

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Sydney, Australia
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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

Greek Workers Show the Way Forward with the General Strike!



Street Fighting with Police During The Recent General Strike Against Greek Govt Austerity Plans

NATIONAL NEWS; NSW RAILWAY NEWS; REPORTS ON PT GRASS ROOTS ORGANISING MEETING; STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH; MARITIME TRANSPORT; VIC. NEWS; GREECE; BRITAIN TODAY; N.Z. UPDATE; DEBATE ON TRANSITIONAL STEPS TOWARD SYNDICALIST UNIONISM ; BOOK REVIEW - BLACK FLAME; BULGARIAN ANARCHISM; 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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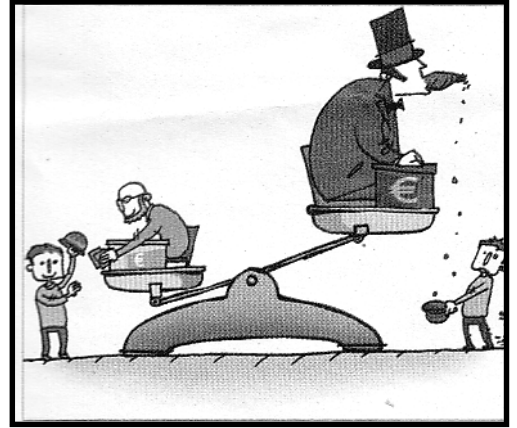
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Considering that lives have been lost, the safety of Australian families has been compromised and the wholesale ripping off of billions of dollars of taxpayers' money have occurred, you'd think a little bit of media attention would be focused on the failures of private enterprise, capitalism and the pitfalls of subcontracting state responsibilities to the private sector.

As expected, not one word has been raised about the failures of a system based on the creation of ever increasing profits irrespective of the human, social and environmental costs. Nothing highlights the moral and ethical bankruptcy of 21st century capitalist society more than its unwillingness and inability to allow other voices to be heard in an era when it's becoming increasingly obvious economic and institutional frameworks that may have been appropriate in an era of plenty are downright dangerous as we move into an era of scarcity brought about by increasing population growth, finite resources, increasing greenhouse emissions and the domination of the world economy by corporate capitalism.

massive amounts of greenhouse emissions generated by the burning of brown coal. You and I are expected to pay the price for our bad behaviour but a company that is putting the future of every living thing on this planet on the line to generate a profit for its major share holders, walks away scott free from its responsibility to the



community.

The problem is compounded by its close relationship with the Victorian State government who, with the help of a compliant Opposition, has passed laws that treat protestors at Hazelwood as terrorists and who have entered into a twenty year agreement with International Power to allow it to use brown coal at a bargain basement price to generate electricity in Victoria.

The privatisation of Victoria's energy production by the Kennett government removed the control governments have over essential infrastructure. The sale of these public assets has made us hostages to corporations who are only accountable to their major share holders.

*Thanks to
the Anarchist Age*

MAKING A BUCK

The owner of Hazelwood, the most carbon intensive power station in the developed world, has managed to make its owner, the British company International Power, a record 387 million dollar profit last year. Not bad for a company that has been crying poor and has claimed it would have to close down Victoria's major power station because it couldn't survive if carbon trading was introduced.

International Power has made a record profit for two very good reasons. It is one of the biggest recipients of corporate welfare in the country and more importantly, it does not pay for the damage it causes to the environment and people because of the

National News

THE PRIVATE SECTOR DOES IT BETTER?

One of the primary reasons that was used to privatise public assets in Australia was they were non profitable, the service provided was abysmal and the workers were not accountable for their actions because they were protected by a heavy union presence. We were told that privatised services would be cheaper, more efficient and staff would be accountable. What was presented as fact has turned out to be fiction. Not that we would have expected any other outcome. People seem to have forgotten that public enterprises were initially set up to cover the gaps the private sector were unwilling or unable to cover because they were not profitable.

Nothing highlights the fallacy private enterprise does it cheaper and more efficiently than public enterprise than the financial rorting accompanying the current home insulation and school hall building schemes. It's become very fashionable for the Opposition Leader and the media to blame the Rudd Labor government for the roiling accompanying these schemes.

Rebel Worker Web Site:

www.rebelworker.org

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

Preparing to Get Screwed

By *Crimson Coconut*

The unions went into the 2010 Enterprise Agreement with some haste, castigating RailCorp for not wanting to negotiate a new deal. Although there is no doubt that we all deserve a pay rise due to the extra duties we have to perform, most people are still reeling from the last agreement. Many positions from the last agreement have yet to be settled, some staff are still suspended in a CityRail Limbo Land.

None of the savings for the last deal will ever be passed on to rail workers despite the sacrifices that were made. The unions modest wish list of 16 demands for the bargaining was gazumped by RailCorps 27 demands. Demands which are an all out attack on our working conditions.

What we have to fear most from RailCorp's demands is a clause that would include forced redundancy. Unlike voluntary redundancy where a sweetener offer of so many weeks for each year of service is included, with forced redundancy no additional payments above the 2 weeks notice plus your own entitlements like long service and holiday pay has to be paid. Other proposed attacks include a reduction in paid casual sick days by one day and a capping of sick leave 6 months prior to retirement.

Other demands remain obscured as they have never been explained to us. It is not good enough just to mention a proposed "changes to clause 23 on filling of positions" without knowing what those changes will be. The changes must be elaborated otherwise they remain vague and ambiguous.

There will be a renewed attack on Network Control staff who will be required to work an extended 76 hrs a fortnight. Train crewing will also come under attack along with CountryLink "on-board" staff, and CCTV Operators. No one will really be spared if this agreement is implemented. I'm pretty sure that staff will vote it down.

For all this we are being offered an extra .8% above the NSW government's wage freeze of 2.5% PA. The funny part about this is that we are not legally bound to abide by the State Government's wage freeze as this is Government policy only. There are no legal grounds for us to abide by the direction. The unions web sites have links to the wage freeze policy as if they have accepted it as a foregone conclusion and forms a starting point for negotiations. This is despite the fact that we are

- Build a consensus (as much as I hate this word) around tactics that we can all agree on.

- Involve members in all decision making where possible. Only act at the instruction of members.

Ignore the NSW Governments wages policy and follow the direction of members.

During negotiation providing feedback about where the negotiations are headed and asking members what should be done



covered by a Federal Award which puts no such stipulation. The legality of incorporating such policies, which ties the hands of unions and workers alike, is questionable under the new Fair Work Australia legislation.

One other legally contentious issue is the inclusion of the sale of Martins Creek Quarry as a condition for getting the wage increase. To include such a demand of workers who have no control over a business decision of the State Government and RailCorp is not only ludicrous, but in my mind would be industrially illegal. According to the Maitland Mercury newspaper says the quarry was put up for sale in 2009 and the staff involved have been offered redundancy and redeployment anyway. The unions should have struck-out this demand from day one.

So how would we, as a democratic Rank and File union, have gone into this negotiation differently:

- On the job discussion about a log of claims in convened meetings of members. Serious discussion about what could be achieved. As well as discussion about nullifying any claims put forward by management.

next to achieve their aims.

- Refuse to trade off any jobs or conditions for a pay rise.

- Members to elect a team in which they have faith to do their negotiating.

Refuse to sit in management briefings on cost cutting exercises that effect jobs and conditions.

Ongoing campaigns on the job around job security and anti-privatisation.

Much more could have been achieved for rail workers after the debacle of the last Enterprise Agreement – sadly the lack of leadership and lack of democracy will most likely see us copping it once again. Unfortunately we are all isolated by our geographic regions and work locations, however that should not stop us. Starting now, let's stop the rot by being active on the job and resisting what management is likely to dish out by working better together.

RAIL - BUS

City Rail News

Whilst increasing numbers of passengers are using intercity services, one wonders why 4 carriage trains are still rostered for operation between Newcastle and Sydney. Coupled to the fact, it's causing serious overcrowding and people having to stand up for long distances on these trains. What is the Government doing about it? Obviously nothing! In contrast, passengers on suburban rail services, enjoy exclusively 8 carriage trains, with minor exceptions.

On another note, once again, the Tabloid media is taking pot shots at train drivers.

The press is complaining about the number of suspensions for misconduct on duty and running signals at red. Whilst there are suspensions for duty breaches in every sphere of employment. Running signals at red, occurs on isolated occasions. It must be stressed, City Rail trains and diesel rail cars are fitted with trip mechanisms which apply the brake at signals at stop. It's about time the media got its facts right.

Sydney Buses News

Once again the STA (State Transit Authority) is doing nothing about running times for buses operating. Drivers are constantly putting up with increased traffic congestion and passenger loading increases on trips. Witness, the fact of the 400 buses.

These buses carry many passengers on long distances. However, running times have only been increased by 4 minutes. Kingsgrove and Waverley drivers who operate 400's, are putting the matter in dispute. The tight running times on this and almost every other route, is proof, that the bus schedulers are incompetent in their duty and should be replaced. If they were employed by another transport employer, they would not have a job. These people have no idea of the harsh realities of driving in heavy traffic and carrying full loads of passengers, which are the main causes of late running. These issues need to be addressed immediately.

However, it's obvious that the STA is increasing the risk of stress and fatigue on drivers, rather than reducing it. These are serious issues and yet the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) officials, once again, appear to side with management on this issue. Change needs to happen now.

Getting the Ball Rolling

by *Crimson Coconut*

On Sunday March 21st a meeting was held in Sydney with the intent of forging a viable challenge to the existing powers within the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union). The group that attended is serious about changing the way workers see their union and interact within it. They are also serious about the role that leadership and worker participation plays in regaining lost ground that has been frivolously surrendered over the past decade.

An election fund is in the process of being set up which will be used during the election for mail-outs and providing information to union members. Various other initiatives such as an email list and web site will be set up very soon. We are expecting supporters who want change to contribute to the fund.

Our convictions come from the belief that workers within the Public Transport industry deserve much better. There are better ways of organising union affairs. All of the members of the union are a valuable resource that can be actively involved in resolving many of the issues that face them on the job day after day. Consultation and communication with and between members is the best way of defeating management when it comes time for a new agreement. Secret deals that involve just a few within the union bureaucracy just don't work as means of putting pressure on management. It is no

longer valid to say that "we elect the officials to do the work for us". This way of working hasn't served us well, as there are nothing in that method to keep them (union reps) honest or to involve members in the decision making process. We propose that the best way to keep in touch with the issues and with fellow workers is

We are doing this also because we can win and we can bring about a new confidence amongst transport workers knowing that their rights are important.

We are calling on other serious like minded candidates to stand on a democratic, rank and file ticket with us. That would mean agreeing to a set of principles that are for the common good of us all. Elected candidates would also be subject to recall from their elected positions if they were not performing to the expectations of the rank and file.

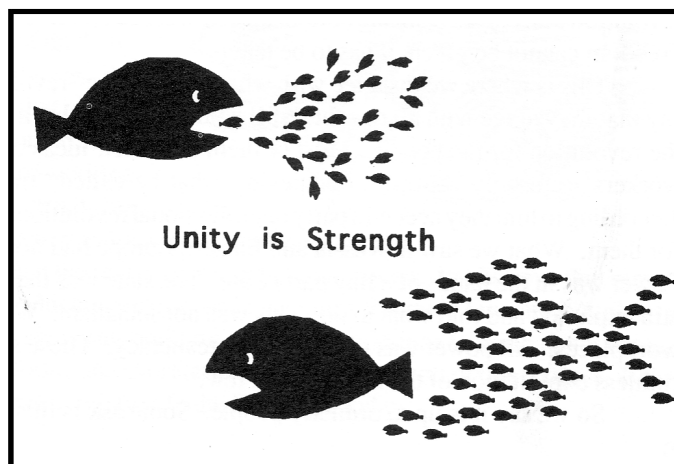
Some of the conditions that candidates would expect to agree to include:

1. Members Representatives will be elected by a majority vote of all members.
2. Representatives so elected have no authority and are directed to carry out the wishes of the majority of

members. They must also only speak on behalf of members

3. Election of Representatives is of limited tenure (eg maximum of 1 or 2 years) after which they must relinquish their position and elections held for their positions.

4. No decisions should be carried out in the name of members without first consulting them and gaining consensus. Pref-



being active on the job.

The overriding principle that we all adhere to is "democracy", Union Democracy. There needs to be a free flow of ideas and action, with support when needed, to and from the ranks and the leadership of the union. We need to support each other as one unit - the old union adage of "solidarity" means just that.

erably this should be done through organised mass meetings where debate takes place. This position should especially be reinforced when bargaining takes place between the union and management.

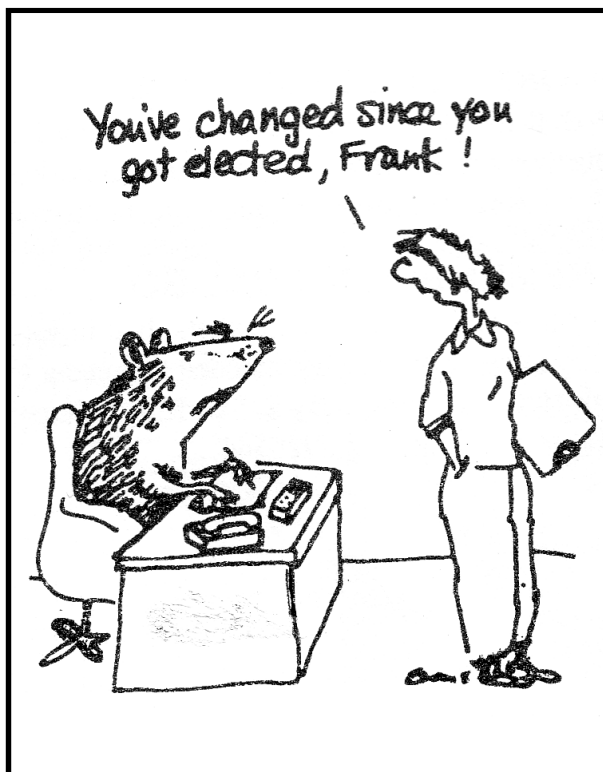
5. Elected Representatives must regularly hold public meetings to keep members informed and up to date on issues which concern them. It also gives members a chance to voice opinions and to give feedback. Newsletters, direct email, and any other method that is effective will be used to keep members informed.

6. Workers Representatives if remunerated for their efforts will receive wages payment which is less than or equal to their position held currently in the Public Transport Industry at the time of election.

7. Any Members Representative or Delegate can be removed (right of recall) by the vote of a majority of members at any time if members do not believe they are performing satisfactorily in their interests. Hopefully this would be done at mass meeting of members where the member or members who are being moved against have a chance to express their position or view in defence of themselves.

8. Accountability for members funds will be audited independently. Members may question the use of funds and peruse

the fund at any time. All financial transactions will be transparent and will rely on gaining the approval of a majority of members. 9. The organisation although



recognising the need to have legal representation will rely primarily on the mobilising efforts of members to achieve

objectives determined by the membership. A mass meeting of members will decide the form, duration and date of any industrial action. Industrial action cannot take place without the majority consent of members.

10. There will be no trading of working conditions for pay rises. All negotiation positions will be put before the membership.

11. Negotiating committees will be chosen by the members of the union.

12. Rules of the organisation may be changed from time to time with the full consent of membership. Rule changes may be proposed by any member but must be put before the membership before they are binding on members.

13. While elected reps may belong to a political parties their allegiance to the union and its members must be paramount in any transaction or decision making.

We ask all rail workers and members of the STA (State Transit Authority) who are fed up with the current situation to get involved in the campaign to defend working conditions by supporting the team that is committed to work with you.

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE GRASS ROOTS ORGANISING MEETING

A well attended meeting of rank and file RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) members was held on Sunday March 21 in Surry Hills to discuss strategies and ways in which the union can be revitalised at the grassroots level. One key topic for discussion was organising a ticket to challenge the current leadership group in the union elections due later this year. Active members and delegates are being encouraged to join this grassroots push to rid our union of the overpaid bureaucrats and careerists currently in control.

A number of members present expressed the view that the current ruling group have been in power too long and have lost touch with the base of the membership and with our day to day issues and concerns at work. Another key topic for discussion was the need for workers to develop an industrial strategy that can get members more involved in the processes of the union and mount a real challenge to ongoing em-

ployer attacks on jobs and conditions. The current round of enterprise bargaining provides an opportunity for members to stake a claim for securing decent pay and conditions in light of the fact that much has been



lost and given away in recent agreements between the union hierarchy and the employer. The real power of the union lies in the unity of rank and file workers on the job. Members are regularly subjected to

second-rate deals because our power is not being utilised - the employer does not fear any consequences for the massive lay-offs and other cutbacks they keep imposing on us.

Until members demonstrate to the bosses how strong we are, using our industrial muscle, we will never reach our potential as a union. We need to meet belligerence from the bosses with on the job organisation and direct action. It is important for active and engaged members to keep involved and encourage their fellow workers to stay united on the job against attacks from management and apathy from the union office.

After all, the union is not the officials, the union is us, the rank and file membership. Rank and file meetings will continue to be held on a monthly basis for the rest of this year.

Max Stirner

STATE TRANSIT NEWS FLASH

UPDATE ON THE BUS DRIVERS' TRAFFIC FINE FUND

Since the last article in RW about the Traffic Fine Fund, certain papers were found in the Industrial Commission files and handed to the writer for comment.

The papers provide details of the amounts of the surpluses to the fund for seven years – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. The total amount of the surplus for these years, totalled \$561,443. What a surplus???

Why do we still need to pay into the fund? This money invested would almost pay the fines incurred by drivers every year.

If you check the figures, one dollar per week would cover the cost of the fines. A total ripoff by our greedy union officials and less take home pay for us, the workers. Why have the depot delegates let the rort continue? Are they worth your support in this year's elections?

These delegates go to monthly meetings at Redfern (Union HQ). Are they doing their job? I let you be judge in this matter.

For many years, the surpluses of the traffic fund were transferred in the general reserves in the Union's books to inflate its profit and to be used for general purposes. Totally, against the rules of the Traffic Fund.

Our campaign has finally been rewarded. In the 2008 union accounts submitted to the Industrial Commission, a bank account called the Traffic fund appeared with a balance of \$273,000. The short fall is only \$288,443! Only 288 Thousand dollars!

Where has this money gone? Is this the union officials' slush fund, we have heard rumours about? Has it been used for overseas junkets or to fund the union's donations to the Labor Party or may be to fund mail out campaigns to get themselves re-elected?

Either way these accounts should be laid open so outside people can peruse them and if necessary, police action taken.

For too long the union officials have done what they like. These ELECTED OFFICIALS should be working for the union, no the union working for them.

The figures quoted in this article can be found on the following web site:

www.e-airc.gov.au/139vns/financial

If you are having difficulties accessing the particular site and reports, just get onto the main site and you can find it from there.

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

Rebel Worker: What's the latest with the Explorer Buses?

Waverley Busie: News came in hand in early April, that both the Red & Blue Explorers are being tendered out to private enterprise. In 3-4 months they could be sold off. Some thought it was an April fool's joke. It certainly isn't. It looks like the Govt is trying to privatise the STA by stealth. We need urgent action to foil this



move.

RW: What's happening on the road?

WB: In recent weeks, there was a very serious incident involving a PM driver on his last run. The driver was spat on and threatened with a broken bottle by a passenger, resulting in the driver getting carried away in the affair. It is alleged that his assailant was bashed 35 times and kicked about 5 times. I have no actual evidence but I can only assume, that the driver was reacting to some story in his past when he may have been the victim of some abuse. He may have also seen himself in a life or death situation, and this motivated his extreme reaction. Rather than just telling his assailant to get off the bus.

An important contribution to the incident was the vulnerability of PM drivers to assault and abuse from unruly passengers

due to a lack of police and transit officer patrols late at night. In Brisbane, there are regular late night transit officer patrols. Why not here?

The media seized on the incident and placed graphic images from the digital camera footage on You Tube and other media sources. Who gave them the footage? Did the police provide it? Why is You Tube seeking the glory of people looking at gory? Why is this being allowed? Don't TV stations have other more important news to focus upon? Why hasn't the ABC Media Watch program taken up the story? Why didn't the union take action to have it blocked?

If I were in a similar situation and was violently attacked, I would attempt to take evasive action. However, if unrealistic, given the circumstances, I would try to subdue my assailant. I'd take the risk of losing my job and facing a gaol sentence, in the case of a life or death situation.

Latest news is that the driver has been sacked by the bosses and is appealing the decision. He is also facing charges over excessive use of force in defending himself and a possible gaol sentence.

RW: What else is happening on the road?

WB: Recently when I was driving a 313 to Coogee on the tramway cutting a ruckus occurred on my bus. It involved a well dressed retired elderly man and 6 muslim school girls. After the man got off the bus, I spoke with the girls. They told me, that the man had been engaging in obscene racist abuse towards them. The hostile approach of this man, probably also stemmed from a story in his past. Why on earth was he doing it?

RW: What's the latest news with Randwick PM drivers?

WB: I was recently speaking with a Randwick driver who operates 343 PM runs and was on his last run. He mentioned to me that an alarming situation has developed with the PM 343's. He complained, that now he had to leave passengers behind on the last run of the night due to a lack of foresight in providing adequate bus services. There is quite a lop sided situation with the 343's. During the day there is a surplus of buses. Whilst in the night there is a severe shortage.

Who is the bus scheduler who hides out at Strawberry Hills and cream - the loose

cannon who is behind these bus service cut backs. Is he the meglomaniac who compels drivers to leave passengers behind in the middle of the night?

I challenge this fat cat to get out of his comfortable basket and blanket at Strawberry Hills and go down to Randwick Depot and explain to 343 PM drivers the reasons for this malicious behaviour! Maybe this is an example of the "Me, Me" phenomena. Where people who get high up jobs, become transformed for the worse.

RW: What's the latest with the bus tickets?

WB: Strawberry Hills, you have done it again! The ticketing system has become increasingly poorly managed. No provision has been made for the training of shop assistants at convenience stores and newsagents regarding the issuing of bus tickets. Consequently, particularly passengers from overseas are having free rides by using the wrong tickets. It's likely the STA is losing millions of dollars which could have gone to paying us a decent pay rise. In place of the recent inadequate 6% pa rise in two instalments of 3% pa.

LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the latest with the Enterprise Bargain Agreement (EBA)?

Leichhardt Busie: Some weeks ago there was a union meeting at the depot where the EBA proposal was discussed. We learnt that for the 6% pa rise composed of two instalments of 3%, there will be important trade off's demanded by the bosses. The bosses are wanting casuals introduced. They say the casuals will be just used for filling part time shifts. However, this will cut out DOC's. Whilst once casuals are introduced, they will become permanent and spread out to all other shifts. Latest news is that the proposed EBA was approved.

"THE SPICE OF LIFE IN THE STA"

RW: What's the latest with the bosses?

LB: I have noticed a new nefarious trend in harassment by the bosses. In "quiet periods" where there are few passenger complaints about us, the bosses are "spicing things up". They are getting creative and inventing complaints to keep the pressure on us.

In one case recently, the bosses claimed that had video evidence of misbehaviour by a driver. However, when several union reps accompanied the driver who was facing disciplinary action to a meeting with management, there was no evidence of the alleged misbehaviour by the driver on the video footage viewed.

In another case, the bosses claimed to receive an email from a passenger who complained that a driver had gone through a red light and was "steam rolling" passengers. Suspiciously the email used bus times which were exactly those on the driver's journal. Indicating a management "fit up" of the driver. As a result of this frame up, the driver was issued with an E1.

In regard to the trainees, the bosses are demanding that they meet the current ridiculous running times for routes, stemming from the constant shave back of running times. Consequently, the bosses have plenty of excuses to jump on the trainees.

Latest news is that all our runs have been rescheduled and the running times are just as bad.

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

We are finally seeing the departure of the staff supervisor but alas another depot is the next desto. Bad luck to Kingsgrove. Time to get organised I guess. They say our new depot managers are a pair of new pussy cats. Ok and Ko (alias 999). They have been named. The next issue will describe round two in the battle.

We had a urgent union meeting in late March and our elected delegate turned up,

at least for 15 minutes. He seems to have thrown the towel in, as it is rumoured that he is running for Redfern (union head office) in this year's elections.

The hard sell was handed over to the pretender to the depot delicate position. He is as a Boer, a boar and a bore. We nick name him Mr.B.

The meeting was about the re structure of the routes in the southern region mainly the 406. I understand Kingsgrove has been using these streets for many years but the State Transit solution was to negate the union delegate's position on the issue with help from the Redfern used car salesman. So no complaints have seen the light of day.

Our Driving Instructor deemed the area around Summer Hill to be too dangerous for our low floors, but our depot manager (a non bus driver) over ruled him.

A typical answer from a public servant. They employ these highly trained personnel but take no notice. As depot managers are always right.

After a review involving the union, a dispute notice was issued. It was decided to cut trees, move signage and only B12 to be used. A standard answer from State Transit. This is their only solution, as our trusty mercs have all gone.

We have been handed, books for the new runs, but alas, they have mistakes in them. Another bungle.

One great outcome from restructure, is that the many complaints from the public, have sent management into free fall, leaving drivers alone temporarily.

It's about time, grass roots drivers' skills were used in developing these restructures. As the so called experts from the Government, always get it wrong.

MARITIME TRANSPORT NEWS

MUA delegate Bob Carnegie removed from offshore job

Bob Carnegie was told this February that he was "not required back" on the Ensco 7500 rig. He has been effectively sacked by Chevron, who hired the rig to find North West Shelf gas deposits. Carnegie was at his home waiting to return to work for his next three-week swing when the labour-hire company employing him, Off-

shore Marine Services (OMS), told him that Ensco did not want him back. OMS and Ensco bosses only come clean about his removal after MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) members on the rig took industrial action on February 19 and 20. The bosses explained that Chevron had put Carnegie on a "no fly" list for air transport between the mainland and the island closest to the rig. Carnegie was removed without formally being sacked, without any official charges, warnings or any written communication. Soon after starting work

on the rig in November last year he became an MUA delegate and chalked up a number of wins over management. The first was getting a \$75 a day "hard laying" payment for workers on the Ensco 7500 rig in recognition of its excessive noise. The payment is backdated to March 30, 2009 and will continue until the noise issues are satisfactorily resolved. The MUA hailed this win as the first ever hard laying payment for rig workers in the offshore oil and gas industry. Carnegie helped to win the move from four-week to three-week swings (three weeks of 12-hour shifts, then three weeks off) for the seafarers on the Ensco 7500, which other workers on

the rig already had. He led a union ban that was placed on sub-standard scaffolding used to climb into the rig's temporary living quarters, as workers had previously slipped and injured themselves on it. Management eventually accommodated the seafarers elsewhere. In early January this year Carnegie intervened after a worker was asked to do some painting unsafely without a proper work platform. Management again backed down after being shown that performing the work in such a manner was against company policy. On January 18 Carnegie returned home after his three-week swing. After arriving home, he was told by work-mates of rumours of his sacking. He im-



mediately contacted MUA officials. Almost two weeks later he was told that there was no flight for him to return to work. He remains on full pay while OMS try to find him other work. They "just" don't have work for him with Chevron and Ensco.

It is now all too common for delegates on the rigs, the ships and the wharves to be victimised and sacked. The MUA needs to serve notice to every maritime employer that, if delegates continue to be discriminated against and sacked for doing their job, we will go into battle to defend them. Bob Carnegie has been active in the union movement for decades. In 1985 he was the first person jailed during Queensland's bitter SEQEB electricity dispute. He was Honorary President of the Seamen's Union of Australia Qld Branch (1988-1994); MUA Southern Qld Branch

Organiser (1994-1998); and a Builders' Labourers Federation (QLD) organiser (2004-2008). During the 1998 Patrick dispute he worked with Californian longshore workers to launch the rank-and-file led boycott of the scab-loaded Columbus Canada. International Longshore and Warehouse Union Locals 13 & 63 defied secondary boycott laws for 17 days in a genuine act of international solidarity.

Members are encouraged to email resolutions in support of Bob to your MUA branch, the MUA National Office, Bob

IE1917@HOTMAIL.COM AND THE ENSCO 7500 CREW 500@HOTMAIL.COM WHO HAVE BACKED BOB UP 100 PERCENT.

(Article from "Vigilance" No.44 (Feb.28 2010) "Vigilance" is a socialist bulletin for MUA members in Sydney produced by Shane Bentley – the "Port Botany Wharfie". See www.vigilanceBulletin.org)

Victorian Railway News

V-Line Admin. Staff News

In previous editions of RW, the role of the Human Resources department of V/Line has been raised. In this issue two salaried employees have come forward to talk about this department. As in the previous issues names have been changed.

Rebel Worker: It is rare for salaried employees to speak out. What has made you come forward?

Seamus: I work in a salaried position within V-Line and I have come forward because I am disgusted at the way some sections of V/Line management treat the lower grade employees.

Sheona: I work in head office and I am disgusted at the way Human Resources treat V/Line employees.

RW: You have put your job in jeopardy by coming forward.

Sheona: I have but you have got to stand up and be counted.

Seamus: Where I work there was an incident where a passenger jumped into a train. The conductor was stood down and was hauled before Human Resources and given a warning. A platform supervisor who witnessed the incident was spoken to by a Union Official and said the train had departed when the person jumped on. When the platform supervisor was asked

to appear at a future enquiry, they declined, as management pressured the person not to appear, thus the case was not reopened.

RW: Why?

Seamus: Management wanted to bung the conductor and frightened the supervisor by saying they would make it hard for the supervisor in the future.

Sheona: I was disgusted when I heard of the incident but you see there is a wombat in Human Resources who acts like a Bully. It is either her way or no way. In fact Human Resources employs about thirty people and most are women. In fact they think they are the law. They fabricate evidence about people and try to bend the rules.

RW: I have heard they don't want existing employees in new positions.

Seamus: You are correct. One of the employees at Southern Cross applied for a Conductor position and guess what happened?

RW: What?

Seamus: The idiots in Human Resources lost his resume so he was never interviewed. He was upset. I wonder whether Human Resources deliberately lost the application.

Sheona: They would have lost that application on purpose. You see they interviewed a large number of people from outside about 12 months ago for the Conductor positions and drew on them when

vacancies occur. Then they compare the internal applicants against the external applicants and then they say the internal applicants are not up to standard.

RW: No wonder morale is low.

Sheona: You can say that again. They advertised for 20 positions for Train Drivers internally. A large number of persons applied. In some cases the department mislaid a number of applicants' aptitude test results and made the applicants sit for the tests again.

RW: This is incompetence.

Sheona: It is but that is not all. After interviews, they narrowed the persons selected to 22 applicants. They sent all these persons for medicals hoping that two persons would fail, and thus have their 20 persons. Unfortunately all passed thus Human Resources had to knock out two people.

Shamus: They contacted unsuccessful persons by phone. One of the persons was running a train and when told was upset. Years ago you were interviewed and told you were successful provided you passed a medical. These clowns seem to bend the rules.

Sheona: The same thing happened when they asked persons to apply for the position of Authorised Officer.

RW: What happened?

Sheona: They advertised internally for a number of authorised officer positions. A number of conductors applied and went for an interview and all of them were told they were not successful. What these conductors were not told was the Government had not appropriated any money to train these

authorised officers. In fact V/Line advertised for these positions externally and obtained trained persons from Connex and Yarra Trams.

RW: In fact one conductor said the Department is corrupt.

Seamus: It is not only Human Resources who use corrupt practices but some supervisors use corrupt practices.

RW: In what way.

Seamus: Well they advertised for a number of positions. Job vacancies for internal positions are supposed to be placed on the notice board. These selfish salaried officers made sure that these notices did not go on the notice boards.

RW: Job vacancies are supposed to be placed on the notice board.

V-LINE TRAIN DRIVERS' NEWS

RW: Rastus and Roscoe, It is good to see you supply further news.

Roscoe: You may be interested to know that after 11 years V/Line is recruiting drivers again.

Rastus: For years new drivers were recruited from the electric trains, but the background of the drivers recruited from the 1970's is conducting. You see when Country services were reduced, the option was the sparks (electric trains) or out the door.

Roscoe: In fact we are getting some female trainees. This is good for equality but once again those people in Human Resources have interfered.

RW: In what way?

Rastus & Roscoe: The rumour going around is that Human Resources have some of these trainees to set up some drivers on matters of sexual harassment. You see, a driver's job is stressful and a driver on the spur of the moment may say something, he may regret to a trainee. Then the trainee blurts to Human Resources, thus giving Human Resources an excuse to sack the driver.

Rastus: I hope the trainees have had the guts to tell the drivers what Human Resources told them. We, drivers have had to find out on the rumour mill. You see Human Resources want to break the drivers and have yes men. You see the drivers stand up over issues of Health & Safety, Defective Trains and maintaining the award. You see it was the drivers, who smashed National Express. When they had the V-Line franchise, they tried to smash the drivers.

For example they tried to reduce annual leave entitlements from 5 weeks to 4 weeks. We just banned working on rest

Seamus: Yes, but these people thought that by not placing these notices on the board, they would be the only applicants, a country depot placed the notices on the board.

Sheona: These notices should be placed on notice boards. Also Human Resources are trying to place job applications on line. The problem is that a number of people are not on email.

RW: This is discrimination.

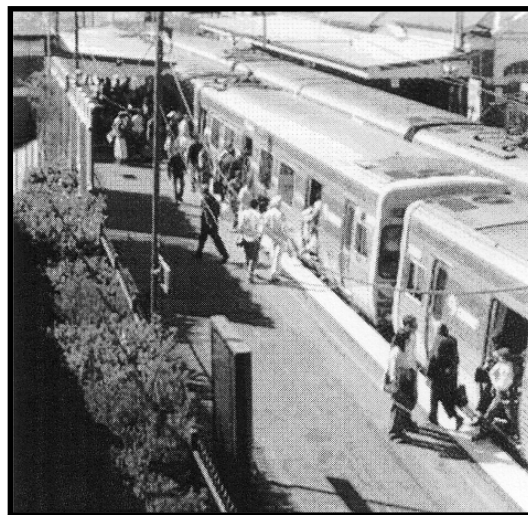
Sheona: It is and they have changed the process without any consultation with the employees.

Seamus: Yes. They should have notified the employees of the changes and should train employees how to use email, but they don't want to train employees as it costs money.

days and worked to rule. After one week, National Express capitulated. When they walked out of the V-Line franchise, we cheered. You see Human Resources observed our fight.

Roscoe: Yes they did! V/Line reverted to Government control and a whole new group of Human Resources people were recruited. This mob are trying to break the Railway Culture and to succeed, they will do what they want.

RW : I hear management tries to have meetings with the drivers to bypass the Union?



Roscoe: You are correct. It is called toolbox talk.

Rastus: At the last meeting of "Toolbox Talk", a driver got up and spoke about why the Driver calls the Conductor up to the cab of the Sprinter and Velocity trains. The driver wants to talk to the Conductor in private and not over the radio as passengers may hear sensitive issues. The driver said it was low for Human Resources to

RW: I must close this interview, but I will give you the final say.

Sheona: I am disgusted with Human Resources. I think they are arrogant and treat long serving employees as an endangered species.

Seamus: In concluding what makes myself sick is that Human Resources do not like people who have worked a long time in the Railways and the impression I got is that long term employees are not wanted. Finally I am disgusted at the way some of my fellow workers do in their work mates to gain favours with management.

dob in a Driver or Conductor. The reason management is dobbing them in is that in case an accident occurs, both driver and conductor will have to be counselled.

Roscoe: Yes management is frightened both will be off work for a week.

Rastus: Doctor Dolittle and the goon from Human Resources just ignored what the driver had to say. The other drivers were disgusted. Now you see why drivers will not turn up at these meetings.

RW: I regard these Toolbox Talk meetings as a way management tries to break the driver. Also in the last issue was the first contribution by drivers.

What was the reaction on the job?

Roscoe and Rastus: The last issue had a real impact. The issue was well received, but the previous issue was received by drivers even better.

RW: You mean the article by Misha and Manfred on conductor supervisors?

Roscoe: This issue was placed on notice boards around V/Line and it was quickly removed, as it was removed, it reappeared on the notice boards.

Rastus: V/Line management conducted a witch hunt trying to find out who wrote the article. They are threatening to sack the two conductors.

Roscoe: Let them try it. If they do, they would have touched all V/Line employees.

Roscoe and Rastus: V/Line Management called all the Conductor Service Supervisors into a meeting when they all passed a motion of confidence in support of the supervisor. The other Conductor Service Supervisor who laughed at this person, behind his back, did not have the guts to speak against the way he was bullying conductors in his region.

Melbourne News Round Up

The “transit cops” here in Melbourne regularly beat people up for the price of a ticket etc but so far have not murdered anybody...yet but have come close by hospitalising some who dared run from these gangs of security thugs.

YOUR FEAR IS OUR PROFIT

With election coming on Victorian State level we have a Law & Order Election with more cops on the beat, - and the beat goes on and on - ouch !

Also a National Election also looming there is currently a competition between the two plunder parties aka the ALP & Liberal-National coalition for the harshest laws on asylum seekers/refugees. A previous election was won by these reactionaries on the Tampa issue (a boat people disaster). Today the Corporate media is running a fear of Afghan and Tamil/SriLankan asylum seekers campaign calling for all to be refused any visas ie as whole nationalities ! Despite their countries being war zones and many seeking to flee the misery.

WORKERS CONTROL?

Airline, bus, ship, taxi, train and tram workers organised as transport workers can decide what work they do not just follow orders as wage-slaves.

For example if the public transport workers and commuters agree to lock out the Privatised transport profiteers and State bureaucrats alike then the money saved could remove the rip off ticket machines and return human staff to be railway station assistants and train guards; & tram conductors again.

Assaults and robberies on International Students as passengers have escalated to stabbings & a murder.

Taxi-drivers have been assaulted, robbed and murdered until by collective action of a 36 hour sit-down strike in the main city intersection a few years back they got security screens installed in their cabs. However many remain unhappy at their insecurity and the casualised insecure employment situation.

With more workers about in transport commuters feel more secure waiting and

using vehicles and can ask directions etc. With modern communications and a multicultural workforce enquiries in other languages can soon be answered promptly too.

Local & International solidarity for transport workers in struggle will win improved job security, conditions and wages. With increased workers control, health and safety will be improved for workers and commuters alike. Using world standard best technology sourced from sustainable energy systems and installed and maintained by unionists would eventually mean public transport being run for free. With buskers, free live entertainment on the journey commuting would become interesting again instead of the current stressful ripoff.

Ah but I am dreaming surely...got to go to work, can't think, must work....

singing: “I owe, I owe, so off to work I go...”

V

GREEK NEWS FLASH

Spring wave of strikes hits Greece

23/3/10

Lawyers have called a 3-day long strike and doctors continue withdrawing their labour against the austerity measures, train workers halt their locomotives, while four different labour marches are to be performed within the day by judicial officers, firemen and pensioners in Athens, along with a central public sector march in the afternoon. Just a few days before the long holiday season of the Greek Easter, which is the government's main hope for easing tension, a new wave of strikes and protest marches against the austerity measures is hitting the country.

Lawyers have declared a three day strike against the austerity measures for the 23, 24 and 26 of March (the 25th is a national holiday). Meanwhile, doctors are continuing to withdraw their labour from the country's public hospitals in demand of

the immediate payment of all their owed salaries. Athens doctors will be seeing the Minister

of Health today, although their Salonica colleagues refused to see the Minister for negotiations a few days ago.

Yesterday doctors across the country performed a coordinated 6 hour stoppage and a demo outside the Ministry of Health in Athens. It must be noted that talks be-

tween National Electricity (DEH) workers and the Minister of Labour are in progress. The DEH union has declared that if the talks fail it will move to rolling 48h strikes that will plunge the country in darkness. At the same time, train and suburban train workers are performing a 4 hour stoppage today against the measures, during the noon peak-time that will see all trains come to a standstill. Judicial officers continue their daily 2-h work stoppage campaign against the measures, which has



brought chaos to the Greek courts. The judicial officers will gather today at 10:00 at the Eirinodikio Courts and march to the Parliament. Meanwhile, firemen have called a demo at Omonoia for 11:00 intending to march against the measures to the Ministry of Finance. A little later pensioners have called a march against the measures to the Ministry of National Economy. They will be joined by National Telecommunications, National Railway and National Post workers also protesting against pension cuts. Later in the day, at 18:00, ADEDY, the public sector umbrella union, has called a central protest march against the measures from Propylaea to the Parliament. At the same time, anarchists are calling for an anti-racist demo at Amerikis square, an hang out area of African immigrants coveted by neo-nazi groups.

The continuous protest marches are expected to keep the centre of Athens off

limits for cars throughout the day. The government is meanwhile launching a mixed campaign of rumours and declarations against these very rumours concerning the country seeking IMF help, or going bust, or changing back to its old national currency. This strategy of confusion is supplanted by newspaper talk of secret printing of old currency notes in the Treasury vaults, and about the 25th of March being a "critical day" for the currency. At the same time the government is trying to let some steam out of radical protesters' anger, by promising an immediate reversal of the anti-hood law and an immediate ban on CCTV in public spaces.

Update:

All protest marches were completed without clashes or police repression. The cops had closed off access to the road of the Par-

liament, blocking the way of the march with a row of armoured riot police vans. After loads of heckling and chanting, they had to retreat and open the way. Apart from Athens, protest marches against the austerity measures took place also in Salonica, Volos, Heraklion and Ioannina. Meanwhile the talks of doctors with the Minister of Health have collapsed despite her agreeing to pay all owed wages.

The doctors will continue withdrawing their labour demanding a guarantee of over-time payments. Finally, DEH reps have announced the talks with the Minister of Labour were satisfactory and have cancelled tomorrow's 48h strike, and have warned of a return to strikes in case the government tries to mess up with the social security scheme as rumours have it.

Thanks to Libcom

BRITAIN TODAY

BRITISH AIRLINE STRIKES

Airways cabin crews have struck for three days in a dispute which is quickly taking on the status of a set-piece battle between workers and management. With a general election weeks away, the political parties have attempted to outdo each other by laying into the strikers, with much of the media in tow.

Much media coverage has been given to the disputed amount of disruption caused by the strike. BA has claimed that 60% of its passengers have flown as normal, while Unite has said that only a few thousand passengers have been shifted. BA's spin machine has gone into overdrive, with BA chief Willie Walsh plastering himself all over YouTube (Walsh, who has described the union's offer as "morally wrong" took home an annual salary of three-quarters of a million pounds in 2009 despite BA making record losses, an increase of 6% on top of a boost to his pension fund). Management is trumpeting the supposed success of its 'contingency plans', and claiming it is largely business as normal at the company. This is an attempt to portray the strikers as an unreasonable minority whose actions are having little effect on the company. In fact, a significant proportion of the flights BA is running are "wet-leased" aircraft,

from airlines like Ryanair, Jet2, Titan, Euro Atlantic, Astreus and Iberia. These wet-leases represent a significant loss for BA, meaning the strike is biting for management. Much of the rest of the "cabin crew"

reporting for work as normal are supervisors, managers, pilots and workers from other parts of the company standing in with only hours' worth of training in some



cases. In fact the strike has a huge mandate from the membership - an 80.7% yes vote for strike action on a 78.7% turnout.

Meanwhile, management's bullying has reached new heights as BA carries through its threats to discipline anyone taking sick

leave over the strike days. A seriously ill crew member on bed rest who is at risk of losing her baby has been suspended, as has a worker recovering from surgery.

A worker off caring for a seriously ill child was instructed to bring the child to her disciplinary hearing. A number of crew members have been signed off with stress and depression, with one being sent to an urgent treatment centre. In every instance, BA's health services have over ridden the decisions of GPs.

According to Unite, bullying against BA staff has also taken the form of suspensions for activities such as:

1. Receiving and forwarding e-mails from their private accounts
2. Discussions on union member only forums
3. Holding private conversations
4. Making a joke
5. Expressing dismay regarding a graffiti board set up by BA management where staff were encouraged to scribble words of support for the company, on which was written "cabin crew scum".

BA management has also undertaken a campaign of bullying against union reps. A union rep responsible for running an online discussion forum for union members has been issued with a 45-page legal document demanding the identities of 32 crew members posting under pseudonyms.

BA bosses are also threatening to take away travel privileges from workers involved in the strike action. This has led to terror on the part of staff who rely on them to get to work. One statistic claims that a

quarter of BA staff live abroad, relying on travel perks to do their jobs. The threat to withdraw these privileges is an attempt to scare workers out of taking strike action. Though the union can't go without criticism for the paltry offer it put on the table - including a 2% pay cut - this is a struggle between a management which has nothing but contempt for its staff and workers defending their terms and condition and refusing to be made to pay for an economic crisis they didn't create.

Public Sector Strikes Solid

8th and 9th March over 200,000 workers belonging to the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) went on strike, and, as we go to press, further strikes are expected on 24th March. The strikes are in opposition to planned government changes to public sector redundancy schemes that would see staff lose up to a third of their redundancy entitlement. This was the biggest strike in the public sector since 1987. That strike was against the Tory government under Thatcher and many expected different from a Labour government. They were wrong. New Labour has continued to attack workers on a daily basis something that has worsened since the beginning of the economic crisis. Councils are expected to cut up to 25,000 jobs in the next three to five years. Right now wages are being cut and workers are being laid off and intimidated if they take action.

The planned changes to the compensation scheme for workers earning 30,000 pounds or less (80% of all staff) would see workers who are laid off or who take voluntary redundancies receiving between two and three year's salary. This could

mean a loss of 20,000 pounds on some redundancy packages. All this at a time when we are paying 13 million pounds annually to fund MP's pensions.

The first strikes successfully disrupted the workings of the state for two days. Key workers walked out of courts, tax centres and even Metropolitan Police civilian workers joined the strikes. The business of government suffered as crown and county court sittings in England and Wales were cancelled and the Houses of Parliament saw picket lines for the first time in a generation.

Most encouraging of all was the fact that many un-unionised workers refused to



cross picket lines and took action alongside their colleagues. By siding with fellow workers and not the bosses, these people strengthened the strike no end. If the battle against cuts is to be won, we need more of this kind of solidarity. The signs in this dispute are that we may get it.

Royal Mail deal - another sell-out

The Communication Workers Union and Royal Mail management are hailing a deal

signed in the wake of winter's postal strikes as a victory for both workers and the business. However, as happened after 2007's postal strikes, the union's 'deal' gives little to workers and is likely to compound postal workers' anger and disillusionment with the CWU.

The union is hailing a 6.9% pay increase over three years as its major victory. There has been much media coverage of the lifting of restrictions for junk mail delivery that the document contains. Though this has been presented as a gift to posties, who are paid extra for delivering the mail, this is in fact a concession to management by a union which previously defended a cap of three junk-mail items per household on the grounds that it prevented posties from being given unreasonably heavy loads on their rounds. On top of this, despite the junk mail cap being lifted, posties will actually be paid less for delivering more of the stuff staff currently are paid per item, and posties usually take home a minimum of around 30 pounds a week. The new deal means that they'll instead get a fixed payment of 20 pounds 60 shillings. With the early shift allowance being phased out, this means a pay cut.

Other aspects of the deal include more Saturday working for staff and longer delivery spans, amounting to more intense and difficult working conditions.

The deal is about the union securing its future at the expense of its members, and side-lining their anger at deteriorating working conditions and attacks on jobs in order to become a junior partner in Royal Mail management.

Thanks to Resistance

NEW ZEALAND UPDATE

Current attacks on the working class

As we endure a period of recession in New Zealand, as always capital and the state try to force the brunt of the cost onto the working class - those of us who are least able to cope. Around the country in our workplaces, thousands are being made redundant, forced to take pay cuts and/or cuts in wages and conditions. When we lose our jobs or are unable to work for

health or family reasons, crackdowns on beneficiaries make it even harder to survive on what are already meagre benefits. In our communities, funding cuts mean closures to vital services.

It is only through collective resistance that we can fight effectively against these attacks, and push for not merely maintaining the current inadequacies but potentially for something better. Petitions and marches on Parliament are not the answer, self-organisation and direct action are.

Workplace Struggles

Tens of thousands of jobs have been cut over the past 18 months - approximately 5000 in May 2009 alone - and many of those who have kept their jobs have found themselves forced to accept little to no increases in pay and sometimes even cuts, along with cuts to other conditions. In

many cases, workers have relied on the unions they are members of to ensure the best possible outcome, but in many cases they have been sorely disappointed.

At clothing manufacturers Lane Walker Rudkin (LWR), almost 500 staff across Australia and New Zealand lost their jobs as LWR went into receivership. The response of the National Distribution Union (NDU), who represented many of the LWR workers was pitiful. In May, they organised a handful of cake selling stalls under the moniker Bake a Cake for Lane Walker Rudkin Workers, raising only a few thousand dollars for the workers who had lost their livelihoods. By the end of May, nothing more would be heard about this ridiculous concept. Meanwhile, many of the LWR workers were left stranded in small towns with little hope of being able to find a new job without moving to a new city.

A more positive example of workplace struggle are the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) workers, who have been engaged in industrial activity against their employers for about 6 months. This activity has included work to rule (including overtime bans), pickets, rallies and strike activity (including semi-wildcat strikes). While their union, the Public Service Association (PSA), is notoriously one of the most pro-partnership and conservative unions around, the workers have managed to engage in a wide range of tactics in their efforts to attain a contract that breaks the current Government's attempted public sector wage freeze. Unfortunately, their efforts have been made more difficult by fellow MoJ workers who are members of the traditionally more combative National Union of Public Employees, who signed a deal rejected by the PSA membership.

Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are perhaps the easiest target for Governments looking to score cheap points, and the current Government is certainly making use of them. Parents on the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB) are perhaps the hardest hit, with the removal of the Training Incentive Allowance (TIA) for all but secondary level courses. The TIA paid for added costs associated with parents returning to study (such as petrol and childcare). DPB recipients are also facing added work testing.

At a time of some of the highest unemployment figures in years, unemployment beneficiaries are also facing attacks. Beneficiaries may be cut off the benefit and forced to re-apply every year, with all of the appointments, courses and forms that go along with that arduous process. Meanwhile, WINZ has signed a deal with Mc-

Donald's and are increasingly pressuring beneficiaries to apply for jobs with this notoriously bad employer, with the added consequence of being able to cut off your benefit if you refuse.

Corporate Welfare - Alive and Well

Shortly after Valentine's Day John Key was cornered by \$15 Minimum Wage Campaigners who asked the question, Could you live on less than \$15 an hour??



Unsurprisingly he admitted that he couldn't. Key was quick to argue that increasing the minimum wage to \$15 would lead to another 9000 people losing their jobs. Since National took office tens of thousands of jobs have already been lost, with over 5000 lost in May 2009 alone!

The \$15 minimum wage campaign began in the same month and stories of people working 40 hours plus each week and not having enough left to pay for even the basics with no choice but to use their credit card to pay for groceries and fuel have become the norm.

Whilst Key skulked away, Social Development Minister Paula Bennett was busy finalising her welfare shake up. Since her recent announcement of 'tightening things up' Beneficiary Advocacy Federation spokeswoman Kay Brereton says there are just not enough jobs at the moment to make the Government's plan a feasible one. They're blaming the poor for being

poor and for being unemployed or for being sick or for being solo parents, said Ms Brereton. They're not investing in finding jobs and in helping these people.

Taking the \$15 minimum wage petition to the streets, we occasionally get a rant from someone about "welfare cheats" and that you're only paid what your worth? but when we begin to investigate who is really cheating the welfare system it becomes obvious that it doesn't matter how hard you work whilst the fat cats are pulling the strings.

Rio Tinto is the World's biggest miner and operates the aluminium plant in Bluff. The

company currently absorbs over 15% of the country's generated power but pays a fraction of the cost. The discounted amount is a heavily guarded secret, but someone has to pay the remaining balance and guess who foots the bill? The tax payer.

We're told that the amount of jobs and wealth created by the industry far outweighs the price, however In Western Australia, for example, mining made \$72 billion last year. The actual return to the Government as royalties for letting mining companies dig the land?

Less than \$3 billion. Once the minerals are out of the Earth its anyone's guess where it's processed.

The cost is further added to by the Trade and Emission Scheme. In 2006 Rio Tinto threatened to uproot its factory and leave the NZ if the Labour Government continued on its plans to implement its regulations on green house gas emissions. The mine is actually increasing its emissions as it works harder to find minerals within the rock, the Government, if it wants to keep Rio Tinto in NZ, will have to subsidise further by giving out free emission permits to the company. In Australia, just like here, nothing is free - Rio Tinto is set to receive A\$462 million in free permits this year alone!

New Zealand's largest multi-national corporation is Fonterra controlling 30% of the World's dairy exports. Its environmental record in NZ is disgraceful with the use of palm kernel based feed, supplied from striped native rainforests, dirty Lignite coal used to power the milk hydrators at Edendale and the methane gases produced by cattle and intense irrigation of the land. By being exempt from the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), until 2015, agricultural greenhouse gas emitters are currently receiving a \$1.1 billion subsidy from taxpayers. This is only set to rise as Fonterra tightens its grip on the economy and further exploits the land.

When the Government attacks an unknown number of beneficiaries who are supposedly ripping off the honest citizen of New Zealand and when we hear the anti-worker, prejudiced rubbish parroted by a handful of people we come across when we pass around the \$15 minimum wage petition I can't help think about the recent news of the planned mining in our national parks, the water privatisation schemes, ACC cuts, backhanders to McDonald's, pay freezes and attacks on welfare and community centres. There is a big fight on the horizon and we better begin to prepare ourselves.

Thanks to Solidarity

Debate on Transitional Steps Towards Mass Syndicalist Unionism

I have some of what are probably very simple questions about Anarcho-Syndicalism:

1. Is it the general strategy of Anarcho-Syndicalism to gather all the workers into a revolutionary union, and when the time comes, to declare the revolution? I personally don't think that this is a good idea - is this what Anarcho-Syndicalists believe?

2. Is it the general strategy of Anarcho-Syndicalists to not gather all workers into a revolutionary union, but to try to get as many as you can and influence the rest of the working class with revolutionary action and thoughts?

My understanding of Anarcho-Syndicalism (I sure do love saying that word outloud) falls between these two positions. I am not trying to insult any of you with asking these two short questions about a tradition that has much written about it. The second position I derived from reading the introduction to anarcho syndicalism on this website, and the "Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 21st Century" essay that I believe you guys issued. My first position is the one that I have held, and one that I say I've picked up in my reading. I believe I am in need of clarification.

I don't think these two positions capture what's important. Anarcho-Syndicalism is about applying anarchist ideas to the workers movement.

Teflon Master

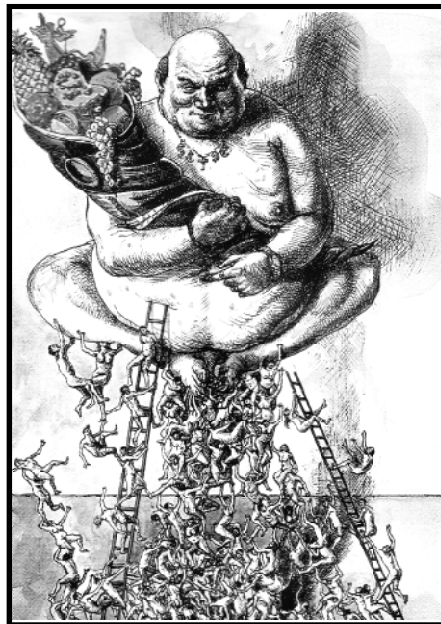
Reply

It's a very primitive concept of anarcho-syndicalist strategy that you are presenting. A more realistic conception informed by historical precedents would be the assisting the emergence of "transitional steps" towards the formation of a mass anarcho-syndicalist union confederation. Practically it would mean an alliance of "grass roots friendly" unions. Unions which would be more informed by ultra democratic decision making on the basis of mass meetings and mandated delegates and limited tenures of office imposed on the union officials.

In Australia, the closest union to come to this form was the NSW BLF (Builders Labourers' Federation) in the 1960's and early 1970's (see the book "Green Bans Red Union" by M & V Burgmann). The alliance of such unions would be critical to

countering likely employer/govt attacks and defy the restrictive industrial relations systems which exist presently and launch major industrial campaigns. Turning the tide in the class struggle.

One or some of these unions would need enormous industrial muscle and be based in key industries. Most importantly the critical transport industries in terms of discouraging employer/state counter attacks. In the context of success in the campaigns I have mentioned and an associated climate of raised morale within the workers movement, it would be possible to facilitate this alliance into adopting the fea-



tures/structures of syndicalist union confederations of the early 20th century and the development of a syndicalist mass media, educational institutions on various levels etc.

It would be possible to carry out aggressive organising drives in sectors dominated by social democratic/business unions or unorganised and massively assist the emergence of new syndicalist unions there – e.g. transport workers cutting off supplies to department stores, factories and government departments at favourable moments e.g. Xmas etc in support of such organising initiatives. Success would be highly likely.

It would be possible to avoid the long drawn out campaigns which often end in disaster. Syndicalist unions in their heydays in certain cases acted just like that e.g. in Barcelona syndicalist truckies helping out catering workers at various cafes, bars, clubs and restaurants etc. In the con-

text of large scale and advanced direct actions e.g. occupations and work-ins on a large scale and the development of a workers intelligensia via their involvement in various syndicalist self education institutions, workers would be prepared for taking over the running of industry and assisting movements in the community e.g. rent strikes. (See Nick Rider's article about the Barcelona Rent Strike of 1931 in David Goodway's "For Anarchism".)

So important preconditions would develop for revolutionary upsurges.

Of course similar movements in other countries would need to emerge and eventually take international coordinated action.

To fully grasp what I'm getting at, would be assisted by a thorough study of the development of syndicalist movements in their classic period.

Some relevant texts include: "The Agony of Modernisation" by Benjamin Martin, and a collection of essays "Red Barcelona" edited by Angel Smith - is very good at looking at the development of Spanish Syndicalism and the emergence of the CNT (National Confederation of Labour – Anarcho-Syndicalist union centre), "Red November/Black November by Salvatore Salerno" very important book about the emergence of the syndicalist IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) in the USA, "Gramsci & the Anarchists" and "history of Italian syndicalism" in "For Anarchism" both by Carl Levy throws important light on the emergence of the early Italian Syndicalist movement; "Revolutionary Syndicalism: An international perspective" edited by Marcel Van Der Linden and Wayne Thorpe has some useful essays particularly in regard to syndicalist movements in Sweden and Germany; "British Syndicalism" by Bob Holton is also very useful - and also very relevant is the history of Polish Syndicalism focusing on the ZZZ union confederation published in Rebel Worker as a supplement in the 1980's. If you read all this you will learn quite a bit about the "transitional phases and structures" leading to the emergence of mass syndicalist unionism and you find "serious syndicalist activity" has absolutely nothing to do with the leftist sect building and antics of certain groupings of today.

From Here to There....

Steps toward getting the above strategy going would involve a new approach being adopted. Dissolving the sects in the Anglo world (which wave red/black flags and claim to be anarcho-syndicalist or class struggle anarchist, etc). However are unconsciously heavily informed by the See Page 20

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

BLACK FLAME: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism. By M. Schmidt & L. Van der Valt USA, AK Press 2009

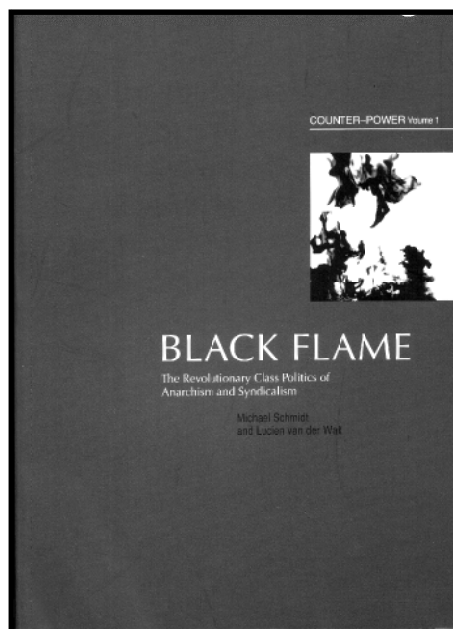
Black Flame is a long work (400 pages) upon labour history (1860-1939) and anarchist and syndicalist philosophy, organization, practice and strategy. Apart from the primary or original material the authors have drawn extensively upon recent professional academic books and articles in Labour History and related political and social fields. Another salient feature of this work is the significant syndicalist histories of Africa, Eastern Europe, South America, Asia and Australasia are given an equal consideration in their analysis.

Appropriate editing could have reduced this cumbersome and repetitive work by half. This study isn't very engaging and most people wouldn't wish to read it cover to cover. But, its extensive and wide-ranging bibliography provides the serious researcher into syndicalism with a useful work of reference.

Defining Anarchism:

The authors sensibly assert that anarchism is a working class movement whose genesis and definition evolved within the politics of the 1st Worker's International in the second half of the 19th century. This position has considerable merit given the recent spate of liberal-minded, revisionist academic post-modernist inspired attempts to redefine and reinvent anarchism by excision of the working classes. The author's definition explicitly opposes the spurious literary approaches of Eltzbacher, Woodcock and Marshall whom portray anarchism as an ancient and/or trans-historical radical-liberal-cultural-intellectual body of ideas found in a diversity of temporally and theoretically disparate "sages", including Lao-Tzu, Stirner, Tolstoy, Neitzsche etc. In contrast this book defines anarchism by restating the ideas of Bakunin, Kropotkin and Rocker and comparing them with Marxism. The introductory analysis is entirely derivative adding nothing that is original or compelling. Those seeking a scholarly introduction to Bakunin are far better served by Leir's recent biography. Unlike the author's one hundred page outline Kropotkin's pamphlets are readable, self-explanatory and successfully define anarchism in 20 pages.

Having provided a basic definition of anarchism the remainder of this book looks at a variety of interests, issues, ideals, approaches, strategies, practices and conundrums that historically preoccupied or confronted the "broad" anarchist and syndicalist movements.



Self-Organization and Disorganization:

It is correctly concluded that all relevant anarchist thinkers embraced an Organizational Anarchism that fought for revolution by the direct action of worker's associations, unions and syndicates. This is contrasted with the historically discredited opposing notion that social revolution might erupt randomly from spontaneous rebellions or precipitated by acts of individual terrorism (propaganda by the deed).

Self-Organization of Syndicates and Communes:

The Black Flames of Syndicalism smother the Red Flames of the Commune in this account of revolutionary history and theory. The author's correctly argue that Syndicalists involved themselves in education, rent strikes and other community

issues and campaigns. But, the idea of a communally organized social revolution isn't discussed at all. The Paris Commune is mentioned in passing just once in this very long book. The French communal uprisings of 1871 were crucial events in the life and thought of Bakunin and Kropotkin. The Commune and the Syndicate are equally necessary interdependent forms of revolutionary worker's association. Communal and industrial forms of Worker's self-organization and direct action have only very limited potential without the other. The Commune and the Syndicate can be compared to the axe-head and shaft-handle of the revolutionary hatchet.

Community Outreach and Communal Revolution:

The authors usefully dispense with the false and oft made claim by opponents of syndicalism that: 'syndicalists were only interested in a narrow range of work-place issues'. Modern "Community bodies" are undoubtedly a very weak form and forum for popular power and organization when compared to "revolutionary unions" (p.190). But, the contemporary idea and practice of 'community outreach' these authors apply to various social initiatives undertaken by anarchists and syndicalists of the past isn't equivalent to the communalist uprisings by workers championed by Kropotkin and in which Reclus and Bakunin participated.

Anarchist Communism and Anarchist Sincialism:

The anarchist-hippies of the 1960's completely misinterpreted Kropotkin's communalist ideas that are not premised and explicitly reject isolated communalist experiments in the wilderness. Contemporary Primitivists like their hippy forbears have almost nothing to do with anarchism. For the last half-century syndicalists and other serious minded anarchists have been right in rejecting these romantic, pre-industrial fantasies masquerading as radical social theory and practice.

The author's correctly assert that before the Second World War "anarcho-communists championed syndicalism" and vice versa (p.124-5). But, unnecessarily bitter and divisively counter-productive ideological tensions between hippy-communalists and

syndicalists dominated post-world-war II anarchist organizational structures, affinities, lifestyles, thinking and publishing. *Black Flame* is a product of these artificial, stupid and unnecessary divides rather than an innovative, expansive and open-minded attempt to resolve and supersede them. *Black Flame* exhibits a selective and sectarian syndicalist approach to anarchist theory and history by ignoring the centrality of communes and communal federations in classical anarchism. That said, my comments are observations rather than criticisms because *Black Flame* despite its claim to be about “the working class politics of anarchism and syndicalism” is clearly an historical study primarily focused upon exploring themes in syndicalist theory and practice 1860-1939. But syndicates and unions are only one historic form of the “working class politics” of self-organized revolt and reconstruction. By suggesting that anarchism and syndicalism are synonymous the authors fail to show why anarchism is a tree upon which syndicalism is a branch rather than the root. The self-governing suburb, quarter or region is an equally fundamental civic component and ideal of working class and peasant struggles, aspirations and deeds of the period.

Tactics and Structure of Syndicalist Action and Organization:

Syndicalists can pursue their goals in two alternative ways: Either by means of entering and “capturing orthodox unions” (‘boring from within’) or, forming independent syndicalist unions “outside the existing unions—dual unionism” (p.211). The author’s examine opposing principles or theoretical positions and draw lessons from the tactical successes or failures of these two strategies in the histories of different countries and movements. The authors deliver an open verdict by concluding that the adoption of one or both of these sometimes complimentary paths to the same goal is a pragmatic choice made within a “complicated” local reality (p. 230) and involving a compromise or mixture of practicality, possibility and principles.

Anarchist Political Organization:

How necessary and desirable is the formation of a separate or supplementary anarchist or syndicalist “political organization” acting along-side syndicates, unions and other groups or associations? The authors strongly support the idea of a unified political platform or con-

gress composed of a “militant minority” of anarchist revolutionaries. They cite a long historical precedent in favour of the platformist position including Bakunin’s International Alliance and the Spanish F.A.I. For anarcho-syndicalists the author’s discussion and support for Platformism would be the most controversial aspect of this work.

The rejection or support for a hypothetical Anarchist Platform is posed by the author’s as an act of choice between no or anti-organization and one anarchist political organization. But life and no less political life doesn’t work or evolve in this way. All parties, movements, industries, sports etc. have a variety of institutions, bodies, forums and federations that cater or concern themselves with the needs and ideas of numerous similar local and international groups. But, it seems to me that if or whenever a unified platform is achieved it is very likely, indeed inevitable that, sooner rather than later some other like-minded group or opposing faction will form an alternative or rival platform in dispute or in pursuit of some issue or another. The Olympic movement finds itself complimented by the emergence among the young of new sports—surfing, skateboarding, snowboarding and BMX cycling—whose participants form their own new separate federations for organizing rules, procedures, competitive and social events. Militant Islamists and Environmentalists manifest strength through a wide diversity of local and global groupings without feeling the least need for some single authoritative organizational platform that is certainly unachievable and probably undesirable.

Race, Sex, Class and Identity Politics:

Finally this study considers the roles and perception of women and race in the history and theory of syndicalism.

Syndicalists successfully pioneered the organization of interracial unions in key industries in many parts of the world when mainstream unions violently upheld colour bars or exclusion of immigrants from the organized labour force. Co-author, Lucien van der Walt’s PhD is on anarchist and syndicalist history in South Africa. He thus has some expertise in the academic sub-field of racism and labour history. The authors justly criticize currently fashionable pseudo-radical forms of identity politics that “perpetuate the crudest racial stereotyping” (p. 304) by denying or ignoring universal class realities whilst stressing locally subjective or incidental identities centered around ethnic, racial, national or cultural difference.

Contemporary feminism centered upon strong feminine identities and parity or success in capitalist hierarchies is differentiated from classical anarchism with its fundamental belief in class politics and the equality of all.

Many Flames of Anarchism: Green, Red and Black:

Kropotkin’s ecological ideas were immensely influential in the rise of the environmental movement and especially among the more radical and educated of the failed hippy communalists of the 1960’s and 70’s. These inevitable and predictable failures, combined with the middle class dominance and romantic anti-industrialism of the mainstream environmental movement led syndicalist’s and mainstream unions to ignore and even denigrate environmental thinking. I am constantly exhausted by the silly ideas and stupidity expressed under the banner of Saving the Earth—but this does not alter the fact that Reclus and Kropotkin rank among the very greatest of the great grandfathers of the environmental movement.

Anarchism was a much broader current of ideas than suggested by this book that is primarily a professional work of Labour (specifically syndicalist) history. The major challenges to global consumer capitalism at the end of the first decade of the 21st century has not come from working class unions, syndicates or communes. But from an environmental crisis that requires us to reinvent our cities, economies, technologies, lifestyles and outlooks. Kropotkin and Reclus were pioneering and highly influential environmental scientists and thinkers. Reclus was one of the first people to conceive of the Earth as unified system in scientific terms. Kropotkin argued for self-sufficient green city communes powered and fed by clean local energy systems and urban food production fertilized by organic wastes. In a number of pamphlets and books I have argued that any viable future anarchy requires the green and red flames of the ecological city commune to unite with the black flames of the organized industrial workers. Example of how this kind of thinking can be translated into syndicalist propaganda, activism and victory include the Green bans by the Builder’s Labourer’s Federation in the 1970’s in NSW Australia and Judi Bari’s IWW/Earth First tie-up in the USA in the 1990’s. These movements successfully or meaningfully linked community, environment and industrial unionism into a single unified vision underpinning a coherent campaign and sustained direct actions. *Black Flame* does not contain a single reference to the environmental

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The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement

By Jack Grancharoff

This is the third and concluding installment of his article on the History of the Bulgarian Anarchist Movement. It continues from the last edition of Rebel Worker Vol.29 No.1 (205) Jan.-Feb. 2010.

When in 1924, the Bulgarian Communist Party appealed to anarchists to join the by now Comintern engendered, United Front, the anarchist answer was: "Our stand is unequivocal, against us all who inculcate power in the brains and apply it in their life... the issue of a united front with any authoritarian group or party is not viable." (1:p374) The practical unity of communists, agrarians and anarchists that had occurred during uprisings was a spontaneous solidarity against fascism and capitalism but not on order from above. It was this unity that Sheitanoff wanted to revive and make it an operative revolutionary force, not the communist unity coming from the Comintern.

With a few exceptions, anarchists had not accepted the Soviet Union as being a socialist country. And their argument was cogent: "In Russia, as everywhere else, there is capitalism. It is stupid to think that the latter can exist without being defended by a government. In Russia this government is referred to as proletarian." (1:p.378)

Anyhow after the coup d'état and the September upheaval, anarchist activities were mostly carried out by illegal detachments known as "Chetty". They committed acts of expropriations to boost the resistance and help political prisoners, to punish the fascist cut throats and to act in solidarity with the oppressed. The Government killing of subversives was a daily occurrence. The army and police hunted them like wild beasts. The Parliament, on January 1924, passed a law in defence of the State instead of a law in defence of the citizens from the State. All organizations not subservient to the Government were outlawed. The reactionary Government intensified its pursuit of subversives. On the top of it on 16th of April a bomb was thrown in the church "Holy Sunday" in order to kill the king who happened to be a few minutes late. It was claimed that a Communist military organization was responsible for it. Whatever the truth of the matter, it was used by the Government as an opportunity to turn into ashes, literally, the bodies of many revolutionaries. Here and there, there were sporadic actions but the darkness set in for a few years until the air of change wafted over it.

The election of 21st June 1931, in response to Government oppression, installed into power the "Peoples' Block", a coalition of the Democratic Party, as a main component, Bulgarian Peoples' Agrarian Union "Vrabcha 1", National Liberal and the Radical Party. Even before the election the anarchists, analysing the heavy burden the people suffered from, called for amnesty, freedom of speech and printing. The BONSF (The Anarchist Student Union) participated in a student meeting in relation to the first May Day celebration. During a talk given by an anarchist, the police attacked the meeting and arrested 11 students. As a result the anarchists printed an appeal demanding "the priests and sergeants major be expelled from schools and universities' and taxes abolished." (1: p.425)



Manol Vassev Nicolov

During the government of the "Peoples' Block" the anarchists resumed their activities. They printed newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and books but many differences among them remained. To create a viable organization to combat fascism and militarism, in August 1932 they called a national conference, in Lovech, where they succeeded in smoothing their internal ideological differences and achieve, at least in theory, a unity. "Rabotnicheska Misl" was declared the official organ of the Federation. Here some digression is necessary.

Manol Vasseff, an Anarcho-syndicalist, with some comrades of Khaskovo's Anarcho-communist groups, tried to organize the small tobacco and peasant growers into a professional organization. This was facilitated by the existence of Vlassofden associations. These associations were from pagan origin. Each year on the 24th of February they celebrated the

day of earthly fruits and the peasants' black anguish. Their patron was a god, Vlas or Veles, who after the acceptance of Christianity became Saint Vlasyi. Vlassofden associations practiced mutual aid and cooperation. All constructions of bridges, roads, water supplies and community projects were collective actions without impositions. Materials were supplied voluntarily by each according to his possibilities. In 1930 the Vlassovden Federation was formed. In January 17th and 18th took place the first constituent congress of the Federation in theatre Odeon, in Khaskovo. There were 600 delegates from all around the country and the Vlassovden Confederation was formed. The bulletin of the local federation, called "Vlassovden", was a fortnightly publication with a circulation of 1,500. The creation of the Confederation Vlassovden had found an enthusiastic echo all over the country and people wanted information about forming groups. The demands of Vlassovden were concrete expressions of the people who suffered under the yoke of heavy exploitation and taxation. They demanded the reduction of direct and indirect taxation; break up of cartels; free medical care for peasant families; community autonomy; insurance and pensions for all agrarian workers. Perhaps not very revolutionary demands but, nevertheless, a thorn in the eyes of the ruling classes. (3: p.94-95) The military coup d'état 19th May 1934 delivered a heavy blow to Vlassovden syndicalism from which it never recuperated. (3: p.94)

Despite all attempts to harmonize the anarchists' differences, the slow and painful process diffused valuable energies and prevented anarchist creativities from reaching their peak. "Rabotnicheska Misl" No 44, October 6th, 1933 admits: "We are not the only anarchists in this country. There are others too. We have differences with them which often lead to arguments and unpleasant and obnoxious polemics." Differences were also complicated by some being inclined towards the United Front and some upholding the illusion that the Soviet Union was "the clear sky of tomorrow" The truth was that the sky was clouded in the both directions. It was not an issue of working together with other leftists or antifascists but an issue of understanding the nature of authority. As 'Rabotnicheska Misl No 27, April 1933 put it: "We have no common base, no common method and no common aims with various authoritarian organizations" It is even better clarified in relation to the process in Leipzig over the burning of the

Reichstag, for which the Nazi's arrested three Bulgarian communists: Dimitroff, Taneff and Popoff, "The accusation against the defendants is in itself irrelevant and absurd. We have the courage to say that without sharing the ideas of the defendants. For us, their ideas do not carry wellbeing and freedom for the people but exploitation and slavery." (*Rabotnicheska Misl*, No 43, September 23, 1933)

During the Government of the "Peoples' Bloc" the lives of anarchist activists had not flowed evenly. On the contrary it was accompanied by arrests, shootings, imprisonments, persecutions, and "*Rabotnicheska Misl*" was often banned and confiscated. Eventually it was completely banned after the fascist-military coup d'état on 19th of May 1934. "*Svobodno obshchestvo*" was also banned but reappeared as a monthly publication renamed "New World" with Peter Lozanoff as editor. "Compass" was another paper. They were all banned in October 1936. The only possibility left was mimeograph editions of "*Khleb I Svoboda*" (Bread and Freedom) 1936-39.

After the last illegal Congress of the FAKB in Vitosha on 25th of August 1936, the anarchists finally put aside their differences as a concerted effort in the struggle against the raising fascism. In 1936-37 anarchist activities intensified in the country as result of the Spanish revolution and internal reaction. The permanent persecutions, goals and concentration camps weakened the anarchist impact but, despite all odds against them, they survived fascism to be subjugated to a brutal destruction and elimination by the communists in power.

At the end of 1940 the FAKB put out a manifesto which perspicuously exposed the game of the Comintern. Instead of bringing an anti-fascist united front and unity of the working class, it promoted disunity within the international workers movement. This benefited fascism, capitalism and opened the road to post modern global corporatism as the final stage of "transparent" democracy. The anarchists were correct to argue that it "committed a historical crime by restoring the credit of the bankrupt bourgeois slogans, gonfalons and institutions for constitution, democracy, love of peace... patriotism and nationalism... Let the warmongers be convinced that Bulgarian people will not shed their blood and die at the fronts or in the rear for a war which in its fundamental is vulgar imperialism and conquest" (1: p.597-98)

The anarchist assumption that people will not shed any blood for a war is a romantic vision because we live in an authoritarian society. It is not because of any hereditary predispositions but because of the internalization of external authoritarian - hier-

archical values which are features of any state society. A good example is the patriarchy - matriarchy syndrome. The country metamorphosed into father, fatherland or mother, motherland to which sons and daughters are to be sacrificed. Nationalism thus becomes a false collective consciousness in defence of authoritarian values. No wonder that people shed their blood for abstractions which have nothing to do with improving their miserable conditions or extending the realm of freedom.

Any opportunities the anarchists may have had to make inroads into society and to penetrate the psyche of the people were greatly diminished because of constant persecution and by the lack of any steady arena in which to voice their ideas. Nonetheless, situated between hammer and anvil, they courageously fought against



fascism and paid dearly for it.

The United Front against fascism was a liberal leftist agenda. When Molotov and Von Ribentrop signed Non Aggression Pact, the paradigm of antifascist struggle shifted. From that point on it had become the struggle against the plutocracy. Now, argued a friend of mine Socialism was invincible because of the unity between National Socialism and communism. Plutocracy was finished. It lasted until June 22, 1941. As soon as Germany attacked the Soviet Union the paradigm switched back to the struggle against fascism. The euphoria that had followed the German - Russian pact had allowed Germany a swift operation in the Balkans. The Communist position had remained encapsulated in the Leninist dictum: two steps backward one step forward. The beginning of the partisan movement, the Fatherland Front, was another Comintern machination to further Stalinist imperialism. Despite backstage manipulations, many antifascists participated wholeheartedly in the struggle, including the anarchists.

On 9th of September 1944 the Fatherland Front captured power and, basically, Bulgaria once again became a vassal state, this time of the Soviet Union rather than of Turkey. In October 1944 FAKB was revived. "*Rabotnicheska Misl*" became a weekly but after 4 issues it was banned. The anarchists, the only moral force against the wave of red fascism, had to be eliminated. Nonetheless anarchist activities in town and villages continued. On 10 of March 1945 in Knegevo (Sofia) there took place the national Congress of FAKB. There were about 90 delegates. Police raided the place and arrested all delegates and not long after sent them to concentration camps or "camps of re-education". As a result of this arrest a new secretariate and new editorial staff were elected. After 4 issues "*Rabotnicheska Misl*" was again banned and this time for good. The anarchists were the first to bear the brunt of the new Government, the others followed later. There is no other way since anarchism is a threat to order, to rules, to domination and to the imposition of power over people, society and the individual. Also anarchism, as an alternative to government of the day, had an appeal among the youth. The fact that "*Rabotnicheska Misl*" jumped from 7,000 to 60,000 in circulation was a good indication of it, taking into consideration that the Government refused to supply it with more paper. The last blow to anarchism came in December 1948 when 600 activists were arrested and sent to concentration camps. The dark veil of communism used to entomb anarchism was also the same that buried the genuine communism and all revolutionary hopes for the emancipation and liberation of the downtrodden.

But anarchism is an elusive bird and like the mythological Phoenix was re-born again after the Communist winter. The Anarchist Federation of Bulgaria was formed in the 1990's and is still (in 2006) active and publishes a monthly newspaper "*Svobodna Misl*" (Free Thought).

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News & Notes

This edition of RW explodes a flare over Rail Corp illuminating ALP Govt plans to radically accelerate the employer offensive. It particularly involves moves associated with the upcoming Rail Corp Enterprise Agreement to eliminate redundancy packages for those workers who have been forcibly made redundant. This initiative is definitely in line with Govt plans for mass sackings in the railways associated with staff reviews, general restructuring for privatisation and the associated introduction of the public transport T-Card. This clause of the Enterprise Agreement will also set important precedents for enterprise agreements in other parts of the public sector. It will particularly assist the "falling dominos" of privatisation which will affect other Govt Utilities and associated major job losses. (See article page 3.)

Grass roots activists in public Transport in NSW haven't been sleeping and are organising to fight the attacks associated with the looming new Enterprise Agreement in Rail Corp and establish grass roots control of the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union). (See article page 4.)

Other important news in this edition is a further expose' of the roting of the Bus Drivers' Traffic Fund in the RTBU by the union hierarchy. It is certainly by such scams that ALP Factions maintain control of many unions. (See article page 6.)

Rebel Worker has an internet web site. Its address is www.rebelworker.org Many articles from back issues of Rebel Worker are available in the archive section on the site.

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Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name

Address.....

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PO Box 532 Newcastle 2300 NSW.

Continued From Page 16 movement despite the fact that

Kropotkin and Reclus are among the acknowledged founders of ecological science and the idea of an ecological society. Workers live in communities supported by local, regional and global ecosystems. Any theory of anarchist organization, action and social-transformation must consider these underlying facts of nature and human social-ecological existence.

Anarchism has consistently held alternative, pioneering or visionary viewpoints on many issues—economic, social and environmental. But, the young see unions as old hat and IT corporations like Google or Yahoo as “cool!” Even apparently well-equipped (culturally and ideologically unified) attempts to reconstruct post-industrial communal enterprises, inter communal structures and economies (like the Israeli Kibbutzniks) failed abysmally. The astonishing pace of technological innovation and social change discredits and annihilates the possibility of a predictable economy or society that might conceivably be planned by Syndicates, Capitalists, Governments or States. Consumerism, individualism and capitalism undermine traditional working class communities and are in the process of creating a global environmental catastrophe.

Continued From Page 14 Stalinist/Trotskyist legacies

with all their navel gazing and pandering with the irrationalities/guilt tripping and “political correctness displays” of identity politics, with a focus on recruitment of uni students and the left sub cultural fringe and getting involved in any campaign or dispute going (the running around like headless chicken phenomena) and move to a more network form with a “long range precision strategic organising approach”. Focusing not just anywhere but industrial sectors which count in the class struggle and would play a critical role in getting the above “transitional

Big Corporations see big bucks in urgently required large-scale centralized green energy and technology ventures. The role of industrial unionism and local communities in the forthcoming Green Tech Economy is unclear.

Archaeology is revealing to us how great cities of the past in civilizations as far apart as Peru and Cambodia disappeared in environmental disasters of their own making. The urgent need to create green cities is a boon for ‘developers’ but what say local residents and the urban poor will have in these inevitable transformations can barely be imagined.

A drop of rain falling on the crest of a hill can either go down one side or the other such that drainage basins or watersheds provide a rational, exact and ecological way to divide up the land, not least because of the primacy of water in sustaining and shaping life. But, the idea that national-state borders might be replaced in some way by natural or eco-regional boundaries is challenged by the fact that climatic change may occur so rapidly that whole regions may convert to desert or disappear under coastal waters.

We live in an un-reassuring age of radical uncertainty about everything from technology, ecology to the future of our species. Kropotkin would have thought

steps” going. Practically it would involve assisting the networking of militants, assisting their activism and raising their morale -involving the launching and continuity of industrial papers “over many years” would be required.

Critical to all this, would be the winning of struggles which cause a slowing down of the employer offensive e.g. defeating aspects of restructuring for privatisation, speed up drives, staff cuts, etc and assisting these militants in election campaigns in unions to help implement syndicalist reforms and create more favourable climates/terrain for activism would also be important. Currently in many unions today union officials spend a lot of time try-

ing that this was a quite natural state of affairs because the fluidity and unpredictability of nature, society and technological progress is what made revolution, rebellion and reconstruction both inevitable and desirable.

The majority of people with difficulty secure a bare subsistence within immense slums or in crippling rural poverty. The state-regulated market, social entrepreneurship (non-profit business model), corporate social responsibility or philanthropic capitalism, we are told, are the parameters in which to create a green economy, sustainable cities and secure material improvements of the masses. Anarchists must present a viable and engaging alternative to this model of social and industrial development or evolution. Anarchists have to convince the people that the de-carbonization of presently anti-ecological urban-industrial and agricultural systems can only be achieved by the reconstructive genius of the people in the revolutionary overthrow of state and capitalist political and socio-economic systems.

By Graham Purchase

Edited

ing to have militants sacked/black listed. With more grass roots friendly union officials it would be easier to hold mass meetings etc and other aspects of work place activism would be assisted. (For some discussion of work on these lines see past editions of RW and in the archive section of our web site www.rebelworker.org re the articles - “Anarcho-Syndicalist Strategy for Australia Today”; “Anarcho-Syndicalism: Catalyst For Workers Self Organisation” and “The Anarcho-Syndicalist Approach to Counter the Intensified Employer Offensive & Economic Crisis”).

Mark

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