

# REBEL WORKER



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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

**ALP, LIBERALS OR GREENS ARE ALL DRAWN INTO THE WEB OF THE NEO  
LIBERAL AGENDA & RORTS DEMANDED BY BIG BUSINESS! ONLY  
ORGANISATION & DIRECT ACTION ON THE JOB CAN COUNTER THIS  
ONSLAUGHT!**



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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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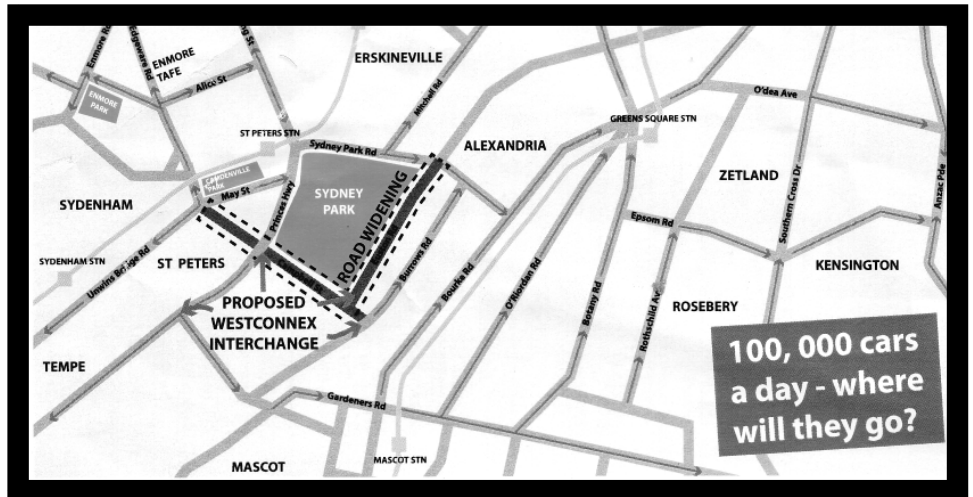
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made out to Rebel Worker.

The gist of the presentation and debate was that a key aspect of the WestConnex is to gain much quicker access to Port Botany and the Airport for 100,000 per year semi trailers coming from the North West and South West of Sydney. Whilst contrary to claims by the WestConnex speakers that it would not result in major pollution increases, it will in fact greatly increase pollution. At various exits from the

crease in King St. traffic, it's likely there will be a huge increase requiring perhaps a 24 hour clearway. On its M4 and M5 components, there are no guaranteed bus lanes or bicycle lanes. As WestConnex is a tollway, motorists who want to avoid the toll will be encouraged to use back streets in the surrounding suburbs and cause more traffic congestion and pollution there. With the construction, mostly only tempo-



WestConnex such as in Ashfield, Haberfield, etc, there would be huge smoke stacks, releasing major pollution. Composed increasingly of diesel fumes from trucks and cars. A local resident mentioned that he sold his house in Haberfield recently, due to his concerns about WestConnex and had a \$200,000 reduction in the money received from the sale.

The WestConnex interchange in St. Peters will destroy this suburb and Alexandria due to the inundation of traffic from the expressway. Despite claims by the speakers, that there would only be a minimal in-

rary jobs will be created such as in the construction industry. There will be very few permanent jobs e.g. tow truck operators. Whilst the impression given to most of the audience was that a prearranged decision had been made on the project.

The meeting ended with applause from the overwhelming majority of the meeting for opposition to the project. The speakers only avoided serious trouble from the crowd, because of the presence of security guards.

## Report on WestConnex Meeting

**On Monday 23/2/15 from 7pm-9pm a community consultation meeting regarding the WestConnex was held at the Enmore Theatre.**

It was attended by 500-800 people, mostly local residents. It was addressed by Christopher Swann, director of the planned M5 East Tunnel and Dennis Cliche CEO, WestConnex Delivery Authority. No interjections were allowed from the floor by the Chair. They set aside 55 minutes for questions and discussions from the floor in the agenda. HOWEVER their presentations (which were only meant to take half an hour) went over by 15 minutes and no extra time was added to the question and discussion portion of the event to make up for them going over time. So in essence there was 40 minutes for discussion and questions. As a result of filibustering in answering questions by WestConnex speakers, the time for questions and debate was severely limited.

## A.S.N. APPEAL

**The Anarcho-Syndicalist Network requires suitable, cost effective permanent premises.**

**A\$750,000 is urgently sought to buy premises for the proposed Rebel Worker-Anarcho-Syndicalist Network Media Centre.**

**Please make out Cheques to Black Cat Media and forward to P.O. Box 92 Broadway**

# N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

## Union Elections and Thank You's

Since this is the first edition of **RW** since the end of last year and after the National Rail Tram and Bus Union Elections anything that we have to say is possibly late and well after the fact. We are not paid for what we do and the work that we do here and on the job is done in any spare time that we have.

We cannot hide our disappointment at the result where Members Voice Candidates standing for union positions were not successful. We had a different vision to the one that is currently being offered. Unfortunately all spoils go to the winners.

We do not want to sound like sore losers, however there are many things which we could have done better. Hopefully these issues will be discussed at the next M.V. meeting. There are valuable lessons learned from the last election which we hope to apply in 4 years time. We also do not want to become just an electoral machine. We need to create and take part in solidarity actions where we can.

Of concern to all unionists is the very small voter turnout in the elections. It means that members are not engaging in the process for some reason or other. In some ballots people were elected

on less than 10% of the vote. We don't have a very healthy union if members do not engage with the issues or they remain disinterested. The reasons for this are pretty clear.

There were a large number of anomalies reported to the A.E.C., who conducted the election. Some of the glaring inconsistencies included, but are not limited to:

- \* Incumbent candidates using the Union

- \* Delays in delivering the electoral roll. One candidate did not receive the electoral roll till after the ballot had commenced.

- \* Omissions from the electoral roll received from the AEC, including missing post codes etc.

- \* Numbers on the electoral roll not tallying with the final voting figures.

- \* Vote farming by paid organisers or their cronies on the job. In some cases organisers arranged for third parties to harass union members for their ballot papers. This is a misuse of union funds.

- \* Sample ballot papers supplied by the A.E.C. for the NSW Secretary's position contained the wrong voting instructions and procedure.

We would like to thank all those that supported our campaign, especially those that contributed their efforts for a change of direction within the union. Congratulations to all the new office holders in the union. Commiserations to all those people who put their efforts into achieving a different result and placing some hope in the future. Unfortunately we must work harder and more skillfully if we are to turn things around. Our aim must be to create hope where there is now is none.



*"I have every faith in the postal voting for the union elections run by the AEC. It couldn't possibly be involved in rorting the ballot in cahoots with the union hierarchy and ASIO. That would be illegal!"*

logo on flags in photo's for the "How to Vote" brochures.

## Sabotaging the Sabotage.

By *Crimson Coconut*

Just this week a Sydney Trains staff publicity news sheet arrived in the letterbox of rail staff. Included was a card that encouraged people to nominate other employees for Excellence Awards. The blurb on the card went something like this. "At Sydney Trains we believe in recognizing the outstanding commitment of our people".

This would have been good if it were true! However, staff no longer believe the management hype.

Not long ago the Transport Minister also said that "no front line staff would be lost" under her reform program.

However there has been a gradually whittling away of jobs at the coal face. Surely, Station Managers, Transit Officers, Cleaners, Booking Office Staff, CSA's, Maintenance Staff, Roster Clerks, Station Support Officers, Information Staff, and many others are front line staff.

Where does the Front Line begin and end? There seems to be no end in sight to the jobs shrinkage that is taking place. Everyone is on edge, employees no longer trust management as their promises have proven to be worthless.

The introduction of disruptive work practices has gone hand in hand with the job losses.

One big bone of contention is the requirement imposed on staff to stand for the full 8 or 12 hour of shift. Seats at the ticket barriers were removed. In some instances these shifts have been broken up into 4 hr blocks involving different tasks. This has caused a great deal of hardship for the staff involved, especially older workers who are suffering under this new punitive regime. However policies such as these will affect everyone in the long term.

The health effects of long term standing are well documented yet staff are enduring lower back pain and leg pain and a plethora of other ailments. These issues have been presented to the Unions by members but have been brushed aside as a non-issues after a series of risk assessments run by management in conjunction with Health and Safety Representative and union delegates.

The situation got so bad recently that union members faxed through a letter threatening to resign from the union because it was seen as not being able to assist members. The leadership was neither willing nor able to win such a simple argument based on the health and welfare of its members. The sentiment in the faxed memo expressed the view that there was no longer any reason to belong to the union if the union leadership continually failed to support its membership over such a cut and dried case of health and safety. Nobody actually has resigned at this stage and the leadership could not have cared less. They did get a couple of organisers briefly involved, however they soon put up the "business as usual" white flag.

There was contemplation of a walk out by staff at one stage, which, while risky, was one way to resolve the push by management to make people stand unnecessarily. The Union organisers were asked if they would back up staff if they decided to walk. They refused, citing the old adages of not wanting to go to gaol for anyone, or not wanting to lose their houses. This was the final nail in the coffin for wildcat action. In the current climate management may have relished such an idea and there was a failure to get the required numbers to be effective. Without the union leadership's support it would have been difficult to rally the train crews behind the cause. Having them onside is essential, due to their ability to cripple the rail network by withdrawing their labour.

Similar see-sawing games took place over the removal of orange safety vests from station staff. The vests supposedly make station staff more visible to train crews. They were first removed by management. Staff were then told that they were to wear the vests while the issue was being disputed by the unions. Finally the union agreed to a 6 week trial of staff not wearing the vest. Effectively this is tacit approval for management to go ahead without a risk assessment being performed before the changed method of working. It is not likely that staff will be wearing the safety vest after the 6 week trial period.

Likewise the proposed replacement for random urine testing for drugs and alcohol by the use of mouth swabs is to be introduced in a most peculiar fashion. To test the efficacy of the new method 1500 staff will undergo simultaneous urine and swab testing. The union's agreement to go ahead with this ridiculous plan effectively makes members nothing more than lab guinea pigs for the new testing procedure. Why do we need such a large sample of 1500 staff members to be tested when the swab technique has been thoroughly tested and documented? It would be easy to understand if the sample was 100 people or so, but 1500 sounds like overkill.

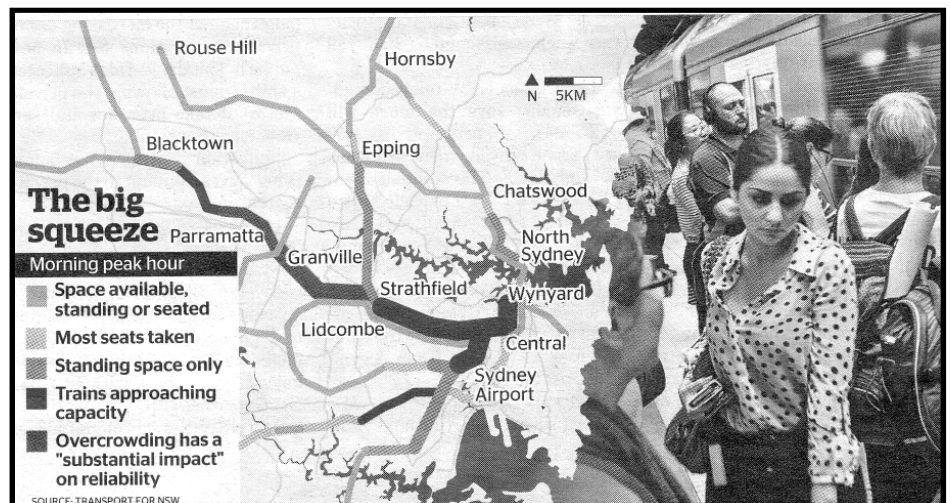
Numerous studies already exist and this data is readily accessible. Why would NSW transport spend such large sums of money on comparisons of the two test methods? It cannot be justified.

The neo-liberal agenda that is being rolled out across public transport is chaotic and illogical. It's as if the NSW Government and it's Transport Managers are sabotaging the whole rail network. The cutting of the Newcastle line is a good indicator of the vandalism that they are capable of.

Reform programs are being rolled out end to end. Many of the newly implemented plans are either incomplete or are unworkable. With each process there has been insufficient or no consultation with the affected stakeholders. i.e. those working on the front lines. From new rostering procedures, to cleaning, to issues with the Opal Card, management has a determination to push ahead despite the outcry from staff and the public. The government just steam rolls ahead with their flat earth pol-

ries, property, the whole box and dice is up for grabs. Before selling off the public silverware they are targeting the workforce with new work practices and they seem to be moving towards having a small pool of employees that would make these businesses attractive to investors. A pipe dream really, but they (the government) believe in it.

Despite the utter disgust of most union members their union leadership fails to organise or mobilise any full scale resistance to what is a full onslaught on the workforce. Their record is not impressive. As railway management has worked its way down through the layers from senior management to those at the front lines there has not been any effective campaign from the union leadership to stop the haemorrhage of jobs down through the ranks. They have never and will never organise or support democratic efforts of resistance from the shop floor. Those that have illusions in being rescued by the un-



ion. They have never revealed their vision of the future, however most staff believe that they are not part of that vision.

Staff, most of whom are union members, are more than demoralised, they are completely disillusioned. Gone are the days of consultation. It has now been replaced with the pig headed and poorly thought-out policies of the new business managers who refuse to budge on even the most miniscule stupidity. "Do it, or else" is the new attitude from management, and they mean it.

Partly this deliberate demoralisation is used to break down solidarity within and amongst transport workers. It is just as effective as having part time workers pitted against full time workers.

Because we are not united, despite some valiant efforts to unite staff, they are able to drive their agenda without much resistance. The long term ultimate aim of the Baird Government is the privatisation of everything that moves. Trains, buses, fer-

ries, property, the whole box and dice is up for grabs. Before selling off the public silverware they are targeting the workforce with new work practices and they seem to be moving towards having a small pool of employees that would make these businesses attractive to investors. A pipe dream really, but they (the government) believe in it.

So what are we to do? There is only one solution. We need to start immediately organising our own forces into a cohesive and united industrial resistance. This is not something that we do lightly, as we have never advocated in the past for such a bold move. We believe that there is more strength in us all being under one fighting and united force. When that is not possible should we just roll over and give up? No way Jose'.

Recent events have become so dire on the job that we can no longer stand idly by while the attacks from management and this government reign down on our heads. Almost every worker is fed up and at breaking point. The truth is that we can no longer rely on the union when our backs are to the wall, but we must come out fighting. It's getting to the point where we have very little to lose. We can and must organise a fight back.



Member's Voice is planning to hold a series of open meetings for which we have not finalised dates and venues. We hope to meet with other public transport workers in NSW who share our vision and who are interested in joining with us to try and work out solutions to the current impasse. We will be attempting to build a united fight back against privatisation and attacks on the public transport workforce. If you

are interested we suggest that you drop us a note on the Members Voice Facebook page or send messages to our email address: membersvoice2010@yahoo.com

I was asking around Sydney Trains whether anyone had received the latest propaganda sheet in their home mailboxes. A common reply was, "I gave up reading this bullshit years ago". Such is

the contempt and disregard for the management of Sydney Trains and possibly NSW Trains. Yet management continue to churn out this optimistic tripe while reality moves in the opposite direction.

Please keep your eyes out for the dates and venues for our meetings.

## STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH

### WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

#### **RW: What are the latest developments with the tramway extensions?**

Waverley Busie: In early January, there was a tremendous blockage of traffic in the city, caused by preparation work associated with the tramway extension construction. The whole city was held to ransom. The level of chaos was unbelievable. Many drivers tempers were fraught.

Why do we need these extensions? In my view if we needed the tramway, it would have been installed years ago. In regard to the extensions in the Eastern Suburbs, over 200 bus driver jobs will be lost from the combined workforces of the three eastern depots. As a result of the extensive trees destruction associated with the extensions in this area, I'm sure there will be major protests by local residents. This latest debacle with the tramway extensions in the city, again shows the short sightedness of the Liberal Government. Eighteen years ago, when the Liberals were in power in NSW and when the M2 was first put up, they refused to consider the option of an O-Bahn, like exists in Adelaide. It would have been a means of reducing traffic congestion in the city and increasing the flow of vehicles. Today, with the construction of the West Connex, more traffic will be spewed out in Newtown and other suburbs. Obviously greed plays a role in the Liberals thinking.

#### **RW: What have been your impressions of STA management under the Liberals?**

WB: To save money, they are putting pressure on everyone. I believe in the case of their push to get rid of a certain percentage of older drivers or at least reduce their wages for 6 months, for each scalp, managers are being rewarded. This is a false profit. The lack of experienced older drivers will just rebound on the bosses. We are being forced to survive in an environment of confusion. As we have seen lately with the tramway extensions chaos. Lately I

have heard that Waverley is regarded as notorious for the most authoritarian bosses. However, I believe all depots have some of them. They don't respect drivers and are not thoroughly investigating incidents on the road, before calling drivers into the office. Whilst increased demands are being put on us.

In the STA hierarchy under the Liberals, there are no mates. You can't trust the bosses. They may seem to be nice today. However, tomorrow, when you are called into the office, you can't be sure whether you still have a job. A very much "Us" and "Them" situation exists. They are seeking to screw as many drivers as they can. At Waverley, I've noticed this attitude amongst the new young guys in the Depot Admin. Some of them, seem to be trying to make a name of themselves with their displays of gung ho-ness.

One area I have noticed where the bosses at Waverley are screwing drivers is on the issue of missed runs. In recent years, in the case of a missed run, the STA would be fined \$2,000 per run. This system has been deleted with us. Now the bosses are putting the responsibility on drivers to avoid these fines. They have toughened their stance on the issue and are demanding a more rigid compliance. Some drivers take this push to heart and together with the traffic congestion particularly in the Eastern Suburbs, which causes a mire on roads and extra work they are facing with the Opals malfunctioning, which the bosses now say, we are required to manually correct, they are being pushed into the pressure cooker. Consequently, they are completely exhausted after their shifts. Whilst, those who don't take the avoidance of missed runs push, very seriously and don't ring the radio room when they are likely to miss a run, are being drawn into the office interrogations over the issue. In this way they are also facing more pressure.

Rarely is there WAD (Work As Directed) on your shift and you are lucky if you have 5 or 8 minutes layover at the end of a run.

At a recent Opal training course I attended, the bosses even admitted that they were unable to screw anymore savings from us and the whole push is backfiring on them.

In late February, I heard of an extremely grotesque example of the bosses' corner cutting in the provision of buses and its fallout for commuters. It was a very hot day, and a driver on a bus which was purposely built to have air conditioning as there were no windows to open, rang the radio room that the air conditioning had failed. He pleaded with the radio room, to supply a replacement bus, as it was extremely hot in the bus and there were babies on board, who couldn't cope and were crying. Years ago, a replacement bus would have been supplied without any fuss, but now he was told to just keep operating with the bus on his normal runs! The driver stood his ground, and the bosses agreed to supply a replacement. These days you have to stand your ground to get any action from the bosses. Isn't this saying something about the fallout of the draconian approach of the bosses?

Those drivers who have been on the job for many years are feeling the pinch and say they can't cope. Whilst, even new drivers who had worse jobs such as factory jobs, are now saying that the job is even worse.

This new system follows from "Optimisation" and the lateness crackdown. Both "pushes" put more stress on drivers and encourage the making of mistakes, which the bosses could seize upon for a disciplinary dividend. Resulting in some drivers getting the sack. The bosses often have the approach, when they call you into the office over an incident, that you are assumed to be guilty and that you have to prove your innocence. Whilst incidents, which would have been ignored in the past, are now focused upon intensely by the bosses so as to build a case to issue an E1.

Another area, where the bosses are screwing us and commuters, is in regard to expenditure on extra buses for runs. According to a bloke in driver training, the bosses have a very limited pool of money for the supply of extra buses. Only in the case of the Bondi Beach service when increased demand occurs, will extra buses be provided. The bosses with this tight fisted approached to expenditure are acting like the President of Indonesia, who

seems determined to execute those blokes, no matter the consequences. He also mentioned there is a very high turnover of drivers, and constant driver shortage due to the draconian disciplinary regime in the buses and all the cutbacks by the bosses.

Since the recent elections, the same the union officials have returned to office. In regard to the management onslaught, they continue to be sitting on the fence and doing little to assist us to fight it! They are on notice from us, that they must be doing their job! I have noticed that definitely they don't have the right stuff to assist us to stand up to an ambitious Liberal Government desperate to fill its coffers.

Another aspect of the current management under the Liberals, is that they don't know how to work with people. They are just trying to put us under increased pressure and resorting to the fear hammer. This is no way to treat drivers and workers in any other Government Dept or business.

I've worked on this job for over 30 years and I have never seen before this wildest form of management. There is very limited communication with management. Their approach is that you are to do, what they tell you. You can provide feedback to them, but no action is taken by them on the matter.

**RW: What's happening in other industries with this neo-liberal management rampage?**

WB: My wife who works for a govt. service, has noticed that the workers there are also feeling the pinch of the Liberal's neo liberal agenda. Out of the blue, the long time highly experienced boss was replaced by a new inexperienced, but highly paid "gung ho" manager. She has been taking a very heavy handed approach to running the service and chopping back everything she can. Whilst workers who weren't doing their jobs were sacked, others who were doing their work properly have had the wind put up them.

In the STA, I have noticed a similar push under the Liberals to get rid of the good staff who had appropriate training and experience. With the removal of most inspectors, now at the Bondi Junction Interchange, I have noticed buses being parked all over the place steadily creeping in. Only the other day I have noticed 2 buses parked in the drop off area, on the Eastern Side under the cover. No one seems to worry about it. No one is doing the job the inspectors performed of controlling what's happening and clearing these areas. Whilst, the other day I walked inside the glassed area of the Interchange and was gobsmacked to be approached by 4 commuters wanting bus information. I won't be walking into there again! In the past inspectors would be walking around in that area, and commuters could ap-

proach them for information. Now only occasionally do we see some police and security guards. On the road, again in the case of problems, we have no inspectors to contact and have to call the radio room. The STA is being run on the smell of an oily rag.

**RW: What are views on the defeat of the Liberal Government in the Qld Elections?**

WB: Campbell Newman the Liberal Premier was ex-army with military training. His "short cuts" approach to governing in-

WB: As a ploy to raise more revenue, the Govt. is demanding we pay \$80 every 5 years as we are "involved with children". As a result, a wide range of workers in NSW who may only have minimal contact with children such as fire brigade workers who occasionally visit schools, will be drawn into the net. The basis for the charge is completely bogus and ambiguous.

In the case of medical professionals like Doctors and Nurses who in their work, have to physically interact with children. They are certainly involved with children.



involved cutbacks to many areas to save money and the selling off of Govt. assets to raise money has rebounded on the Liberals with this massive electoral loss.

In the case of the buses in NSW we see similar Liberal "short cuts". I noticed in the public transport news sections of a recent edition of the MX newspaper, the Liberal NSW Govt. is expected to spend approx. \$92 million for new buses for Hills Buses in the North Western suburbs. How many buses can you buy with this and how many new services can these buses provide? However, at Waverley we have recently received just one of the brand new short buses. Whilst, much of our fleet consists of buses on their last legs. This short sighted approach has manifested recently throughout the STA with the terrorism paranoia security crack down at depots. Now only the union and certain individuals are allowed access. As a result, outside organisations which help us out, such as the Encompass Credit Union are being denied access. It's likely this shortcut will result in reduced funding by this organisation to sporting groups at depots. Already we have been hard hit by previous short cuts in the case of the sacking of auxiliary staff which supplied uniform clothes, mechanics and inspectors.

**RW: What are the latest developments with the Baird Government?**

However, all we do in our jobs, is to pick them up in our bus. If a complaint comes about you harming children, the police are obliged to check into the matter. It's likely only a handful of people would face such complaints. So far, the union hierarchy's "legalistic approach" involving a court case has been ineffective in halting it. With the wide sweep of the charge, the Government could gain initially over 5 years, extra revenue of many, many millions. However, with more workers employed in affected sectors, the Govt. will make even more revenue. Following paying the \$80, we will presumably be issued with a certificate. Will it be transferable to other jobs? Will it be binding? What does the Govt. want from it? I don't see any advantage for us with it. Will it protect you if there is a complaint about you in regard to children on your bus and the whole thing goes to Court or will it count against you in Court? Conveniently, we will be required to have the certificate and have paid the charge by the day before the NSW State election at the of March, if we are to continue driving buses. Latest news is that there is a long list of drivers who won't pay the bogus charge at the depot. Will they be taken off the job over lacking this certificate, despite having licences to drive buses?

**RW: What's the latest with employment prospects in the STA?**

WB: I was recently speaking to someone who had previously worked for a company in a contract situation with the STA and had been laid off. He had knowledge of the structure of the bus driver job and was now looking for employment as a driver in the organisation. He mentioned that he was recently checking the STA website and no-

ticed only part time casual work of 20 hours per week shifts were on offer. Due to the unacceptably low wages, he was unwilling to apply for the job. Interestingly, I have noticed all new drivers are put on full time work, despite the STA's website still only showing only part time employment being available. Again we see a case of confusion and misinformation by the Government. A similar pattern of confusion is

occurring in other Govt. Depts., such as the TAFE, where workers are also very unclear on aspects of their jobs. Like the Campbell Newman Government, the Liberals in NSW are showing they are not up front.

## VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

*In the last issue of RW, brief mention was made of employees lagging on their fellow employees. In this issue, we will discuss a number of these issues with drivers, station staff and conductors. Once again names have been changed.*

**RW: Can you tell us what is happening at V/Line?**

Clarence: Some of our fellow workmates are lagging on their fellow employees. They do so in the hope, they can obtain an easy promotion or favouritism from managers and Department Heads.

Jethro: In fact it has got that bad at Southern Cross, that is has been alleged that one manager has said that at the time when he walks past the staff clerks, he has to PLUG HIS EARS at what is said. He will not listen to these people. He has no time for Laggards.

Rastus and Roscoe: You are correct. Drivers attending classes around the staff clerks area have heard these employees lagging in fellow workmates. They say these employees are letting down the team.

**RW: Can you explain the term?**

Jethro: Conductors at Southern Cross are divided amongst various CSM'S, who are their team leaders. These CSM's encourage employees to report on any employee who lets down the team.

**RW: In other words, lag on your workmates.**

Clarence: At this point may we introduce you to Reeva. Reeva works in a Customer Service area.

Reeva: I have come forward, as I was disgusted with the way a booking clerk was given a final warning over an honest mistake on a ticket.

**RW: What was the mistake?**

Reeva: The clerk made a keyboard error in spelling a passenger's name on a ticket issued for a seat booked train. You see the passenger's name rhymed with a well known Anglo/Saxon four letter word.

Clarence: Mistakes can be made while using a keyboard in a booking office, as booking clerks are under a fair amount of pressure at peak times.

Reeva: The passenger obtained the ticket and did not notice the mistake. She boarded the train which was on the North East Line and when the conductor checked the ticket, they noticed the mistake.

**RW: What did the conductor do?**

Reeva: Well this conductor obtained the ticket and when they returned to their home depot, they photocopied the ticket and handed the ticket to their superior.

**RW: What happened?**

Reeva: The booking clerk was stood down

for is hoping for promotion. In fact, management is using this jerk for their own ends. If the booking clerk was fired, I hope this conductor had a conscience.

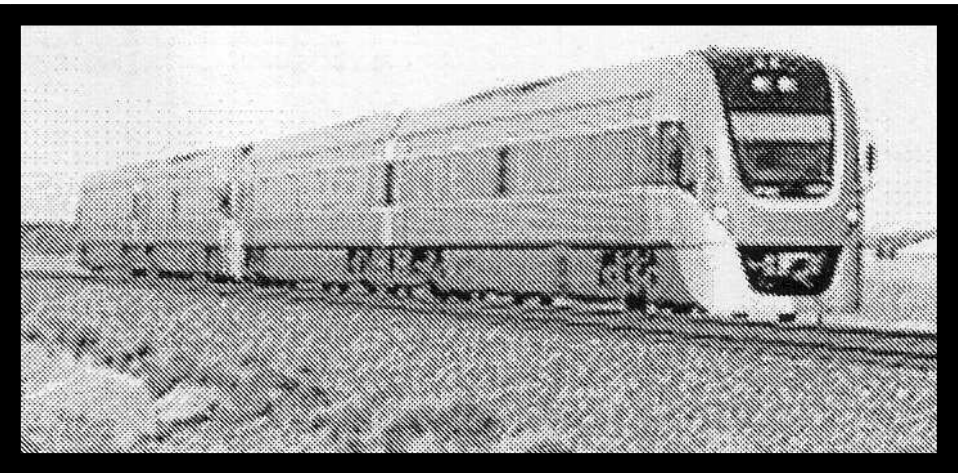
Rastus and Roscoe: Knowing this conductor. No!

**RW: Can you explain a rumour circulating around V/Line about a driver, who lagged in a number of drivers.**

Rastus and Roscoe: Yes, you are correct. May we introduce you to Roland. He was in the meal room in Southern Cross when the incident occurred.

**RW: How long have you been on the job, Roland?**

Roland: A long time. I will not say what depot I work from, but I was disgusted at this driver. You see I was in the meal room and I was speechless when this jerk spoke.



for nearly one month.

Rastus: Think of the stress it caused the clerk.

Roscoe: V/Line does not care. Think of the overtime bill. It was said in the last issue, management does not care how much is wasted as long as they nail the person stood down.

Reeva: The clerk was given a final warning.

Clarence: It was an honest mistake and this jerk, who dobbed the booking clerk in, should have gone to the clerk and showed the clerk the mistake. Not lagged him in.

Reeva: This conductor is well known for lagging in fellow employees. This conduc-

**RW: Can you give our readers a report.**

Roland: The new traffic manager had come to the drivers' depot to talk to the Locomotive Divisions signal sighting committee.

Rastus and Roscoe: The new traffic manager has come to V/Line from CountryLink and is one of the new Chief Executive appointees.

Roland: She came into the meal room just to have a look at the area and this driver got up and went to speak to her.

**RW: Then what happened?**

Roland: This driver went over to the manager and went into a tirade mentioning how he was getting all the worse jobs on

the roster. He claimed he was on standby and if someone went off sick, he always filled the particular job. He then went on about the roster clerk over favouritism towards other drivers.

Roscoe: He should have gone to his Union Rep.

Roland: He should have, but he thinks he is one up above the other drivers.

**RW: Is this driver a know all?**

Roland: He certainly is. Other drivers were shocked, as he mentioned other work practices to the traffic manager. In fact, some of the work practice have been around for over one hundred years.

Roscoe: This is correct, but if these practices have to be altered, then it has to be negotiated by the union with management. Not by this driver going off on his own tangent.

Roland: As soon as he finished, other drivers in the meal room were shocked with what was said and expressed their disgust to him.

Clarence: By what you have said Roland, this is the type of CRETIN, we have to put up with.

Roscoe: You are correct, these are the types of people Human Resources are employing. If you are a good unionist, as a large number of drivers are and you are from day Pacific National or another freight company, then you will not get a job.

Reeva: You are correct. In the conductors area, we have a crawler who wants to be a driver and he is always crawling to the staff clerks, CSM's, managers and Human Resources, hoping to obtain a driver's job. So far he has not been successful.

Rastus and Roscoe: Drivers classes have heard this person crawling and they are disgusted.

**RW: What about the driver in the meal room?**

Roland: He went on sick leave, then annual leave and weeks later, he finally returned to work.

Rastus: We drivers would like to send him to Coventry. In other words, not work with him, but under the current workplace laws, it is very hard.

Roland: We don't like this driver and the driver has said just be careful what you say to him or you may front Human Resources.

**RW: In concluding, there two examples are just what is happening in the workplace. Unfortunately, in all industries you have employees who want to advance in the workplace and they don't care who they step over to achieve the aim. Thank you Reeva and Roland for coming forward.**

Rastus and Roscoe: In concluding, since the current bunch of people have been in charge of Human Resources, the number of incidents of people lagging on fellow employees has increased. As for the two persons mentioned in this article, you are scum and get out of the job, you are not wanted. Finally, if you are dobbed in, refuse to front Human Resources and if suspended, go to the media. What V/Line hates is bad publicity.

## Health and Safety - the Ultimate Bosses Stooges

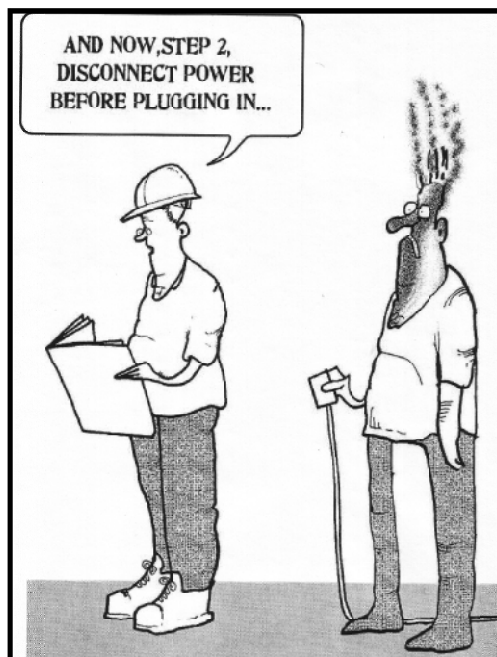
**We've all seen them on the job, the health and safety officers prowling around keeping an eye on everything we do. You could be excused for thinking that these men and women are there to help you and keep you safe from injury but this is rarely the story.**

Just like the whole WorkCover system, health and safety officers on the job are generally more about saving the boss from injury pay outs. This is why it is rare to meet a Health and Safety officer who is not right up the various managerial arses that preside over the work place. Fall foul of one of them on the job and it is the bosses authority they wield, dressed up in the guise of WorkCover.

They are not your ally (nor is WorkCover for that matter) their first and primary interest is saving the boss from financial loss.

Formerly injury on the job was pursued by the unions who put the workers interests first (at least in fairness during injury claims) and ignored what the bosses might or might not want or feel about the situation. Claims were pursued in court seeking massive payouts for injured workers.

Move forward to WorkCover and the birth of the health and safety officer armed with folders full of guides written at about the



level of a preschool child to bash you over the head with at regular opportunities.

Let's say you might try and cut a few corners and make your job just that bit easier,

to the rescue is the health and safety officer to "folder" you and force you to comply to what management has decided is first best practice. There have often been cases however where "first best practice" is inherently less safe than the way you were doing things; instead of safer you are actually cajoled into what the bosses have decided is more efficient.

Safety is like a lot of things, it can be used to dress anything up and used as a back stop excuse. "Well it has been decided that you should stack the red hot molten steel bars without your (expensive for us to buy) gloves as gloves can cause skin rashes in the heat". Now while this is an extreme example, the principle is apparent: methods involving increased efficiency can always be made to sound safer. In fact health and safety has regularly been used to bring about speedups on the job.

One of the things Health and Safety has more recently taken responsibility for is education/compliance about Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment has become something of an in-joke in Australia due to the excesses the middle class women's movement have bludgeoned upon it, it would seem these days that smiling at a woman on the job is some type of sexual assault! "How are you today" SEXUAL HARASSMENT! But we need to look at the reasons behind this adding of duties to the Health and Safety stooges. When bosses realised they could be sued for sexual harassment who did they turn to? The very same people who were already looking after their financial interests - Health



and Safety. If Health and Safety officers were really so independently looking after everyone's interests why were the bosses keen for them to take it on?

Health and safety officers often are on a much higher pay grade than everyone else on the job. National Safety Recruitment released its annual salary survey figures recently and found that a career in OHS attracts salaries 90% above the average Australian salary. This person is hardly working class, they have a higher than average salary to protect which means carefully towing the line with management. In fact saying they are a clear part of manage-

ment is probably a fairer estimate. There are some Health and safety officers who are volunteers but you have to ask yourself what type of person volunteers to become the bosses stooge.

Safety is very important on the job and under existing WorkCover laws the odd arm, leg or other crippling injury is barely compensated; and that's after a long protracted process where the bosses routinely lawyer up and lie through their teeth. Safety needs to be one of the most important parts of any work place, not governed by the bosses stooge or workplace practice created for greatest work efficiency.

Through a grass roots union (that just rejects out of hand the idea of working with the bosses and the state) boundaries of safety can be developed by the people actually doing the work and imposed on the bosses. While we continue to accept the dupe of the Health and Safety officer and indeed that they are in any way on the job to help us, we will not progress towards safe conditions on the job.

*Sean*

## BRITAIN TODAY

### What anarchists do instead of voting

The general election is here, and once again the parties are all over us like a rash, promising that they will fix things. But you don't have to be an anarchist to know that nothing changes, whoever gets in. This is why politicians are keen on new methods such as postal voting. Labour, Tory, Liberal Democrat, nationalist (Plaidá Cymru, SNP, Sinn Féin), principled or radical (Green Party, or leftists in some alliance), or nationalist-racist (UKIP etc), the fundamentals of the system are the same. Whether we have the present electoral system or proportional representation, or however many people vote or don't vote in an election or referendum, as we have just seen in Scotland, capitalism is at the driving wheel globally. As working class people, we are exploited whether we can take part in free elections or live under an authoritarian regime. Capitalists and property owners continue to control the wealth that we create, and they protect it through the police, legal system, and military.

### You can't complain

Non-voters are told that, If you don't vote you can't complain. But voting under these circumstances is just pretending that the system we have is basically alright. It lets the winning party off the hook. The fact is, we have next to no say in the decisions that get taken by the people we elect. This is called representative democracy. Anarchists organise by direct democracy, where we can have a say in every decision,

if we want to. We don't put our power in someone else's hands, so no one can betray us and abuse it. This really could work globally! Ask us how...

### Campaigning against voting

A don't vote campaign on its own is just as much a waste of time. The same goes for a protest vote for a leftist or novelty candidate. The time and money spent campaigning could be better used fixing



some of the problems we face in our lives. Protesting, whether it is spoiling a ballot paper or marching in the street, fails to offer any real challenge. So, anarchists say, vote, or don't vote. It won't make any difference. What is more important, is to realise that elections prop up a corrupt system and divert us from winning real change.

### Don't vote, organise!

We should organise with our neighbours, workmates, other people we have shared interests with, and others who don't have the privileges that some people have. We are the experts on what we need, and on

the best way to run things for the common good. We need to use direct action to achieve this. Direct action is where we solve a problem without someone else representing us. By this we mean, not just protesting and asking for change, but things like occupying, sabotaging, working to rule, refusing to pay their prices or their rent, and striking (but not waiting for union leaders to tell us when we can and can't!).

For example, when workers aren't paid the wages owed them, rather than asking the government to give us better legal protection, we take action to force employers to pay. The Department for Work & Pensions has even named the Anarchist Federation and the Solidarity Federation among groups that are a serious threat to workfare, because we have shut down programmes. This was achieved with only a few hundred people. Imagine what could be done with thousands!

### Taking it back

In reality, people are understandably afraid of taking the state on. But direct action doesn't have to mean an all-out fight to defeat capitalism in one go. Anarchists do think that ultimately, there has to be a full revolution. But by confronting the system directly at any point we can start to take control. In fact, all the good things we think of having been created by the state free health care, free education, health & safety laws to protect us at work, housing regulations, sick pay, unemployment benefits, pensions came about historically to put an end to organised campaigns of collective direct action that threatened their power. And where we would fail as individuals, together we can win.

### Labour and the Unions

The infatuation of the trade unions with the Labour party should be nothing other than a mystifying for ordinary workers.

Whether it is Unions Together or TUC (UK version of the ACTU) voter registration drives, trade union members amongst us should feel deeply insulted at being asked to prop-up the Labour party as the best available solution.

The Labour Party was set up in the early twentieth century as a political wing of the trade union movement. Despite the rose-tinted view of history, it has continually regulated workers under capitalism. It is not a case of Labour having lost its way and needing recapturing. To echo the anarchist Rudolf Rocker, political parties and elections haven't brought workers a hair's breadth closer to socialism.

## The Special Relationship

The TUC and parts of the left continually present us with a picture of Labour which

has nothing in common with its actual actions. They tell us that we still have a special relationship, and that despite its failings, the Labour Party stands-up best for ordinary working people. So we should support it without illusions, because it is better than the Tories. Not that you would notice! All the major parties support austerity against the working class. This is irrefutable, and Labour even says as much.

What remains of the dwindling trade union movement is essentially shackled by harsh restrictive anti-union laws and a totally compliant TUC leadership. These laws tell us how to manage our affairs, seriously restrict our ability to withdraw labour, and tell us who we can and can't expel, which means that we have to accept scabbing in our own unions. They restrict free association in a way that no other organisation can under British law and are

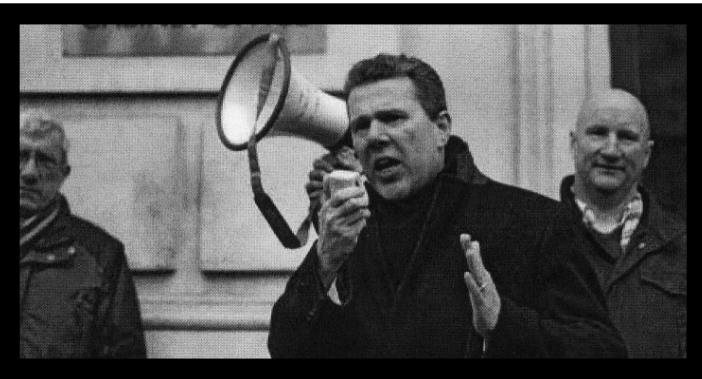
regularly condemned by the International Labour Organisation, which is hardly a hotbed of radicalism. The only time Labour repealed anti-union laws was when its hand was forced by a mass grassroots workers movement in the 1970s.

Overturning these present laws and rebuilding militant culture around the workplace is going to require not the politics of the ballot box, but sheer will and the determination to oppose so-called representatives in both the Labour Party and the TUC. Their class interests under capitalism are intimately linked; our interests begin and end with us.

## PUBLIC SERVICE UNION REPS VICTIMISED

1/12/14

**Two union reps sacked by their employer for their trade union activities are lobbying the National Executive Committee of the PCS (UK Public Service) union tomorrow.**



In two very similar cases of union busting and victimisation, the union has failed to offer adequate support in quite different ways.

At the start of the year, I detailed the case of John Pearson. John was sacked by Hewlett Packard for sharing information passed to him in his capacity as an elected union official with the members he was elected to represent, and then refused support from the union and tried to claim that he had brought his situation on himself.

Since then, John paid his own legal fees to take the case to an Employment Tribunal. In a damning indictment of the PCS decision, he won his case. The tribunal ruled that he was unfairly dismissed for carrying out his union duties, and that the information he shared could not reasonably have been assumed to have been in confidence.

However, rather than admit that it was wrong and offer support for John in retrospect, the union dug in its heels. Even after an open letter to General Secretary Mark Serwotka that received a huge amount of signatures and publicity, the union leadership's response was to repeat a number of false assertions and insist that it was right to refuse John support.

Most offensively, the union robustly defended its record in supporting victimised union reps - to a victimised union rep whom they had denied support!

John's case is contrasted with that of Sofia Azam, at Ofqual (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation). Like John, she was victimised for sharing industrial relations information with the trade union members who had every right to see it, and ultimately lost her job. Unlike John, she was supported to the hilt by PCS - and lost her case!

In both cases, PCS full time officials advised the reps to fight the case on the grounds that they had mistakenly circulated the material and were sorry for it. John was pilloried and left in the cold for refusing this advice, but was proven right in fighting his case on the grounds of automatic unfair treatment for carrying out legitimate trade union duties. Sofia followed the advice and PCS first lost her case and are now refusing to support an appeal.

In itself, this case should be worrying. If a trade union is not performing the most basic function of providing principled and effective support for its reps when they are attacked by the bosses, then what is it for?

It is doubly concerning given that PCS in HM Revenue & Customs is currently under attack. Leaked documents have revealed a union busting strategy adopted by directors to sideline the union and disrupt its organising capability. But if the cases of John and Sofia are the benchmark of support reps can expect, how many will be discouraged from putting their heads above the parapet to fight back.

Unfortunately, as former PCS activist Jon Bigger has detailed, the leadership is less concerned with a position of principle than with its own grip on power. The sentiment that raising John's case amounts to an "attack" on PCS has been voiced more than once, and it smacks of the worst kind of desperation.

As another PCS rep so eloquently put it on Facebook:

*Quote: "A difference of an opinion within our own ranks is not an attack on the union. An employer victimising a rep for carrying out their duties is always an attack on us all".*

That is why this issue will not die down or fade away, no matter how much the leadership might wish it. As long as there is even the slightest doubt as to whether union reps will receive full, automatic and principled support from our union if we are victimised by the bosses, this storm will rage on. An injury to one is an injury to all - no exceptions!

*Thanks to Phil's Blog*

## BELFAST: CALL CENTRE WORKERS FACE SACK

**More than 200 jobs will be lost when the Insurance Company, Ageas, closes its West Belfast call centre. Call centres are dehumanizing, unrewarding and impersonal and only those of us desperate for jobs put ourselves through the daily torment of working there and who are dependent on Capitalism's system of wage slavery.**

The company claims that the West Belfast site has become "increasingly uneconomical". This is what happens in a neo-liberal society such as the one we live in now. — They are a disciplinary measure for big business and therefore the government. They create tired, disempowered and apathetic workers. — Companies are profit driven, and profit can only mean that someone is being exploited - usually the workers. They do not want steady, stable profits, they

want rising profits. A decent wage stands in the way of rising profits, as does a strong workforce which is why most call centres have been outsourced to countries such as India where the workers are not unionized and can be paid less.

Another place they might go is somewhere where there is a lower corporation tax, so that they can exploit the national econ-

the wages they hand out are nothing compared to the large scale profits they bring in it makes the difference for some families here between being able to heat their house or even eat a proper meal.

Ageas will just pack up and leave while workers, their families and their communities will be left to pick up the pieces, to struggle on in this time of economic hardship which is only being made worse by even more cuts about to be brought in by the Sinn Féin-DUP government.

A protest will be held outside the call centre this Tuesday at 12.30pm.

In short, if you think Capitalism is working try asking someone who isn't!

*Posted by Derry Anarchists at Monday, March 09, 2015*

<http://derryanarchists.blogspot.co.uk/2015/03/victory-to-workers-if-you-think.html>



omy of the country of their choice as well as their workforce. Companies have no consciences.

They can take away much easier than what they give. While

## USA: OIL REFINERY WORKERS STRIKE

**10/2/15 HOUSTON (Reuters) - A strike by U.S. refinery workers appears set to widen late Saturday night to 11 plants as walkouts have been scheduled at BP Plc refineries in Indiana and Ohio, a BP spokesman said on Friday night, the sixth day of the strike.**

Stoppages by hourly workers represented by the United Steelworkers union (USW) are scheduled to begin at 11:59 p.m. local time on Saturday at BP's Whiting, Indiana, and Toledo, Ohio, refineries. The Ohio refinery is a joint venture with Husky Energy. Currently, about 4,000 USW-represented workers are on strike at nine plants in California, Kentucky and Texas, including seven refineries that account for 10 percent of U.S. refining capacity. The strike is the biggest in the refinery sector since 1980. Among other requests, the union is seeking a tighter policy to prevent workplace fatigue, which federal officials have tied to refinery accidents. The union is also seeking the assignment of work being given to non-union contractors to go to USW members. A USW spokeswoman confirmed that notices of intent to strike had been given to the BP refineries in Indiana and Ohio. The Steelworkers represent hourly workers at 63 U.S. refineries. BP spokes-

man Scott Dean said the two refineries were operating normally on Friday and the company planned a safe transition between union

workers and temporary replacement workers. "Presently, both refineries are operating normally and we will remain in regular communication with regulators and other officials as long as this strike continues," Dean said. BP's 413,500 barrel per day (bpd) Whiting, Indiana, refinery supplies the Chicago market and changes in its operation can affect mid-continent wholesale gasoline prices. The walkout at the 135,000 bpd Toledo refinery will begin one hour (0459 Sunday GMT) before workers leave their jobs at the Whiting plant (0559 Sunday GMT) because the Ohio refinery is in the eastern time zone.

With the two BP plants now planning walkouts, the percentage of national refining capacity at stake would be about 13 percent. BP said it would remain at the bargaining table ready to talk to the USW about the issues between the two sides. It was unclear how the strike might affect a shut gasoline-producing fluidic catalytic unit at the Toledo refinery, said sources familiar with plant operations. The unit went down on Jan. 27. Representatives for Chevron Corp, Exxon Mobil Corp, Royal Dutch Shell Plc, and Valero Energy Corp said their USW-represented plants had not received strike notices as of Friday night. Talks between the USW and Shell, which

is the lead negotiator for U.S. refinery owners, are in recess until next week while the union awaits fulfillment of an information request. Union negotiators rejected the sixth contract offer on Thursday from Shell, saying there was "minimal movement."

The walkouts are in support of a nationwide pact that would cover 30,000 workers. Companies have called in trained non-union workers to keep plants running almost as normal. The two camps have been in a stalemate since the USW called the first strikes Feb. 1, saying Shell had left the negotiating table when talks broke down on Saturday. Picket lines went up at plants owned by Shell, Lyondell Basell, Marathon and Tesoro Corp shortly after midnight on Sunday. Negotiations have been tougher than in years past. A drop of more than 50 percent in oil prices since June has eroded profits at major oil companies, prompting executives to say they cannot afford to lift wages for workers. The USW may order further walkouts at some of the other refineries and chemical plants it represents if there is no progress in the talks, the union has said.

# State Repression in Spain

*A short article featuring observations and analysis of the government crackdown on and arrests of anarchists in Barcelona and Madrid in December 2014, written by the editors of the Barcelona journal, Argelaga.*

## What's Behind Operation Pandora? – Revista Argelaga

**If there is one thing we can be sure of, it is the fact that the Spanish Government is not enjoying its best times. Up to its neck in a swamp of corruption and incapable of resolving either the difficulties posed by the restructuring entailed by the regional separatist movements (“soberanismo”) or the pressing economic problems that are crushing increasingly broader sectors of the subject population, it fears that its lack of credibility and its impotence will terminate in a State crisis that, faced with a popular reaction that is not limited to voting, could very well have harmful consequences.**

The State is hardening. The proof: the attempt on the part of the Ministry of the Interior to create a file on people who are arbitrarily classified as “suspects”, and the passage of a Law of Civil Security that gives the police carte blanche to repress any movement that protests in the streets. As opposed to those who propose constitutional reforms, or even to “democratize” the State in order to save it, there is a political sector that seeks to armor it with all kinds of repressive measures. Behind the walls of this fortress the majority of the real powers that have a great deal to lose in this crisis have taken refuge. They are beginning to panic, and that is why the State has embarked upon a change of course; with this goal in mind it is preparing the ground. The communications media were the first to lend a hand in this task, long before the police and the judiciary. For quite a while now fantastic stories about mysterious international visitors, the messengers of anarchy, as well as other tales of the same alarmist type, have been circulating, stories that have a tendency to criminalize the only means that exist which are opaque to Power (an opacity that is itself a scandal): squatted buildings, libertarian cultural centers and self-managed collectives. The message is clear: either us or chaos. The strategists of Power do not believe that the libertarians and squatters are their

most fearsome enemies, even though they are quite aware of the example of Can Vies. To the contrary, in their view they comprise a weak enough link to serve as a scapegoat, a kind of warning buoy to those who might also think of navigating such waters. The crude set-up staged by the National High Court judge, Bermúdez, is not just a simple maneuver of intimidation against them and the possible conflicts they might unleash in defense of the Banc Expropiat de Gràcia,<sup>1</sup> threatened with imminent eviction. You do not need to read between the lines. The arrest of a dozen young people, almost all in Barcelona, at the old Rosa de Foc,<sup>2</sup> under the pretext of four homemade explosives that were detonated two years ago at two separate ATM



machines—acts that were ridiculously defined as “terrorism”—or the deployment of more than four hundred State Police [“Mossos d’Esquadra”: the Catalan regional police force] against the Kasa de la Muntanya,<sup>3</sup> are such disproportionate and incommensurate responses that they cannot dissimulate their sinister intentions. And other, similar events took place not too long ago.

Those who pull the strings of such obvious set-ups are either a handful of useless mental defectives, or they are simply trying to warn others—the legal opposition—that they should desist from their monkey-shines, applaud the Gag Law and join the united front with the System. Or maybe they are both at the same time. The provocation of the anarchists, good people who are not afraid of anything, is the first step in a strategy of tension that is just the tip of the iceberg. Power is trying to stir up some kind of commotion in order to strike fear into the hearts of the television-watching citizenry. The State is floundering, it fears for its stability, it is on the verge of a nervous breakdown and that is why it hopes

that a few minor disturbances will forge the unity of the party of order. Judging by the spread of the example of the numerous demonstrations

yesterday all over the peninsula and, above all, the enormous demonstration in Barcelona, we doubt that it will succeed.

*Free the prisoners!*

*Revista Argelaga*

*December 17, 2014*

*Translated from the Spanish in December 2014 from the text published on the website of Argelaga: <https://argelaga.wordpress.com/2014/12/17/que-hay-detras-de-la-operacion-pandora/>.*

\* 1. A squatted building that was formerly the site of a bank branch office. For more information, see: <http://www.circusbazaar.com/squatting-a-new-future-in-barcelona-can-vies/> [Translator’s Note].

\* 2. “Rose of Fire”, an expression coined in Barcelona to describe the series of arson attacks that lit up the skies of the city during periods of social conflict in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rosa de Foc is the name of a libertarian cultural center in Barcelona [Translator’s Note].

\* 3. A squatted building that was once a station of the Civil Guards in Barcelona [Translator’s Note].



# GREECE TODAY

## The end of a grassroots movement in Greece

**Many leftists have been overjoyed that an anti-austerity party won the general election in Greece. For the left, including those in the UK, Syriza's victory is seen as a turning point in Europe against economic policies based on harsh cuts.**

SYRIZA ('Coalition of the Radical Left') started off as an alliance of various reformist left-wing currents. Its programme was very similar to Pasok, a socialist coalition of the 1980s. In fact, a large part of the old Pasok leadership is now in Syriza. Alexis Tsipras took over as Syriza leader in 2008, as the party was moving away from reformist 'Eurocommunism' to build a relationship with the grassroots social movements that had grown in Greece against austerity. As it was developing a presence on the streets and joining the large 'square protests', the party also increased its influence in trade

unions, especially the public sector, and organised among university students. It quickly positioned itself as a last hope for change for the social movement.

Syriza will now be the political wing of a repressive State apparatus - the police, the army, the judiciary - that is historically riddled with right-wingers and fascists. It has already formed a coalition with a right-wing anti-immigration party and will continue to

make compromises to stay in power. As the party is quite small with 35,000 members, around 10,000 will be moved into government positions in an attempt to counter the right-wing, well away from the grassroots initiatives that carried them into office.

Greek radicals with longer memories will remember that after Pasok was elected it rapidly dropped the radical programme that helped it to power. In any case, it was all but wiped out in later elections. Now here we are again with more leftist promises from Syriza. As one Greek anarchist

Spyros Dapergolas remarked about the importance of people sticking to grassroots organising, "Everything else is a recipe for failure, disappointment, loss of time, and, of course, political and individual corruption ... what power and state always create."

*Thanks to Resistance Bulletin*

## Syriza HQ Occupation

**Anarchists have occupied Syriza's headquarters in Athens as an act of solidarity with an ongoing hunger strike.**



8/3/15 The headquarters of governing party Syriza have been symbolically occupied by anarchists in solidarity with an ongoing hunger strike in the Greek prisons. This past week a number of anarchists and political prisoners have been on hunger strike against the high-security type C prisons and in response to the arrests of people suspected of involvement with, or support of, the Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire (CCF) group, including the arrests of suspects' family members.

The statement from the occupation:

'Today Sunday 8th of March we occupy the central offices of the government SYRIZA in Koumoundourou Street.

We stand in solidarity with the hunger strikers, political prisoners in Greece, and we ask that their demands are satisfied.

1. Abolition of the Anti-terrorist Law 'A', article 187, Law 2001 (criminal organization)

2. Abolition of the Anti-terrorist Law 'B', article 187A, Law 2004 (terrorist organization)

3. Abolition of the "hoodie law" (acts committed with concealed physical characteristics).

4. Abolition of the legal framework for type C prisons.

5. The immediate release from prison of Savvas Xiros (convicted for his participation in the R.O. 17 November) on health grounds.

6. Against the criminalization of the family relations of the members of the R.O. Conspiracy of Cells of Fire.

Anarchists in solidarity with political prisoners' ContraInfo

A video of the occupation shows a group entering the building and hanging a banner declaring 'solidarity with the hunger strikers'.

A number of prisoners began a hunger strike some days back aiming at the abolition of the high-security prisons introduced by the last government. The Type C prisons as they are called would essentially see prisoners deemed particularly dangerous incarcerated in severe conditions and in some cases isolation. The first facility, at Domoko in central Greece, to be converted into Type C came into operation not long ago and already holds a number of anarchists.

The pretext for the creation of the Type C prisons was the escape of November 17th member Christodoulos Xeros back in January 2014. Xeros was subsequently recaptured this year

but had, according to reports, been planning to help members of CCF break out of prison. Since the recapture of Xeros the police have arrested a number of people they claim were working with him. These arrests even extend to the family members of the detained. In response CCF members began their own hunger strike which has extended the current struggle.

These ongoing events will test whether Syriza is willing, or able, to dismantle the authoritarian structures put in place by previous governments.

## BOOK REVIEW CORNER

### Anarchy in Puerto Rico

**A review by Rod Jackman of *Black Flag Boricuas: Anarchism, Antiauthoritarianism, and the Left in Puerto Rico, 1897-1921* By Kirwin Shaffer, University of Illinois Press, 2013.**

**Kirwin Shaffer's *Black Flag Boricuas* takes its title from the color of the anarchist flag, and the island on which the radicals organized: Puerto Rico. The black flag symbolized solidarity with those most abused by the state, by capital, and by religion. A work of deep scholarship, Shaffer also offers a study that's accessible to the general reader. Its subtitle defines both the subject and period under study: Anarchism, Antiauthoritarianism, and the Left in Puerto Rico, 1897-1921.**

It spans, therefore, the end of Spanish colonialism (1898); the Cuban war for independence (1895-98); the Great War: World War One (1914-18); the Mexican Revolution (1910-20); and American expansionism, all pivotal moments in Caribbean social development. It's a complicated time. Shaffer's analysis unfolds chronologically, and he grounds the reader in the struggles of a few major actors such as Santiago Iglesias Pantin and Juan Vilar, who rotted in jail. Iglesias is a carpenter from Spain who had worked with anarchist groups in Spain and Cuba before fleeing the latter in late 1896 as colonial authorities ramped up their repression. He's a problematic figure. Depending on when you encounter Iglesias, he may espouse anarchist views or endorse electoral politics. He would win a seat in the Puerto Rican Senate in 1917. To the chagrin of many anarchists, he aligned his FLT (Free Federation of Workers) with the American Federation of Labor's support for the Great War.

Though anchoring his readers in a few fascinating personalities, *Black Flag* doesn't espouse a Great Man theory of history. Quite the contrary, this is a materialist analysis of the period. The island was just emerging from being an agrarian society. Large scale industrialization would accelerate at the turn of the century, as American firms absorbed the tobacco industry. At every inflection, Shaffer elucidates the conditions faced by workers particularly those most oppressed. How does one organize workers who are predominantly illiterate? Anarchists employed two main methods. One was the professional reader, the lector, who kept the cigar workers informed. The lector read what the workers chose, usually newspapers, novels, pam-

phlets, and short stories. In this way, workers heard liberal and radical critiques of society as expressed in those publications. An artisanal sector, cigar workers were among the first to be industrialized. Cultural production is the second innovation which anarchists developed. Shaffer identifies a range that includes theatrical performances, dramatic production groups, poetry, fiction, non-fiction and journalism. CES branches Centro de Estudios Sociales (Social Studies Center) operated in many parts of the country. No CES was worth its name without a band. Just as a



CES needed music, it also needed plays. That need would be filled by someone like Romero Rosa, who wrote *Le emancipacion del Obrero; Drama alegorico en un acto* (Emancipation of the Worker: An allegorical drama in one act). Or someone such as Juan Jose Lopez, whose poem titled *Lucha Rosa* (Red Struggle) urged people to unite around her (anarchy). Lectors and the dramatic presentations of plays and poetry facilitated self-awareness within the island's nascent labor movement. Shaffer does not overlook the craft centers (casinos de artesanos) and the social gatherings (veladas) which staged leftist drama. Anarchists targeted artisans; performances were in fact educational tools. This activity played impor-

tant roles in resistance and solidarity. Not surprisingly, therefore, artisans also developed theater groups to act out their growing understanding of exploitation and injustice. Casinos offered night courses and built libraries, no minor accomplishment for the development of literacy, agency, and class consciousness. Anarchists disseminated their ideas in periodicals, though often having the actual printing done overseas in vehicles such as New York City's *Cultura Obrera* (Labor Culture) and *El Despertar* (The Awakening) as well as in Havana's *Tierra! (Land!)*. They pooled money to purchase copies of *El Dependiente* from Havana. They published a remarkable number of home grown papers, given the oppositional weight of the state and the clergy.

Thus, one finds: *El Porvenir Social* (The Social Future) *Voz Humana* (Voice of the People) and *Ensayo Obrero* (Labor Experiment). Though many were ephemeral, the list in Shaffer's bibliography almost fills one page. Leftist remissions also supported failing publications overseas, a laudable sacrifice given the island's poverty. While the anarchists were not prone to acts of violence, their writing was rife with it. Shaffer does not spend as much time in *Black Flag* on leftist literature as he does in his discerning 2009 essay: *By Dynamite, Sabotage, Revolution, And The Pen: Violence In Caribbean Anarchist Fiction, 1890s, 1920s*. It makes the case for how violence manifested itself in radical art, much more than in radical action.

By the Caribbean, he means the Spanish speaking territories. Anarcho-syndicalism, the anarchist philosophy of labor organizing, did not express itself in the Dutch or French colonies. Contemporaneous Anglophone Caribbean radicalism was anti-colonialist and pan-Africanist. Anarchists arrayed themselves against the Catholic Church. Ponce-based *La Conciencia Libre* (The Free Conscience) emerged as a strident anticlerical voice. The Church remained not just a legacy of Spanish colonialism but also a backward, authoritarian institution that blocked scientific and democratic progress. The Spanish-born but Puerto-Rican raised female freethinker, Belen de Serraga, condemned the Church's mysticism and for making women throughout the Latin world woefully unprepared for the surge in new radical ideas. By attempting to separate Jesus from orthodox conservative Christianity, anarchists veered toward what would today be considered liberation theology.

Were there any ethnic or racial tensions among radicals in Boricua? Shaffer does not explore this. In his 2005 study of Ca-



Caribbean radicalism titled *Anarchism and Countercultural Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba*, he spends an entire chapter on this topic: *Anarchism in Black and White: race and afrocubanismo*. Given the cross-pollination of ideology, ideologies and publications among the islands and the mainland, one wonders how the Puerto Rican experience differed. Was there perhaps the functional equivalent of negrism, which asserted an Afro-Cuban cultural heritage?

Shaffer asserts that unlike Cuba, One finds no such adaptation [of global anarchist ideas] to fit ethnic diversity in Puerto Rico. Rather, the island's anarchists were mostly homegrown and from a wide racial representation. Perhaps true, but somehow it feels unsatisfactory.

With the end of Spanish dominance, America exerted its neo-colonial suzerainty; agrarian society declined as industrial production supplanted it; wars of national liberation were undertaken nearby; clericalism was on the defensive; intra-Caribbean and global relationships were evolving. Despite intense repression, anarchists capitalized on the social, political, and economic fractures to promulgate their ideas and build institutions. Shaffer includes a map of the island's municipalities, and identifies where anarchists operated. It becomes visually evident that countercultural politics extended beyond

the urban centers, to become a widespread phenomenon. In his prior study of anarchism in Cuba, Shaffer included a chapter on the Cuban Melting Pot. The Cuban elite saw Spanish immigration as contributing to the whitening of Cuba. One also learns that Haitian and Jamaican workers engendered working class antagonisms. Though *Black Flag Boricuas* looks at migration of anarchists to and from Puerto Rico, Shaffer does not evaluate its ethnic ramifications. We do not discover if notions of *raza latina* an overarching conception of ethno-racial identity played out among anarchists in Boricua, as it did in Cuba. Autonomy versus American integration sharply divided leftists in Puerto Rico. Reformists, such as Iglesias, advocated rejected independence and promoted the island's special relationship with Washington. Some, like Angel Dieppa, applauded the U.S. democratic system, which he thought was the best government people had yet encountered. Others, like Luis Munoz Marin, pointed to the American occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1916. He feared that Puerto Rican independence would unleash something akin to the Platt Amendment (1901) which legitimized unilateral American intervention in Cuba. Platt is still felt today. It mandates negotiation over the Guantanamo Bay naval base. It's impossible to separate leftist and antiauthoritarian work from the frenzy of

contemporaneous domestic and international activity. Shaffer articulates the impact of those intersecting forces on a complex situation which requires a capable guide without losing grip on his narrative thread. As he points out in his earlier essay, *By Dynamite*: One-hundred-year old Caribbean anarchist fiction is not easy to acquire. Most surviving copies are preserved in institutes and libraries in Europe, Cuba and Puerto Rico. Those conditions also apply to anarchist non-fiction. Therefore, scholars face an extraordinary challenge. *Black Flag* is a valuable addition to an emerging body of work on leftist radicalism in the Hispanic Caribbean. Shaffer succeeds in his goal of recovering anarchists from their largely forgotten history. Quibbles notwithstanding, he provides a substantial companion to his previous treatment of Cuban radical organizing. One hopes that he'll next tackle anarchism in the Dominican Republic.

*Edited.*

*Discussed in this essay: Black Flag Boricuas: Anarchism, Antiauthoritarianism, and the Left in Puerto Rico, 1897-1921 by Kirwin R. Shaffer. University of Illinois Press. 2013. 240 pages. \$65. Rod Jackman has taught English at several colleges in New York*

## **New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The International, the National and the Transnational. Edited by David Berry and Constance Bantman. Published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.**

### **Syndicalism in a Neo-Liberal Climate**

**Some contemporary syndicalist writers (favouring ultra democratic principles, industrial unionism, direct action on the job, independence of unions from all political parties and workers control of industry and communities) have argued that with the steady roll back of the welfare state, relentless privatisation pushes, massive jobs and workers' conditions losses, associated with the adopting of neo-liberal programs by social democratic parties and bureaucratic unions since the 1980's, facilitated by various agents of international capitalism, important preconditions for the resurgence of a mass syndicalist union movement on an international scale are emerging.**

As workers presumably will be compelled to self organise and take direct action to counter the continuous deepening attacks

of the employer offensive, assisted by Governments and the bureaucratic unions. Whilst the bases of support of these formally social democratic organisations will radically decline and associated illusions will be dispelled with the parliamentary electoral road and the smoke and mirrors of the bureaucratic union negotiations game.

In the Australian context, the bureaucratic unions have particularly played a vanguard role in this neo-liberal onslaught via the ALP/ACTU Prices and Incomes Accord and subsequently "Enterprise Bargaining" from the mid 1980's onwards and the current "unofficial accord" – the close cooperation between ALP controlled bureaucratic unions and ALP/Liberal Governments and managements to facilitate various neo-liberal attacks.

The international syndicalist movement which had emerged in the late 19th Century and early 20th Centuries, reached its high point in the immediate post WWI pe-

riod, when the International Workers Association formed in 1922 from mostly syndicalist union movements in mostly European and Latin American countries with a membership of over 2 million workers. It had declined in the late 1920's and 1930's associated with a range of factors such as the rise of Fascism, a number of dictatorships in Latin America, the rise of mass Stalinism associated with the proliferation of Communist Parties, the Welfare State and fixed term contracts. In the immediate post WWII period, the outbreak of the "Cold War" and the associated US financed boom in particularly European countries in the "Western Orbit" and the emergence of the welfare state phenomena, created seeming insurmountable obstacles to the resurgence of mass syndicalist unionism.

An important factor in the emergence of the embryonic syndicalist movement in many countries during the harsh labour organising and Laissez Faire environment of the late 19th Century and early 20th Century was the initial support of state structures and electoral competition between political parties. In the case of the French Syndicalist movement, the *Bourse du Travail* – state sponsored labour exchanges formed in the late 19th Century led to the formation of local alliances of

unions and subsequently a federation - the Bourse Du Travail Labour Federation, which in 1900 merged with the CGT (General Confederation of Labour).(1) Until the immediate WWI period, it had a syndicalist orientation and major influence on the international syndicalist movement. Whilst, in Spain during this period, the early syndicalist unions which went on to affiliate to the CNT(National Confederation of Labour) formed in 1910, were greatly assisted by the Republican movement, which was competing for working class support with the Socialist Party in elections and provided a range of assistance e.g. offices, legal help, publishing, etc. Most significant was the Blasco tendency in Valencia.(2)

In the contemporary Anglo World situation, it's likely syndicalist catalyst groupings will have to do much of the "heavy lifting" in providing the infrastructure to assist major breakaways from the formerly Social Democratic unions which would form transitional steps to achieving mass syndicalist union centres.

The essays in this volume were mostly presented at the Anarchist Studies Conference held at Loughborough University, UK in 2008. They focus on four key areas. An overview of the syndicalist movement in Europe from the early 20th Century to WWI, key militants in the movement, studies of aspects of the movement and interpretations.

*"Uneasy Family: Revolutionary Syndicalism in Europe From the Charte D'Amiens to World War One"* by Wayne Thorpe, examines the profound influence of the syndicalist oriented French CGT (General Confederation of Labour) on the emergence of the movement throughout Europe at this time, and conflicts between it and allied movements in other countries.

Whilst *"From Trade Unionism to Syndicalisme Revolutionnaire to Syndicalism: The British Origins of French Syndicalism"* by Constance Bantman, examines the critical influence of British industrial unrest in the late 19th and early 20th Century on the formation of the French CGT.

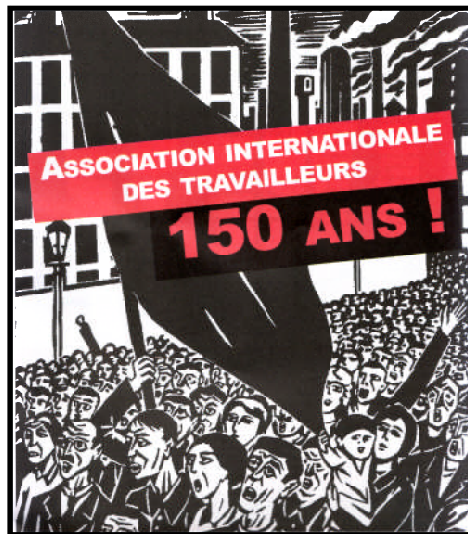
*"Analysing Revolutionary Syndicalism: The Importance of Community"* by Bert Altena, shows the difficulties in explaining the emergence of syndicalist unionism in different countries. He agrees with the views of the historian of revolutionary syndicalism, Marcel Van Der Linden that major reasons for the decline and marginalisation of syndicalist labour movements particularly in the post WWII period was the existence of national fixed term labour agreements and the emergence of the "Welfare State" phenomena.(3) Altena, also considers that the

emergence of commercial mass entertainment and sport, played a key role in undermining syndicalist influence and culture amongst workers.

However, the most interesting essays in this volume shed light on the above phenomena in Poland and the role of the Cold War in severely weakening resurgent syndicalist unionism, particularly in France in the immediate post WWII period and a possible "realistic" approach for establishing mass syndicalist unionism in Australia and elsewhere today.

## Polish Syndicalism & Anarchism

**The emergence of the Polish syndicalist movement is discussed in the essays, "Polish Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism in the Twentieth Century" by Rafał Chwedoruk and "Internationalism in the Border Triangle: Alfons Pilarski and Upper Silesian Anarcho-Syndicalism during the Interwar Years" by Dieter Nelles, and shows this pattern.**



These essays sketch the background to the emergence of the ZZZ(Central Wydział Zawodowy(Union of Trade Unions, Poland) which was the largest union confederation in Poland in the interwar Period, with a peak membership of 170,000 and the key role of Alfons Pilarski in its syndicalist wing.

Rafał Chwedoruk, sketches the character of the Polish Anarchist movement in the 1920's. It was grouped around the Anarchist Federation of Poland (AFP), formed in 1926 and lacked much of an industrial base. Its social composition consisted mainly of young people of the middle class and the Jewish minority. The most important would be considered in Marxist terms déclassé. Unlike the so called anarchist milieu in the contemporary Anglo World, which has a similar social base but also includes apart from students, workers with

high levels of autonomy in their work, is characterised by tiny bourgeois subcultures merging into largely sectlets and cults. Notable for all manner of navel gazing, Stalinist legacy influence, grotesque "political correctness displays", fascination with bourgeois identity politics, the typical "oppression mongering and guilt tripping" of middle class leftists, introversion and bizarre antics and generally "running around like headless chickens" chasing any fashionable issue and struggle going. Many AFP members developed a serious orientation to the workers movement.

The author looks at how these elements were drawn into engagement with the ZZZ via the influence of Pilarski. The type of absolutely dedicated and dynamic figure, the syndicalist movement has often thrown up throughout its history. He had been the political editor of the syndicalist paper, "Freedom" in Upper Silesia, Germany and had also initiated the Black Cohorts, antifascist fighting organisation. As a result of his involvement with it, and the coming to power of Hitler, Pilarski was forced to flee to Poland. There he also became employed by the ZZZ Secretariat and subsequently became the editor of its national daily paper "Workers Front". He was also employed in the Polish State Radio as a speaker broadcasting to Nazi Germany. Subsequently, he was co-opted to the ZZZ national executive.

With the agreement of the International Workingmen's Association (IWMA) international syndicalist organisation, he was able to persuade members of the AFP to leave and become involved in the youth and cultural associations of the ZZZ. The anarchists in the ZZZ were pushing for the merger of the socialist unions with the ZZZ.

The authors look at how the ZZZ in 1931 formed via the merger of the GFP (General Federation of Labour-Poland) influenced by the French CGT (General Confederation of Labour) during its syndicalist phase and smaller non syndicalist unions. Government support for the ZZZ, to counter the influence of the Socialist Party allied unions, greatly assisted its expansion in Govt. owned industry. As a result of Pilarski's efforts and the influx of young anarchists from the AFP, the ZZZ increasingly moved toward a syndicalist orientation. The authors show how this involved participation in numerous strikes and conflict with the Polish Govt, resulting in a counter attack by its former sponsor. It entailed the Govt. provoking a major split in the ZZZ, via threats of the withdrawal of employment privileges to ZZZ members. Resulting in its shrinkage to 40,000 members in 1937. The Polish State proceeded to wage a campaign of harassment against ZZZ militants. The ZZZ



went on to adopt an explicitly syndicalist program and became drawn into relations with IWMA sections. By the onset of WWII it had become a small, but very combative union centre.

### Syndicalist Movement Crisis in Post WWII France

**“How and Why The French Anarchists Rallied to the CGT-FO (1947-1950)”, by Guillaume Davranche, examines how the French syndicalist and anarchist movements were severely weakened by the outbreak of the Cold War.** The author particularly focuses on the resurgence of a diverse but minority syndicalist movement in the wake of industrial unrest during 1946-47 amongst workers in diverse industries e.g. postal and communications, railways, metal working, etc, against the close collaboration of the Communist Party controlled CGT - main union centre with the French Govt. in post war austerity policies and reconstruction. It was characterised by one explicitly syndicalist union centre, the CNT (National Confederation of Labour) which split from the CGT in 1946 and a range of “autonomous” unions with vague syndicalist orientations, which formed in the context of the Post WWII wildcat strike wave. Whilst a “reformist” opposition also developed in the CGT to oppose the Communist leadership, the Amis de FO supportive of the US foreign policy agenda.

A serious omission in the essay, is any discussion of the role of the CIA in helping provoke the split leading to the CGT-FO and its continued funding up till the Reagan Administration. (4) Around this time a similar rightward split in the SAC (Swedish Workers Centre) – a small syndicalist union centre, increasingly moving toward orthodox social democratic unionism and integration into the Welfare State) occurred and has been alleged by veteran SAC militants to be also engineered by the CIA.(5)

The author particularly examines the failure of the FA (French Anarchist Federation) attempts to establish a syndicalist union centre with a mass base to counter Soviet imperialist and US imperialist influence in the French labour movement, as manifested in the CGT and CGT-FO. The Post WWII FA appears to be a far cry from the contemporary tacky outfits of oppression mongering, guilt tripping, amateur “social worker” activoids and navel gazers

in the contemporary Anglo World, which abuse the anarchist label. Like most in the Polish AFP, it had a serious orientation toward building a syndicalist movement.

A key aspect of the FA strategy was to encourage the formation of a new union confederation comprising the CNT and the various autonomous unions. The author shows the FA was unsuccessful in this strategy. It’s call to establish a new syndicalist union centre was rejected at the first conference of the autonomous unions held on 19-20 Nov. 1948. Whilst Trotskyists were successful at the conference in achieving the establishment of the CUAS (United Syndicalist Action Cartel), a liaison committee linking up autonomous unions and the CNT. The FA saw this new



structure as a partial victory. However, the author shows it dissolved in a few years time, due to centrifugal forces unleashed by the main union centres. In the process the CNT which initially had very promising prospects with an estimated 100,000 members and bases in strategic sectors such as auto, transport, etc, also underwent a severe crisis, losing most of its base to the CGT-FO or the independent unions. (6)

### Perspectives for Syndicalists in Contemporary Australia

**In Australia today, we appear to have reached a dead end with any electoral approach to help establish the transi-**

**tional steps toward a mass syndicalist union centre, associated with the rorting of the 2014 elections in the Rail Tram & Bus Union.**

A prominent role in the rorting apart from the ALP union hierarchy was played by the AEC (Australian Electoral Commission). Whilst the intervention of ASIO must also be considered. Certainly an important precedent has been set for these forces rorting any further elections for important positions in unions. Whilst, the openness to rorting via hacking and lack of independent scrutineers of the internet ballots for the RTBU enterprise agreements in 2014, also sets precedents in other industries and unions. (7)

As in the post WWII French situation, break away unions seem to be the only way forward, which could federate to form a syndicalist pole of attraction in the Australian labour movement. Such a union centre would need to have bases in strategic sectors so as to launch direct action to slow the tempo of the employer offensive, break out of enterprise bargaining, and defy repressive industrial legislation. Consequently, an expanding syndicalist union movement would emerge to wipe out the bases of ALP aligned bureaucratic unionism.

In conclusion, the collection of essays in the volume do an excellent job sketching various factors leading to the emergence of the international syndicalist movement in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. It also does a very effective job in sketching the role of exceptional militants in helping achieve important organisational break throughs for the syndicalist movement. Its discussion of important reasons for the decline of mass syndicalism in the post WWII period, would benefit from some consideration of the role of such international agencies of global capital, as the CIA.

Mark McGuire

### NOTES

1. See, Wikipedia “Bourse du Travail”.
2. See, “Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936” by Richard Purkiss, Published by Sussex Academic Press.
3. See, “Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective”, Ed. Marcel Van Der Linden and Wayne Thorpe.
4. See, Wikipedia “CGT-FO”.
5. Discussion with a veteran SAC Stockholm Local member.
6. See, “Introducing CNT-F” on [www.iww.org](http://www.iww.org)
7. See, “NSW Railways News” p3 in this edition of RW.

## MELB. FACTORY OCCUPATION

**About 25-30 workers at International Flavours and Fragrances (IFF) in Dandenong, Melbourne initiated a factory occupation on January 25 2015 in response to the company trying to force a pay cut and indefinitely locking them out.**

It's really significant that these workers have decided to take strong industrial action at a point when workers rights are under attack more than ever.

Some Anarchist Affinity members are in the factory from the first time. Also MACG members have visited the site.

They have been told to leave or risk trespass by the cops, but have unanimously voted to stay.

The factory is 5km from Dandenong Railway station. 310 Dandenong Valley Highway. The bosses went into arbitration with the workers through the Fair Work Commission. This could result in an injunction ordering the workers to be forced to leave by the cops.

The workers at International Flavours and Fragrances (IFF) have been camping on the Dandenong site since early Tuesday morning in an effort to get a pay rise linked to the consumer price index (CPI).

The matter went before the Fair Work Commission on last Tuesday night and the hearing it was to resume on Thursday morning.

The National Union of Workers said the sit-in, which has been dubbed "occupy Dandenong", was in response to an indefinite lockdown served to the workers from management.

One of the workers, Arthur Ingles, said they had been negotiating over pay and the removal of paid breaks since September.

"We've had EBA negotiations underway since approximately September last year, despite everyone's attempts to resolve this situation, it got to a situation where it was commonly acknowledged that we were just going around in circles," Mr Ingles said.

"As a result, we applied to take protected industrial action, which was to commence on the Tuesday."

But Mr Ingles said when workers arrived to work on Tuesday at 6:00am to "listen to the company's response", they found themselves locked out.

"From there we chose to take action which we believe would accelerate the resolution of this situation and chose to be locked in to the premises, rather than locked out," he said.

The company said they had negotiated in good faith and instituted the lockout because the planned industrial action included a paperwork ban.

"A paperwork ban that would have negatively impacted our ability to maintain quality control over the products we manufacture," IFF said in a statement. "As our products are consumed by families everywhere, we take the quality and safety of everything we make very seriously.

"Therefore, we had no choice but to lock out the workers who would be manufacturing our products without the benefit of quality control processes." The company said they would continue to try to reconcile the situation through the Fair Work Commission over coming days.

"We look forward to an equitable resolution and to getting our employees back to work."

Mr Ingles said his colleagues were pre-



pared to sit it out for as long as the matter took.

"We believe that this situation should've and could've been resolved between the two interested parties, given the stand that we've taken that we're at work and we're prepared to work, we're prepared to be here until the situation's resolved," he said.

Mr Ingles said the group was reasonably comfortable in their temporary residence.

"We're living like kings, I'm sure," he said.

"We're able to bring in food, we've been able to bring in bedding, and it's as comfortable as it can be although I don't think it's going to make it to Dandenong's top 10 hotels."

\*\*\*

IFF: Meet with your employees in Dandenong

To: Arjan Koudijs, Regional Operations Manager, Asia Pacific Region

We want to get back to work! We're calling on IFF's Asia Pacific Regional Operations Manager, Arjan Koudijs to meet with Australian employees and end this lockout.

### Why is this important?

On January 27, 2015, Australian employees of International Flavours & Fragrances (IFF) began occupying our factory in Dandenong. We were forced to take this action because local Australian management has pushed us to the brink. We believe matters cannot be resolved with local Australian management and we ask that IFF's leadership listen to us, the IFF workforce in Dandenong, because our voices are not being heard in

Australia.

All we want is to be heard and genuinely negotiate a workplace agreement, which benefits the interests of both the workers and the interests of the company. We, the workers, have a clear interest in IFF.

In the past, and specifically during the negotiations of our last agreement, we were promised there would be a cultural change from management. But things have only gotten worse. Local management couldn't care less about us. There is no acknowledgement of the humanity involved in the process of running a business.

We were also promised that, due to a breakdown with local management, we would

See Page 20



## NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important developments "behind the scenes" has been the rorting of the national Rail, Tram and Bus Union elections held in late 2014. A major back-drop is Govt. Plans to massively cut the NSW rail workforce, wider attacks across industries and privatisation of public transport and other sectors..

The ALP union hierarchy typically played a nefarious role. However, the AEC (Australian Electoral Commission) got seriously into the act. Brazenly sabotaging the campaigns of candidates opposed to the ALP machine. Whilst holding secret ballot counting meetings. Throwing out the window, the AEC's charter which commits it to transparency and voter concerns and the associated policy that all candidates can have scrutineers at ballot counting. It's very likely ASIO was also involved in the skulduggery associated with the ballot outcome. Despite this state conspiracy, Members' Voice, rank & file group pushing for grass roots control of the union and direct action waged an energetic campaign, efficiently assisted by ASN comrades.

The rorting of this election sets precedents for this cabal of forces to determine the outcome of elections for important positions in all other unions. Recently, the AEC has made submissions to the Federal Government for internet voting for industrial elections which are well known to be open to rorting via hacking. Intriguingly new Federal legislation makes "legal" the adjustment of such ballot results by say ASIO computer hacking, to achieve the Government's desired outcome! (See article page 3.)

In State Transit, this edition of RW focuses on further ramifications of the current savage speedup in drivers' jobs. This increased pressure leads drivers to make slip ups, which management seizes upon to fit many up for wage cuts and the sack. (See article page 5.)

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

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### Grassland Infoshop

207B Nicholson St.  
Footscray  
3011 Vic.

## Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name .....

Address .....

General Secretary

PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

If undeliverable, return to  
PO Box 92, Broadway NSW 2007

*Cont. From Page 18* have quarterly meetings with the Asia Pacific management team. However, we have had only one of these meetings over the last three years.

We believe it is not difficult to treat people with respect. Unfortunately a culture of respect is not encouraged or practiced by management in Australia. Mr Koudijs, we call on you to intervene because we believe Australian management cannot or will not negotiate

fairly or respectfully. So far, local management have continued to be provocative and combative, which is not conducive to an agreement being reached.

There has been much talk of productivity from local management, and workers have gone to great lengths already, including moving to 24-hour production. Now it is also time to recognise that workers want security, not uncertainty and anxiety. This, not stealing workers' 10 minute breaks, will see an increase in productivity and the health and well being of the workforce.

Mr Koudijs, to end this lockout and help deliver a swift and fair agreement, will you meet with workers?

### STOP PRESS

*After a 4 day occupation, the workers won a victory. Management agreed to meet with workers to resolve the dispute. As of 1/2/15, Management advised that paid breaks and all provisions for sick leave will remain intact.*

*Thanks to Anarkismo*

## LETTER

### PICKET BLOCKS TRAIN AT SOUTHERN CROSS STATION, MELBOURNE

Dear RW

In regard to your report on developments at Southern Cross station in Melbourne in

the last edition of RW Vol.33 No.3(221) Nov.-Dec. 2014, I would like to mention that Union Officials did come there over a number of disputes.

Including (1) Promotions and career paths. (2) Rosters. (3) The Stood down Conductor, who was sacked as reported in last RW. He was given another position, but not on trains. (4) Union Election Campaigning. Over the issue of the sacked conductor, the Geelong Train was blocked by a picket involving union offi-

cials standing on the rails, for half an hour, as reported in the last RW. The only reason he got offered another job is because the Chinese Community was going to come to rally in his support.

He wants his job back on trains and the Union is working on obtaining this.

*V-Line Reader*

## INDIAN METRO WORKERS PROTEST CASUALISATION AND CONTRACTING OUT

15/3/15

The newly elected government of the Delhi Assembly, India's capital district, came to power promising a better deal for many of the city's workers. Contract workers employed by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation took to the streets to press their claims to regularise their employment status and become permanent employees. Their demonstra-

tion was met by police barricades. When the workers went past these barricades, the police attacked the demonstration. This latest action is only the latest of an increasingly vocal working class in India.

*Thanks to Australian Asia Worker Links*

