

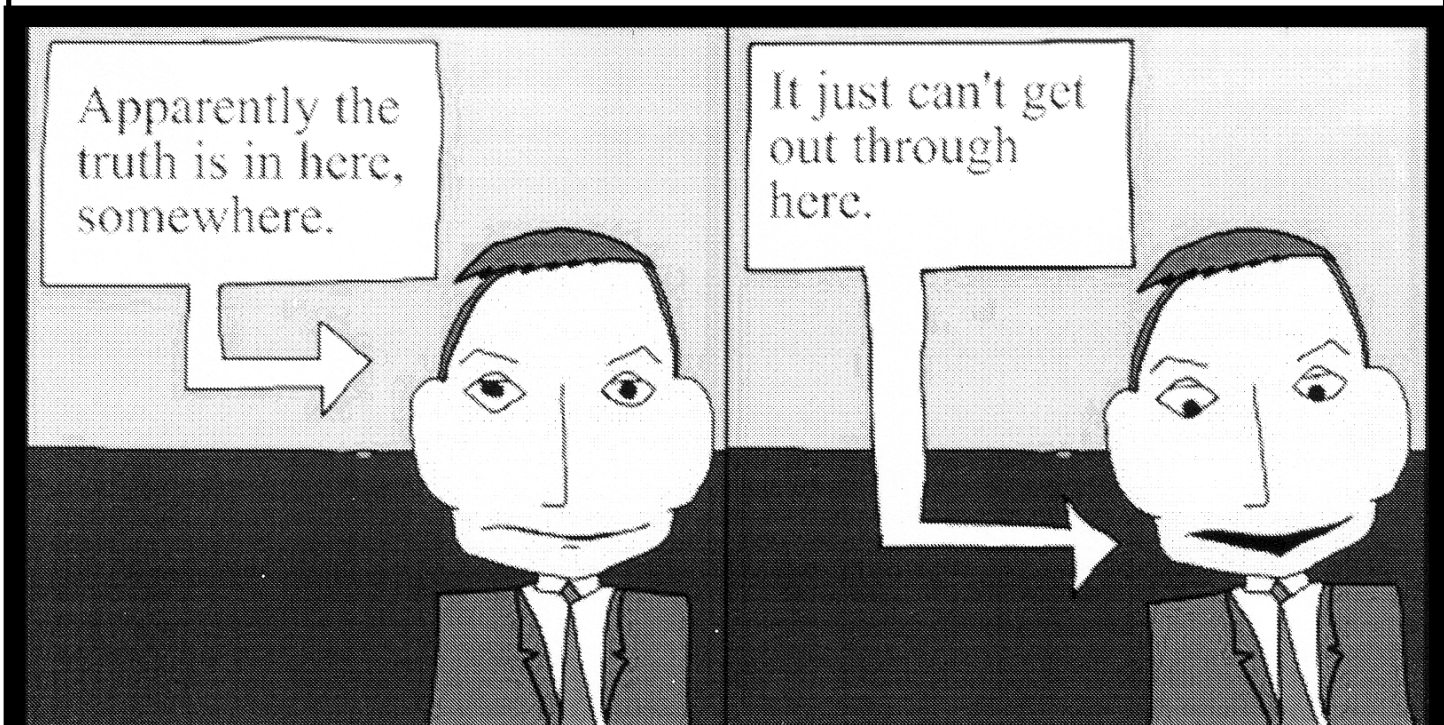
REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

ABBOTT PREPARES TO WIELD THE LIBERALS' AUSTERITY AXE! ONLY DIRECT ACTION CAN HALT IT'S PATH OF CARNAGE!



**NSW OCCULT STATE: NSW RAILWAY NEWS; STATE TRANSIT NEWS
FLASH; VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS; BRITAIN TODAY; USA LABOUR
NEWS; GREECE; INDONESIA; ALTERNATIVE UNION MEETINGS; BOOK
REVIEW CORNER; MAURIZIO GARINO; HOW TO FIGHT PRIVATISATION;
NEWS & NOTES**

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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N.S.W. OCCULT STATE

Welcome to the Occult State!

Now we are back to a Liberal Government, travelling back in time seems to be plausible. Are Australian voters so conservative? Can't people see passed the propaganda, the hype, the spin, the rhetoric?

Here comes the occult state! Where information becomes supernatural. Only those psychic elites are in the know. Knowledge really is power; prescribed both socially and economically, taken internally against a natural resistance that threatens to blow the illusion away. The geography of the state now becomes a military issue, where the fog of war is replaced with regular media bulletins for a slavish press. Where have we seen this before?

Our society is being organised today around secrecy and uncertainty. It's difficult to know where certain interests lie, which groups have influence over others. We don't really know where our food comes from or what regulates the prices of commodities anymore, what network of international companies produce the things we need or use. The public is

mostly in the dark, dependent on the press for what is considered and prescribed as news, vulnerable to suggestion and hysteria.

We are now in a world devoid of logic; namely the loss of the possibility of distinguishing between what is important or what is unimportant, what may be incompatible or inversely what is relevant. Amidst this confusion there is no more effective anaesthetic than the media, thriving in an environment of increasing illiteracy.

The emperor still hasn't got any clothes, but nobody notices. Or if they do are too embarrassed and ashamed for themselves to speak up. They might start speaking

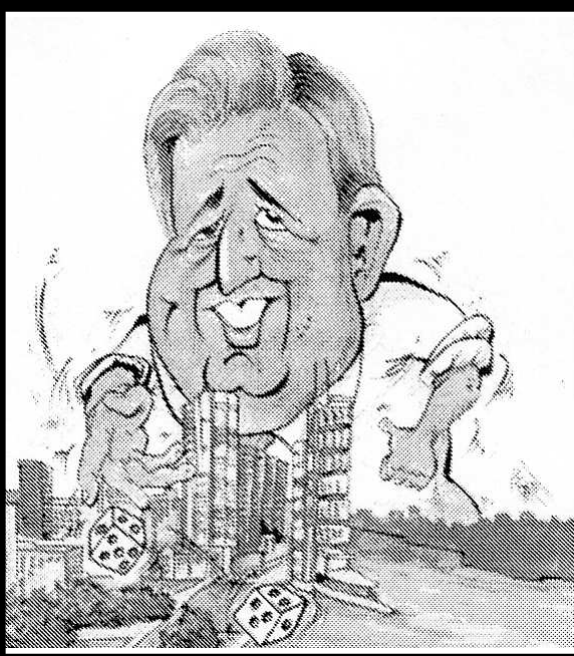
Greek, and we can't have that, can we? There remains now a certain quiet desperation in this country. The always one step forward and five steps back. There is a chance, a glimmer of something new and its basically crushed by conservatism. Conservatives always reject history. Capitalism has colonised all of us. Don't change, stay the same, only present a per-

ception, a representative, an image of change. Redesign the facade; better highways for the circulation of commodities, strangling the countryside, poisoning the air, exploding into flames occasionally. A land that will only be fit for zombies, the necessary product of the occult state.

It's not all doom and gloom. There is trouble coming everyday and in every way. Already existing in dead-time. The thing with zombies is that they really have nothing to lose. The overall cynicism with politics is turning to open contempt and insouciance towards authority.

Politics only create problems, never solutions (we all know that). The point is to overcome politics, to turn having into being, to supersede the domination of capital over our daily lives.

JD



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N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

In Agreement for 2014

By *Crimson Coconut*

The time has come once again for a new workplace agreement. The old 2010 agreement expires in April 2014. To understand where we are going with the 2014 EBA it is worth looking back over the period of the last EBA.

It was under the current 2010 agreement that:

- * Station Managers lost their jobs and were replaced by highly paid bureaucratic bean counters.

- * Cleaners were taken to the cleaners and delivered to the private sector or lost their jobs altogether.

- * CSA's were shuffled between stations and shipped out of their workplaces.

- * Signalers came under the control of Shift Managers usurping the power of Network Control Area Managers.

- * The door was also opened allowing Casual and multi-skilled Part Time Workers to flood into the organisation while permanent positions remained unfilled.

- * It became easier to sack you. Your right of appeal through the Transport Appeals Board was removed (and the Appeals Board disbanded).

- * Journey claims under workers compensation were removed. If you get injured, assaulted, have a car accident going to or from work you effectively cannot claim workers compensation. Return to work plans for injured workers became harsher, to the point of harassment.

- * Shift Managers were introduced to the Train Crewing area. Crews were broken up into teams. Various ways of working were introduced by management that were often opposed because of their vague nature or because they were unworkable.

- * Many staff are doing the work of those of higher grade and yet are not properly compensated. The distinction and boundaries between grades have become blurred.

- * Leave and flexibility became harder to get. It was left to the whim of the local manager whether he/she would grant leave or not. Then there was always the excuse of being short staffed, even though this was no fault of the worker who applied for leave.

Some rail staff are saying that they are prepared to stay at the same pay level rather

than lose anything else. We should not entertain standing still. Given the chance, the O'Farrell Government not only wants to reduce wages but also to attack working conditions. The point of view that we sacrifice nothing for nothing is exactly what they want you to think. It is not realistic.

In most cases those that are denying us a pay rise have a wage that is 5 to 10 times what we earn. Some corporate CEO's earn hundreds of times what their employees earn.

Also the cost of living is not neutral and continues to spiral upwards. We all have rising water, gas and electricity bills. Rents, tolls, fares and the cost of food continue to rise. So if we just maintain our present rates of pay we will still be going backwards.

ing of 2.5% will depend on how we go about fighting for it. As a guide, workers on the Airport Line just signed up for increases of 4% PA over 4 years. Whether they had to give up anything to get that I do not know.

However most Public Transport workers are adamant that there should be no "trade-offs" at any stage of EBA negotiations this time round.

After counting the losses of the last agreement, what are some of the things that we would like to see in any new agreement? Here are some suggestions.

- * Of course a pay rise is the most obvious thing we would like to see. Arbitrarily this should be set well above the government ceiling of 2.5% (which by the way we are not obliged to agree to). The actual figure should be agreed by rail workers before



Politicians have no such qualms about granting themselves a generous pay rise whenever they feel like it. It's not like they are feeling the financial heat in the same way that we do.

Before coming to power Tony Abbott voted himself a pay rise of \$1766 per week, (2012). That's more than what we earn in a week. Julia Gillard on other hand gave herself an extra \$2500 per week in 2012. I guess that might help with the living expenses seeing that she did not have to pay for transport to or from work, did not have to pay rent living in The Lodge, electricity or much else.

We did not share in any of the rationalists savings over the last 4 years that they were able to make by downsizing, by changing work practices and general penny pinching.

We deserve and need a pay rise. How much we get above O'Farrell's wage ceil-

negotiations start. I suggest that a 5% PA raise might be a starting point taking into consideration that we are up against a government and management that is hostile to workers. Any agreed figure should be contingent on losing no conditions.

- * Limitations on the numbers (as a percentage) of part-time and casual workers replacing full time workers. The "filling the gaps" clauses in previous agreements should be replaced by definitive figures. We should also put a time limit on the length that a person serves in a part-time position before being converted to full time work. That does not mean that there should be any clauses about suitability for conversion to full-time work. This should be available for everyone that so desires. There may be some people for whom part-time is preferable for whatever reason. They of course should continue to be allowed to work part-time if they wish.

* Fair processes for acting in Higher Grade. Currently there are blatant abuses of process when people are seconded or extended periods of time (often without the requisite competencies) to positions graded higher than their normal duties. This gives the acting person a massive advantage when the job is finally advertised. Seeing that we have so many people acting-up these days, guidelines for acting up should be incorporated into agreements so that they have a legal basis.

Preferably, vacant positions should be filled with full-time workers through the normal contestable process. Many appointments to acting higher allow several grades to be jumped – this disadvantages those that may have a higher grade than the appointee but are never give the chance to hone their skills. Time limits for acting in Higher Grade should be imposed to ensure that others get the chance to improve skills. Where this is not possible a time limit should be set before advertising and filling the position. This is the most contentious area where accusations of favoritism often come to the fore.

* Remove any clauses pertaining to Sydney Trains/ NSW Trains management or government being able to restructure, provide a mechanism for ongoing change, commitments to financial responsibility, or commitments to continuous reform. These are the clauses which they used to hang us last time.

* Remove any clauses which require us to “avoid industrial confrontation and any associated disruptions to operations or services.”

* Allow reasonable access to leave without having to provide a reason. Often the reason of “staff shortages” is used to knock back people applying for leave. This is not the employee’s fault. Managers should not be able to knock back any reasonable request for leave.

* Wages grades to have same conditions and receive the same penalties as Salaried Staff.

* That any work or overtime for a particular grade be offered to people within that grade before seeking someone from an-

other grade to perform the work. There are instances of staff from lower grades being used to lower the overtime bill by performing the work of higher grades. Lower graded workers and part-timers are unwittingly being used as a wedge to lower conditions and access to equal work.

* That Salary Maintenance be paid indefinitely for any person who is displaced or had their job abolished if they forced to

in a united campaign around issues, that we have to agree on, then we will fall short in the negotiations and will get an agreement that will be worse than we sought.

It’s up to our union representatives (which are not elected in any way, but appointed - to the detriment of democratic representation) to take back to the negotiations the wishes and aspirations of those in the front lines. When they meet obstinate manage-



perform a lower graded job. In such cases the skills acquired to perform the former job are not lost. It is no fault of the employee that restructuring or workplace reform abolishes a position that is held. The remuneration that they received was recognition, not just of the tasks that were performed, but of the competencies needed.

Before any negotiations are to take place, meetings should be held in all workplaces with union members. This is necessary to talk about the upcoming negotiations and to ascertain and to pass motions on a log of claims from the shop floor. Sadly this hasn’t happened yet.

This agreement is critical. We have to get it right. We have a hostile State Government and an Abbott Government in Canberra that is looking to curb wages and to cut many entitlements that we now enjoy. Unless we mobilise the whole workforce

ment that makes demands for take-backs, those same representative are expected to go back to the members to explain and seek a way forward.

They should always be guided by the wisdom of those on the shop floor. This has never happened yet in all the years that our enterprise bargaining has taken place. We are not holding our breaths this time either. Ordinary union members on other hand are expected to actively participate in negotiations by supporting union negotiators, at the same time holding them accountable for undemocratic behaviour and the failure to represent members interests.

United we can achieve a better than reasonable agreement. This will take all of our skills, cunning and muscle to make it a reality. This can only eventuate if the Rank and File are considered to be actively part of the process. It is up to us to ensure that we are!

Is it fair to bargain with a Government that sets the rules?

The recent briefing by Rail Management on the NSW government’s position during current EBA negotiations sets the terms of reference around which bargaining can begin.

Management and the NSW Government has set a number of business oriented

goals that are generally not worker friendly. However is it really bargaining when we are negotiating with a Government that is all powerful? Government’s create the laws which govern us in the workplace as well as being the employer. They have the ability to change laws to suit a particular political agenda.

So while the Government is Lawmaker, Judge, Jury and Executioner they enjoy a power that many private corporations do not. Negotiations under these conditions is akin to dictatorship rather than bargaining in good faith. They have the complete upper hand and workers enter the wrestling match with their arms already cut off at the elbow.

At this stage the Government’s wish list, as outlined in the RTBU Bulletin No2 is vague at best.

* Statements such as "Agreements to aligned with organisational arrangements" could mean anything. But will the flesh be put on the bones as the agreement negotiations roll out? Will we get a clearer picture of what they are on about? That will depend on how the union leadership communicates the process to their members.

*There are some statements that should cause us concern. This one: "Rostering and utilisation aligned with customer and organisational needs" is based around changing work practices could make us quite vulnerable. There have been rumours floating around for some time now about the possibility of split shifts. Working, for instance, in the morning peak then having up to 4hrs off then returning for the afternoon peak to work 4hrs more or less. Is this what they have in mind or do they mean a small full-time workforce supplemented by part-time and casual workers? I don't think that we can speculate too much at this early stage.

*The wish list containing "benchmarking against international rail entities and 'best practice'" and "the need to modernise" is ridiculous to be placed on an agreement with employees.

Employees have no control over the work process or how much is spent on infrastructure at all. They are basically told

what to do. Most people know that the equipment that they work with breaks down on a regular basis, while software is generally outdated and inadequate.

Also considering the disparity in passenger density here in Australia compared to Japan or many other countries around the world, 'best practice' is like comparing oranges with a leg of lamb.



Liberal Government's, in general, are not Public Transport friendly, preferring instead to fund private toll roads and highways at great cost to Public Transport and to the environment. This impacts on 'best practice' which is a ridiculous concept under the current ideology. Railways in par-

ticular are massively underfunded and need a huge injection of capital if they are to approach standards that we are going to be compared with overseas.

The new Director General of Transport who hails from Queensland is no friend of public transport and was present when privatisation decimated Public Transport jobs in Queensland. His forte is private toll roads which have become a cash cow for certain companies that have managed to profit.

We all know that what the Government in NSW has put on the table is a wish list. It is far too early yet to make head or tail of their proposal, as the vagueness in which it is framed means little to us. These type of phrases could mean anything, "Adjustments necessitated by NSW government policy".

We need to make sure that negotiations do not continue down this obscure line and that simple English be used to fill in the details of each and every proposal.

Negotiations should be halted till management and the Government spell out what they mean by the clauses in the document presented. The proposal should then be put to all members of the workforce for them to decide how to, or whether to, proceed under the terms already outlined. This could best be carried out through mass meetings of the general membership of the unions. Only then, after the approval of the membership should negotiations proceed.

STATE TRANSIT NEWS FLASH

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

by the Transport Scrutinizer.

Many things are happening in the bus industry. The more notable are as follows:

1. ROUTE OPTIMISATION.

Yet another Management blunder. Bus Operators were told that this was introduced to eliminate Special working from point to point. Now more than ever there is plenty of dead running from point to point. The only reason the route optimisation concept is in force is to confuse Bus Operators at the behest of management and those inept useless so called schedulers. The whole setup is a farce!

2. Waverley Bus Operators - Burwood 400's.

Yet another way of management forcing a totally unpopular route on Bus Operators

that vehemently oppose this work. It is odd that this garbage is being offloaded onto standard rosters on the weak excuse that Waverley does not have 14.5 Scania's so 400's need not be exclusive work. 200's to Chatswood have always been worked by standard type buses yet the work remains exclusive. The general consensus of Waverley drivers is that the vast majority DO NOT WANT Burwood 400's and would rather see the run go to private operators than be forced on them.

3. Defective buses in service.

Many drivers are being forced to operate defective buses in service due to mechanical staff being reluctant to effect changeovers. The worst buses in service are the 0405NH CNG buses. These vehicles often stall at any given time and for no apparent reason. Only last week a Waverley gas bus cut out and restarted but rolled backward IN DRIVE GEAR which it should not be possible to do, almost causing a catastrophic accident. This is surely a danger-

ous defect in an already dangerous lousy excuse for a bus. How much longer must drivers have to put up with these mobile death traps?

4. The customer is always right!

What a load of nonsense! Recently a driver was suspended for telling a mother to tell her toddler to behave himself. Drivers have a huge task to do without having to put up with whining whinging tantrum throwing children. The child in question is well known for misbehaviour and his mother does nothing about it yet will complain to the media when a driver has the guts to stand up to them. The Union needs to stand up for drivers rights for this and many other matters yet seems to be indifferent.

The time has come to stand up and be counted. WORKERS UNITE!!!

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

RW: How is the bosses' "Optimisation push" going?

Waverley Busie: Now all 3 depots in the Eastern Suburbs are interdependent. To give you an idea of the new routes we have

taken on, as part of this restructuring, Waverley is now taking on for example the 394, 301, 373, and 374 extra runs. Whilst, we operate overall roughly 25 new routes. The bosses say it's all about measures to save money. However, I've seen no evidence of any such savings. It seems to me that "Optimisation" is in reality a justification for selloff by stealth. Certainly, the job is being wrecked up, with the loss of many inspectors and mechanics, who the bosses consider to be excess staff. A lot of these experienced staff are now gone.

Whilst, many drivers aren't coping with the changes to routes they have to operate. Causing them increased stress. They consider the job has now become too hard.

The public is particularly being hoodwinked, by these subtle behind the scenes moves to construct this cluster of profitable routes. With drivers being forced to take on the new routes to destinations, they have never been to before or have in the distant past. For example, in my case, I haven't been to La Perouse in over 25 years. This confusion experienced by many drivers, has resulted in increased commuter complaints. As buses are stopping at wrong stops for terminuses and taking wrong routes.

The upper crust of management and Transport for NSW bureaucracy continues to see itself looking good. Despite wrecking up the workforce and bus operations in the interest of the privatisation hidden agenda. It appears that if the lower level bosses aren't doing something to stuff up bus operations, they are seen as not showing some results to upper management to make them look good.

RW: What's the latest with the bosses stance on discipline?

WB: I have noticed they are taking a much tougher line on disciplinary issues and constantly more drivers are getting the sack.

In recent weeks, a driver from Waverley in his late 30's who has been on the job for over 10 years and is married with kids, was issued with a final warning. This is extremely serious, as he can now be sacked for even some trivial incident. The basis on which he was issued the final warning, seems quite unwarranted. The bosses say he was going the wrong way, while running as special. Did someone on the job who he had a falling out with, inform on him to the bosses? This over the top approach by management in his case, could also be explained by the restructuring of STA administration. It seems the more level headed and experienced depot bosses are being replaced by gung ho types, who want to impress and look good to the higher bosses, so as to save their jobs.

One of our Waverley drivers, who has legal training went to the union head office to approach the union hierarchy on the issue of this driver and his disciplinary problem. I read the statement he received from the officials, about how they handled the disciplinary case. I was taken aback by the simplistic response. It was so mundane and pathetic. It certainly wasn't written by professionals. It could have been written by anyone. Why didn't the officials refer the case to the union lawyers to have an effective written response to the gung ho



management? Why weren't professional people used to provide a professional service?

It was an issue that could have been quite easily resolved favourably for this driver. If the officials exerted themselves. However, the impression given to me, is that they didn't want to be seen as being uncooperative toward management and wanted the whole thing to be washed over. It highlighted to me how the officials aren't doing their jobs. It's just not good enough. We pay them our union dues and we get this grossly inadequate response.

RW: What's the latest with the ferries?

WB: In late August, I was down at Circular Quay, and I noticed quite a deterioration of the ferries area since it was privatised. The

ferries area has become quite rundown and unkempt. The ferries glass barrier approaching the ocean was unclean and the area around the ticketing booths was unkempt, the area looks quite cheaply maintained and dirty. I even noticed weeds growing on the side of the ferries wharf. The whole setup is looking horrible! It was in stark contrast to the railways section. It was very clean and well maintained. With the Quay being seen by tourists as the "gateway to Sydney", a very bad impression is being presented of the ferries and public transport in Sydney and Australia. Whilst there has been a marked rundown of ferry services, since privatisation. With ferries missing runs and going on occasion to wrong destinations.

This decline in the ferries, raises the whole issue of who is now accountable for its operations? I, as a bus driver now feel disconnected from the ferries, as it is now a private operation. The rapport I had with the ferries workers when it was publicly owned, now doesn't exist. Who cares? With privatisation, the ferries are now a completely separate entity, which can be rundown by corporate cowboys, despite commuter needs.

RW: How is the bosses' economy drive going?

WB: I have heard a whisper that there is a possibility that all auto electricians will be made redundant and all outside auxiliary staff who do such jobs as bus cleaning are to be put on the same treadmill, to save money. Again we have a situation where to look good with higher level bosses, lower level bosses are doing something "nasty" to look good. Creating a vicious circle of cutbacks. Slowly the wheel of economic rationalism is grinding at the Govt. transport sector. Little by little, parts of the STA are being cutback, until we are completely wiped out. Experienced workers who have worked hard in the hope of saving their jobs, are now getting the chop. Currently there is a shortage of full time drivers, due to rapid turnover, associated with the worsening of the job and the bosses crack-down on disciplinary issues. At Waverley, I'm constantly noticing new faces. However, the STA has been doing some bizarre "horse trading" with the advertising for part time and casual drivers! I find this situation weird! In Adelaide, where the buses have been privatised, and casuals and part timers are being employed, the whole system has become run down. Whilst, given the high price of housing in Sydney, part timers and casuals would not be able to meet mortgage repayments with their low wages.

The idea that the new 5 year contract for the STA will save us is bullshit! With all the cutbacks to the STA, its running on the smell of an oily rag! Its living on borrowed time!

Whilst, taking such measures to shave back bus maintenance, cleaning and other sectors to allegedly save money, the bosses are continuing to allow massive fare evasion. Apparently, as they are waiting for the Opal Card. This shows a lack of integrity and accountability by the bosses. It was highlighted to me recently, when someone caught my bus. When I approached the passenger that he was using the wrong ticket for his trip. He wanted to use a 1-2 zone ticket when he got on at Park Street and wanted to get to Double Bay, which requires a 3-5 zone ticket. He

mentioned that he had been using this wrong ticket for three years for this trip. This fare evasion would run into a considerable some with many, many passengers doing the same thing for several years.

RW: How are the PM shift drivers faring at the depot?

WB: PM shift spare drivers are up in arms over problems they are having with the 6-7 roster schedulers at Pt Botany. This bunch are messing up their shifts. None of these drivers know what's going on with their shifts. To save money, the schedulers are

cutting their shifts and these drivers aren't getting their regular amount of work. At the last moment of the day, these drivers' shifts are being trimmed. They don't even know whether, they will get a shift the next day. Their shifts are floating around like a cork on a rough sea. It's unfair to these drivers. They have become irritable with the STA and are demanding that their shifts are not tampered with and there are no more last minute changes. This bullying and harassment has to stop!

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In previous issues of RW mention has been made of changes in V/Line management and issues of Human Resources picking on employees. In this issue once again drivers, conductors, head office and station staff will talk about these issues.

RW: I hear V/Line has a new Chief Executive.

Clarence: Yes, he is from Queensland Rail. He started in May and as this issue was being prepared, he has announced a restructure of upper management of V/Line.

Jethro: Most of the Senior Managers are on fixed term or performance based contracts. If they perform, they get a bonus. If their area goes over budget or does not perform, they lose. In other words, these contracts are not renewed.

Sheona: Being in head office, you can see the tension around the place. People back stabbing others and people worried about their jobs.

Rastus and Roscoe: We hope the tension is in Human Resources, as these people pick on long serving employees. In fact, as we drivers have said in previous issues, this department employs more people than METRO TRAINS, which has more people employed than V/Line.

RW: In the previous issue, mention was made about the person assigned to Spencer Street.

Clarence: This woman hasn't changed. She still hides behind the curtains spying on employees.

RW: What can be done about her?

Rastus and Roscoe: We drivers had one woman from Human Resources removed. The conductors and station staff should call a union meeting and tell Management to get rid of her or no trains will run.

Clarence: The problem is we have a number of crawlers who, if we hold a meeting would run to Human Resources and dob people in.

Rastus: Yes, they may, but the drivers would find out and would make it hard for them. Also there are other ways to deal with her via covert action.

RW: How?

Rastus: If you have to face her over a passenger complaint, appear at the enquiry with your union representative plus a so-

representative. If the complaint is serious, then bring a solicitor or the Industrial Officer in the Union, who would have the University Qualifications to match these people in Human Resources.

Sheona: When listening to the Radio or Television, you hear these Industrial Lawyers advertising their services – No Win – No Fee.

Rastus: Yes I have heard these adds, but I would not want to be a Non Union member. Some non union members think they are perfect. In other words, they are never in trouble. BUT. One day you may receive a complaint. WHO will represent you? The union won't and you will have to pay a solicitor. Remember their fees are high, so it pays to be in the union.

RW: We must move on. In issue 142, mention was made of a manager at Spencer Street.

Clarence: This manager has done a chicken run.

RW: What do you mean?

Rastus: In issue 143, mention was made about Conductor Service Manager who was sacked over ticket irregularities.

Roscoe: We cannot say why he was removed, as the matter may come to court. Once we know the Court Case has happened, we shall comment.

Sheona: The vacant Conductor Service Manager job was advertised.

Jethro: A number of Conductors applied for the position, but they were unsuccessful.

Clarence: The reason we have said that he has done a chicken run, is because he was on a contract for a fixed term. Whereas a Conductor Service Manager is a salaried position, which pays overtime. The contract doesn't pay overtime and you are on call 24 hours.



licitor sent by the union. The solicitor can ask to look at the statement and demand to cross examine the complaint.

Clarence: There is a Bus Company in Eastern Melbourne, where the bus drivers were not in the union. When these drivers received complaints, they turned up with a solicitor to defend them. Once the message got around, the Eastern Suburbs, that solicitors were appearing to deal with passenger complaints, the number of complaints decreased.

Roscoe: The down side was that these bus drivers had to pay their own solicitors' fees. They may have won, but they lost financially. If you are in trouble over passenger complaints appear with your union

Jethro: This manager possibly thought with Job Restructuring, his position would go, so he moved sideways. He deprived another person of a career path.

Clarence: There are Conductors on fixed term contracts. In other words, if a Conductor had have stepped up to a Conductor Service Manager Position, then a Conductor on a fixed term contract may have obtained a permanent position.

Jethro: These conductors as we have said in previous issues replace persons on long term illness, maternity leave and people seconded to other departments. Unfortunately with job cuts and when these people return, then they say your contract will not be renewed. This puts a lot of tension among employees. Due to space limitations, a future issue of Sparks will report on this matter.

RW: Moving on. I have heard management is conducting another witch hunt over Sparks.

Rastus: You are correct. In distributing issue 144 of Sparks, a number of our drivers were asked who was distributing the issue.

Roscoe: We don't know, but a number of Conductors were questioned.

Jethro: Yes, the issues were discretely placed in the meal room and a conductor saw the issue and took it to management.

Clarence: A conductor was hauled before a manager, who said that Human Resources were trying to find out who was distributing Sparks and this manager said if the person is caught, they will be terminated. The conductor who was questioned walked out. The conductor who the article in the issue was written about was hauled in for questioning and he was asked if he supplied Sparks. He said NO! and walked out.

Rastus: They are trying to frighten people, but the way we report to Sparks, we sit around and listen in meal rooms and

around the job to what people say and also if people are victimised by Human Resources, we will report the matter. Remember issue 132. We reported on a Conductor Service Manager, who bullied conductors. Human Resources carried on. But we were correct.

RW: We have run out of space. A future issue will report on Short Term Contracts for Employees. As regards people, who are not in the Union, join, as solicitors fees are expensive.

Rastus & Roscoe: In having the final say, Human Resources are trying to STIFLE free speech. As for the conductor who took the issue of Sparks to Management, you are a "low crawler". Remember Sparks fights for the Free Speech and it is the Magazine of the Rank and File.

BRITAIN TODAY

Grangemouth workers hung out to dry by Unite and SNP

The fate of jobs at the Grangemouth petrochemical plant now lies solely in the hands of a ruthless corporation that buys firms and then drives them back into profit at the expense of their workers' wages and benefits.

The 1,800 Grangemouth workers have found that neither the Unite union leaders, who they pay for, nor Labour or SNP (Scottish National Party) representatives they voted for, would stand with them, if they decided to mobilise a real fight against Ineos. In an amazing display of solidarity and determination, the majority of the Unite members had voted to strike and reject the company's blackmail.

But within hours of their vote on Wednesday 23/10/13, the message from all sides was that there was no alternative to accepting destruction of living standards and the pensions of any future workers. A media outcry held the workers responsible for the fate of the 10,000 related jobs in the local area.

So yesterday, their union leaders simply caved in. Unite general secretary Len McCluskey left earlier negotiations up to

local officials but hurried up from London to capitulate in person. Within hours he had unreservedly accepted the company's terms, "warts and all". Shocking but true. McCluskey has breathed fire and brimstone since the ConDems coalition took

closure of the petrochemical plant at Grangemouth would reduce global capacity and drive up prices to the benefit of Ineos plants elsewhere.

And that's the big lesson. When it comes down to it, the corporations make decisions on the basis of their own business plans, on the grounds of costs, shareholder value and profits. And so who holds the power?

The Scottish SNP government lined up with the Westminster government to demand that the Grangemouth workers ac-



power, threatening strikes, civil disobedience, even a general strike against austerity, the public sector wage freeze and pension curbs. When it came to the crunch, he had no fight. Hot air and nothing more.

Later today it will be discovered whether this treachery is enough to keep the plant open or if in reality the company never had any intention of staying their hand. The

cept the inevitable. First minister Alex Salmond was in talks begging Ineos not to close the plant. Finance minister John Swinney, the great champion of an oil-based independent economy, stood shoulder to shoulder with ConDem Scottish secretary Alistair Carmichael.

SNP claims that a capitalist Scotland would be in some way better for Scottish

workers have been exploded. Ineos, like all Scotland's key industries from oil to whisky, is not "Scottish". They are run by freebooting global capitalist transnationals with no care for local conditions, except where they impact on profits.

The adjacent oil refinery, whose waste product is processed at the threatened plant, is owned by Petroineos, a refining and trading joint venture between Ineos and the Chinese government-owned PetroChina. Its other refinery is at Lavera, near Marseilles.

As the recession continues and fracking throws more cheap US coal and gas on to the world market, who knows what will happen to the offshore oil refining business. There is no such thing as security for workers, whatever the status of their country's governance.

The Unite members were ready to fight and their union could have organised an occupation to prevent the dismemberment of the plant, but they did not and will not. Independence will not change that.

Those who limit their vision for the future to achieving a "Yes" vote in the 2014 referendum have missed the point. Independence and self-determination should not be reduced to whether a Scottish elite should be in charge of a capitalist Scotland.

It has to be about acquiring a revolutionary independence, forging a new solidarity across the UK and Ireland, based on the struggle for a democratic state, for the socialisation of Scotland's resources, for a new commons. That would provide a platform for a sustainable energy strategy that protects both jobs and the environment.

Penny Cole

25 October 2013

Mail sell-off is market state's 'wild experiment'

The privatisation of the Royal Mail after centuries in state hands is not simply a carve-up of a public service for the benefit of big business and shareholders. It's also another step down the road towards a fully-fledged market state.

A market state's task is to provide opportunities for capitalism within the formerly public realm. That can mean everything from taking over parts of the NHS, running prisons, operating trains and – now – delivering letters and parcels.

This vision of the contemporary capitalist state is shared by all the mainstream parties. Royal Mail can be privatised quickly because the previous New Labour government created the conditions for this to happen.

In 2006, the Royal Mail lost its 350-year old monopoly and the British postal market became fully open to competition. A bid to privatise the service failed after a revolt by backbench Labour MPs.

But last year, legislation was passed which created the conditions for next month's sell-off. The mail service will be sold on the stock market and quickly fall into the hands of equity funds, pension funds and global investors. It will be run for profit which means a ruthless rationalisation of services, especially outside the major towns and cities.

Naturally, the sale of Royal Mail has been brought forward to try and beat the programme of strikes planned by the Communication Workers Union. The CWU is pinning its hopes on a Labour government renationalising the service. That's not going to happen, as Ed Miliband's party is committed to the present government's spending plans. And that doesn't include spending £3 billion or so in taking the royal mail back into public ownership.

Labour's policies are being shaped around Miliband's idea of "pre-distribution" and "responsible capitalism". The role of the state here is to encourage and "incentivise" the private sector to pay better wages and treat their workers better. Old-style state control it isn't.

As for Miliband's would-be partners in a future coalition government, it is significant that the privatisation of the mail service is being pushed through with enthusiasm by Vince Cable, the business secretary. Once touted as a Liberal Democrat that Labour could work with, Cable is totally pro-business.

Billy Hayes, general secretary of the CWU, points out the overwhelming hostility among the public to privatisation, with 70% opposed according to one poll. But that cuts little ice with a government responsible for a national debt that is increasing at a rate of £3,200 a second. The sale of the Royal Mail won't make a huge difference, but every little helps.

Hayes is confident that his members – 96% of who say they are against privatisation, despite being offered a bribe in the form of shares – will vote for a programme of rolling strikes.

"Privatisation will destroy a national public service and lead to a race to the bottom on jobs, pay and conditions. It is vandalism, and must be stopped."

But how? The British capitalist market state is the most advanced in its ambitions to divest itself of its former role as custodian of public assets and will sell them to whoever wants to buy them. Railways, airports, water, nuclear power stations and much more are owned by global corporations and banks whereas the American state jealously guards national assets from foreign control, restricting ownership to domestic corporations.

Even when it comes to the mail, only a handful of countries have privatised their services. In Argentina, it was such a disaster



that it had to be renationalised. A taste of what British postal workers can expect is shown by the experiences in the Netherlands. PostNL, formerly a subsidiary of TNT, is driving down wages and conditions and is planning to restrict deliveries to three days a week.

So Hayes is partly right when he says the ConDems' plans amount to a "wild experiment". But that's the nature of the beast. Rather than relying on Labour, the CWU would be better off joining with the teachers, fire fighters and other sections coming into conflict with the coalition this autumn.

Their aim should be to develop support for action to oust the government and launch a discussion on what kind of new, democratic economic and political system should replace the discredited market state. That's the way to protect and develop public services.

Paul Feldman

Communications editor

13 September 2013

Thanks to A World to Win

U.S.A. LABOUR NEWS

Port of Oakland Truckers Protest and Work Stoppage

From: FireWorks

By: Doug Anderson

10.21.13 - Members of the Port of Oakland Trucker Association, ATU (Amalgamated Transit Union) locals 1555 and 192, as well as a large contingent of supporters from Occupy Oakland and various other labour unions participated in successfully shutting down the SSA terminal and picketed at several bays at the Port of Oakland, early on the morning of Monday, October 21st. In August, independent truck drivers that work at the port of Oakland took part in a work stoppage that cost the bosses millions of dollars.

The strike centred around poor conditions, rising fees, low wages, abuse from management, and lack of access of bathrooms and other basic necessities. After the strike, management attempted to reach out and cool off tensions among drivers by attempting to meet with some drivers to discuss addressing their demands. However, it soon became clear to many of the drivers that management had no intention of seriously addressing any of them.

On Friday, October 18th, members of ATU 1555 and SEIU (Service Employees International Union) 1021, (BART workers), successfully blocked a bay at the Port used by BART maintenance workers as BART began its strike. When workers with ATU and SEIU again attempted to shut down the same part of the port that night to stop the next shift of ILWU (International Longshore and Warehouse Union) workers, the leaders of ATU 1555 told them to put down their signs and stop the action. At the same time, truckers again were meeting to discuss their situation to plan their next action. Out of these meetings, the nucleus of the Port of Oakland Trucker Association was born. As independent truckers are considered 'their own company,' they legally cannot form a union. Thus, their meetings and job actions were completely self-organized and independent of any outside group.

On October 20th, truckers and their supporters organized an open forum at Oscar Grant Plaza (14th and Broadway) to discuss their situation. The truckers are made up of drivers from various races and nationalities. Several truckers spoke to their situation and called on people to strike

with them the next day. A 5 AM the next morning, truckers and supporters turned out to shut down several bays in which independent truckers work out of. Frank Adams, who is seen in the video, told me that he believes that around 100 truckers took part in the strike by having "boots on the ground" and several hundred more stayed home. Some workers did choose to scab on the strike and were booed and called names in Spanish and in English by striking truckers as they passed by. "How much money did you make today?!", yelled Frank as they drove by. "Zero!", he yelled back. Scabbing drivers made no money simply because the bays that would have been used by drivers were closed down. In part due to pickets and in part due to ILWU workers (in the morning) respecting the lines.

Joining the picketers on the lines were members of BART's union, 1555, who carried signs in support of the truckers. One banner that was brought later in the day spoke to the spirit of solidarity between transit workers, reading: "Transit Worker General Strike!

Give the Class War Two Sides!" BART ATU members have been pushed by their union leaders on all sides to keep their pickets tame and to keep their struggle isolated. Recently, two workers that crossed picket lines to work on BART rails as management prepared to run trains without union drivers were struck and killed. At one picket line I attended on the day that the news broke of their deaths, strikers were told to put their pickets down and go home and to stop pickets the next day. To see these strikers show solidarity with another group of workers is inspiring, especially at a time when union officials are trying to dampen their spirits and contain their anger.

Members of the of the ILWU (in the morning shift) were also supportive of the truckers. Several Longshoremen approached the truckers and expressed solidarity with their struggle and also made it clear they cared more about honouring the picket lines than losing part of a day's pay. When one worker approached to address

the picketers, he also yelled at the line of riot police (actually, Alameda County Sheriffs) who told him to get out of the street. "Y'all have beat me up before," he replied, as he walked over to

join the other group of workers. Although the Labor Arbitrator, a government representative who rules if a picket line poses a problem of safety to ILWU workers and thus, sends them home with pay, ruled that the picket was not unsafe, ILWU workers still choose to go home and not unload the cargo on the one ship that was docked at the bay where many truckers and supporters were picketing. Ed Henderson, a business agent for the ILWU asked the workers as he left, "Y'all seen Salt of the Earth?," as if to imply the kind of struggle that would be needed to win the strike. In the film, a group of Mexican-American workers in New Mexico go on strike in a



mining town. Up against brutal police and mining bosses, women and families take a leading role as the men in the strike are unable to picket. Their courage and ability to break through established roles of gender and family help to win the struggle.

Speaking of police, the sheriffs on hand were large in number and early in the day were able to successfully push picketers out of the street and onto side roads. Several picketers were pushed and hit by police. Police also set up a mobile command centre in a park near-by and vehicles for the Department of Homeland security also made numerous drive-bys as did ICE. Frank commented on this reality. "Many of the workers here are immigrants. They come from countries where if you protest you will be arrested and beaten. Many of them are afraid to come out and protest today." The dramatic police presence and numerous slow drive-bys from government agencies were not by accident. They were intended to scare workers and to keep them from organizing with each other. The threat of the police, deportation, and gov-

ernment repression has always been a racist tool of the state to keep workers divided and afraid of fighting back. Management has also issued stay away orders to several of the drivers who participated in the protests back in August, in effect, trying to scare drivers away from taking action.

Returning to the port for the second shift of ILWU members around 6pm, I encountered another large crowd walking a picket line at the entrance of a large bay. This time however, the ILWU leadership in charge did not choose to respect the strike. A ILWU union member that I spoke to on the picket lines told me that this type of strike breaking activity is almost totally unheard of for the ILWU and was extremely shameful. According to those on hand, the ILWU president was quoted as saying that since the truckers were not in a union the ILWU did not have to honour the strike. Police also made a show of force that night, and pushed the picketers off the street quickly so that workers cars could move through. Also making an appearance was Miguel Masso, the police officer who killed Alan Blueford. When the crowd saw him, he was quickly drowned in a sea of boos and chants and was taken out of the crowd by his commanding officers. Before I left for the night, I talked with several drivers about the struggle before them. They all stated that they were in this for the long haul and that they were prepared to see it to the end. "We will be out until we win," one driver told me as we walked back to our cars. The next day, pickets continued at the port, with Port Trucker Solidarity commenting:

Truckers are picketing SSA still, but police have broken their lines again and Longshoremen have crossed their lines and gone to work. Some Longshoremen have told Truckers they will go to jail if they don't unload this ship. Whether they are actually being threatened with that or not isn't clear at this time. Truckers are asking for support in outreach and for friends to come down to boost their spirits. They are going to stay. Very few local trucks are crossing their lines, but trucks from Stockton and Sacramento have taken this opportunity to take the local striking Truckers' loads. The Terminals are going to have to call trucking companies to pick up these loads.

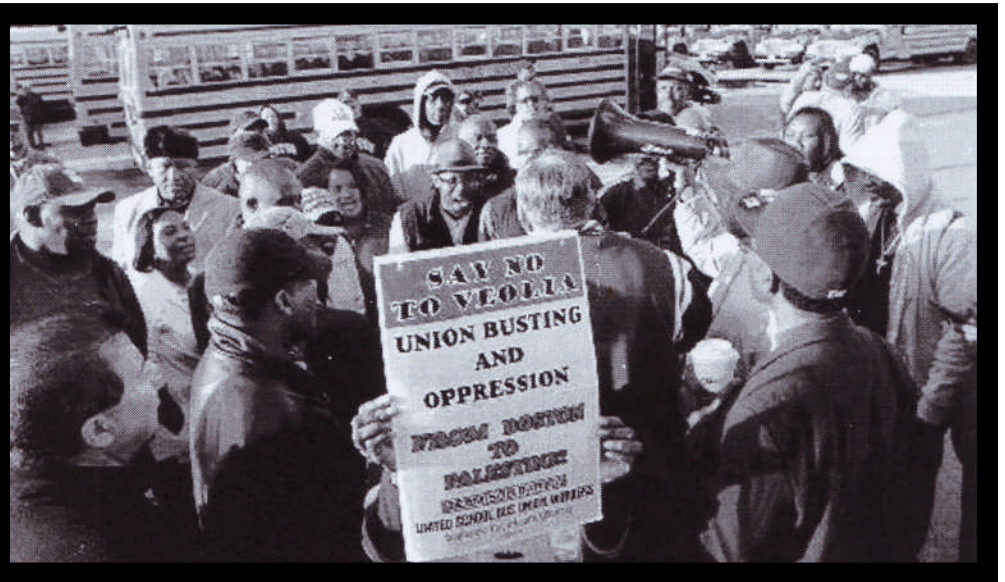
The next step in the struggle of the Port of Oakland truckers is to keep their strike going until management is forced to come to the table and negotiate. As they move forward, truckers have expressed a desire to reach out to other workers and also activate and expand their own base. While they are up against not only their own

bosses, but also the state and its police, they ultimately have something much more powerful: the power to withhold their labour and refuse to use it.

At a time when large bodies of workers have their struggles contained either by union or government bureaucracies admit a backdrop of bi-partisan calls for bans on strikes, the actions of the Oakland truckers are a testament to the power of regular working-class people to come together and collectively challenge a system that exploits and abuses them.

BOSTON BUS DRIVERS' WILDCAT STRIKE

On Tuesday 8/10/13 morning over 600 school bus drivers in Boston took wildcat action. They are angry at the complete ineffectiveness of their trade union (USW) and at the union-busting city administration, and the management style of Veolia, the private company now running the buses. Following an unsuccessful attempt at gaining an injunction,



the mayor arranged a city wide scabbing operation by the police. The predictable purge and victimisation by bosses and union bureaucrats has now begun.

The dispute has been brought to a head due to the knock on effect of the Government shutdown. A dispute had been lodged with the National Labour Relations Board, but as they have not been working the dispute has not been looked at yet. The drivers decide to take matters into their own hands.

A handful of scabs entered the yard and tried to board their buses. As pickets tried to prevent them, police and USC bureaucrats intervened and enabled them to drive the buses out. A shouting match between pickets and bureaucrats ensued outside each of the four depots.

Drivers are furious that there pay is rarely ever paid correctly and can be as much as 40% down, which then takes two months to rectify (affects hundreds of drivers a week). A spokesperson for the city administration said that although he understood they pay-check issues, there are much more important issues at stake (I am sure his pay-check is fine).

Veolia acknowledge that there are problems but blame the drivers for not submitting their hours in the correct manner. Other issues is the bullying by Veolia management, and the use of a GPS tracking system that was intended to be used by parents to see where their children are, but is now being used by Veolia as a management tool to bully drivers.

Mayor Thomas Menino has stated that the action is 'illegal' under the terms of their contracts and that their behaviour will have 'consequences'. His comments have been echoed by the USW bureaucrats. One of Melino's advisors has gone on record to say that the participants in the strike are all 'immigrants' who really do not understand the issues, and have been 'hood-

winked' and 'tricked' into taking part. She claimed that they are renegades and intimidators who are breaking the terms of their contract. The average length of service of the 600 drivers is 20+ years, so I am sure they are well aware of the issues.

Steven Kirschbaum, one of the leaders of the action has been the victim of a smear campaign by the local media and the city mayor. Yesterday the Boston Globe published an article about Kirschbaum. They claimed that he had been a member of the Workers World Party, the All Peoples Congress, the Coalition for Equal Quality Education, and that he had been on an anti-KKK rally and protests about school closures and budget cuts. They had even trawled his Facebook account and found a tribute to General Vo Nguyen Giap, the

former North Vietnamese military leader who died last week. They had interviewed the city mayor, Thomas Menino, who described Kirschbaum as a 'bully', and the leader of a 'rogue element of renegades'. By rogue element presumably he means the 95%+ drivers who took part.

The court injunction was not granted as the sitting judge agreed with the USC that the strike was the work of one 'rogue em-

ployee' – Steven Kirschbaum. Kirschbaum and one other person have been suspended, and a further seven workers are 'under investigation'.

As the issues that led to the walkout have not been resolved, and now participants are being bullied, it is likely that further actions are on the horizon. The drivers have submitted 16 demands to the bosses. They include, resolving the pay issues, scrapping the GPS system, proper breaks and restrooms, fair benefits, withdrawal of the

Veolia employee handbook, and a halt of any action against employees resulting from the wildcat action. It is believed that Veolia will reject the demands, supported by city officials who are putting robust scabbing plans in place for any future walkout.

Thanks to Working Class Self Organisation's Blog

Las Vegas: Casino Workers' Direct Action

5/11/13

Over 3000 members of a culinary workers union without permanent contracts have blockaded three lanes of Las Vegas Boulevard and a further 100 have occupied the lobby of the Cosmopolitan Casino - all of whom were subsequently handcuffed and arrested. Most of those involved have been working in casinos across Las Vegas for more than two years without any job security. Several Las Vegas casino owners are known to have contributed sizeable sums to a Republican Party 'union busting' campaign.

This is the second such demonstration in 2013 and the second to end in the arrests of over 100 peaceful demonstrators. The police only waited a few minutes before reading a warning over a megaphone warning people that they are trespassing. Nobody can interfere with the flow of money upstairs to casino bosses, so they were quickly dealt with.

The Culinary workers union represents approximately 60,000 food servers and bar



staff. As well as basic job security, they are demanding a 40 hour working weeks, better healthcare cover, and clause in their contracts that mean that terms and conditions will be carried over in the event of the Casino being sold to a different gangster.

Negotiations with casino owners have been on-going since 2010. There is no sign of any kind of settlement on the horizon, nor is there likely to be with owners who are openly engaged in the funding of a union-busting campaign.

CHILE - Starbucks Workers' Strike

IWW Starbucks Workers Union Declares Global Week of Action against Starbucks Union Busting in Solidarity with the Chilean Starbucks Strikers

Liberté Locke (IWW, NYC)
917-693-7742, [liberte.angrybarista \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:liberte.angrybarista[at]gmail.com) (English Only)

Andrés Giordano (President of El Sindicato de Trabajadores de Starbucks en Santiago, Chile) 011-569-918-19467, [sindicatosbux \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:sindicatosbux[at]gmail.com) (English and Spanish Speaking)

July 22, 2011

Union Seeks to Hold Starbucks Accountable for their Union Busting at Home and Abroad

NEW YORK – Monday, July 25th, the IWW Starbucks Workers Union will

launch a Global Week of Action in support of their separate but sister union El Sindicato de Trabajadores de Starbucks en Chile (Starbucks Workers Union in Chile).

Over 200 baristas and shift supervisors that work in the 32 Chilean Starbucks locations went on strike on July 7th. They are striking in an effort to have their demands met. Their most crucial demand is earning a higher wage. Currently baristas at Starbucks in Chile make \$2.50/hr. while the drinks are still sold for US prices, and they haven't received raises in 8 years. The baristas are also asking for a lunch stipend in order to eat during their shifts, this is something managers in Chile are provided.

Two weeks, to the day, after the strike began a New York City barista and mother of two young children was fired for announcing her membership in the IWW Starbucks Workers Union. The company gave no official reason for her termination but did fire her when she refused to meet with higher ups without her attorney and union representative present, which was a previous agreement between the union and management. Tiffany White-Thomas has worked at the Canal/Broadway Starbucks for over two years. She was up for a promotion when her store manager, Rafael Fox, told her that, being a mother, she would not have the time necessary to dedicate to the company so he would not be promoting her. A letter given to Tiffany's managers made reference to the collective efforts of the IWW Starbucks Union and the Chilean Strikers. Both unions feel that that this solidarity across borders is seen as a threat to the company and is, in part, what led to Tiffany's termination.

In New York City, the first solidarity action will be a press conference and picket in front of the Canal and Broadway Starbucks location, 405 Broadway between Walker and Canal St., starting at 12pm on Monday, July 25th. The IWW is demanding full reinstatement of Tiffany White-Thomas and that Starbucks negotiate in good faith with their brothers and sisters of El Sindicato de Trabajadores de Starbucks en Chile.

Similar actions in support of the Chilean Strikers are expected in various cities throughout the US and the world throughout next week.

The IWW Starbucks Workers Union is a grassroots organization composed entirely of current and former Starbucks employees who have fought for respect, security, affordable health care and a living wage since 2004.

Working together, SWU members have improved working conditions for Starbucks employees and won legal victories against unfair labor practices.

GREEK POLICE EVICT T.V. H.Q. OCCUPATION

8/11/13

Greek riot police have forcibly evicted dozens of journalists from the former state TV headquarters (ERT), bringing to an end a five month occupation that started after the TV station had been taken off air, and the journalists sacked. The closure had been part of a program of public sector job cuts to meet their austerity targets. Many of the workers had stayed behind and kept the station running with an illegal news feed via the internet.

Scuffles broke out between the journalists, their supporters, and the police. The streets around the building were cordoned off, and several rounds of tear gas were used to disperse those protesting. Four people were arrested on charges of 'resisting the authorities'.

A spokesperson for the radio workers union said that:

Quote:

"I was on air when riot police stormed into the studio and ordered me to shut the microphones and leave. I've never seen anything like this before; it's barbaric and indicative of the kind of democracy we have in this country."

A former ERT employee who had been evicted stated that:



Quote:

"This is how fascism works, slyly and in darkness. I feel like they have violated my home, violated my life, my democracy. They have destroyed everything."

The government condemned the illegal 'occupation' and said that the dawn raid carried out by the police was necessary to uphold the law and to restore legality. Government inspectors are now going through the studio with a fine tooth comb

to check whether the facilities and equipment have been damaged so that they can lay further charges on the occupiers. The studios will be handed over to the new state TV station, which will no doubt put a much more positive spin on the government and their austerity measures.

A series of rallies in support of the occupiers are being planned for the coming days.

INDONESIA

31/10/13

Three million workers across all sectors (mainly textiles) have begun a week-long strike to demand a nationwide pay rise of 50%, stricter rules on outsourcing, and universal health cover. Indonesia's economy grew by 6% last year and the workers want a bigger piece of the pie. A group of 37 huge companies – mainly in the textile in-

dustry – have submitted a statement to the government demanding no wage increases in 2014, or they will close their factories and leave the country.

A spokesperson for the workers said that:

Quote:

"Many workers can no longer afford to pay the rent and live under bridges or even the sewers. Instead of rice, they are forced to eat pre-cooked spaghetti. We have worked a lot to help the economic recovery, why are we being trampled on?"

Record levels of inflation have seen the price of basic commodities almost double, with the price of fuel increasing by 44% in 2013 alone. The Indonesia economy is growing at some of the highest levels in the region which has enabled many multinational corporations to make many billions of dollars profit over the last few years, but they are fighting tooth and nail to try and prevent ordinary Indonesians – who are the lowest paid textile workers in the region – from getting any benefit from their labour.

The government will make their final deci-

See Page 20

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Sewing Freedom: Phillip Josephs, Trans-nationalism & Early New Zealand Anarchism

By Jared Davidson AK Press 2013

A Review Brief by Graham Purchase

I knew nothing about the development of Anarchism in N.Z. before reading this well-researched and ably produced study.

This book is a brief, readable and informative piece of Anarchist historical scholarship examining movements, organizations and personalities active at the cusp of the 20th Century.

The book is nominally an account of the life of Josephs whom from his little tailor shop organized the distribution of anarchist literature that he imported wholesale from London and America. Josephs was an anarchist disciple of the category perhaps best described as the Kropotkinite-Freedom Group (London) tradition.

Josephs migrated to Glasgow from Latvia in 1897. Here he married a cigarette-factory worker, fathered 4 children and toiled as a sweatshop machinist before moving to Wellington in 1904. Here he set-up as a self-employed tailor cum anarchist bookshop, becoming involved in local revolutionary and anti-capitalist groupings, particularly the N.Z. Socialist Party, then a broad based organization attracting many Syndicalists. Activities focused around the Socialist Hall wherein lectures on such topics as Socialist Economics were delivered. Josephs contributed articles to the Commonweal and the Maoriland Worker, newspapers published by the NZSP and the Federation of Labor.

Strikes were illegal under an obsolete and bankrupt Arbitration system whose courts invariably favored employers despite low wages and increasing living costs. The first challenge to the Arbitration system was an 'illegal' strike by Tram-workers in



1906, followed by Slaughtermen, Miners (Blackbull strike) and culminating in the General Strike of 1913. The 'Red-Fed' (Federation of Labor) was an I.W.W. affiliate and the most revolutionary. The Federation split with the N.Z. Socialist Party because its members rejected parliamentary politics and Trades Unionism in favor

of direct workers' action. The Syndicalist surge within the class struggles of 1908-13 was bolstered by a stream of noted revolutionaries and labor leaders who stepped of the ship and onto the soap box. Transnational radical tourism created a melting pot of ideas which spurned a minority movement of anarcho-syndicalists within a radicalized and militant labor movement.

Jacobs founded the Freedom Club which organized well-attended weekly discussion meetings on a wide variety of subjects. The group collapsed or was suppressed following the failure of the Great Strike of 1913. Jacobs was elected secretary of the Anti-Militarist League (a broad based non-revolutionary grouping including Christian pacifists etc.) that opposed compulsory military training and conscription.

War Legislation was used extensively to stymie revolutionary syndicalism and a state-sponsored campaign against Wobblly-Anarchist-Socialism continued after the conclusion of the Great War. Fascination with Bolshevism after the Russian Revolution (1917) and the founding of the N.Z. Labor Party in 1916 corresponded with a decline in Revolutionary Syndicalism.

Jacobs migrated to Australia in 1921 and little is known about his life thereafter. In truth not much is known about his life in N.Z. But, Jacobs' life usefully serves as an anchor upon which to elaborate a modest but extremely competent and cogent account of early anarchism and syndicalism and its relationship with the wider Labor movement in N.Z. between 1900-21. The author acknowledges his great debt to previous scholarship undertaken by Bert Roth and Frank Prebble. The book ends with an appendix containing two newspaper articles on the failure of trades unionism, conscription and the General Strike.

Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936 by Richard Purkiss, Published by Sussex Academic Press.

In countries such as Australia in the Anglo world, the so called anarchist milieu, in recent decades has been characterised by congeries of sects, in some cases cults and tiny subcultures based around the left sub cultural hot houses of book shops.

As a result of the predominance of mass Stalinism to the left of social democratic

labour parties from the 1930's to the 1960's in the labour movement, those drawn into this milieu are often consciously and unconsciously drawn into authoritarian ways and all manner of shady behaviour e.g. stacking meetings, psychological manipulation of particularly inexperienced young people by swell headed "gurus", general duplicity, underhanded-

ness, and hypocritical navel gazing of "safe spaces policies", introversion associated with the unwholesome focusing on such sectlets "precious" internal life - structures/processes, etc.

Often, such groupings with their associated micro bureaucracies are engrossed in creating some macro bureaucracy of a "federation". In which they can delight in the formalism of the "clockwork" operation of its structures and associated rituals which can provide excuses for social occasions and a salve to the oppression

mongering, of its middle class, student and workers with high levels of autonomy in their jobs, which provide its membership and social base.

Certain of these sectlets are drawn into the mad antics of creating “papier-mache unions” favouring red & black colour schemes, to impress the credulous members of similar overseas and interstate sects, with fake syndicalist organising and even “international solidarity campaigns” on bogus grounds via the medium of the internet and web sites, etc. Whilst others are drawn into tail ending of workers struggles and picket support, little different from the various Trotskyist sects. Leading nowhere, in regard to achieving major defeats of the employer offensive and helping turn the tide in the class struggle. These groupings lack any concept of a long term serious program of industrial work and associated strategy.

Most of those drawn into this milieu feature a lack of any conception of how to reach the average worker with anarchist ideas and practices, and realise the transitional steps to achieve mass syndicalist unionism. This work place strategy has proven to be only way to create mass working class interest in anarchism and the workers movement which could achieve an anarchist society. Through encouraging and practicing direct action on the job in its various forms, the direct democracy of mass meetings and the strict mandating of delegates with limited tenure of office procedures for officials.

In sharp contrast to the often laughable, bizarre antics and absurd pretensions of existing syndicalist and anarchist sectlets in the Anglo World, the book under review, focuses on a genuine mass anarcho-syndicalist workers movement in Valencia, Spain. It played a central role in innumerable strikes and general strikes from its emergence until the outbreak of the Spanish Revolution and Civil War of 1936-39, when it was the key force behind widespread collectivisations of industry in rural and urban areas.

This book throws important light on key factors contributing to the emergence of mass anarcho-syndicalist unionism in Valencia and its dynamics. Most significant is the important contribution of the Republican movement, in particular the “Blasco” current in nurturing the early anarchist influenced unions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These unions went on to affiliate to the anarcho-syndicalist CNT (National Confederation of Labour) in 1910. This support stemmed from competition between Republicans and the Socialist party for votes in elections at various levels. Republican control of local government, led to the provision of offices for the anarchist unions, lawyers who were Republicans provided legal help to these

fledgling unions. Whilst, the Republican controlled media, provided a mouth piece to these unions and its publishing houses published anarchist texts. In contrast to the Anglo world and in the case of Australia, such a phenomena as Republicanism and

daily newspaper Solidaridad Obrera from Barcelona to Valencia in 1919. (In say the Australian context, the development of such mass circulation workers media must also be connected with the emergence of a mass syndicalist union movement in



the associated electoral rivalries were missing. Colonial Labour Parties, since the 1890's and then subsequently the ALP founded in 1901, having overwhelming working class electoral support and control of the bureaucratic unions, up to today. The author sees the CNT's surge to predominance in Valencia, as explained by a range of factors: the Spanish industrial boom during WWI and rising employment levels, spiralling inflation, the revolutionary enthusiasm following the Russian Revolution of 1917, a national propaganda and organising campaign launched by the Catalan CNT and most significantly the transfer of the publishing of the CNT's

terms of providing a mass readership, raised workers morale, a network of worker correspondents, full time editorial staff, subsidies, printing facilities, etc. Such a mass circulation paper is not going to eventuate from a tiny paper appealing to the student/middle class leftist subculture with all manner of oppression mongering and “political correctness” displays, gradually getting bigger and bigger circulations.) This explosive expansion was also associated with the winning of a series of strikes by CNT affiliates at this time. Resulting in the CNT securing a majority position in most Valencian urban industries.

The author emphasises the importance to the winning of strikes by workers in less industrially strategic sectors who could be easily replaced with scabs by employers was the industrial solidarity of CNT workers in the most strategic sectors such as the transport union via boycotts.

The book focuses on the rivalry of major tendencies i.e. those who identified with the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) and the Trientistas in the Valencian CNT following the end of the Primo Rivera Dictatorship in the early 1930's. These tendencies, the author shows were interconnected to CNT unions of differing strategic importance. The radical FAI pushing for "revolution around the corner" and constant calls for general strikes and insurrections had a base in unions within industries with a high level of unskilled and the unemployed. Whilst the Trientistas considered to be moderates, but representing a range of different positions with a long term union building perspective, were based among the most strategic sectors such as transport, metal, public utilities and wood manufacturing unions. They particularly opposed the idea that the CNT and FAI being complementary organisations, working together in different spheres..

The author shows how ineffectual were FAI attempts to impose general strikes in industries in which they had influence,

due to often unskilled labour in such sectors as catering and construction, which could be easily replaced by employers. Whilst, the Trientista or moderate unions such as the Transport union in the port area of Valencia were able to rapidly and effectively close down all work during a general strike call. The author shows that an important ramification of the failure of strikes by FAI influenced CNT unions in Valencia was a move by militants toward individualist "direct action" in the shape of bank robberies, sabotage, bombings, etc. Associated with the both the FAI influenced CNT unions and Trientista unions were cultural/educational centers supported by the unions. The author examines the different emphasis of these centers. The Trientista centers being much more open to speakers from other left groups. In the Australian/Anglo context, lacking any mass syndicalist movement to interact and support, such centers easily become transformed into left subculture "hot houses", where the poisonous weeds of the middle class/student leftist subculture flourish..

The author looks at how the rivalry between these different CNT factions led to a major split in the CNT in the early 1930's which continued until 1936. With the Trientista unions breaking away to form their own confederation, the "Opposition Unions". The "official CNT" unions be-

came swept up into support of a series of insurrections/general strikes encouraged by the Barcelona based FAI in the early 30's which led to massive waves of state repression, enormous membership losses and a rightward shift in the Spanish ruling class. Culminating in the military coup of July 1936. This rightward shift and the rise of Fascism in Europe the book shows encouraged the re-unification of the CNT in 1936, just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War.

In conclusion, the book under review throws important light on the various factors contributing to the emergence of mass anarcho-syndicalist unionism in Valencia in the early 20th Century. A movement which failed to develop on this scale in the Anglo world and continues to be the case. Most significantly the book provides an excellent examination of the factional struggle in the Valencian CNT in the early 30's which led to a major split at this time and the layers of workers which supported the different sides. The book does a very good job in discussing the outcome of the "official" CNT being dominated by the FAI faction, with the organisation being transformed into an "anarchist workers association" and embarking on a disastrous course of "revolutionary gymnastics".

Mark McGuire

Pistoleros: The Chronicles of Farquhar McHarg Volume 1: 1918

By Farquhar McHarg

Introduced by Stuart Christie. PM Press, Calif., 2011.

Review Brief by Graham Purchase.

In 1918 an 18 year old Glaswegian boy named Farquhar McHarg arrived in Barcelona by boat in which he worked as an apprentice engineer. Already an anarchist convert a chance meeting with young anarcho-syndicalist (CNT) activists led him to jump ship and throw in his lot with the Spanish revolutionaries.

Whilst there are numerous studies in English on anarcho-syndicalists during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9), their historical role in the First World War era is much less widely known. To most people the tragic events of a century ago are now distant and poorly understood. McHarg's mastery of autobiographical narrative allows readers with little historical knowledge to effortlessly transcend the haze of history, entering and relating to

the social and political concerns of the last year of the Great War. This crisply written story contains all of the



most common or quintessential ingredients of a romance or spy novella or movie, but without the saucy bits: Love, comradeship, intrigue, adventure, exotic locations, seedy cafes, bad-dies, secret agents, sabotage, war and revolution.

Pistoleros exploration of revolutionary Barcelona

in 1918 is comparable to George Orwell's Civil War autobiography *Homage to Catalonia*. But McHarg's simple storytell-

ing is a considerably more readable, lucid, heartwarming, complete and elegant yarn than Orwell's confused and scrappy notebook.

McHarg's engaging, authentic, personal work of creative non-fiction is followed in the second half of *Pistoleros* by a more objective or conventional approach and analysis of (revolutionary) politics in 1918 from an anarchist standpoint. The politics of Western Europe and North Africa are examined as well as the aftermath of the Russian Revolution (1917) which altered the trajectory of the War and led to the Anarchist (Makhnovist) resistance to the tyranny of Bolshevism/State-Communism.

European politics is always complex and McHarg does an excellent job of succinctly covering the key personalities and concerns of 1918. The particular emphasis and reference to neutral Spain, examines areas of WW1 that are not often visited by historians and, almost never by documentary makers or school text book writers.

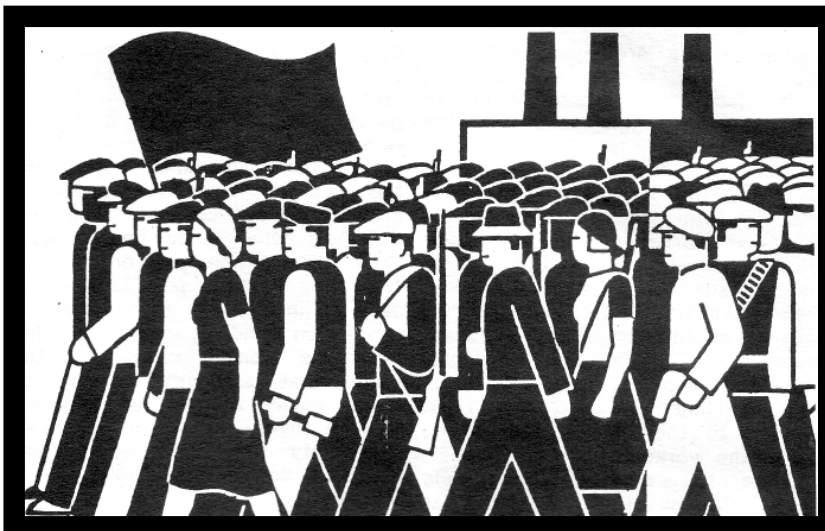
This book is obligatory reading for all anarcho-syndicalists.

(To be continued.)

Garino, Maurizio, 1892-1977

A short biography of Maurizio Garino, one of the leading anarchist animators of the Italian factory council movement.

Maurizio Garino was born in November 1892, the son of Michele and Nicoletta Chiglioni in Ploaghe, Sardinia.



In 1895 the family moved to Turin and in 1900 to Cassine. After elementary school and a short stay in a religious school Maurizio became an apprentice carpenter and then a pattern-maker mechanic.

He returned to Turin in 1906, and in 1908 joined the Turinese Socialist Youth. Adopting an abstentionist position, he moved towards anarchism with the agitation around the case of the Spanish libertarian teacher Francisco Ferrer in autumn 1909. In 1910 he was with Pietro Ferrero one of the founders of the Modern School, modeled on Ferrer's ideas, which was a cultural circle for the political and cultural education of the Turinese working class.

He was involved in the agitation against the war in Tripoli. He took part in the strike in 1912 against the withdrawal of privileges and union derecognition in exchange for the "English Saturday".

He joined the new union SUM (United Metalworkers Union) created by revolutionary syndicalists. The strike led to a serious defeat after two months. The negative experience of the defeat led him and Ferrero to argue for staying in the FIOM union, after the founding of the anarcho-syndicalist USI in November 1912. The great strike in the car industry in spring 1913 led to a victory for the FIOM

and the eclipse of the SUM, with a Turinese section of the USI, under the leadership of Ilario Margarita, going over to the FIOM.

In June 1914 Maurizio had a major role in the strikes during the Red Week. Arrested for violence, threats and carrying of arms, he managed to be released. During the war

he defended anti-interventionist positions. These anti-war positions meant a constant changing of jobs. He avoided the draft because of his classification as

a skilled worker in a key industry.

Between one lay-off and another, he was in the front line of the agitation in the workplaces and took part in the movements in the factories in August 1917.

Within the Turinese section of the FIOM, he and Ferrero organised a Libertarian Group. The main fear of the reformist socialists was an alliance between the Libertarian Group and the Maximalist current within the Socialist party. In fact, at the beginning of 1919, that started to happen.

Maurizio took a leading part in the factory council movement. As a member of the Turinese group, he attended the founding conference of the Unione Comunista Anarchica Italiana (UCAI) at Florence in 1919 along with Errico Malatesta. The UCAI later became the Unione Anarchica Italiana (UAI).

In December of the same year he participated in the extraordinary congress of the CDL union at Turin putting forward a motion in favour of the factory councils. In May 1920 at the national convention of the FIOM in Genoa, he condemned the lack of solidarity with the Turinese metalworkers. The following June together with Ferrero he took part in the Conference of the Piedmontese anarchist movement. In July he attended the Bologna Congress of the UAI where he formulated anarchist positions on the factory councils.

In 1921 he started work in a cooperative. This was later turned into a joint-stock company in order to avoid fascistisation. During the fascist period, he was constantly arrested and persecuted.

His close comrade Ferrero was murdered during the fascist attack on Turin on 18 December 1922. After 18 September 1943 he started re-organising the Turinese anarchist movement and set up the Circle of Social Studies. He took part in the fighting against the Nazi-Fascists. Arrested in October 1944, he was released thanks to an exchange of prisoners.

After the liberation he continued to take part in the activities of the Piedmontese anarchist movement, and restarted the Modern School, and was also involved in intense cultural activity with the organisation of various conferences on many topics. However, these various cultural



activities had far less effect on the Turinese working class than they had in the past.

He died in Turin in 1977.

HOW TO FIGHT PRIVATISATION

Introduction

The following article refers particularly to the British situation. However, its ideas for fighting privatisation are of relevance to Australia today, where many Government owned assets and authorities are under threat.

Some quick thoughts on privatisation and how workers can effectively challenge it.

There two high profile cases of privatisation at the moment. Royal Mail is the one that's hitting the headlines right now, but the National Health Service is also being sold off piece by piece. There is a sharp contrast in the response from the workers' movement to these two cases.

With the NHS, of course, the Trades Union Congress might have been of more use if Brendan Barber had done a wet fart into a box and posted it to David Cameron. There was a national march and a nationwide candle-lit vigil which (rightly) became the butt of a great many jokes. Especially when it was announced that people could also take a photo of themselves with a candle at home to be added to a photo mosaic.

The annual march against the Tory Party Conference has the NHS as a theme, of course. But this is less than nothing given that the bill allowing the selloff of the service has long passed and that the theme is largely a side note given that the only plan that is ever made for these marches is for lots of workers to be led to a field and talked at by overpaid windbags.

The closest we came to any actual disruption in defence of the NHS was UK Uncut's "block the bridge, block the bill" action. This was far more innovative than the TUC's (Trade Union Congress - British ACTU) strategy – apparently carved in stone in a bygone age to be passed from general secretary to general secretary and occasionally polished to look new for any and all circumstances. But it stood alone and was no substitute for action by staff within the NHS, and so it ultimately failed its stated objective of blocking the bill.

By contrast, the Communication Workers Union has responded to the government's plans for a speedy sell off of Royal Mail by balloting for strike action. In fact, it says something about the strength of feeling and determination to fight that even Royal Mail managers in Unite, traditionally a

scab outfit whose members cross CWU (Communication Workers' Union) picket lines to keep the post moving, have talked about coordinating action over this issue.

Of course, this doesn't mean that there aren't potential pitfalls. Aside from the government being determined to railroad through the sale, the CWU has form when it comes to diffusing members' anger and selling disputes short. As with all unions, there will inevitably come a point when what counts as a victory for the officials will clash with the interests of the workers, and as long as the bureaucrats maintain



control of the dispute they will get their way.

But this still puts the fight to stop Royal Mail privatisation far ahead of that to stop NHS privatisation. It also begs the question of what those outside of the workforce can do to help the fight, particularly where vital public services which will be wrecked if sold off are concerned.

A caveat, before I go on. I largely agree with Jim Clarke here on the subject of re-nationalisation as a favoured leftist demand.

Privatisation should be fought as it is always pushed as a way to benefit shareholders and private profit over workers and service users. But, as civil servants and public sector workers will be all too aware right now, a boss is a boss is a boss. Our struggles may force nationalisation, and this may be a short or long term benefit depending on the terms, but we don't need this as a demand for it to be the outcome. "Public" ownership is no automatic panacea and it is no substitute for genuine workers' self-management.

That being said, how do we fight against privatisation? Strikes and other industrial action by the workers affected are obviously one of the best forms of action, but this doesn't mean that lacking a unionised

workforce – or with a union unwilling to fight – then the sell off is inevitable. Likewise, alongside solidarity on the picket lines, the wider class can utilise direct action as part of the fight.

There are a number of forms this could take.

The "I won't pay" movement in Greece is one example that can be deployed when what's at stake is a service where fees are being introduced, or significantly hiked, as a result of private sector involvement. This can also galvanise an awful lot of people given how extra costs can impact particularly on those already struggling to make their income meet their outgoings.

Another potential form of direct action is the kind of pickets that the anti-workfare campaign has used to force providers out of the government's work for benefits schemes. After all, a sell off requires a buyer, and if we can find out who is bidding for the contract then a hit on their profits and customers turning away can potentially persuade them to pull out of the deal.

There are also occupations and economic blockades. As with the threat of a service being shut down altogether, users taking it over in opposition can be a powerful show of defiance and cause the kind of disruption that can make the whole process too much of a headache. Likewise, since the person doing the selling is the government, hitting the economy as a whole by blocking roads (or bridges) can have a similar disruptive impact.

None of these actions are on their own going to stop privatisation. Nor are they all going to be equally useful in every circumstance. But they should be seen as a starting point that we can build on and utilise where possible.

When privatisation is threatened, whether the detrimental effect is purely for the workers facing it or for broader sections of the working class, we should fight it. But all the petitions in the world won't force the state and the bosses to change their mind. They can safely ignore us too if all we do is march from point A to point B and listen to speeches. Don't even get me started on sodding candle-lit vigils.

But if we're willing to cause as much disruption as possible in opposition, then our power as the productive class in society gives us real leverage. How we do that most effectively is where our debate needs to be focused.

Don't petition – organise!

Phil

Sep 20 2013 13:20

NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important news in the NSW Railways are upcoming Enterprise Agreement negotiations. The current enterprise agreement has seen many attacks on rail workers jobs. One of the most serious has been the outsourcing of train and station cleaning jobs. Whilst parts of the railway work force has been white anted with casuals and part timers, which will facilitate further major attacks.

The upcoming EA no doubt will see a further wave of attacks associated with the privatisation hidden agenda, of the O'Farrell Government and Big Business, unless the grass roots unite on the job to fightback. The success of the bosses onslaught in this sector will inspire other public and private sector bosses to follow suit. (See article Page 3.)

In State Transit in NSW, privatisation by stealth moves continue behind the scenes, wrecking up bus operations, driving many off the job and alienating many commuters. Associated with this push has been a new move to outsource work and cut staff. Whilst, the workforce is to be white anted with casuals and part timers, to undermine grass roots resistance to the bosses and O'Farrell Government offensive. (See article Page 5.)

In the Victorian Railways, grass roots activists are getting behind the public transport workers paper "Sparks" to fight the bosses attacks. Whilst the bosses typically are trying to deny freedom of speech and discussion. (See article Page 7.)

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 at 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.
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3011 Vic.

Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name

Address.....

General Secretary

PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

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

Continued From Page 13 sion on whether there will be any pay increases, on November the 1st. In the meantime they are being put under lots

of pressure from the gangsters who run the sweatshops to offer nothing otherwise they will take their business to other Asian countries where they can pay less.

Solidarity with all workers on strike in Indonesia!

ALTERNATIVE UNIONS MEET IN NORTH AFRICA AND EUROPE

In early 2013, alternative unions held two meetings to expand international cooperation.

On February 23, the Mediterranean Union Coordination met in Tangiers. The unions that met include the Moroccan National Federation of Workers and Officials of Local Collectives (FNFO CLUMT), National Federation of Education Workers (FNE-UMT) and National Federation of Agricultural Workers (FNSEA-UMT), the Spanish CGT, the French CNT, the Association of Unemployed Graduates of Morocco (ANDCM) and the Union of Unemployed Graduates of Tunisia (UDC). Solidaires (France), the Algerian unions SNAPAP (National union of public service personnel) and CLA (Council of High-School Students of Algeria) and USI (Italy) sent messages apologizing for their absence.

The meeting's final declaration called for support for an upcoming general strike in Morocco on February 28; support for February 20 (student) Movement; and solidarity with the Union of Unemployed Graduates of Tunisia in their ongoing struggle to realize the aims of the revolution there. The network also strongly condemned the improper expulsion and inhuman treatment reserved for militants of the unemployed workers' organizations in Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania by the Algerian regime, who were invited by the SNAPAP to a preparatory meeting for the creation of the North African Union of Unemployed Workers.

Anti-capitalist unions also met in Paris from March 22-24. The meeting was called by the Confederación General del Trabajo (Spain), the Union Syndicale

The international meeting set the following objectives:

To implement, over time, union solidarity actions focused on one or two countries.

To participate in a unified and coordinated manner to support existing international struggles and campaigns: support for the Palestinian people, recognition of independent unionism in North Africa and the Middle East, against the military occupation of Haiti, against the European treaties that impose austerity, for the right of all peoples to decide their future, etc.

To strengthen and expand international work in the various labour sectors (transportation, education, call centres, industry, commerce, health care, etc.) and inter-professional issues.

Decide together the materials necessary for the success of joint projects.

The organizers declared that by holding this meeting they did not intend to declare the establishment of a new international organization. Rather, they were seeking to strengthen, expand and streamline a network of combative, democratic, independent, alternative and internationalist trade unionism.



Solidaires (France) and the Central Sindical e Popular Conlutas (Brazil) and brought together some 60 organizations from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Thanks to ASR