" shifts our depot has taken on sundry odd runs from other depots such as the 504, 406, 443 and 423. Oddly enough, the 423 which we have taken from Kingsgrove, commences from that depot. One depot, which has been very hard hit by the new shifts is Tempe. It was supposedly to just have the red pre-paid ticket buses. Now with the new shifts, it has had to take on the blue buses. As a result, it has needed to have a revenue clerk and cash machines installed there.

RW: How has depot management been lately?

BD: The bosses have been taking quite a

of millions of dollars due to not tackling the current massive fare evasion. The bosses have instructed us not to check tickets. People in many cases are still not paying for the correct tickets. Whilst shop keepers continue to be selling incorrect tickets. Recently I went to a small booth at Martin Place which sells tickets. A year ago, I had noticed that this shop keeper had been selling the wrong tickets. On this occasion I noticed he was still doing the same thing. A lady had wanted to purchase a ticket to Paddington. He issued her with a \$2.20 ticket, rather than the correct \$3.60 ticket. The STA isn't bothered about educating shop keepers about issuing the correct tickets. Ticket inspectors are rarely seen patrolling buses. We are getting savaged by the STA to claw back budget monies, but they don't bother about the massive revenue loss from fare evasion. There is a definite conflict of interest.



hard line on accidents. I've noticed quite a few guys who have had mishaps with their buses, being placed on stage 1 of the disciplinary procedure. I have also noticed quite a few drivers who have been called into the boss's office over disciplinary issues are not taking the union rep with them. This isn't good and seems to stem from the disillusionment many have with the union which is becoming increasingly common at Burwood and at other depots.

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the latest with STA plans for implementing the new transport smart card?

Waverley Busie: We have been advised that Waverley, will be the first depot to trial it in Sept. With the implementation of the smart card coming in a few months and no guarantee that it will work properly, the bosses remain unconcerned about the loss

RW: What are your views on the bosses' plans to have drivers in the Eastern Depots work together on all the routes covered by these depots?

WB: The bosses have wanted drivers at Waverley, Randwick and Pt. Botany to operate on all the same routes in the Eastern Suburbs. It has commenced since mid May. The bosses have spread the smoke screen that it's just a cost saving measure to reduce special running time. However, in reality there is no difference. Whilst, intriguingly, the STA has now, after years of neglect, suddenly spent \$5-7 mill on renovating and sprucing up the entire Waverley Depot. So it seems to me, the real agenda is about creating a cluster of depots and routes to sell off to the Govt's business mates as a package. Also it's likely O'Farrell won't make the move until our current enterprise agreement runs out next

year and he won't want to rock the boat with the public, until the Federal elections to be held in Sept this year, are out of the way.

A likely purchaser of this cluster is SERCO. It won the contract to operate the North Western rail link and in Adelaide has the contracts to operate the prisons and public transport. As a result, it has been guaranteed millions of dollars in profits by the Government, which it can now play with. It highlights the absurdity of private operators running public services which in turn leads to reductions in government revenue and encourages further privatising.

The union hierarchy appears unwilling to assist the grassroots to fight the move. In typical STA "you work it out yourself" approach, we have been told to pick up a DVD from the office, which will show the new routes, we will have to work. We will have to have the DVD burned and learn the new routes in our own time. Why aren't we being paid for this extra work?

RW: How is the situation with the STA's corner cutting?

WB: Many back up staff jobs such as mechanics and inspectors have been cut out. Particularly with the loss of inspectors, our work has become more difficult. If say a ticket or pass is stuck in the green machines, there is now no inspectors to remove it. Those left on the job are doing other jobs. In the past, there would be inspectors at say Bondi Junction interchange who could help with the ticket removal or you could contact radio room, and an inspector would later make contact to help with the problem. Now, we have to take the affected passenger's name and address, so they can be later reissued with the

lost ticket or pass. Consequently, in the case of say a 3 day or weekly pass, passengers can lose significant money. It just goes to show how the bosses are doing things on the run and failing to consult with workers in the running of the buses.

RW: What's other news at the depot?

WB: I've noticed some STA staff hanging around the corner of York Road and Oxford Street checking buses coming into and leaving the depot. I have confirmed they have been checking buses running times. Apparently as part of the STA's push for reducing start up and ending time on buses down from 10 to 5 minutes. Drivers leaving late from the depot are being issued with please explain letters. It's becoming quite common now for suddenly, out of the blue, to receive these notices, about one's alleged short comings. No doubt, as part of the bosses "flexing their muscles" on discipline.

RW: What's happening at other depots?

WB: Recently, I was speaking to a Kingsgrove driver. He mentioned that 60 lines of work, involving roughly 90 drivers have been removed from Kingsgrove and allocated to other depots. A likely objective of this initiative is to cut down on overtime, through filling vacant spaces at different depots. With this moving around of drivers, it's going to put more strain on many families. Making the job ever more, not a family friendly environment.

A friend of mine, who has a wife and young children has been particularly hard hit by the changes to his shifts associated with the new lines of work, we are being expected to operate. His shifts have to be coordinated with when his wife goes to and returns from her job, so his children

can be looked after. Under the new regime affecting his shifts, to fit his family requirements, he is now often being given only 7 hour shifts. As a result, he is facing a wages cut and has difficulty meeting his mortgage obligations. We should all be offered the same share of overtime. Given the strenuousness of our type of job, we should all be well paid.

It's also going to put more pressure on roster clerks and driving staff. In the case of those transferred to Port Botany, it's not an easy place to get to. This experiment seems to be a ticking time bomb. As a lot of passengers are getting late for work and are being shoved off buses at wrong terminuses, due to these drivers being inexperienced with the routes. This type of work must be run by routine.

RW: What are your thoughts on the O'Farrell Govt's expenditure on public transport?

WB: The O'Farrell Govt. has been saying it has no money to spend on expanding Govt owned and operated public transport. However, it is splashing out on the construction of the M7 and associated tunnels in a big way. Rather than expenditure on new freeways, there is an urgent need for the existing roads to be fixed up. The current Liberal Govt. appears to be copying the Greiner Liberal Govt. over 18 years ago in regard to its policies. At that time Greiner splashed out on the construction of the M2. Whilst rejecting consideration of a more public transport friendly solution. Such as an O-Bahn, like exists in Adelaide, which has greatly increased commuter bus usage in that city.

VICTORIAN RAILWAYS NEWS

In previous issues of RW, mention has been made of Human Resources hanging around various departments of V/Line. In this issue, once again Conductors, Head Office Staff and Drivers will discuss these issues. Also two employees who have had to front Human Resources, will speak of their experience. Once again names have been changed.

RW: Can you explain to our readers about these hangers on.

Sheona: These people from Human Resources are assigned to the various departments of V/Line such as Track Workers or

Drivers. If employees are in trouble, then they have to face their respective supervisors and these people from Human Resources are sitting in on the interview.

Clarence: You may be interested, but Southern Cross Station has a woman from Human Resources assigned looking after Conductors and Station Staff. Some of the Service Officers and Station Staff hate her, but some Conductors and Station Staff crawl to her.

RW: Are they frightened of her?

Jethro: Yes they are. With tension over job cuts around Southern Cross, some people are crawling to her, thinking they will be in her good books. We do not know where she worked before V/Line, but some managers say she is dangerous.

Sheona: She is only using Southern Cross as a step to a career path in V/Line and if she achieves this, then, she will move on to a better career with another industry.

Jethro: In other words, bash a few heads. At this point I will introduce you to Anthea and Alvin. These two conductors have had to face Human Resources over the last eighteen months.

RW: Where are you stationed?

Anthea and Alvin: We will not say what depot, we are based as management will try to trace us.

RW: What was the reason you had to front Human Resources?

Anthea and Alvin: Leaving a Van Door of the Conductors' compartment open, as the train was arriving into Southern Cross.

Rastus and Roscoe: At this point may we join the discussion. Up until 2009, the conductor on a Locomotive hauled train would observe the train on departure and once the train cleared the platform, the Conductor would close the door. On an arrival the Conductor would open the van door and observe the signal. Some of the platforms are long with intermediate signals and can accommodate more than one train. If the intermediate signal was red on the platform, then the Conductor would release the doors for the passengers to alight.

RW: Why was this changed?

Clarence: At the end of 2009 all of V/Line locomotive hauled carriages were equipped with power doors and then Occupational Health and Safety Officers for the conductors suggested to the Conductors Manager that Conductors once a train departed, did not need to clear the platform, as the train was locked like a railmotor.

Sheona: You actually were signalled out as management wanted to make an example of you.

Anthea: We had to appear before the Conductor Manager, at different times, but not together.

Rastus and Roscoe: They just want to belittle us.

Anthea: When I went for the interview, I went with a Union Official, who defended myself. I walked into the manager's office and sitting next to the manager was the woman from Human Resources. She started giving myself a lecture about V/Line policy and did not consider my work record or the compliments I received from passengers.

Alvin: They do not care about how long you have been on the job or your work record. This person does not care your length of service. I will tell you what I was alleged to have done. I opened the van door because the train was detained at a signal

ble, we would both get a final warning. They did not consider our many years of loyal service to V/Line. We were devastated.

Rastus and Roscoe: When preparing a train, we saw this SPITEFUL WOMAN spying on the station staff and conductors.

RW: Was this the woman mentioned in a previous issue?

Clarence: Yes, this was the idiot, who grabbed a booking clerk's Christmas tie, saying the clerk was not in uniform. She was made to apologise to the booking clerk.

Sheona: They are threatening long term employees, as Human Resources are trying to change the culture at V/Line. They say that if you are in trouble, you are out the door. You see, they have a talent pool of people wanting to be conductors, who have been interviewed and are on a waiting list. There are also conductors on short term contracts, because other employees

are on maternity leave or on long term secondment to another job. Thus if a long serving employee is terminated, these people may obtain a position. Due to constraints in space, this issue will be discussed in a future issue of Sparks.

RW: In concluding, thank you Anthea and Alvin for coming forward, Long term employees are being treated like dirt and it is about time, this rule

concerning the conductors van door is removed. If CountryLink, still observe the train departing along the platform, why should V/line conductors be disciplined for doing the same?

Rastus and Roscoe: Again in having the final say, long term employees in trouble are treated shabbily. Regarding the woman assigned to Southern Cross, one day we saw this person walking around Southern Cross, wearing a vest, and wait for it. She was in HIGH HEAL SHOES. Finally, if you have to front any manager at Southern Cross, and Human Resources are in attendance. WALK OUT!



Rastus: This particular Conductors' Health and Safety Officer was a loafer with no railway knowledge and we drivers had arguments with her over a number of issues.

Jethro: There was no consultation with the Unions, when this rule was introduced. It just appeared as a controlled docket, which everyone had to sign.

Roscoe: The XPT when departing Southern Cross, the Senior Passenger Attendant has to observe the train whilst it clears the platform, then he shuts the van door.

Anthea and Alvin: When we had to front Human Resources, we were given a letter naming the charge, we had to face and when we had to front them. The letter, also said we were not to discuss the matter with our fellow employees.

Rastus: As I said in a previous issue of RW, discuss the matter with your fellow employees.

Alvin: I spoke to my fellow conductors and they said I was being treated harshly.

on the long platform. I wanted to know when to release the door. The signal changed to a yellow caution and the train moved down the platform. I forgot to close the van door and the train stopped at the end of the platform, I released for the passengers to alight.

Anthea: In my case the train had stopped and the signal changed to yellow. I was making a P.A. announcement and two drivers came through the conductors compartment and alighted, but forgot to close the door. I was making the announcement, so I could not shut the door, as the train moved down the platform. When the train stopped I released the doors for the passengers to alight.

Rastus: The two drivers would have walked through the train to alight via the van, as they had to sign on.

Clarence: Apparently this person was hiding behind a curtain in one of the offices spying.

RW: What was the outcome?

Alvin and Anthea: After a couple of days, we both received letters. These letters stated that the next time, we were in trou-

GREECE TODAY

PUBLIC BROADCASTER CLOSURE

The surprise closure of the public broadcaster ERT provokes anger and a general strike as thousands are fired.

The Greek government has ordered the immediate shutdown of the public broadcasting company (ERT). The surprise move was announced on Tuesday and took effect hours later as TV screens went blank. Thousands of people instantly lost their jobs and the decision is being condemned and challenged by the workers of ERT and other trade unions.

The first effect of the closure is the sacking of 2600 workers. Such sackings were a condition of Greece's last bailout deal imposed by the Troika with more expected later in the year. New Democracy (ND), the coalition government leader, acted alone when issuing the closure order with its junior partners refusing to back the move. This has angered the other coalition members and could threaten the stability of the government.

ERT workers are doing their best to keep broadcasting over various satellite and internet streams. Many workers have kept a physical presence in the ERT buildings and have vowed to stay. On Wednesday evening thousands gathered in solidarity in Athens. Despite this there is the possibility that riot police could be sent into to secure ERT buildings at any time.

Criticism of the switch off has come from across the political spectrum as well as from international bodies. Inside Greece trade unions have reacted to the jobs losses by calling strike actions over the next days. Unions representing journalists and the media called for strikes on Thursday. In addition Greece's two largest unions have also declared a 24 hour general strike on Thursday 13th in solidarity.

ERT's significance is as Greece's only non-commercial TV and radio broadcaster with all other stations being privately owned. Whilst the network has been criticised for staying close to the government line during the crisis the loss of public broadcasting is being labelled a blow to democracy. Greece is falling down the

rankings for press freedom as governments have arrested or replaced critical journalists, closed independent media and now switched off the only non-private station.

The manner of the shutdown has angered many as such a major decision was taken without going through the standard democratic procedures. Since its election one year ago the ND government has tolerated no opposition. The attempted closure of Athens Indymedia earlier in the year, the forced ending of strikes and attacks against squats all point to a government determined to push through austerity mea-



sures against popular resistance.

By

Thrasybulus

Jun 12 2013 19:21

A member of the Twin Cities IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) reports back from Greece.

Riots, general strikes, austerity measures, a vibrant anarchist movement, a threatening fascist resurgence... these are all words that come to mind when we think of Greece. I spent two weeks in Greece at the end of May with comrades from Eleftheriaki Syndikalistiki Enosi (ESE), or the Libertarian Syndicalist Union) in order to find out what life is like behind the headlines.

I found a country that is traumatized and scarred by two years of economic crisis, made much worse by a structural adjustment package forced on the country by the

European Central Bank, the European Union, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Because of the cuts agreed to by the country's former "Socialist" ruling party, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), at least 20 percent of the Greek population is unemployed, wages are as low as €2 an hour, and workers sometimes go for six months or a year without being paid. Healthcare has been semi-privatized and homelessness and mental illness are on the rise. It's a bleak picture.

But I also found reason for hope. Greek workers are fighting back. My hosts in ESE introduced me to rank-and-file activists who are rebuilding the Greek labor movement from below; under the radar of the mass media and outside the now-broken framework of European social democratic labor relations, a new workers' movement is cohering.

There are many, many instances of workers reopening their businesses under workers' control after their bosses stopped paying them and closed the doors. In other cases, laid-off workers have formed cooperatives, mostly in restaurants and cafes.

Often this is just done temporarily to make back the money they were owed, and the new cooperatives do not break with the logic of the market and commodity production, but the prevalence of these examples is powerful proof that the spread of workers' self-management

is an organic response to capitalist crisis.

Workers have also begun building new unions, outside the control of the main PASOK-affiliated confederation. They call these "base unions." Like the IWW, they typically have few or no paid staff; workers make decisions together, democratically and view collaboration with the state system of labor control with skepticism. Here's a quick summary of the unions I met with:

Courier's Union (Athens): Founded in 2004, this union has about 200 members, with an active core of 20-50 members. It organizes workers from multiple shops and uses picketing and direct action to win unpaid wages. It has no paid staff and low dues. It's a lot like the IWW. I met with them at length and discussed solidarity unionism and industrial unionism. They are the linchpin of a new, alternative confederation that is currently forming in Athens.

Servers and Cooks Union (Athens): This is another group in Thessaloniki. It engages in many struggles over wage theft and has

helped workers take over their cafes when the boss went out of business without paying them. Their most high-profile struggle was the worker takeover of an Applebee's in Thessaloniki around the New Year in 2010. The workers operated the business for one to two months after the boss suddenly shut it down.

Media Workers: One of Greece's six main network TV stations shut down suddenly in 2010, laying off 500 of its workers. They took over the station for one to two months and operated it as a workers' TV station, focusing on worker struggles. In the wake of the takeover, they have formed a cross-craft network linking workers throughout the production process at different media outlets, à la IWW.

ESE: Sort of the IWW equivalent in Greece, but newer. They are currently wrapping up a struggle over unpaid wages at an upscale bakery/cafe with three locations in Thessaloniki. The boss has not paid the 100+ workers in about a year. A few of the workers started discussing taking legal action, and were fired right away. They came to ESE, which helped them develop a direct action and legal strategy.

They held several aggressive pickets and plastered the town with posters denouncing the boss. ESE is connected to many of the new base unions and worker struggles that are emerging in the crisis, and continues to innovate tactics, strategy, and theory.



There have been many other struggles—a strike at the port led by a Communist Party of Greece (KKE) union, a strike by fuel truck drivers which shut down the economy, the occupation of a fertilizer plant in Thessaloniki. Some of these have won favorable settlements for the workers. How-

ever, there is no coordination between the workers directly because the Greek Communist Party and PASOK control the unions from the top down.

As most of the world descends into economic stagnation and crisis, there are powerful lessons we can learn from the Greek workers. Political reform in Greece, like in the United States, will not bring back social democracy. Rather than seeking to resuscitate an expired New Deal, we should build on the wave of workplace takeovers and push for a genuine industrial democracy. We should seek to dramatically hasten and expand the growth of new base unions and worker committees, and infuse the movement with a revolutionary vision. As a new workers' movement grows in response to the crisis around the world, we should be immersed in it, seeking to expand its boundaries and deepen its content.

We believe another world is possible, so let's follow the example of our Greek comrades and start building it right now.

Originally appeared in the July/August 2012 issue of the Industrial Worker

ITALIAN LABOUR NEWS

On June 1st, Italian industrialists and union confederations reached an agreement limiting the right to strike and rewriting the rules of union representation, ignoring protests from base unions and from left-leaning members of metalworkers union FIOM.

June 1st saw the beginning of a new era in Italian labour policy, with a new agreement about union representation signed by the three union confederations and Confindustria (the national association of industrialists). The agreement came after a long build-up and a few months of informal meetings with industrialists, for instance, taking part in the May Day rally organized by CGIL, CISL and UIL in Bologna.

Despite the general consensus around it, this agreement seems to be a victory only for industrialists and union bureaucrats. It was welcomed by many, including Prime Minister Enrico Letta and Maurizio Landini, national Chair of FIOM (the union representing metalworkers). Ironically, those who would be most harmed by such an agreement are its most fervent supporters – this seems to be, apparently, the case of Landini.

The text of the agreement has not yet been made public; from what is known, it would underwrite the new power balance in la-

bour relations, effectively weakening the right to strike. High-ups in the union confederations now have official recognition and a new and powerful tool in their ongoing struggle against workers' grievances and against the most active unions – a

only to be approved by 50%+1 of all unions at the table, regardless of the size of their membership. Consequently, a few small unions (that is, a few among those that signed the deal) could form a majority and approve an agreement, thus deciding



struggle that so far has been characterized by political immobility and by acquiescence to industrialists' diktats.

From now on, only those unions that signed this deal will be authorized to represent workers in bargaining. Agreements between unions and employers will need

matters for all other workers.

Workers will still have some say through a referendum process. However, as the cases of Pomigliano and Turin clearly showed, these consultations often come with heavy pressure: the threat of losing one's job is so strong that it can often determine the out-

come of the vote. Unions, of course, exist precisely to free workers from such threats, through the strength of collective organization.

Once an agreement is signed, unions cannot change it. This rule is enforced through a sanctions mechanism. Workers still have the right to strike, as laid down in the Constitution of the Italian Republic. However, the unions that are supposed to guarantee this right can be fined or sanctioned for it.

Base unions and left-leaning Fiom officers have protested loudly. Among them are Giorgio Cremaschi and Sergio

Bellavita, who strongly criticized their chair, Landini. As Bellavita declared: "All power is given to the leadership of union confederations – a leadership that keeps mistaking the protection of their own organization for the protection of workers' rights."

This deal is not valid for Fiat. Sergio Marchionne, Fiat's CEO, withdrew Fiat from Confindustria in order to have "a free hand" with unions. This decision has already brought about the expulsion of Fiom from its plants, and the adoption of a very regressive contract.

Marchionne, with his anti-union behavior, has now opened up a way of operating that is being extended across the whole of Italy. What is worse, this is happening with the complicity of CGIL and Fiom, its metalworkers' wing.

More info and sources available here.

Posted By

StrugglesInItaly

Jun 10 2013 22:00

POLAND

ELIMINATION OF THE 8 HOUR DAY!

By Akai

The avant-garde of neoliberal horrors has finally done away with the 8-hour working day.

On June 13, the Polish government eliminated the 8-hour working day, a right which was won in 1919. The government

expectations by keeping at work, begging for crumbs from their masters' hands. If it went so smoothly here, one wonders where they will strike next.

The elimination of the 8 hour day is accomplished by increasing accounting periods for calculating the average amount of hours worked for the whole year and by also introducing flexible working hours. In the past, you had to have a certain resting time between your shifts and if your shifts were moved from day to day, it could be considered outside your normal

ready for many years, Polish employers openly defy whatever rights workers still have and nobody wants to crack down on them.

In the meanwhile, workers are facing a myriad of unprecedented attacks against their well-being. However most are disorganized, controlled by concessionist unions or uncertain about their ability to act, being afraid of widespread repression. Yet others have been successfully brainwashed by years of neoliberal propaganda from every corner.

The amendments to the Labour Code were drafted by a young and eager neoliberal careerist, trying to win the favor of the state puppet masters. Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz is a 32-year old doctor who first ran for the City Council of Krakow in 2010. He was not elected, but took the place on the list of another. With all of this "experience", about one year later, he was made Minister of Labour (!!!) and the next day became vice-chair of the PSL party. He introduced the amendments to the Labour Code which effectively abolish the guaranteed 8-hour working day.

Not that Kosiniak-Kamysz is the only villain. He is clearly in his job to do the dirty work of the employers' lobby, business and political interests. They apparently see no limits to what they can force on the people, since they have been given a green light and an open road by all those who have swallowed their neoliberal medicine for far too long.

Thanks to Libcom



supposedly is trying to make Poland even more "competitive" for capitalists who want to earn more through exploiting the poor worker protection in the country and the scandalously low wages.

This is a major attack to the working class, smuggled by with little notice of the world press and little protest of the collaborationist unions. Poland is the laboratory for the introduction of the worst neoliberal dismantling of workers' rights and the working class lived up to their masters'

working time. You would then be entitled to overtime pay. The new rules allow bosses to impose much longer working days, so long as if some other time of the year they cut the hours. For workers in some industries and areas, this could mean long days for all their working time, and a few months of idleness, instead of stable working hours. It is also not clear what rights workers who are hired temporarily (for example for 6 months) would have under this scheme. What is clear is that all

Update 8/7/13

Basically, it's just us who have been protesting the new law. The Polish Socialist Party and part of the Anarchist Federation have been out on the streets about this, although the main unions said they would be doing actions in the summer. The membership of Solidarity has voted overwhelmingly to have a general strike, but the union bosses have yet to call it. There

are talks, with a lot of activists pushing for a general strike in September, which would be the first one since the transformation. A lot of more active members (mostly low-level shop stewards) are even creating their own general strike material, even though their unions have not decided on it yet. We will see.

We published a call for the rank and file to push the strike and for other workers not in those main unions to join. A lot of these low-level shop stewards liked this and now some union web pages and Face Book have this one on their pages. Unfortunately those people who would take action are not the real decision makers. We of course would love for them to act independently of the union bureaucrats (but probably won't happen now).

We keep going on with whatever info actions we can make. We'll be back on the street this weekend. Some info about pickets are here in English: <http://www.zsp.net.pl/zsp/english>



One more important thing is that the government is taking revenge for the unions, even threatening a strike by writing a draft of an amendment of the Act on Trade Unions that would take away some of their privileges. (Not that I agree with all them, but what the government is doing is terrible.)

Any solidarity is welcome and thank you so much for the initiative! Of course if this general strike does take place, surely it would be nice for people to show their support in any way they can.

Akai

BRAZILIAN PROTESTS NEWS

Report on New Direct Action Developments in Brazilian Protest Movement

8/7/13

I thought I wouldn't have much else to tell about the current wave of protests around Brazil, but things keep happening and new qualities are joining what's already happening.

Across the country, this past week had its

truck drivers' strikes in some cities, which caused significant delays in transportation. On July 1, something really bizarre took place: an ordinary guy decided to invite the country for a general strike from Facebook, without any connection to unions or whatever, and more than half a million people signed it. However, being a mere Facebook event, it confused many people. I myself didn't give it much attention, even though my bosses at work seemed a bit excited about the possibility of such an event, and I really didn't expect

cial places were kept closed (I can only talk about my own city), and many schools decided not to open. It was really, really bizarre.

Speaking of general strike, on July 11 the biggest Brazilian unions, CUT, Força, UGT, CGTB, etc., are calling for a day of protests, strikes, marches and more in order to push for their own agenda with many items, including the reduction of work hours from 44 to 40 a week. I think it's going to be a big day, as hopefully there will be lots of people on the streets. Everyday I'm hearing of new professional categories joining the general strike.

I don't know very well what's going on in the main cities of the country, but in Vitória the latest protests focused a big part of their attention to a very specific situation: the toll fees we have to pay to use the main bridge connecting Vitória to Vila Velha (see photo, above). It's a very important connection, and not only is it to cross it, but it also causes a lot of congestion in very important parts of both cities, as it's not on the outskirts, but in quite central areas.

Two weeks ago, on the biggest march of all, all the toll booths were smashed by protesters, and the company responsible for its operation was forced to let traffic through without charging anything (they tried to charge the prices manually and even advised drivers to avoid using the bridge), so people had the chance to experience the crossing without the annoyance of paying for it and I guess it opened the path for new hopes. I'm probably exaggerating it, but that's how I felt, I can't deny.



usual street marches, much, much less crowded compared to the ones two weeks ago, and I thought they would be over soon. Other than this, there were bus and

anything unusual on Monday. But my brother didn't go to work, a few commer-

Anyway, somehow, one day, it started to spread the news that there was a project to be voted on the State's Legislative Assembly that could eliminate the need to pay the toll of the bridge, and all attentions then

day the project was to be voted, the Legislative Assembly was packed with people aggressively watching on all politicians in there

When it was the time to vote it, though, the first one to speak said they needed more time to consider it, and so the voting was postponed. The people watching became really angry, broke doors and invaded the House Presidency Office, keeping an occupation in there since then. They said they'll only leave it when the project is voted. Politicians said they'll only vote it

if the office gets freed. People are taking food and more stuff to the occupiers every day.

Yesterday there was a new march from both Vitória and Vila Velha, set to reunite on the Legislative Assembly, which is right next to the bridge of discontent. I couldn't go there, but people say the arrival at the occupation gave everybody a

great sense of unity, even though there were just about 2,000 people in the crowd. They then marched to the toll booths, now heavily guarded by the police, and amazingly five toll booths got smashed again, even with all the police repression that took place. In fact, police brutality is again pissing everybody, probably because now that there are less people on the streets, they have to make sure to kill the movement once and for all, even though police violence has always been there anyway. You can read a short description of yesterday's drama on this link.

The most amazing thing yesterday is that the police started forcing some of the people to cross the bridge, speeding them up with a rain of tear gas canisters, surrounding them and even turning the lights off in the middle of the bridge!

They then began searching people, erasing photos, harassing others and the usual police stuff. So now it remains to be seen what will happen in Vitória in the next days, as there will be new marches next week, on the same day of the general strike, and people will certainly keep trying to push for the scrapping of the bridge's toll fee.

Thanks to Davi's Blog

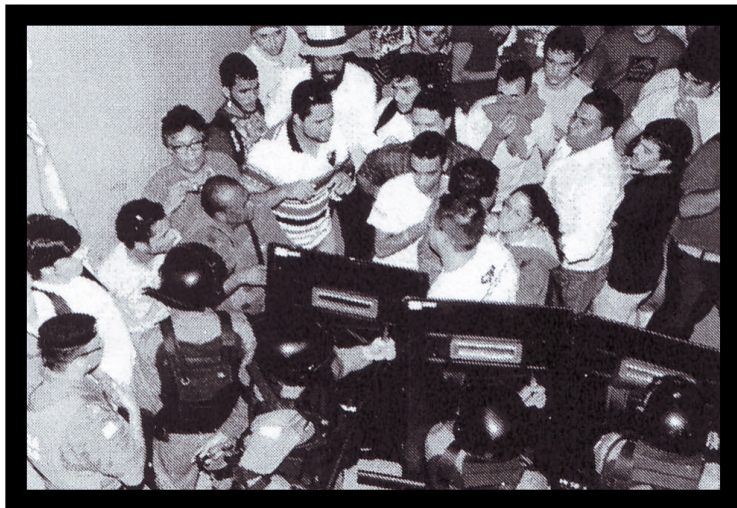
They had previously walked out in January over appalling conditions in the kitchens and toilets. That time they were paid 250 Pounds to return to work.

Brighton bin workers' action continues

300 workers at Cityclean in Brighton went on strike for 7 days after the local council, controlled by the Green Party, imposed pay cuts of up to 4,000 Pounds a year. There were mass pickets for up to 12 hours a day at the depot. The strikers organised a march through Brighton ending in a rally. They have now suspended strikes whilst they conduct a ballot over a new offer. GMB union officials engineered a second strike to take place the following week, but for refuse cart drivers only. United action by all the refuse workers would have strengthened their hand. The dispute caused a rift in the local Green Party.

The unrest among bin workers spread to Bromley and Croydon with three day strikes in those boroughs announced for early July over a derisory 2% pay offer by employer Veolia.

Thanks to Resistance Bulletin



turned to the deputies in the Assembly. I really cannot tell the real nature of this decree, as it all came too sudden and I couldn't find reliable material on it, to know if it's really, really possible to do what it says, as the company in charge of the bridge (Rodosol) would never accept such a thing peacefully, but the thing is: on the

BRITAIN TODAY

Industrial round-up

Posties strike at Bridgewater

When a militant postal worker at Bridgewater delivery office in the West Country was victimised and suspended from work last July, 110 fellow workers went out on a wildcat strike that lasted 48 hours. The activist was reinstated and workers forced employers to agree to national talks about the deteriorating situation at the Delivery Office.

However, bullying tactics by bosses continued, with workers made to work faster, and when full-time workers left for other jobs, their positions were replaced with part-time posts, increasing the workload pressure. Now posties have overwhelmingly agreed to strike on three consecutive Saturdays

from June 29th. The discontent at Bridgewater is not an exception. All over Britain postal workers are concerned over pay, pensions and conditions. The situation is tinder dry and could lead to action right across the UK.

Solidarity delivers the goods!



Building workers wildcat at Runcorn

670 building workers came out on wildcat strike at Runcorn

Thermal Power Station in late June. They took action against bullying from bosses.

EDINBURGH WORKFARE NEWS

DEMONSTRATORS DENOUNCE “SANCTIONS TARGETS” AT LEITH JOB CENTRE

Claimants and anti cuts campaigners are set to demonstrate at Leith Job Centre on Thursday 11th July in a protest against “sanctions targets” set by a Job Centre manager.

“A new manager at Leith Jobcentre has told staff that 30% of claimants are not meeting the conditions for receiving benefits – the clear implication is that these claimants should be sanctioned, that is have their benefits stopped. In reality this is a return to the supposedly outlawed practice of setting sanctions targets, and is totally unfair and unjust,” said Ethel MacDonald of Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty.

The demonstration is part of the Boycott Workfare Week of Action against the government’s controversial “work-for-your-benefits” schemes and is in opposition to the whole government austerity programme.

“People are really suffering because of sanctions. Right now we are opposing sanctions imposed on a disabled claimant who is having to live on £26.05p per week because he was too ill to go to an appointment with the Ingeus workfare provider. What’s more, most claimants who are sanctioned have their money stopped completely, for from one month to three years.”

The protestors state that they will challenge sanctions, and issue a call to direct action. “You have the right to challenge sanctions. Ask for the decision to be reviewed and appeal against it. If need be, we can alert our Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty solidarity network to have a peaceful demo INSIDE the Job Centre.”

The demonstrators point to a government press release stating that they have set up



“hit squads” in all Job Centres to presurise claimants returning from workfare providers. “The government have openly declared war on the unemployed”, say ECAP. “We know that in Leith Job Centre they have set up such a “hit squad” and some officials are misinforming claimants that they have to allow the DWP to monitor their online job search. This is a lie and we urge claimants to stand up for their right to protect their privacy.”

Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty have also been leafleting the Leith Job

Centre workers, appealing for workers to join claimants in opposing cuts, sanctions and workfare. “Some Job Centre workers are themselves facing unemployment, as now they only get temporary contracts, and could easily find themselves on the other side of the counter,” explained Ethel MacDonald.

“If we are not to be condemned to years of austerity we need to take a stand,” said Ethel MacDonald of ECAP. “Enough is enough! Why should the vast majority suffer because of the greed of a minority of speculators, bankers and super-rich, and the chaotic nature of their profit-driven system? It’s time for action to assert that people’s needs must be the priority, not money. We can’t rely on any of the political parties, we must organise at the grass-roots, through people power.”

The protest is from 10am till 12 noon on Thursday 11th at the Commercial Street Job Centre, Leith.

Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty
ecap@lists.riseup.net
www.edinburghagainstpoverty.org.uk
Greater Leith Against the Cuts
www.edinburghagainstcuts.org.uk

Boycott Workfare
www.boycottworkfare.org

Government press release announcing Job Centre “hit squads” and detailing sanctions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-detail-s-of-post-work-programme-support>

biologists, including (Kropotkin’s rival) Huxley, of whom Dugatkin is clearly a great fan. Dugatkin is much more critical of Kropotkin (and Allee) in his book the Altruism Equation in which he explores the evolution of the neo-huxleyian, neo-Weismanist, neo-Darwinist tradition through the 20th century. Dugatkin might have changed his tune but the completely uncritical stance of The Prince never reveals whether he believes that Kropotkin’s ideas are ultimately wrong or right?

The Societal Super Organism and Communal Experiments:

Dugatkin’s exposition and interpretation of Kropotkin is mostly completely correct and uncontroversial. The only exceptions are his remarks upon Evolutionary W/holism and the Super Organism. Dugatkin’s analysis is wholly mistaken.

Though rarely read today Kropotkin’s chief intellectual rival in his own time was Herbert Spencer who was then universally accepted as a great evolutionary and politi-

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Dugatkin’s Prince of Evolution 2011

Review article By Graham Purchase

Kropotkin was a great popular scientific journalist and pamphleteer. Dugatkin’s brief introduction to him broadly follows in this tradition. Dugatkin’s booklet/pamphlet isn’t a heavy academic work but written in the style or genre of serious but popular scientific literature with the admirable intention of providing a short, modern and basic introduction to Kropotkin’s evolutionary theories.

Dugatkin quite successfully covers kropotkin’s life and times. This simple, short, readable booklet on Kropotkin is a worthy addition to what I hope will be

many more such books by other writers in the future. Within Kropotkin’s work there lies ample material for hundreds of similar works to The Prince (such as has occurred with Marx, Darwin or Dickens).

Anything royal seems to increase circulation of popular books and magazines. Dugatkin’s choice of The Prince as his sales-title is in poor taste. Regrettable because Kropotkin renounced his title at a very young age and refused throughout his life to exploit it for advantage.

Uncritical:

Dugatkin’s uncritical presentation gives the impression that he is a disciple of Kropotkin. But in other recent works he is equally enthusiastic about the lives and ideas of a great many other evolutionary

cal philosopher. The Social Organism was Spencer's term for an ideal polity he envisaged emerging from a minimal state or stateless free-market/merit based society.

Kropotkin metaphorically uses the term social organism in one passage in his popular autobiography *Memoirs*. Kropotkin never used the term "Societal Super-Organism", as Dugatin implies (pages 68-9) and this is both a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of Kropotkin's political ideals.

Kropotkin's own term is incontestably: "Integrated Evolution". He linked this biological concept with a political appeal for an "integrated society" fed by an "integrated farming" rather than "agricultural monoculture". Kropotkin combined this by advocating "Integral Education"; schooling that respects individual wholeness and initiative within (a utopian vision of) a future freely evolving, agriculturally sustainable and truly civilized culture.

The notion of integration is different from that of being a cell or an ant and performing some specific or determined role or function in a social super-organism. Kropotkin explicitly rejects such "ant hill psychology" in the first few pages of his *Ethics*. Kropotkin was equally dismissive of small scale intentional communist communes on the grounds that they would at best become a "communist beehive" where "all would lose their individuality".

Holism denotes the tendency in nature to form wholes or individual identities that are more than their parts, and which are not reducible to them. Holism is an important biological, environmental and sociological concept underlying and justifying a broad spectrum of theories, outlooks and positions in diverse disciplines.

State nationalists of all political shades have used the notion of the nation and the state as being a super-individual phenomenon that is quantitatively and qualitatively superior to the will of individuals, whom are expected to submit to the will and direction of the whole. The most extreme version of this way of thinking is that the only true individual is the 'social-whole'. Fascism and state-Socialism (with their emphasis of a planned and regimented statist society) are often referred to as holistic political concepts in contrast to capitalist individualism. However capitalism is premised upon the idea, practical utility and desirability of a self-regulating free market that functions like an organism or system that is greater than the individual speculators, buyers and sellers.

The intellectual roots or ideal of The Super-Social-Organism originates as a modern scientific concept within the works of the great evolutionary biologist, Haeckel. Politically the idea of the social

organism (via Hegel) inspired both the Authoritarian Communist State (Marxism) as well as Fascist notions of the racialist-nationalist-social-super-organism.

Fascist Super Organism Theory was developed into a philosophical system by the unequivocally fascist South African Apartheid Statesman Jan Smuts (1870-1950) who counted among his disciples the popular novelist John Steinbeck (see his very readable maritime travelogue *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*). In his book *Holism and Evolution* Smut's argued for holistic processes as the determining or primary factors in biological evolution and social-history, rather than being the result of individual decisions as social Darwinism suggested. Sexual preference (following Darwin), Smuts thought, was the one exception, where the individual could exercise individual creative choice and preference in evolutionary and social history. Because holism



(often drawing upon biological data/theories/analogies) has been a component of extreme nationalist and fascist ideologies it went out of fashion in the west after World War II but underwent something of revival in the 1980's with the popularity of the Gaia hypothesis.

Political/social holism claims either that social entities are like or act sufficiently like organisms or organic processes. Biological/environmental holism is the idea that animal & human groups, the biosphere or universe is made up of integrated functioning organs or the world itself is a single integrated organism.

Dugatin in his *Prince of Evolution* repeats a commonly made misrepresentation of Kropotkin¹ by characterizing him as a social-ecological holist.

Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock in their famous little book *Gaia* (O.U.P. 1983 check date) similarly cite Kropotkin in their introduction as a pioneering ecologist. But they then go on to paint a view of global organism-like stability or

self-regulation. Kropotkin was totally opposed to the idea of stability in nature and regarded nature as fluid, dynamic and ever-changing.

Homeostatic regulation of the bio-sphere by bacteria:

Margulis and Lovelock build upon the observation that the bio-chemical processes of very simple bacteria have created and maintained stable conditions suitable for life for more than 2 billion years. In this sense the Earth's biosphere acts like a living, dynamic self regulating organism, similar, though infinitely larger than the countless other organisms that inhabit the Earth.

The idea that life is a geological force that shapes the Earth was first developed by Vladimir Verdansky (1863-1945), a Ukrainian bio-geo-chemist publishing his most influential work during the 1920's. The now undisputed fact that life created the conditions for the further evolution of

life was conjoined in Verdansky's theories with the controversial and unfounded idea or hypothesis that life actively maintains and self-regulates Earth's chemistry. The idea of stability (in atmospheric composition or ocean salinity) over eons is a recurring theme in most of Margulis' many books and Verdansky's pioneering work was a forerunner of the Gaia Hypothesis.

The Organism and Systems Account of Holism:

Most ecologists, although they appreciate the value of the use of organism as a metaphor for an earthly

body, conceive of the Earth as a super-ecosystem rather than a super-organism. Because the Earth cannot reproduce itself, the analogy with an organism, although powerful, is in some senses a very weak.

Margulis and Lovelock must be criticized for over-emphasizing the idea of the Earth as an organism rather than as a planetary system. Early ecological scientists similarly thought of ecosystems as organisms but this viewpoint is now almost universally rejected. Biotic assemblages exist in natural systems not as organisms. The idea of a system as greater than the individuals of which it is composed, is different to the older and earlier organism model of holism as it does not contain the idea that a system is a tangible physical or biological entity. The study and relevance of systems theory in the modern world is of fundamental importance. This is seen in environmental concern over the health of global atmospheric systems and the social impact of information and communication systems. Computer assisted areas of modern bio-mathematics i.e., chaos and com-

plexity science, are dedicated to examining the dynamics of self-organizing systems. Although a species of organism can evolve over time (homeorhesis) systems are much more open-ended and capable of rapid emergent radical step-changes. In novel environments systems may instantaneously and unpredictably flip into entirely new regimes.

Small-scale communal experimentalism:

Dugatkin links his notion of the super-organism with the practice and ideal of small-scale communal experimentalism (p. 75). In a delightful piece of travel journalism Kropotkin does indeed praise the industrious Mennonite communities of the Canadian plains. But

he specifically rejected such experiments in a number of closely argued political articles (see Kropotkin, *Small Scale Communal Experiments and Why They Fail*). More generally, by Kropotkin's time communal experimentalism as a way of facilitating social and economic change and as a political goal was completely discredited in socialist circles and most usually associated with the works and followers of the eccentrically laughable and entirely loveable early socialist thinker, Charles Fourier.

Scholarly Limitations:

Because of its short length, biographical approach and journalistic or non-technical style *The Prince* is far from comprehensive and entirely derivative—adding little or nothing to Kropotkin scholarship.

Although scientifically rather than politically focused Dugatkin doesn't cover all major relevant scientific fields which Kropotkin pioneered or championed. This isn't a criticism of Dugatkin's little book. I simply want to highlight its limitations in documenting Kropotkin's substantial or founding contributions to diverse fields recognized by science today. Most importantly Dugatkin does not explore Kropotkin's and Reclus' founding scientific contributions to Ecology. (see my article *Green Flame*).

Direct Unionism: A Discussion Paper by Recomposition: Notes for a new workerism

The revival of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) – a syndicalist grouping, has seen it remaining on the margins of various labour movements throughout the Anglo world.

In the case of Australia, it has extreme “sect” features with its major “organising” accomplishments in Sydney lately being so called “workers picnics” and other social occasions and jamborees, catering mainly for students and the leftist fringe. Whilst its major industrial activity has been typically of late limited to university campuses.

In the USA, where it has its largest membership numbers, of currently roughly a few thousand. Its major organising drives and campaigns in recent years have focused in such non-strategic sectors as retail, restaurants, welfare, etc such as the Starbucks Coffee shops chain and has been party to contracts in a significant number of shops it has organised. Recently, it has adopted a position of rejecting contracts as the objective of organising drives. It has also become entangled with the noxious left subculture resulting in certain locals developing sect like features. Particularly, with the adopting and much salivating over the hypocritical/navel gazing Stalinist legacy informed “safe spaces policies”. It has also adopted generally “political correctness” displays and identity politics fashionable in the middle class/student leftist subculture. Certain to alienate militant workers outside the tiny leftist fringe and encouraging the IWW's marginalisation.

The publishers and authors of this pamphlet are all members of the IWW in the USA and seek via providing a critique of the “contractual” tendency in the IWW

and the associated organising approach, to assist it to chart a new path to become a mass syndicalist union movement. It focuses on a “non-contractual” orientation.

Bizarrely, they appear to be completely oblivious to how the IWW is entangled in the various noxious growths of the leftist subculture and its self marginalising ramifications.

The authors provide many valid criticisms of the contract system in the USA and how



it encourages a “service unionism” approach. Involving unions becoming a separate force from the rank and file, with the emergence of an elite of professional contract negotiators and in the IWW an elite of “super activists” who perform this function. They are engaged in policing contract clauses and discouraging wildcat action by the grass roots, which would break the contract. Consequently, moving the IWW toward “orthodox” business union ways and away from syndicalism. However, based on the authors experience of IWW organised shops, it has a poor record of administering contracts and being a “service union”. The authors make the interesting point that the US industrial legal system views contracts by definition implying the existence of a “no strike” agreement during its existence.

The authors are also critical of the “shop by shop” organising approach influential in the contemporary IWW. They rightly point out how multinational companies with hundreds of shops across countries, can close individual union shops without hurting profits. Whilst, hardline small business bosses may go bankrupt to defeat unionising drives. However, the authors neglect to consider the critical importance of a focus on organising in transport industries with a view of workers there taking major industrial action which could slow key spearheads of the employer offensive, raise morale of workers generally and enable via boycotts to facilitate IWW organising drives amongst numerous small shops in such peripheral sectors as retail, hospitality, etc. Certainly, the success of the anarcho-syndicalist union movement in this sector in Barcelona in its heyday in the 20's and 30's, stemmed precisely from the industrial solidarity of its transport union.

The authors present a rather simplistic alternative approach to this “contractual” tendency in the IWW. It involves working “under the radar” of the bosses via “low profile” union activity to establish networks of IWW militants throughout industries. These networks would be involved in helping workers to win small victories on the job via direct action and when “a critical mass” of experienced union members occurs, large scale industrial action would be pursued across regions and countries and presumably in this context, establish mass IWW industrial unions.

The whole approach appears to be informed by “codes and folkways of the left subculture” which in leftist milieus are beyond debate and discussion, such as only being active as a syndicalist in the industry where you have a job. Creating an unscientific climate and discouraging stimulus

to historical research and vigorous debate. Whilst, all successful syndicalist organising drives have involved a combination of organisation on-the-job and off-the-job to varying degrees and a focus on organising drives not just anywhere, but in strategic sectors - critical to the functioning of the capitalist economy and threatening its key arteries. In today's worsening speed up "whirl winds" of the employer offensive, constantly increased surveillance of workers and low morale, the precision deployment of massive "outside-on-the-job" organisation is ever more critical. Particularly in regard to short circuiting the dis-organising impact of these rapids of the employer offensive and assisting the emergence of on-the-job organisation and its growth.(1) In regard to the IWW in the US "before it lost its way" since its resurgence in the 1960's, there is ample evidence of this approach. Such as the IWW's organising drive during the 1930's in the Detroit auto industry. Where considerable resources and "outside the job" organisation was devoted. Involving an IWW radio program, a large union hall and massive leafleting of workers entering and leaving auto plants. As a result of this prioritising

of resources and personnel, the IWW was initially successful in recruiting several thousand auto workers. Whilst the drive in auto proved later to be unsuccessful, due to a change in auto models, it resulted in an important organising spin off. Resulting in the IWW organising important large factories in Cleveland and achieving organisational stability in this sector into the mid 1950's. (2)

Whilst the foundation of the original IWW in 1905 particularly stemmed from union building activity in the mid west mining industry by the anarcho-syndicalist Paterson based "Right to Existence" group which led to syndicalist influence in the WFM (Western Federation of Miners), a key component of the early IWW. (3)

In conclusion, the pamphlet provides a valuable critique of the legalistic "contractual" and the "shop by shop" roads to building a syndicalist union movement influential amongst a tendency in the US IWW and how it facilitates a "service union" organising approach. However, the authors lack consideration of the critical importance of a strategic organising approach and the precision deployment of re-

sources and the long range hard yards it must entail. Perhaps, resulting from the influence of the malevolent leftist subculture, amongst many in the current IWW and the ultra left in the Anglo world and a lack of industrial experience. Consequently, they are unable to chart a realistic way forward to mass syndicalist unionism in the US, and overcome the various major obstacles currently in its path.

Mark McGuire

Notes:

(1) See "Anarcho-Syndicalism: Catalyst for Workers' Self Organisation, Not Leftist Sect Building" in the archive section of our web site www.rebelworker.org

(2) See, Roediger, David Ed. "Fellow Worker: The Life of Fred Thompson By Fred Thompson", Published by Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co.

(3) See Chapter 2 "The Myth of Frontier Origins" in "Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the IWW" by Salvatore Salerno, Suny Series in American Labor History and George W. Carey, "The Vessel, the Deed and the Idea: The Paterson Anarchists 1895-1908" in *Antipode* 10 & 11 (1979).

Interview with Historian of the Spanish Revolution 1936-39

Interview with Agustín Guillaumón, Historian of the Proletarian Revolution of 1936 By Txema Bofill (for Catalunya: Òrgan d'expressió de la CGT de Catalunya):

TB: What groups or political organizations have you been a member of or participated in?

AG: During the early seventies I was a member of Plataformes. I was in contact with groups like the ICC and FOR, without becoming actively involved. I became interested in the Italian communist left, councilism and workers autonomy. And I have always studied and tried to acquire an in-depth understanding of the causes of the defeat of the revolutionaries during the Civil War.

What led you to study the Spanish Civil War?

My family history. The oppressive reality of Francoism, a dictatorship without any other justification than its victorious war against its own people, and especially against the working class. I thought it was necessary to answer these two questions: Why was the war lost? Why was the revolution defeated?

Why have you devoted yourself to history?

To gain, to disseminate and to foster a more profound knowledge of revolution-

ary history, to refute the falsehoods and distortions designed or spread by the "sacred" bourgeois history. To reveal the real history of the class struggle, written from the point of view of the revolutionary proletariat, is already itself a struggle for history, for revolutionary history. A struggle



that forms part of the class struggle, like any wildcat strike, factory occupation, revolutionary insurrection, The Conquest of Bread or Capital. The working class, in order to appropriate its own history, must fight against social democratic, neo-Stalinist, Catalanist, liberal and neo-Francoist

views. The proletarian struggle to understand its own history is one struggle, among so many others, in the ongoing class war. It is not purely theoretical, or abstract or banal, because it forms part of class consciousness itself, and is defined as the theoretical understanding of the historical experiences of the international

proletariat, and it is undeniable that Spain must understand, assimilate and appropriate the experiences of the

anarcho-syndicalist movement of the 1930s.

What lessons can be drawn from the Civil War?

The capitalist state, both its fascist as well as its democratic versions, must be destroyed. The proletariat cannot conclude any kind of alliance with the republican (or democratic) bourgeoisie in order to defeat the fascist bourgeoisie, because such an agreement already presupposes the defeat of the revolutionary alternative, and the renunciation of the revolutionary program of the proletariat (and of its methods of struggle), for the purpose of adopting an anti-fascist unity program with the democratic bourgeoisie, in the name of winning the war against fascism.

What were the functions of the Defence Committees? How did they relinquish power? What happened to the Defence Committees after the counterrevolution of May 1937?

It would take me much too long to respond to these questions. These questions are addressed in my book, The CNT (National Confederation of Labour - anarcho-syndicalist union confederation) Defence Committees in Barcelona. Their principal limitation was their inability to organize and carry out coordination outside the confederal apparatus. The supe-

rior committees politically and organizationally suffocated the revolutionary committees, which had become their worst enemies and the most serious obstacle to their long-sought necessary integration into the apparatus of the bourgeois state, with the final goal of their institutionalization.

What kind of relations and what kinds of differences existed between the Defence Committees and the anarchist affinity and action groups?

The Defence Committees could be defined as the revolution's underground army, deeply devoted to serious tasks related to information, armaments, training, strategy and preparation for the workers insurrection. They were institutionally subordinate parts of the CNT, because they were financed by the trade unions and it was the members of the latter that filled their ranks.

The affinity groups constituted the organizational structure of the FAI. They were basically groups of friends and/or militants, united by ideological affinity, who assumed common tasks, positions and tactics. The Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) was merely a common platform, or coordinating centre, for affinity groups, which often disagreed with the Peninsular or Regional Committees.

The action groups, during the era of pistolismo (1917-1923), were formed as groups for the self-defence of the trade unionists and of the organization, because their only purpose, faced with the brutal terrorism of the state, and the militarization and financing of the gunmen of the Free Trade Union by the Catalan employers association, was to ensure the mere survival of the CNT militants, in order to prevent the disappearance of the CNT as a result of the assassination of its members and the resulting massive resignations of trade unionists.

Was there a revolution in 1936? Did the CNT's pact with the Generalitat put an end to the possibility of revolution?

In July 1936, in Barcelona, there was a revolutionary situation. For the first time in history, however, a victorious insurrection of the revolutionary workers did not seize power, it left the apparatus of the bourgeois state intact. The CNT-FAI, which was the dominant working class organization in Barcelona and Catalonia, did not possess an adequate revolutionary theory and opted for collaboration with the other anti-fascist organizations and chose to participate in the governmental tasks of the autonomous government of the Generalitat. Its only goal was to win the war against fascism. Its leaders renounced the revolution at the very moment when the revolutionary neighbourhood committees (in Barcelona) and local revolutionary

committees (throughout Catalonia), the factory committees, the committees of the barricades, the supply committees and committees of all kinds, were expropriating the property of the bourgeoisie, the Church and the state, in the absence of any visible forces of public order (which were all biding their time, waiting for the counterrevolution).

Why were the barricades of July 1936 successful while those of May 1937, raised against the Stalinists, were not?

The difference between the insurrections of July 1936 and May 1937 resides in the fact that, in July, the revolutionaries were unarmed, but possessed a precise political goal—the defeat of the military uprising and of fascism—whereas in May, with arms and organization superior to what they possessed in July, they were politically disarmed. The working class masses would begin an insurrection against Stalinism and the bourgeois government of the Generalitat, with overwhelming popular support and with their organizations, and without their leaders, but they would prove to be incapable of pursuing the fight to the end without their organizations and against their own leaders. The barricades raised in July of 1936 were still standing months later, while those built in May of 1937 would disappear immediately, except for a few that the PSUC would allow to remain as a testimonial to its power and to its victory.

What was the cause of May 1937?

May 1937 was undoubtedly the consequence of the growing discontent with rising prices, food shortages, the internal struggles underway in the enterprises for the socialization of the economy and workers control, the escalation of the Generalitat's efforts to disarm the rearguard and to obtain control over the forces of public order, etc., etc., and was above all the result of the necessary armed defeat of the proletariat, which required that the counterrevolution must finally put an end to the revolutionary threat to the bourgeois and republican institutions.

Who are the persons who are most responsible for distorting and falsifying the history of the Civil War?

It is not so important who distorted it, as the fact that it was distorted. Those who do the distorting are the same ones as always: neo-Stalinists, social democrats, liberals, Catalanists and neo-Francoists, that is, the sacred history of the bourgeoisie.



Can you provide us with an example of such distortion?

For instance, the confrontation between the CNT and the PSUC. This was a political conflict, in the Greek sense of the term, that is, a struggle between two different strategies with regard to the provisioning of the Barcelonian "polis": that of the neighbourhood committees, which placed the highest priority on the egalitarian, efficient and adequate distribution of bread and staple foods; and that of the PSUC, which sought to reinforce the power of the government of the Generalitat regardless of any other considerations. And this strategy of the PSUC required, above all else, the liquidation of the neighbourhood com-

mittees and the imposition of the free market. The free market meant completely unrestricted prices, and favoured the enrichment of the small shopkeepers, at the cost of the hunger of the population. The ideological and theoretical justification of the PSUC was that the free market, and unrestricted prices, favoured the distribution on the market of products that would otherwise be hoarded. What actually took place was that the free market fostered the hoarding of food and speculation, resulting in higher prices. The theoretical free market would rapidly become a black market, and hunger soon spread among the workers.

The official prices of staple foods, which were acquired with a ration card, were only nominal, because the supplies were immediately exhausted and they could only be obtained on the black market. The statistics do not reflect this shortage of regulated staple foods. Nor do they reflect the prices on the black market, which only responded to the law of demand. Anxiety, hunger, waiting for hours in long lines, and the expeditions to the agricultural towns to get supplies of food by means of barter, coercion, looting or robbery became generalized for the entire population of Barcelona after the spring of 1937.

Beginning in February 1938, the provisioning of the city would be militarized; this militarization would be complete by August 1938, when three categories of rationing would be established: combatants, armed rearguard and civil population. The Stalinists and the bourgeoisie tried to defeat the revolutionaries by means of hunger.

Can you provide some names of those who have falsified our history?

Miquel Mir, of the junkyard school of history. Rather than a historian, he is a novelist and a deceiver who invents, manipulates and modifies documents. He is financed by the Cercle Equestre, a

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NEWS & NOTES

Whilst, the mainstream media is currently a buzz concerning the massive spying by the USA NSA (National Security Agency) throughout the world, in this edition of RW, we focus on a move by the Transport for NSW bosses to further invade the privacy of public transport workers. It involves fingerprinting for signing on and off work. The introduction of fingerprinting in this sector, will create the basis for its generalisation throughout public and private industry. (See article page 4.)

Whilst Sydney Buses has according to the O'Farrell Govt. been guaranteed a further contract for 5 years for the provision of bus services. Behind the scenes moves are foot to radically restructure the workforce via a savage attack on bus drivers' work and create a cluster of highly profitable depots as part of the O'Farrell Govt's privatisation hidden agenda. (See article page 5.)

"Rebel Worker notes the passing in recent weeks of Warren Buckland, who worked with the ASN in Sydney in the early to mid 1990's. Naturally in saying so, we must also contend that Warren degenerated mentally into almost an exact antithesis of what we as anarcho-syndicalists uphold in later years.

In the spirit of comradeship, on the occasion of his death, we choose however to remember him with kindness for those earlier rational years he worked alongside us."

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Grassland Infoshop

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Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name

Address

General Secretary

PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

Continued From Page 18

Catalan
aristocratic
association

with profoundly Francoist convictions. His attempt to defame the anarchists failed and discredited the Catalan upper bourgeoisie, whose ancestors were so frightened by the anarchists in 1936. Pío Moa, César Alcalá and others of the same ilk, from the neo-Francoist school.

They repeat the usual fallacies of the Francoists and the extreme right, for the purpose of justifying and praising the bloody massacres under the Dictatorship of the Galician Franco: Martín Ramos and a long etcetera of the neo-Stalinist school. They dominated most of the Catalan universities for many years. They dogmatically denied that a social revolution took place in Barcelona in 1936, going so far as to refuse to recognize it as a school of historiography. Today they reject the notorious name of Stalinists and prefer to consider themselves to be social democrats. They hate the anarchists and are the main proponents of the black legend of Catalan anarchism, whose adepts are depicted as bloodthirsty vampires ... originated and propagated by the saintly founders of the PSUC and their predecessors (Max Rieger, Ehrenburg, Stepanov, Peruchó) whose purpose was to transform advertising partners into forgers of reality, at the same time that they unleashed the repression against the CNT in the summer of 1937, which would cause the CNT to disappear in many areas and would fill the prisons with thousands of libertarian prisoners. They claim to be objective and scientific, but they are fiercely sectarian and the most effective defenders of the obsolete capitalist system and the corrupt democratic bourgeoisie. Their works are published in the journal *L'Avenç* (and by the publisher of the same name) and in *El Viejo Topo*. This list of university figures would omit a handful of notable exceptions: Izard, Muniesa, Pagès ... and a few others.

From the neo-liberal school, there are prestigious historians like Viñas, or Cata-

lans marginalized by their neo-Stalinist colleagues, like Ucelay Da Cal. They are more intelligent and less compromised than the neo-Francoists, and less dogmatic than the neo-Stalinists. They are destined to succeed and replace them, if only as a result of the generational decline of the now obsolete divide between Francoists and anti-Francoists.

One of the alternatives to collaborating with the Generalitat was the “Go for Everything” strategy, as it was called by García Oliver, which he defined as an anarchist dictatorship. Regarding this “Go for Everything” strategy; was it not a possible option for the revolution? Could it have put an end to the power of the ruling bourgeoisie?

At the CNT-FAI headquarters, which occupied the two buildings confiscated from the Employers Association and the Casa Cambó, the proposal of Companys that the CNT should participate in a Central Committee of Anti-fascist Militias was submitted for the formal approval of a Regional Plenum of Trade Unions, convoked by the Regional Committee of Catalonia.

After the introductory report read by Marianet, José Xena, representing the district of Baix Llobregat, proposed the withdrawal of the CNT delegates from the CCMA and a commitment to carry on with the revolution and establish libertarian communism. Juan García Oliver stood up following the debate and characterized the decision that had to be made as a choice between an “absurd” anarchist dictatorship and collaboration with the other anti-fascist forces in the Central Committee of Militias in order to continue the struggle against fascism.

In this way García Oliver, whether deliberately or not, rendered the confused and ambiguous choice of “Go for Everything” unviable. As opposed to an intransigent “anarchist dictatorship”, the defence presented by Federica Montseny of the principles of anarchism against all dictatorships would appear to be more logical, balanced and reasonable, reinforced by Abad de

Santillán’s arguments about the perils of isolation and foreign intervention. A third position would emerge, advocated by Manuel Escorza, who proposed that the government of the Generalitat be used as an instrument of socialization and collectivization, which would then be dismantled when it ceased to be of use to the CNT.

The Plenum proved to be in favour of the collaboration of the CNT with the other anti-fascist forces on the Central Committee of Militias, and voted against the proposal of the representative from Baix Llobregat. The majority of those who attended the Plenum, including Durruti and Ortiz, remained silent, because they thought, like so many others, that the revolution had to be postponed until the problem of Saragossa was resolved, and fascism was defeated. A resolution was passed, without any more debate or philosophizing, to consolidate and institutionalize the Liaison Committee between the CNT and the Generalitat, which had been formed before July 19, and transform it, reinforce it and expand it into the CCMA which, by means of the anti-fascist unity of all its component parties and trade unions, would be responsible for imposing order on the rearguard and organizing and supplying the militias that had to fight the fascists in Aragón.

The authentically revolutionary alternative was not the “Go for Everything” of García Oliver, which was nothing but the seizure of power by a minority of anarcho-sindicalist leaders, but the revolutionary committees that were in the streets, expropriating the factories, recruiting and equipping the militiamen, manning the barricades, running the city’s services, forming security patrols ... and, in a word, replacing all the state functions and exercising all power, in practice.

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