

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

FRANCE MAY'68 REMEMBERED



UK COURIER NETWORK P.2; NSW RAILWAY NEWS P.3; RORTS IN THE UNION OFFICE P.4; SYDNEY BUSES NEWS P.5; COMMUTER RALLY P.7; VIC. RAILWAY NEWS P.7; BRITAIN TODAY P.9; FRANCE P.11; INDONESIAN ANARCHISM & SYNDICALISM P.12; BOOK REVIEWS P.13: MAY 68', WORKERS' ARMY & BAVARIAN REVOLUTION; ARMANDO BORGHESI 1882-1968; NEWS & NOTES P.18;

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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U.K. Courier Network

Our network, made by Couriers, for Couriers organises around our demands and on our terms – not those of unelected union bureaucrats or those who decide for us what is in our best interest.

Chris, a courier from Glasgow, is currently working as the lead organiser for the campaign and has given us the run-down on the Network and our recent wins:

Quote:

"The IWW Couriers Network is organised on a loose, federal structure. Local network branches are free to join in terms of membership, and are open to non-IWW members and IWW members alike. They are led directly by the membership and make their own decisions, based on the relevant issues in their area. Reflecting the long-held commitment of the union to direct-democracy and worker self-management, organising in the network is led from the bottom-up, rather than the top down.

With the network system, we hope to show couriers that organising at work is successful in winning demands – providing

that you put in the effort and are brave enough to act together. Through the network system we hope to share and develop practical organising skills with the aim of winning member demands and building the collective self-confidence of couriers."

Our network is focused on achieving real wins for couriers on the ground, and we have seen great progress in the short time that we have been active. Organising in Cardiff and Glasgow has already borne fruit as Chris tells us:



Quote:

"Already the IWW Couriers Network has seen significant wins in local areas, thanks to the collective action of network branches. The Cardiff branch of the network which has been active for the longest period of time has resulted in UberEATS adding new boost and delivery zones following pressure from the Network, along with improved map routing in the App.

In the first few months of forming, Glasgow has also seen significant improvements. One restaurant in the city would keep couriers waiting, unpaid, up to 45 minutes for their delivery to be prepared. Couriers delivered an official letter of

complaint through the union, with the threat of industrial action if these delays were not reduced. Within days of receiving the letter, service at the problem restaurant started to improve. Amusingly, the union's presence in the city has also prompted UberEats and Deliveroo officials to organise frequent 'feedback' sessions recently in an attempt to circumvent its growing influence."

The IWW Couriers Network are not the only force fighting for couriers, and there

is currently a lot of focus in the media on the recent court cases brought against Deliveroo by our comrades in the IWGB, along with a recent report into gig-economy hiring practices by Frank Field MP (you can read the report here – and to which we submitted evidence). Our members know however that improved terms and conditions were never achieved by appealing cap in hand to those in power and it is only by organising on the ground that we can build real power and

take the fight to the global multi-nationals exploiting us for profit.

So what is next for the IWW Couriers Network? After a period of rapid expansion into cities across the UK and Ireland, we will be focusing on consolidating our branches in these cities and others – we are getting queries from couriers every day wanting to fight back! – along with building our first collective campaign!

If you are fed up with being messed around by companies like Deliveroo and Uber and want to fight back – get involved today by emailing couriers.network@iww.org.uk

ASN APPEAL

The Anarcho-Syndicalist Network requires suitable cost effective Permanent premises. A\$750,000 is urgently sought to buy premises for the proposed Rebel Worker Anarcho-Syndicalist Network Media Centre.

Please make out Cheques to Black Cat Media & Send to P.O. Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

WE MUST TAKE UP THE STRUGGLE AGAINST PRIVATISATION

The failure to fight against Privatisation, in any meaningful way, is a failure for the whole of humanity.

The things we take for granted, the things that make our lives bearable, like clean water, shelter, uncontaminated food, convenient public transport, reliable utilities such as energy, health care, affordable education and some senses of equality/egalitarianism are all being pulled from under our feet. The rug of security has been pulled from under us revealing the dirty unkempt floor that has always existed underneath. We are all at risk from a system that is imploding.

For the 1% who benefit from privatisation there are no real world problems, they can afford to manage on their own. For the rest of us, life is a constant struggle, where a life a servitude and begging is required to put food on the table and a smile on our offspring.

When State assets are sold off we are told that services and goods will be cheaper, more reliable, more efficient, and better value for money. In almost all cases the exact opposite is the true.

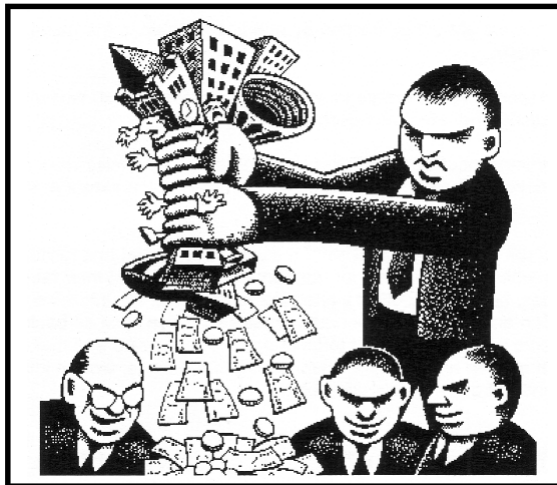
Privatised Transport in Victoria requires huge subsidies just to continue functioning yet the system is constantly criticised by commuters for being late and unreliable. In the first 8 years since Metro took over Melbourne's public transport \$10 billion was paid in the form of public subsidies. This is a rough equivalent amount that it would have taken the Government to run the system over the same period. Yet, despite massive subsidies to the private operators customer satisfaction is at an all time low, safety standards have been compromised, failures of maintenance, service reductions, and accidents have been at an all time high. In this same period \$350 million has flowed out of the country in the form of profits.

The privatisation of electricity around Australia produced the same devastating results. Despite us being told by Governments that electricity privatisation would cause prices to tumble consumers are paying on average 44% more on their bills than they were 10 years ago. At the same time the number of asset failures and breakdowns has risen exponentially. Figures for the Victorian privatisation show that from 2011 to 2013 there was a 103%

increase in failures in distribution from 1119 failures to 2269. The result is a less reliable system at greater cost. That is the legacy of wanton privatisation that is about transferring public wealth to private profits. It doesn't work for us.

If we want a future where we provide for ourselves then we will have to fight for it. The union movement as a whole must embrace this fight otherwise they also have no future. The fight is no easy task as it means building democratic movements in the workplaces and in affected communities, a massive movement across broad layers of people who clearly reject privatisation and embrace re-nationalisation (putting people's assets back in public hands.)

Privatisation is not just an attack on communities it is an attack on the workers who work in the industry. That's why fighting privatisation is Union business.



Yet despite this Unions have largely failed or have been half hearted in their fight to stop privatisation. The A.L.P. does not have a specific policy against privatisation and when in power have instituted the same disastrous policies as the Lib/Nat Parties. Union leaders who see themselves aligned to the ALP are an obstacle to building a mass movement that could challenge privatisation. It makes it very difficult to form allegiances when union leaders are more interested in unrealistically preserving the electoral chances of the ALP at the ballot box rather than protecting their members and the community from the wreckers embracing privatisation.

At the Grass Roots level we need to develop new ways of building alliances with

the Community and in the Workplaces. We need to look at the problem from the interest of not just ourselves but the Community as a whole.

Some of the processes of privatisation are common across industries and across regions. They are similar and we need to be aware of them. We need to challenge these processes as they unfold.

Shedding of Staff

The shedding of staff in public transport has continued unabated for years. In most cases Workshops, Cleaners, Maintenance Workers and Office Workers have been replaced by private contractors. This happens many years ahead of the selloff of the main business. In the case of Sydney Trains this process is well under way. The current shortages of staff in the Train Crew area are directly attributable to this. Of course the provision of services are directly linked to staff shortages and the privatisation project. However many commuters don't make the link between privatisation and poor services, preferring instead to blame "incompetent rail workers" rather than Government policies.

Adding New Management

Old intransigent managers who stand in the way of reforms are replaced with managers from diverse section of the Private Sector. The old bureaucrats are replaced with managers and bean counters from the airline industry, Kentucky Fried Chicken, the prison industry and from other areas of the transport industry and elsewhere. Their sole purpose is to destroy the old culture and break down resistance to the privatised culture change.

The new managers often have little idea of how to better the provision of public transport services and often fail to stop the deterioration of them. In fact their decisions actually are the most probable cause of the deterioration. For this they are paid more handsomely than the old State Bureaucrats.

An example of this new management style could be best demonstrated with the privatisation of Telstra. A new corporate culture oversaw the shedding of thousands of highly skilled jobs. Outsourcing became the new norm for maintenance, installations, customer service, management and all other tasks.

Consequently the telco slipped from a top rating in the world to something akin to a third world one. Despite sales of \$19billion P.A. it has failed to innovate

and keep up with new technologies. It was not even allowed to bid to build the NBN. We are all the poorer (except if you own shares) because of the privatisation and we now pay much more for the service.

Outsourcing

One of the most visible results of Corporate Management of the State Enterprises is the outsourcing of almost all tasks, with a small core of Corporate Managers overseeing the whole process.

The new private employees usually do not belong to a union and have inferior working conditions and lower wages than the replaced public sector workers did. Some employees such as cleaners are hired on 457 visas for substandard pay and no rights.

Running Down of Competing Services

Where State Enterprises compete with each other and with private services they are either terminated or run down.

Motorways are built with public funds at the expense of public transport then flogged off to the Private Operators for a token low price.

Profitable Airports are sold off to cartels of banks and financiers that charge exorbitant prices for the use of services. Even the rail lines and stations at the Airport Terminals are handed over to the private sector who charge ridiculously high fees. More the expense for us all.

Convenient, cheap, public bus services between Sydney City and the Airport were terminated in favour of the private rail services to and from the Airport. There is less choice about how to get to the Airport.

Attacks on Working Conditions through New Agreements

Before any privatisation takes place exhausting industrial reform processes take place to shed jobs and to change the industrial landscape. Employee's become pawns in a strategy to ease the way to privatisation. This process can take many years or a decade or more of bargaining with unions and employee's.

Little by little these processes wear away at the industrial strength of workers on the job due to the new insecurity that exists. Many workers are too scared to pop their heads up to fight despite the fact that the workforce around them is being attacked and decimated one section at a time.

The mechanisms for these reform processes to take place are written into Enterprise Agreements which over the years have been endorsed by the union movement and voted on by union members. That is the sad fact of the matter. Members are never ever fully informed and therefore fail to understand what is contained in their Industrial agreement.

At every stage of privatisation the markers are visible - the process is well known. At

every stage we have a chance to intervene and put a spanner in the works of Government's privatisation plans. In this so called Democracy it is the rich and powerful who have the ear of Government. It is they who pull the strings on politicians to further their own interests. If we want a fair share of the cake we have to stop privatisation.

Believing that it is possible to stop privatisation is the first step to advancing the fight. But we must recognise what the steps are and challenge them at every opportunity. Even if the Unions agree to this and that clause with the Corporate Managers does not mean that we have to.

The fight ahead is a massive one, involving all sectors of society. It has to be a democratic yet political struggle to wrest power from those that would sell us short and those that manipulate large sections of society to their own ends.

Building a democratic rank and file organisation in your workplace and community is the first step to educating, encouraging and strengthening a mass movement that can challenge the status quo. This will be no light undertaking as failure is common. Perseverance strength and honesty is the key to the struggle. Good luck.

Spotlight on Rorts in the Union Office

Is there an agenda of the Right-wing ALP machine officials in the RTBU to roll the NSW branch into the National union completely?

In 2014 the building in Redfern which the branch owned and the National office along with the NSW Bus Division and other tenants occupied, was transferred to the National office which then collected the rent and moved to Trades Hall where they pay rent. This is a huge transfer of assets away from the members of the NSW branch which still pays \$830,000 pa capitation fees to the National Office and \$64,000 pa affiliation fees to the ALP. The NSW branch appear also to have adopted the black and white logo of the National office. Strictly speaking there was NSW Branch executive involvement in the decision. However, it was organised outside of the executive and then presented at the executive meeting as a fait accompli. It was not discussed at the branch council prior. The Redfern building was given a book price of \$3.5 million. A nice gift to the National office.

These tactics all play to gerrymander the voting process and disenfranchise NSW members. Why? Remember the 'Federal intervention in the BLF' back in the 1970's? Norm Gallagher's Federal Office intervened and set up a rival State branch in NSW, that took over and ran the NSW Branch and legally appointed their federally-controlled local union officials. (For the record Steve Black replaced the Munday-Owens-Pringle NSW leadership in a hostile take-over. We are not suggesting here that the National office in the RTBU is hostile. On the contrary, the take-over is to entrench NSW RTBU officials that are loyal to the Right-wing ALP machine and make it harder for any "reform" ticket in the current elections to dislodge the incumbents). Does this new arrangement mean that the Federal Office can annul the results of the current State RTBU election if it doesn't go their way?

A second "rort" is the fact that a clique of loco division officials are released on "Secondment" to work in the union office on a rotating basis. Effectively providing a full-time employee in the office at the rail-

way's expense. This might lead a reasonable person to think the managers who facilitate these releases could expect favourable treatment from certain union officials.

A third "rort" relates to Union manipulation of paid staff positions. When a very popular and experienced organiser was eased out of the job. The position was left vacant. Eventually it was filled by the nephew of a senior official.

The same goes for the Sydney and Newcastle Buses. State Transit helps fund union organisers, but the NSW RTBU laugh about this because management do not seem to realise they are doing it. Nevertheless the Bus Division of the NSW RTBU "compensate" State Transit for their "generosity"? How else can we explain the carefully manipulated sell-out of Area 6 buses to privatisation?

A fourth "rort" is where the old TV show "Cooking with Kerr" has been replaced by "Cooking with Claassens"? It involves the question as to why are RTBU NSW Branch finances audited, and reports supplied, on their website, but no breakdown

of individual rail, bus and tram Divisional Finances found within the provision of these regular financial reports? In particular, the 'Bus Drivers Traffic Fine and Picnic Fund'. Why have none of the surpluses of this fund which has existed for decades ever been paid to Bus Drivers as a premium or refund? Why has no regular financial reports of this fund been supplied to members? When was the last time the Bus Drivers had a picnic? What happened to the former Bus Union's "strike fund" when it was rolled into the RTBU under amalgamation?

A fifth "rort" is in the capitalist media. For the period 2011-12 to 2015-16, the RTBU received the overall sum of \$854,043 from the bosses via contributions to a training fund. Why has this money been accepted from the bosses? What was this money really spent on by the union hierarchy? What financial report has been supplied to members regarding these funds and its expenditure? (See "Unions 'Skim' \$130m from Worker Funds" by Simon Benson, The Australian 7/9/17 via Google search).

A sixth "rort" involves the RTBU, and other unions as well, where union officials draw a large stipend for being on their members Super Fund Board. However, Claassens has stated publicly and for the new auditing process that any remuneration received from the Super Fund position is declared. It is in effect donated to the Union. There is still a conflict of interest in the fact that part of his retainer from State Super finds its very way into the union.

So we have a NSW Branch Secretary who in this term has:

Taken \$5,000 from a TWU slush fund, according to Crikey.com. He explained to the Executive that it was used to pay for election material used at the last election. When he went to pay it back, the accounts had already been frozen by the Inquisition

- The Liberal's Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption. This is illegal. As an unpaid debt can be called a donation and donations over \$1000 should be declared. See www.ozpolitic.com/forum/YaBB.pl?num=1448477660

Taken a trip to Israel in 2015 at the expense of a Zionist gun dealers lobbyist (linked with former Right Wing ALP politician Mary Eassen) and never declared it to members or explained what benefit the members gained. Yet the RTBU helps finance Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA which in turn helps finance UN supported charity work in Palestine. What is the po-

sition of the RTBU on the Palestine issue? Was the State Secretary acting contrary to the Union position on the issue? See "Israel's ALP fan lobbies for arms maker" by John Lyons The Australian 12:00AM March 16, 2016 and Trade Unionists report Israel Visit www.jwire.com.au/trade-unionists-report-on-israel-trip/email/

Uses his position as NSW RTBU Branch Secretary to endorse the business Brightset Printing through Tony Brightwell's Linked-in page. This is the company that prints and mails his election material and that of other Right-wing ALP candidates. See reproduced Link-in page.

If you would like the absolute proof of what an incompetent person he is Google Alan Jones and Alex Claassens interview.

In the case of the Election Consulting Group which conducts RTBU NSW Rail EBA postal ballots, according to its Director Debra Pittman, the company employs former Employees of the AEC (Australian Electoral Commission). According to hearsay evidence, the AEC was involved in the rigging of the 2014 RTBU elections. See article "NSW Railway News" in Sparks No.151 Mar.- April 2015 on Web Site www.sparksworld.org

By Our Special Correspondent

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

RANDWICK DEPOT NEWS

Sparks: How is the situation in the STA in light of the NSW Govt's privatisation push?

Randwick Driver: The atmosphere at State Transit is toxic, and imploding, regardless. Transit Systems, the private company that won Region 6 at tender, is not only advertising overseas for drivers, it's head-hunting and poaching STA managers to run its acquisition. So there's upward pressure on salaries at management level, and "screw-you" downward pressure on drivers' wages down here at Slater level. There's palpable pandemonium and paranoia among management ranks at Sydney Buses. No sooner does Furball announce

his "A-team" of Depot Managers, ("A" coming in with a very good odds as meaning "Arsehole"), than they're being poached in whisper-quiet behind-the-scenes deal-making. In the same week (just two weeks ago - early May) that our brand new Randwick Depot manager was escorted off the premises by Security for taking up a Transit Systems offer to manage Tempe Depot instead.

All this helps you visualise the anarchic death-throes and desperation inside Furball's STA as he attempts to choreograph and stage-play the necessary pretence of the organisation's ongoing survival, while little more than Constance and his penthouse suite of TfNSW aco-

lytes actually hold the rudder of this ship-wreck destined juggernaut. There's abject terror and panic up on deck, - everyone's running around with one eye on the lifeboats, and one eye on everyone and anyone else who might represent a threat to their chances of being in one.

PORT BOTANY DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the latest with the ramifications of Region 6 privatisation for the depot?

Pt. Botany Driver: In late June 17 drivers transferring to the depot from Inner West depots facing privatisation came to the depot and were told by the depot manager that their transfers wouldn't be accepted and they had to return to their depots of origin. The union went to the Fair Work Court and obliged management to reverse the decision. In the lead up to Region 6 privatisation, management then wanted

regular drivers at the depot to go on loan to the Inner West depots. We threatened to take sickies and the bosses backed off again. Then all trainee drivers with less than a week or two on the job at the depot were being shanghaied and sent on loan to the Inner West depots to help out with driver shortages. Drivers have also been particularly angry about a stack of brand new buses kept on ice at the depot. These buses were all transferred to Region 6 depots prior to privatisation, so that Transit Systems, the new operator would look good with its fleet when the company took over.

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the situation with management at the depot lately?

Waverley Busie: Selina is still depot manager. Jim Narkos former depot manager who was rumoured to be replacing Selina in the job has now been transferred to a plum middle management job at STA Head Office. The STA is constantly training up new drivers. Whilst removing all excess drivers. The way the STA is operating it seems designed to get rid of the older drivers. In particular, long time drivers are complaining about the monotonous short runs they are being obliged to work. Making working at the depot less attractive. The bosses are going deep into the flesh with cutbacks. People are realising how blatant and brutal the bosses have become. However, there is a general lack of comradeship amongst drivers. Other news is that there is a reduction in gas buses with the loss of the Volvo gas buses. Whilst we are receiving a stack of new Mercedes Bendies. With these larger buses, the bosses need less drivers. Seems in line with a management plan to create a smaller workforce at the depot. The introduction of the new bendies, is in stark contrast to management policy over recent years to rundown infrastructure.

RW: How are drivers finding the job since the November timetable and route changes?

WB: The depot has been hard hit with the changes as those depots targeted for immediate privatisation such as Leichhardt and Burwood have been favoured with the lucrative runs. Whilst Waverley has now

less lucrative routes such as the 379 from Nth Bondi to Bronte and less city runs. Drivers are feeling unhappy and alienated in their jobs.

LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What is the situation with privatisation?

Leichhardt Driver: There were no mass resignations following the takeover by Transit Systems. However there has certainly been some retirements amongst the old timers from 1/7/18. One of those veterans of the STA who will be retiring in August is Peter Santos, the depot Charge man. In the lead up to privatisation there continued to be a great shortage of drivers with everyone working DOC's. The new operator will be transferring some of its fleet from its depots out in the West to Leichhardt. However, whether these buses are of the

same quality as STA buses is unclear. We are very conscious that the new operator will be after our extra week of sick leave. However according to the union our existing on-the-job conditions will remain in place for 18 months. Other news is that Peter Rowley former STA CEO and former STA senior manager Jamie Sinclair will be employed as consultants for Transit Systems for Region 6 rather than as managers. There is now a general consensus amongst us that the union hi-

erarchy and the ALP sold us out over the privatisation.

RW: What is the impact at the depot of the privatisation?

Leichhardt Driver1: Latest news is that 70 drivers are transferring from the depot to Transit Systems depots out West near where they live. Whilst in mid June 10 to 20 new drivers are coming to the depot. With the lack of old timers on the job, there looks to be considerable problems with training new drivers. Latest news is that throughout Region 6 a ban has been imposed by the STA on transfers. If you

wanted to transfer, you had to resign. With only 15 drivers at a time which can be trained at the depot, and existing transfers, it's looking like a real crisis of bus operations is looming with privatisation.

RW: How is the situation since privatisation?

Leichhardt Driver2: All the transfers have gone through. Otherwise there has been minimal change. The only difference between the STA and Transit Systems regarding Holidays is that whilst both provide 5 weeks recre-

ational leave per year, with Transit Systems you can cash-out your 5th week of recreational leave. There is no evidence of trainee drivers from STA depots coming here.

STOP PRESS:

It appears that a deal may have been done between the RTBU and TWU leadership over coverage of workers of Transit Systems in Region 6. As intriguingly in the media the TWU rather than the RTBU is being consulted on the implementation of privatisation. Is the RTBU membership in Region 6 aware of this? Will members have to resign from the RTBU and join the TWU? What will be the situation with continuing entitlements?

Is there a secret component in the contract to Transit Systems for Region 6 which allows the company to do what they like in regard to a range of costs and issues? Has the NSW Govt. Provided a bottomless pit of money for the company to pull off the privatisation. As seems the case with the West-Connex?

1. Who is covering the transport and training of interstate drivers not used? 2. Who is paying for the transport, training and lodging of Kiwi drivers, not seen on the road as yet? 3. Who is covering the Consultancy fees for the likes of Jamie Sinclair, now chief honcho at Leichhardt depot? 4. Who met the tab for all the Region 6 drivers who were still in State Transit and were sent to a 9 day company induction course? 5. How come Region 6 drivers are already complaining of wage cuts? Despite the public notification, depending on the 3 months or 18 months version, you read, that there would be no change in drivers' conditions?

WARNING OF SCAM DETECTED IN YOUR AREA!

THIS SCAM IS DANGEROUS & CAN LEAD TO BUS ACCIDENTS & DAMAGE TO THE PUBLIC IT INVOLVES AN OFFER OF \$5,000 FOR MEETING UNREALISTIC BUS RUNNING TIMES & EXPECTATIONS.

If you see any more of these Scams. Google this web site: www.scamwatch.gov.au/ & Report details.



Commuters Maintain Vigilance Over Privatisation

There were 30-40 at the meeting outside the entrance of Leichhardt Depot on Sunday 1/7/18, organised by STOP (Sydney Transport-users Opposing Privatisation).

Jamie Parker Greens M.P. spoke at the Rally. He raised an interesting point re Transit Systems takeover of Region 6. Currently in Australia, passengers only

are compensated \$40 mill because of un-anticipated or unbudgeted overtime, then the company must pay the difference. Similarly if the company cuts services, increases fares or short-changes drivers on pay entitlements, to cut their costs below the intended \$200 mill outlaid by the Govt, then this is an increase in profit distributed to shareholders and management through

of the public campaign against the privatisation. They have only put a small logo on the buses and failed to shift in their fleet of private buses from the Fairfield and Smithfield depots. It looks like they are too frightened to use their old bomb buses from the West in Region 6 due to a potential passenger backlash. However despite Transit Systems saying they have the full complement of drivers and claimed they flew many of the Adelaide and Perth drivers back home as surplus to needs, the public are curious whether the crash training course will be sufficient for the imported Kiwi drivers. Questions have been raised whether the State Govt is subsidising all the interstate and overseas recruits. Who is paying the plane fares and accommodation and resettlement costs? What about the safety and speed of training implementation? Will the details of a trainee driver fatally hitting a Transit Systems staff trainer last month be made public?

Although this rally was small, the over-reaction by Transit Systems in calling the police has not gone unnoticed. The media did not turn up although the local press have followed the post-privatisation period extensively calling for more commuter feedback. No one from the ALP State Conference turned up despite over 500 flyers handed out at the lunch break at the Sydney Town Hall. The RTBU delegates to the ALP event were all informed but disappeared quickly (in shame?) rather than discuss the issue with activists. Clearly the Eastern Suburbs are next to face the privatisation chop with many cross-city runs now operating. The State ALP Opposition see their electoral chances enhanced for the March 2019 election and are active at a local Govt area, especially over the removal of the Bronte to City 378 route. Commuters should be wary they are not betrayed the way those in the inner-west were by ALP Mayoral indifference and Union leaders selling the workers short by caving in to Fair Work Commission bans of strike action. *Contributed by a Participant*



contribute 20% of cost of buses - in London it is over 55% and Europe 40%. He argued under privatisation the pressure will come from Transit Systems to raise the fare contribution from consumers towards the overall costs to make our system "internationally competitive". He said a previous Liberal Govt introduced the "zonal-system" of breaking Sydney up in to "Areas" of operation.

This enabled the State Govt to call for "tenders" for each "package" of "area of operation" (whether public dept or private operator in charge) after the expiry of a 5, 10 or 20 year contract. (However in the case of the Region 6 tendering, the STA was not allowed to tender.) For example the Govt may offer a \$200 million allocation from Govt revenue to run buses over say Area 6. The tender winner is the one who offers the best service. If their costs run higher than the subsidy offered, the company meets the difference (e.g. if it budgets \$30 mill for wages, but workers

Executive bonuses, etc).

So there will be pressure on Govt to raise fares in next few years - as the company can say other countries have much large passenger contributions. Also mentioned an ALP Govt. would not renew Transit Systems contract if in office but Luke Foley was ambiguous about reversing privatisation during the course of the current Region 6 contract. Could point to hidden nasties in the contract with Transit Systems. Such as a penalty clause involving say \$100 mill. in case of discontinuing of the contract.

At the protest there was a blockade of 8-10 people at the depot entrance. 3 buses were stopped for a few minutes as a token effort to make a point. However the cops were called by the company bosses, after a report from a driver. A group of them suddenly came out of the Admin building when the blockade started. Jamie Parker mentioned that the company is very scared

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of RW we will discuss the standing down of a Senior Union Official of the Locomotive Division. In this issue Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff will discuss these charges. As in previous issues of RW names have been changed.

RW: Why has the Union Official been stood down?

Rastus: He was stood down because, he is alleged to have threatened the woman who manages the Drivers.

Clarence: Not that Moron again.

Roscoe: Yes it is.

Abner: This Moron caused a fair amount of trouble at Ballarat. They were glad to see her go.

Rastus: The reason the official has been stood down is because V/Line Management wants to send a message to Train Drivers that Union Officials can be gotten rid off.

Roscoe: He was not stood down over the recent moves to alter the EBA?

Rastus: He was stood down over an incident relating to a Manpower Clerk. In other areas of V/Line, they are known as Staff Clerks. In the 1980's, the Drivers' Rostering was changed to Manpower. By 2018 Manpower Spencer Street rosters all Passenger Drivers around the State.

Roscoe: This woman had it in for one of the Manpower Clerks. After being on the job a couple of months, she said that this Clerk's job was unsatisfactory. She had no proof of this.

Rastus: You see another Manpower Clerk was returning from Maternity Leave and she wanted his position. You see the position he worked was a day shift.

Roscoe: The Union Official when he heard she was trying to terminate him, defended him and told this woman that she was destroying the Manpower Clerk's livelihood. She didn't care as you can see what happened up at Mildura. There was a heated exchange and the Delegate said that Solicitors would be brought in.

Rastus: She insinuated that she was being threatened and he was stood down. He was made to hand back his Driver's Keys, so it was obvious they were going to sack him.

Roscoe: On hearing he was stood down, there was anger amongst the Drivers. A number of Drivers wanted immediate industrial action. This is illegal during a period of the EBA.

Jethro: Didn't V/Line try to break the EBA?

Clarence: Yes, but it was defeated.

Rastus: As this issue of Sparks is being compiled two months has passed and the matter is unresolved. The union wants to know what charges the Delegate is facing. V/line will not reply.

Roscoe: The union has been to Fair Work Australia to settle the matter, but V/Line still will not reply. So it looks like the case may lead to the Federal Court.

Roscoe: Court cases cost a fair amount of money from union funds which has to be diverted from funds used to help members. This is a tactic used by V/Line to try to cripple the union in legal fees. That is why a legal levy was introduced into the union dues.

Abner: The Union Delegate has support of all of V/Line Unionists. Most members say if he is knocked off, then what is stopping V/Line going after all of the Union Delegates.

Roscoe: She maybe a moron but she is an educated moron who has been sent through the employers training colleges. Before she came to V/Line she was a very high up in a retail chain.

RW: What is this rumour that V/Line has a slush fund to cover Unfair Dismissal Claims?

Clarence: Rumours have it that this fund is used to pay out employees who claim Unfair Dismissal if it is settled in the employee's favour.

Abner: They do not want these people back in the job. Six years ago V/line paid a conductor they wanted to get rid of \$50,000 to upgrade her teaching skills. So she could resume teaching.

RW: What is this I hear that Authorised Officers have been used to monitor trains to see if there has been illegal industrial action.

Clarence: A couple of times Authorised Officers who should be out patrolling trains have been used to see if conductors are arriving at their trains less than 15 min-



utes before departure.

Abner: The union has put a stop to this action.

Arlene: We have also observed people from Head Office particularly Human Resources and Managers monitoring the trains to see if there is any industrial action.

RW: I hear two booking clerks have been stood down.

Clarence: You are correct. They have been stood down over some issue with Email. The union has taken up their case and this may be heading to the courts.

Jethro: The shifts the clerks worked have not been covered. The Booking Office is two staff members down. What V/Line is playing at is they want to find some issue to sack them.

RW: Once again we have run out of space. V/Line does not care how much money they waste as long as they obtain

a result, which suits them. The standing down of the Senior Union Delegate is a calculated effort by V/Line to smash the Locomotive Division. It will fail. When these managers depart, the union will be still around.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say, we Drivers will fight any attempt by V/Line to sack any Union Official. As for using Authorised Officers to monitor drivers and conductors it shows how low V/Line can go. Finally we will say to V/Line. You TOUCH ONE, You TOUCH ALL.

STOP PRESS:

As this edition of RW goes to press, one of the Booking Clerks who has been stood down was sacked. The Clerk is taking V/Line to Fair Work Australia for Unfair Dismissal and will only accept being reinstated as a Booking Clerk. The rumour about the Driver is different. It has been alleged that Driver has been told to reply to why he shouldn't be dismissed by V/Line. This case may head to the Federal Court. V/Line has no grounds to dismiss him.

In this issue of RW we will discuss events at V/Line over the last four months. Again Customer Service Staff, Conductors and Drivers will discuss these events. As in previous issues names have been changed.

RW: What has happened at V/Line over the last four months?

Abner: V/Line tried to renegotiate the current EBA.

RW: In what way?

Clarence: They tried to get the Membership at V/line to vote on changing the EBA in a phone ballot with a private company.

Rastus and Roscoe: They did not involve Fair Work Australia.

Abner: May we introduce you to Colleen and Cathal who will talk about these issues.

RW: What is your position at V/Line?

Colleen and Cathal: We are employed as Conductors and we are fed up with V/Line trying to undermine our working conditions.

Rastus and Roscoe: V/Line wanted to renegotiate the EBA with the Drivers bearing the brunt of the changes to working conditions. One of the examples would be to train shunters to move trains from the yards to the platforms.

Colleen: Most of the membership was puzzled as to why a Marketing Company was to be used to conduct the ballot and not the Australian Electoral Commission.

Cathal: A number of members contacted the union as to why the AEC was not used

and the union checked with their legal experts who reported that it was legal. V/Line notified the union of their proposals between Christmas and the New Year.

RW: What a low act.

Colleen: What would you expect from V/Line when the CEO is from Metro Trains.

Rastus and Roscoe: He is trying to introduce Metro Trains working conditions to V/Line. In other words Union Busting.

Cathal: Towards the end of the Ballot, V/Line offered all of its workforce a bonus of \$1500 tax free if the Ballot was carried.

Clarence: This was Bribe money and V/Line hoped the members would fall for the Bait.

Jethro: Retired members, interns from the Trades Hall Council and Job Delegates gave up their time to help in contacting all of the membership at V/Line to urge them to vote NO to the changes.

Colleen: The result of the Vote was a resounding NO.

Rastus: 92% of the members voted and the result was 94% No, 5% YES.

Roscoe: It was good to see the management EBA proposal defeated. The respective Union newsletters have reported on the campaign and what we offer in Sparks is a brief summary.

RW: I hear a number of employees received letters about being late for work and given veiled warnings about being late in future.

Colleen: You are correct. This is V/line Human Resources showing their true colours to their employees. This is SPITE over losing the EBA votes.

Clarence: Forty employees at Spencer Street were sent these letters and only one was sent to a Country Area. Both Daily Paid and Salaried Staff received these letters.

Cathal: These letters gave a history of employees being late over a four year period.

Colleen: Most employees were late by four to five minutes which has been caused

by delayed trains or traffic jams. Most employees when they are delayed phone the Staff Clerks, when they are running late. If they were less than ten minutes late they were not docked.

Abner This changed over five years ago when an instruction from the manager of Spencer Street to dock all employees if they were late was issued. This has been reported in previous issues of Sparks.

Rastus and Roscoe: One employee who gave himself sufficient time to be at work was travelling by V/Line. There was a signal failure on the line he was travelling. The train arrived at Spencer Street a few minutes late. He had notified the Staff Clerk of the delay and that he would be a few minutes late. A number of Drivers were also in this particular train.

RW: Was he docked?

Clarence: Yes.

Abner: One employee who had a blemished record was distressed about the letter saying if he was late in future, disciplinary action would be considered.

Cathal: The Staff Clerks should stand up to management and defend employees. Not be a yes man.

Abner: The union was notified and the Union said ignore the letters. The matter will be taken to Fair Work Australia,

RW: I hear that two Conductors who were not on the On-the-Job Trainers were appointed to the position of Conductor Service Managers to act in the position while two CSM's were on leave at Spencer Street.

Colleen: You are correct. Two Conductors who were not OJT's were appointed.

Abner: The career path for CSM is Conductor then OJT and then CSM. In country locations when a CSM was on leave an OJT was appointed as Acting CSM.

Cathal: The OJT's at Spencer Street were not considered for the position.

Colleen: A number of Conductors were upset that the job was not advertised and they conducted the Independent Review-Based Anti-Corruption Commission, better known as I.B.A.C.

Abner: You see IBAC protects Whistle-blowers, so V/Line is unable to conduct a witch hunt.

Rastus and Roscoe: V/Line is already in trouble with IBAC over a training scheme in South Western Victoria.

Colleen: As a result of Conductors contacting IBAC, one of the Acting CSM was removed from the position.

Abner: Then V/Line pulled a rabbit out of the hat, two OJT positions had been advertised, but the person who represented Human Resources, who was conducting the interviews resigned. The recommendations this person made who were to fill the acting positions were found. Wait for it. The two Conductors who were made acting CSM's were successful are now in the acting CSM position, as they are now OJT's.

Rastus: What a joke. I wonder if this was fabricated. Perhaps IBAC should investigate further.

RW: Once again we have run out of space. This is the only time I can remember that an attempt has been made to alter an EBA midway through an agreement and we at RW are pleased that the vote was a resounding NO. As for the letters sent to employees being late this is SPITEFUL and should be contested through the Courts. Finally if employees think the selection process for a position is wrong contact IBAC.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say the attempt to alter the EBA has failed but it will be attempted again in future negotiations. So be on your guard. Finally regarding the letters to employees. You TOUCH one employee you TOUCH ALL. Regarding who were selected for acting OJT positions, we Drivers conclude by saying V/LINE management are CORRUPT.

BRITAIN TODAY

Underemployment, Casualisation & The Future of Work

Underemployment is the term used for workers who get fewer hours than they want and need to live on. In the UK there are now at least 1.4 million workers on zero-hours contracts and 865,000 agency workers, many of whom struggle to get enough hours a week to survive on. Added to which, companies

are increasingly employing people on a part-time basis, often on contracts of 10 hours or less. This leaves workers dependent on any extra hours management may choose to offer them. According to the Office for National Statistics, just under 10% of the working population or 3.3 million people want more hours; or to put it another way, are part unemployed. To put this into context there are now twice as many people underemployed as there are

unemployed. The practice of underemployment puts management into a powerful position, enabling them to dictate working conditions and create a workplace culture of fear and permanent insecurity, where workers feel they have to put up with just about anything or risk being sanctioned by not being offered any extra hours available. Studies have shown that, where there is a high level of underemployment, the culture of the workplace is characterised by discrimination, and assault, high levels of stress and mental illness, bullying, arbitrary rules, favouritism and wage theft. It can also make balancing

work, childcare, and school a nightmare given the need to take on extra hours often at short notice to make up pay. "We only find out on the day, or the day before, about how many hours we will work and about our start and finish times. I am a single mother of two children and it is very difficult for me." The reality behind underemployment was revealed in a survey of 450,000 USDAW union members. The survey was largely of workers in retail, warehouse and distribution along with road transport. The survey revealed that 60% of respondents have contracts for 30 hours or less. Almost two-thirds (64%), of those taking part in the survey, regularly work additional hours above their contracted hours. The survey found that two-thirds would like these extra hours to be guaranteed. It also found that one in every three of respondents said they would like to work longer hours.

The survey also found an increasing use of agency workers with one in twenty workers (5%) reporting that at least half of the workforce are agency staff. It was also found that many workers have to take on extra jobs to make ends meet with 8% having a second job, with a further 20% looking for a second job. The survey also shows an alarming increase in the use of short-hours contracts - contracts of 10 hours or less - as a means of avoiding the bad publicity now associated with zero hours contracts. The overwhelming majority that took part in the survey stated they wanted more job security and guarantees over hours with 98% stating that they believed that workers should have a right to contracts that reflect their normal hours.

The USDAW survey is alarming as it points to a big growth in underemployment in the traditional sectors of the economy where it has generally been assumed jobs are more secure. It now appears that these sectors are moving towards the conditions found in the "gig" economy, where the majority of employees' hours vary from week to week according to business needs. "Agency workers at my workplace are very unhappy with the way they are treated. They come into work; many have spent up to 6 pounds just to get to work; when they arrive, they find that they are sent home after one hour." That big-named companies are now using underemployment, as a means to cut cost and increase profits, should not come as too big of a surprise. This process has been underway in the US retail sector for many years and has become commonly known as "short shifted."

In the US, retail companies have introduced just in time scheduling" and use other "lean" manufacturing practices managing an increasingly part time workforce and cut wage cost to the bone. The key to the introduction of these "lean"

manufacturing practices has been the use of the latest technologies, which has allowed retailers to track sales patterns and predict labour costs with far greater precision. This has enabled US retailers to cut or increase workers hours in line with fluctuations in business. For example, if there is bad weather, the scheduling algorithm can indicate that employees should be sent home before their shift ends. Another example is to use detectors embedded in the welcome mat in shops that measure conversion rates - how many people enter the store in relation to how many walk out with bags - and plan work schedules accordingly. Methods like this, have allowed, even large retail companies employing thousands of workers, to tailor the working hours of individual workers to cut cost.

To the extent that companies are able to use sales per hour of individual workers for one week to determine their work schedule for the next. This not only cuts



cost, it puts constant pressure on workers to sell more or have their hours cut. This has led to guaranteed full time employment increasingly the preserve of managers and long-term employees with the majority of the workforce on part time contracts with many in constant need of extra hours. "I'm not considered full-time but during the holiday season I work full-time hours. Only managers can get full-time status officially." Not surprisingly these "lean" manufacturing practices has spread beyond retail in the US and are now being used in fast food and full-service restaurants, hotels, entertainment, construction, and information sectors. The USDAW survey would indicate that "lean" manufacturing practices are being imported into the UK economy.

Amazon, for example, regularly sends workers home when not enough work is available and uses the practice, common in US retail, of getting workers to compete with each other for the reward of extra hours. In the UK, much has been made of the dangers posed by new technology and focus has rightly been on increasing automation and the threat to jobs. However, the danger of technology being used to casualise low-tech "unskilled" jobs, is just as real.

This may well have big implications for the future of work in the UK. Already there is evidence that, in the UK, companies are reluctant to invest in labour saving technology due to the price of labour being cheap. With new technologies being used to drive down labour cost, making automation less cost effective, we may well see the workforce increasingly dominated by state subsidised, underemployed workers, whose lives by necessity revolve around the constant need to work more hours to make up pay. A scenario even more likely, should some form of universal basic income be introduced.

As a union, Solidarity Federation is committed to developing new methods of organising to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing economy. Part of which includes running a workplace organiser training course which is open to everyone. For more information contact training@solfed.org.uk.

Campaign Against Under Payment of Holiday Pay

Brighton Solidarity Federation Hospitality Workers have successfully concluded a campaign against a hotel in Brighton. Brighton SolFed had been working with a former employee for a payment of unpaid holiday pay, as well as compensation for dangerous working conditions which have had a serious impact on this worker's health.

The worker was only contracted to work 20 hours a week, but was regularly pressured to work up to 40 hours, doing work that went far beyond their job description. In addition to his usual duties of taking care of linen and rubbish, he was given sole responsibility in evenings for the duties of a room attendant and dealing with all the requests made by guests, acting as luggage porter, cleaner of bar and brasserie toilets, and responsible for dealing with dirty clothes in the kitchen. This extremely physically demanding overwork was compounded by various failures in health and safety, including being expected to push a broken rubbish cart for 6 months, despite this issue being raised with management, which has caused a

long-term back injury. This was only acknowledged when he recently submitted a GP letter confirming this. He was not provided with safety gloves for six months and was expected to handle cages without protection. To add insult to (literal) injury, he was only awarded holiday pay for the contracted 20 hours of work, effectively missing out on half of his holiday entitlement.

The disregard for not only this workers personal health and safety, but also basic legal requirements around his holiday pay is shocking. Brighton SolFed organised with this worker and got the pay and compensation that they're owed after only one picket. Clearly having their working conditions subjected to the light of day was

too much for these bosses to handle! This is yet another case to make hotel and restaurant bosses think twice before subjecting more workers to these degrading, exhausting and dangerous conditions. The ease and speed with which this case was won further demonstrates the value of anarcho-syndicalist unionism. As the worker puts it, "I've never been in contact with unions or had been associated with any group. The problem of many of us[have]to take the first step to contact them, perhaps we don't do it because we believe that they won't be a more than words and will not have an effective result..."

Solfed have[all the information]and know to handle it in an action process that they

have organized, being very prepared people; their own safety and firmness creates in you a self confidence...During our meetings I felt that they also trusted me and that is why they supported me throughout the process, knowing that they were acting in my name being sure that it was a worth it. "It is obvious that a job is important, but people are more important, and If someone feels mistreated in a work environment it is best to leave the job, but not before having fought... and that's what Solfed is for." Don't let bosses get away with these criminal conditions. Unionise! Organise! Fight Back!

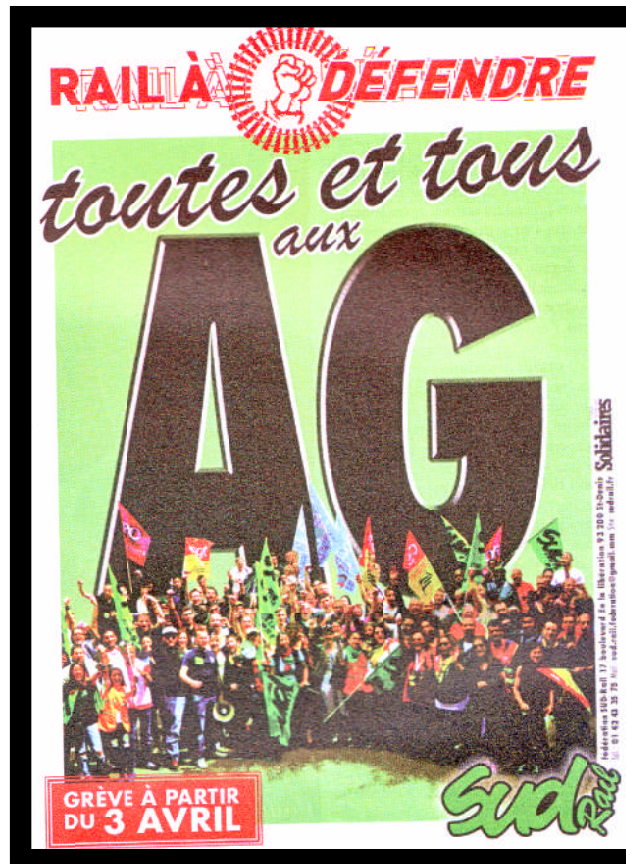
FRANCE: RAIL WORKERS FIGHT PRIVATISATION

The social movement in the railways that started in the spring does not lack originality: by its amplitude, by its form, by the inter-union relations, or by the virtual disappearance of the self-organization of the struggle. But above all, it was organized as an impressive machine to lose, despite a very important initial mobilization of railway workers. The strike at the SNCF began on April 3, after a first episode on March 22. But the union federations CGT, Unsa and CFDT imposed a calendar of 36 strike days spread over three months; in the form of 18 two-day strikes. The SUD-Rail and FO federations have been talking about an extendable strike but have not organized it.

The Turning Point of March 22

From the beginning, the union federations chose not to create a dynamic: it was not until a month after the government and employer announcements that a perspective of action was proposed. It was on March 15 that they announced the now famous "calendar of the strike". In SUD-Rail, but also the CGT, it caused a lot of reactions. SUD-Rail filed a renewable notice, without joining the CGT, Unsa and CFDT federations; however, under cover of unity, the critics were killed and it was a mistake [1]. It could have been repaired a few days later. Indeed, planned well before the

Spinetta report or the railway pact, a national demonstration of railway and railway workers was organized on March 22, and it was a success. But the most important event was the number of strikers:



according to the figures of the management, more than 35 % of staff (including management), whereas only the Unsa and SUD-Rail federations called for a strike. It was therefore possible to bounce back on this event to impose another movement

from early April, despite the inter-federal call of April 15. If all the trade union structures were favourable to an extendable strike had campaigned during two weeks to organize it, things would have been different at the beginning of April. This was not the case, and it paid off afterwards.

The trap of 2 days out of 5 The CGT Federation's week-long campaign on "finding a form of action that is cheap for strikers" weighed; especially since, most of the time, the ideological battle to counter this was not carried out, in the name of unity that should not be weakened, or by agreement with this positioning, however, well below the stakes. As a result, there was no real debate among the mass of railway workers and railway workers about the form of the action. The schedule of the 18 48-hour strikes has become clear evidence of departure. There was the trap. Because once the cases launched thus, it was almost certain that one would arrive at this situation: successive strikes which occupy the media space, but a number of strikers who is not at the height, and especially the impossibility of to create a dynamic of self-organization, of strike control by the strikers. This last element is decisive.

More than a third of SNCF staff must complete an "Individual Declaration of Intent (DII)" to strike, 48 hours before, specifying on which notice. Inevitably, the most common reference was the unitary (CGT / Unsa / CFDT), 48 hours, non-renewable. From that point onwards, drivers, controllers, controllers and other personnel who had filed their DII could not continue the strike unless they were in an irregular situation [2]. For the others,

the advertising on the calendar from April 3 to June 29 pushed to choose its strike dates among the 36 proposed: how many times the activists have heard “no, the strike tomorrow, I do not do it; but I will do the 18th and the 19th, and not the next but the next one ...”? Over time, it played more and more on the percentage of strikers, every day a number of them and they passing their turn; a phenomenon that does not exist in a reconductible strike: we are not strikers in not striking! Certainly, colleagues stop the movement before the end, but daily GAs and strike talks often allow this decision to be postponed. The number of strikers was very uneven according to the categories. Very strong among the driving agents, the strike has never taken the height of what must be a national strike that lasts, among the commercial agents of the stations, the personnel of the maintenance of the installations or in the workshops. This is largely inherent in the terms and conditions.

And the claims? By imposing its schedule of non-renewable strikes, the CGT federation was able to finish (momentarily, let us not be afraid!) With the practice of the general assemblies where the strikers really decide their strike; it had been acquired for more than thirty years at the SNCF (the strike of November 1986/December 1987) that many union bureaucrats did not stop fighting. Certainly, for form, general meetings remain; but there is nothing left to discuss: where the debate on the form of action was put, the union responses (CGT, Unsa, CFDT, but sometimes also SUD-Rail) were unambiguous: either “no question of discussing this in AG, since there is an inter-federal calendar”, ie “you can decide what you want in AG, we will stick to inter-federal calendar. And then, frankly: since everyone had the program of strikes from April 3 to June 29, why participate in general meetings?

The four federations had agreed on an eight-point platform, including the abandonment of the government rail pact. Over the days, the union leaflets have “forgotten” these claims, to highlight the need for “round tables”, “negotiations” and other “tripartite meetings” whose content

seemed to become a matter of secondary importance [3]. That’s not why strikers lose pay! Again, the weakness of the GA did not help to raise the bar.

A movement that lasts, lasts, lasts ...

Unsa and CFDT had no doubt planned to leave the strike well before the end of June: government policy that intends to ignore, weaken and destroy all trade union organizations prevented them. There was no way out! The baccalaureate period, the end of the initial quarterly calendar provided them with the expected pretext. But fundamentally, the question is: “why did the CGT federation, once again, choose to favour unity with Unsa and CFDT instead of joining forces with SUD-Rail and FO?”. And above all, “what do we need to work for the combative teams of the CGT, SUD-Rail and FO manage to thwart these manoeuvres in the future, failing to renew a scenario too often known in recent years?”

The movement continues, but what is its effect? This is the crux of the problem. For us, the strike is to win; negotiations must be under the pressure of strikers; it is a moment of break with the system in place that allows to consider other, stronger strategies. Those who only wanted to “show their strength” are faced with a major problem: government and employers do not intend to negotiate. Only the balance of power can make them crack. And it goes through a disruption of the economy, a disruption of rail activity. But it is not by multiplying the loss of wages due to a series of non-renewable strikes that a renewed strike is prepared under the best conditions. The movement lasts, but under what conditions! The leaders of the strike are, for many, very sceptical for a long time about how it unfolds; that does not create the optimal conditions for its success.

Railroad workers unbridled [4]

[1] This is said without the slightest pretension to dictate the truth ... especially a posteriori. We, activists and activists libertarians of the rail sector, if we

immediately criticized and challenged the choice of 18 square strikes, did not measure how it closed the door to any dynamics afterwards.

[2] Of course, a strike without notice or out of the existing ones is possible and has been seen many times in the past ... provided you have created a dynamic, a collective craze that make you forget these legal details.

[3] The episode of the referendum by which the CGT federations, Unsa, SUD-Rail and CFDT asked, after a month of strikes, whether the railwaymen and railwaymen were in agreement or not with the government, is a little similar. 95 % of voters (61% participation) refused the government’s railway plan. Confirmation certainly; but what interest? Tens of thousands of railway and railway workers had already given their opinion since early April by participating in the strike! Note that, contrary to what the federations were selling, the referendum did not allow any rebound in the mobilization: the militant energy would have been more effectively used otherwise.

[4] Find them on www.leraildechaine.org. Due to a lack of space, this article does not deal with important topics but we have had to put aside for this time: the strike funds; the contradiction between the claim of “convergences of the struggles” and the fact, that including in the railway sector the strike, did not affect other companies than the SNCF; the differences between delegate co-ordinations mandated by their AG, gathering strikers organizing actions and committees unrepresentative; the illegal practices of bosses who want to scare us (payroll deductions well beyond strike days, intimidation letters before and after actions, etc.).

<http://www.alternativelibertaire.org/?SNCF-Greve-cheminote-une-machine-a-perdre>

Indonesian Anarchism & Syndicalism

Continued From Last Edition

(1945-1948) Sutan Sjahrir. As a friend of Salomon Tas-former chair of the Social Democratic Student Club, Sjahrir had made direct contact with him after he came to Amsterdam in 1929-his new

friend “moved further and further to the left to search for his radical counterparts”, until he finally met a handful of anarchists living in the commune.

However, Sjahrir, according to Tas, quickly moved from here and was inter-

ested in socialism in a “more practical” form.[39]After Indonesia gained independence, Sjahrir became the leader of the Indonesian Socialist Party.

The fact that the young Indonesian nationalists ultimately disagreed with the Dutch anarchist, was no accident. Although anarchism is against colonialism, it is critical of the idea of creating new national states. The Dutch anarchist stressed

that national independence would not eliminate the position of exploited workers in the colonies, but would only replace the oppression of the invaders with oppression by their own bourgeoisie, their own military, and so on. Speaking at an anti-colonial congress in Brussels in 1927, the representative of the Antimilitarist International Commission, anarcho-syndicalist Arthur Müller-Lehning, warned the oppressed people not to follow Western example by creating new countries. He urged them to renew social life in the spirit of eliminating class.[40] And in the League Congress against Imperialism in Frankfurt am Main (1929), the delegation of the International Anti-Militarist Bureau, an anarchist named Bart de Ligt, stated that the struggle should not only be waged against colonialism and "white" imperialism, but also against nationalism between the oppressed countries; not for the power of the national bourgeoisie, but for "a free and open international world ... of all languages and races."

He attributed the nationalist struggle to create independent states with the desire of the elites of the states to dominate. "Everywhere in the world we see the emergence of a genuine bourgeoisie who longs to create its power on the basis of the exploitation of the vast masses with its country."

This new class must have fought there for national independence, yet at the same

time building a new economic system borrowed from the white bourgeoisie ... "- that is the explanation of the Dutch antimilitarist. He called for a struggle against militarism in the liberation movement, and also called for anti-imperialism, which, as demonstrated by experience in China, can only lead to new Chinese imperialism. His position of opinion is clear, he



supports unarmed and non-militant movements.[41] It is clear that such statements can be unpopular among activists seeking to create their own national bourgeois state.

At the time of the proclamation of Indonesian independence in 1945, there was no sign of any anarchist movement in any

form in this country. The new state political elite uses the label "anarchism" to condemn their opponents. After 1945, workers began spontaneously seizing railroads, industrial and plantation companies, establishing control over them, and local authorities dubbed this movement "anarcho-syndicalism." As the researcher Jafar Suryomenggolo pointed out, the term is borrowed from the literature Marx-

ist to describe the dangers and risks of workers who are out of control of their country, but the label is not intended to describe the actual process of workers' control, but to reject and perceive the phenomenon of the working class movement. Abdulmajid, who became the leader of Indonesian students after Hatta's departure, and other socialists "brought" the anarcho-syndicalist expression of the Netherlands. As in February 1946, Vice President Hatta publicly attacked "syndicalism," speaking at an economic conference in Yogyakarta that the companies had passed state control.[42] President Soekarno, in turn, feared an "anarcho-syndicalist" tendency in the Indonesian Labor Party created by unions.[43] But this charge has nothing to do with the real anarchist or anarcho-syndicalist movement.

"Spoke at an economic conference in Yogyakarta that the companies had passed state control.[42] President Soekarno, in turn, feared an "anarcho-syndicalist" tendency in the Indonesian Labor Party created by unions.[43] But this charge has nothing to do with the real anarchist or anarcho-syndicalist movement. "Spoke at an economic conference in Yogyakarta that the companies had passed state control.[42] President Soekarno, in turn, feared an "anarcho-syndicalist" tendency in the Indonesian Labor Party created by unions.[43] But this charge has nothing to do with the real anarchist or anarcho-syndicalist movement.

Continued Next Edition

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

May Made Me: An Oral History of the 1968 Uprising in France by Mitchell Abidor, AK Press.

A Furnace for the Forging of Revolutionaries

The explosive events of France May '68 featured the largest general strike in history involving 10 million workers, widespread factory and educational institution occupations and massive student and worker demonstrations. It inspired many of us around the world to take the revolutionary path without the slightest hesitation. Following the sign post at this cross roads in one's life which points to the difficult road of personal sacrifices and the necessity of fastening on the

buckler of iron self discipline. Doing those terrible hard yards over many decades of grass roots on-the-job organising and inspiring other comrades with one's absolute dedication to the cause to follow suit. Encouraging scientific processes and historical research and damning the manipulative antics of today's megalomaniac leftist sect and cult gurus. Defiantly hurling back the gauntlet of the Neo-Liberal challenge. Holding in utter contempt today's middle class/student based leftist sub cultural groupings with all their organisational navel gazing, identity politics infatuated, hypocritical "political correctness displays", oppression mongering and

guilt tripping. Stoically aware of the necessity during inevitable crises of taking terrible forced marches and then having to summon all one's reserves of commitment to work miracles "to take strategic hills" to assist militant workers in the struggle against the forces of capitalism and the realisation of steps toward revolutionary industrial unionism. Whilst ignoring that other sign post pointing to the alluring mire of a soft life of normality and careerism in bourgeois society.

May '68 & The End of Mass Stalinism

May 2018 is the 50th Anniversary of the France May 1968 Uprising, which be-

came the epicentre and catalyst of a wave of other failed uprisings and worker and student upsurges internationally. A key historical precedent was the 1848 international wave of uprisings against various Ancient Regimes. As in '68, these revolts were unsuccessful and led to the predominance in many countries labour movements of socialist parties and associated bureaucratic unions adopting mostly the parliamentary road and the goal of state socialism as the predominant current in many countries labour movements. Culminating in the Bolshevik coup in 1917 resulting in a Red dictatorship based on state capitalism and the rise of the Moscow financed and manipulated Communist parties internationally.

The events of France May '68 also sounded the death knell of state socialism and the Communist parties. However, the Stalinist legacy associated with duplicity, hostility to scientific processes and underhanded practices continues to heavily inform most leftist groupings. The sharp decline of mass Communist Parties particularly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, paradoxically has undermined the morale and organisational ability of militant workers in many countries. As despite the Stalinist agendas and collaboration with the Capitalist set up of the party bosses, the Communist Parties also assisted grass roots on the job activity particularly via networks of regular workplace papers. Consequently the employer and neo-liberal offensive has been assisted globally.

France May '68 & "The Rise of History"

In retrospect the major long term legacy of May '68 has been inspiring attempts to perfect dimensions of bourgeois society – so called "Modernising of Capitalism". Involving the blossoming of identity politics informed movements to remove various obstacles to these sectors to rise up in the capitalist set up, improve civil liberties and enhancing the role of bureaucratic unions in the running of the capitalist set up. The uprising at the time was confused with a generalised attempt to overthrow capitalism and replace it with self managed socialism. The CIA and other agencies of international capitalism seized on these movements to promote divisive and disruptive identity politics amongst leftist groups of various stripes. Most significantly the so called Women's Movement. (1) Together with the cultivating and further integrating of the union bureaucracy into the State to undermine and isolate workers struggles. In the Australian case the union bureaucracy has played a vanguard role in promoting Neo-Liberalism

via the ACTU/ALP Wages and Incomes Accord of the 1980's/1990's and subsequently "Enterprise Bargaining." Whilst the interaction of outside-the-job organisation facilitating on-the-job organisation, which leftist groups could play rather than being just student/middle class leftist social clubs was often short circuited.

The marginalisation of syndicalism and anarchism as currents in the French workers movement stemming from the impact of the Cold War and a CIA engineered split in the CGT (General Confederation of Labour – Communist Party controlled union confederation) in 1947, quashed some promising steps toward a mass syndicalist pole of attraction in the French labour movement in those years. Stemming from the mushrooming of a range of breakaway unions and an explicit mass syndicalist union with an estimated 100,000 members – the CNT-F in the wake of the post WWII strike wave. This factor must be seen as a key cause for the May events failure to take a full on revolu-

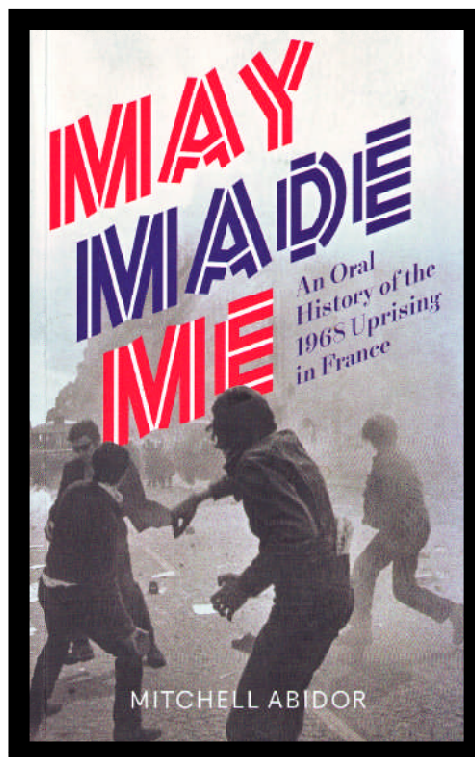
fraudulent practices to halt the events such as advising the Grenelle Accords on May 27 (which provided wage increases, union recognition and a rise in the minimum wage) at 11am that a vote would be held on this agreement at 2pm! Preventing militants from issuing flyers criticising the sell-out. Insufficient numbers of Action Committees had formed in the factories to provide structures to organise outside the ferocious CGT/CP bureaucracy tentacles. Simon also dispels the illusion of student and worker unity, showing the lack of collaboration in most cases between these sectors facilitated by the CP/CGT bureaucracy and the absence in most workplaces of a countervailing grass roots militancy pole of attraction with an associated network of workplace papers.

Interviewee Isabelle Saint-Saen, one of the Students in Paris, shows the May events were an outgrowth of other movements of the time – the Anti-Vietnam War movement and its committees morphing into Action Committees. An area not focused upon is how a similar process associated with pop music and pirate radio stations such as Radio Luxembourg contributed to the spread and mass support for the movement and breaking through the Govt's media blackout.(3)

Another interesting aspect touched upon is the assistance by peasants for the factory occupations. The interviewee, Joseph Potiron in the section May Outside Paris, looks at how he and other peasant members of his family in Brittany helped supply food at cost to the workers of the occupied factories.

In the volume there are several references to the Tianamen Square Events in China 1989 and the bloody suppression of the associated student and worker upsurge by the Chinese Army. An interesting point raised by interviewee Jean-Jacques Lebel, another veteran of the struggle is that the May Events came very close to a similar outcome. However organisers of the protest marches were warned by Free Masons amongst the French Police that if they occupied the Hotel de Viche which was the heart of the Paris Commune of 1871, they would face a massacre by machine gun equipped police. As a result they changed course and went to the Stock Exchange and lit a small fire.

Interviewees involved in May outside Paris: Guy Texier, Bernard Vauselle and Dominique Barbe, throw new light on the role of grass roots Communist Party factory militants activity. Focusing on the events at the Saint-Nazaire shipyards where the occupation was not completely "spontaneous" but involved an initiative of these militants, launched for bread and butter demands. They were hostile to revo-



tionary turn, with even more profound international ramifications. (2)

The book under review consists of interviews with a range of participants and comprises the following sections: Veterans in the Struggle, Students in Paris, May outside Paris, May and Film and Some Anarchists. It throws plenty of new light on aspects of May '68, dispelling many myths and confusion.

Interviewee Henri Simon, a veteran of the struggle, confirms the sudden explosiveness of the May events, taking all by surprise. He outlines how the CGT bureaucracy and CP bosses resorted to

lutionary students such as Daniel Cohn-Bendit who agitated for generalised self management and the overthrow of the Capitalist setup.

In conclusion, the volume does a brilliant job showing how the May events major outcome was a push to perfect dimensions of bourgeois society associated with the appearance of a range of identity politics informed movements and improvements in a range of civil rights. Whilst, small improvements in workers conditions were

granted. Showing the flexibility and resilience of capitalism in that era. Whilst throwing new light on various important aspects of the May events in France, providing important lessons for today's syndicalist militants.

Mark McGuire

Notes

1. See, "Gloria Steinem, The CIA and the Women's Movement" on the internet.

2. See, "How and Why the French Anarchists Rallied to the CGT-FO (1947-1950)" by Guillaume Davranh in "New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism," Edited by David Berry and Constance Bantman, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

3. See, "1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977." Edited by Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, Published by Palgrave.

Daithi' Mac an Mhaistir, The Irish Citizen Army: The World's First Working-Class Army (Dublin: Connolly Books, 2017) 79 pps.

The Irish Citizen Army was the armed militia of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, its name a reference to the Jacobin heritage of the French Revolution.

The ITGWU itself was formed along syndicalist lines in 1909, with James Larkin and James Connolly its chief organizers, its ultimate aim the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism in Ireland. During the employers Lockout of 1913 in Dublin, official repression against union members and workers in general had featured unrestrained attacks by the Dublin Metropolitan Police on peaceful demonstrations and a wholesale invasion of the slums with squads breaking into homes and smashing furniture and personal possessions.

In reaction, a union defense force was recruited. At first armed with hurling sticks, the Irish Citizen Army soon formally organized itself, acquiring rifles and equipment and training by veterans of the British Army, and with a directing body, the Army Council, elected by its rank and file every six months. Loyalists in Ulster had already formed armed units against the threat of Irish Home Rule, and in reaction nationalists in the south recruited a body of National Volunteers. Favorable to the Empire Loyalists, the British government could do little to immediately suppress the Volunteers or the ICA. Since 1914 the bulk of His Majesty's forces were on the Western Front or in the Middle East.

In 1916 about one thousand of the Volunteers and several hundred men and women of the ICA, under the command of James Connolly, would join together in open revolt against imperial rule in the abortive Easter Week Rebellion in Dublin.

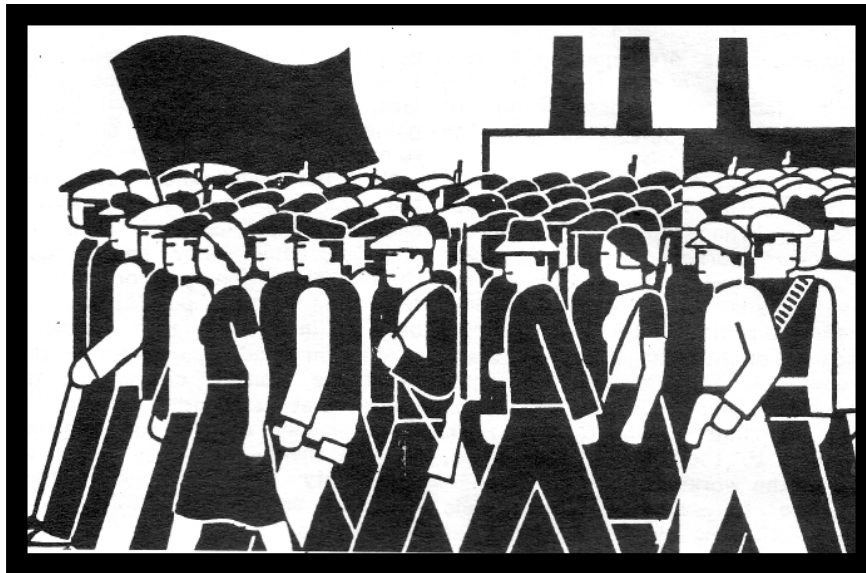
Mac an Mhaistir does not dwell on the origins and history of the Citizen Army. His main concern is to demonstrate and affirm that the organization was both for and of the working class. His extensive researches have enabled him to list the names, addresses, and occupations of 409 members of the organization. This is the entire recorded roster of the men and women of the trade union militia, including many not listed in previous studies. About half took an active part in the events of Easter Week, supplemented by some eighty others not included in the official membership list, who nevertheless fought within the ranks of the ICA.

Some thirtyfive women actively participated, accounting for over 10% of the Citi-

zen notes that 87% were unskilled or semi-skilled workers or skilled tradesmen, less than 10% clerical workers or shop assistants and some 4% petit-bourgeois or middle class. Of the total, laborers and dockers provided the two largest occupational categories.

This is in great contrast to the National Volunteers, an organization drawn mainly from the middle and lower middle-classes. According to the recollections of Citizen Army veterans, Connolly is reputed to have urged his troops to retain their arms if their rebellion was successful, as their fight was not merely for national independence but for a workers republic, with the means of production and distribution under popular ownership and control.

The author emphasizes the class consciousness of the ICA rank and file, noting that if they were motivated merely by nationalism they would have joined the better equipped and larger National Vol-



unteers. Over the last century the Army's historical significance has been ignored and obscured by the Irish political establishment and by academic historians, often purposely. At the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Week Rising in 1966, the Irish state media warned its affiliates that the event should be presented as "nationalist but not socialist ... emotional rather than interpretative and analytical" (3).

Whether the ICA was in fact the "world's first working-class army" as the book's subtitle claims, may be open to question. The red battalions of the Parisian national guard in the Commune of 1871 immediately come to mind. Yet the author accepts Lenin's rather vague assertion that the soldiers of the Commune were "petty artisans" lacking a full class consciousness

(74). Certainly the Citizen Army was the first workers armed body in the twentieth century, anticipating by a year the factory militias of St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Mac an Mhaistir reminds historians that, quite aside from the romantic aura that narratives have often cast upon the events of Easter Week, the Irish Citizen Army

“was a product of the conditions of squalor, poverty, destitution and ever-present threat of starvation that defined the precarious existence of early twentieth-century working-class Dublin” (39). It should be remembered, he insists, that “for the men and women behind the rifles of the Citizen Army it was class war.” (37).

Martin Comack

Boston Labor Solidarity Committee

Simon Schaupp, 2017. *The Short Spring of the Council Republic – a Diary of a Bavarian Revolution* [Der kurze Frühling der Räterepublik – Ein Tagebuch der bayerischen Revolution], Münster, Unrast Press, ISBN: 978-3-89771-248-5, EUR 19.80 (pbk.), 302 pages

The Short Spring of the Munich Republic – a Revolutionary Diary

By Thomas Klikauer

Sydney Graduate School of Management, Western Sydney University
t.klikauer@westernsydney.edu.au,
<https://klikauer.wordpress.com/>

Simon Schaupp’s most exquisite German language book on the Munich revolution of 1918/19 is a diary of three anarchists – Erich Mühsam, Hilde Kramer, and Ernst Toller. Perhaps somewhat unbelievable to many, in the immediate years after World War I, Munich and Bavaria were the centre of a European revolution. Many European revolutionaries were drawn to Bavaria and its capital of Munich. Schaupp’s diary on Bavaria’s revolution is divided into five parts. Part one starts with the ‘January strikes’ organised by Munich’s workers following the revolutionary sailors uprising in Kiel (4th November 1918). The sailors of Kiel refused to enter into a last military suicide mission against the mighty British navy in the dying days of World War I. Rather than dying for Kaiser, capitalism and fatherland, they rebelled.

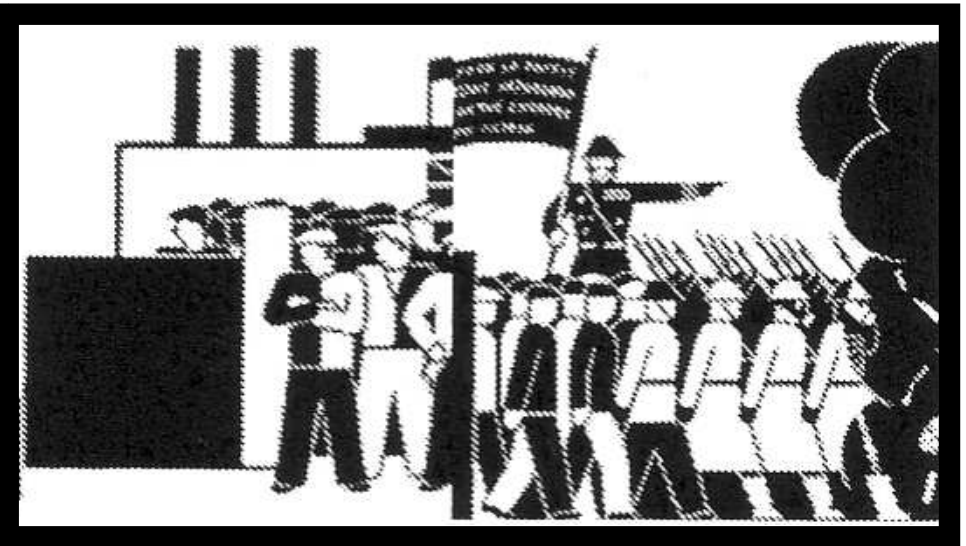
The book’s second part focuses on the USPD, the revolutionary independent part of Germany’s mighty SPD. Today’s USPD is called Die Linke. During the revolution, the SPD took an accommodating position on militarism and capitalism. It favoured parliamentarianism and a social-democratic version of “nice” capitalism. By contrast, the USPD sought a radically different future. At some point the USPD left the SPD behind, ending 738 years of dynastic monarchy in Bavaria through the establishment of a revolutionary workers’ council. The third period is signified by the constitution of the workers’ council. Unlike parliamentarianism, councils offer a radically different form of politics. Revolutionary councils are elected at workplaces and represent the revolutionary *volonté générale* of workers. The fourth phase centred around the

defence of the council movement against counter-revolutionary forces. It culminated in setting up a defensive red army. The last phase started with the military defeat of the council movement culminating in the “white terror”. Counterrevolutionary militias – the infamous free corps – massacred countless workers between May and the end of August 1919.

Before all this, Bavaria’s revolution really began before the dying days of World War I. Building on ‘hunger marches’ against war and capitalism, a ‘peace strike’ (26th January 1918) sought to end Germany’s disastrous war. This involved strikes at the arms manufacturers Krupp and Maffei. These strikes were, at least partly, organised by the social-democratic trade union DMV. By 31st of January, these strikes

the dying days of a lost war in which a last offensive by German troops resulted in 230,000 men killed while allied forces lost 310,000 soldiers.

In Bavaria’s rebellion against the senseless slaughter of so many, the three anarchists were not alone. Their revolutionary friend Gustav Landauer was developing a communist-anarchist utopia. It was influenced by the French anarchist Proudhon. Unlike the Bolsheviks, Landauer’s political ideas were not based on the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. Instead, his ideas sought to abolish the proletariat. When the pre-fascist radical-right saw these movements, protest rallies, strikes and revolutionary ideas, it started to organise. On 18th August 1918 a first meeting of the infamous Thule-Society took place, organised by esoteric Rudolf Glauer (cf. Phelps, 1963. “Before Hitler Came”, *Journal of Modern History*, 35/3). The infamous Thule-Society was a *völkische* but secret society believing in a



became more widespread. The revolutionaries noted in their diary, ‘we not only faced Germany’s military dictatorship but also the governing SPD as well as the majority of the trade union organisations that was dominated by the SPD’. All of these organisations took an accommodating position. Despite the SPD’s call for moderation, by the 2nd of February, more than one million workers joined the strike. Claims such as ‘all power to the councils’ started to emerge. Workers started to set the council movement against parliamentarianism. All this occurred in

Jewish world conspiracy. The German word *völkisch* means a racially cleansed Aryan *Volksgemeinschaft*. The Thule-Society claimed that only a dictatorship could defend Germany against Jewish world domination. It advocated to ‘keep your blood pure’ (e.g. Anti-Semitism). Its insignia featured a swastika and a sword as its members greeted each other with “Heil and Victory”. Its main publication was the Munich *Beobachter* – a stark reminder of the Nazis’ *Völkischer Beobachter* founded in December 1920.

On the day of the revolution (4th November 1918), crown prince Rupprecht noted, 'the danger of a revolution is rising, even the otherwise calm Bavaria might be affected'. Indeed, on 7th November, 'Munich came to standstill because of strikes and rallies as the king of Bavaria fled'. With the end of monarchy, a revolutionary workers' council was constituted. It consisted of the anarchist Erich Mühsam, the anarcho-communist Josef Sontheimer, and the revolutionary USPD-member Max Levin. The first council election was held at various workplaces and in soldiers' quarters. Meanwhile, Berlin's SPD proclaimed the German Republic while Karl Liebknecht announced the Socialist Republic (9th November 1918). Hilde Kramer received the news that Germany's emperor had also fled.

Shortly after that, Landauer suggested not to eliminate capitalism through reforms or revolution. Instead, communism and capitalism should exist side by side. Communism was set to establish a network of autonomous communities without privately owned factories and capital (15th November 1918). Council democracy advanced everywhere. On 19th November, women received the right to vote for the first time. Meanwhile, the reactionary Thule-Society moved even stronger towards völkisch-nationalism and Anti-Semitism. In Berlin's election to the soldiers and workers council (18th December), the SPD received 60% and 266 delegates, the USPD 18.4% and 98 seats, the syndicalists 2%, non-affiliated delegates 15.3% and finally, the democrats 5.1%.

As the council movement constituted itself, sections of Bavaria's military started to call for a counter-revolutionary Bürgerwehr. A few days later (30th December), a secret Bürgerwehr started to work readying itself for a military coup d'état against the revolution. On the 6th of January 1919, Bavaria's first communist party constituted itself with Max Levin as leader. Parallel to the council movement, a parliamentary election took place in Bavaria (2nd January) where the reactionary

Bavaria Party received 35%, the SPD 33%, the liberal DDP 14%, and the völkische DNVP 6%. On 16th January, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered in Berlin. Overseeing the murder, SPD's Gustav Noske became minister of the military. His paramilitaries – the free corps – organised the counter-revolution by starting to massacre countless workers in and around Berlin.

The zenith of the revolution is marked by the words of Erich Mühsam when noting, 'we are at a place of no return, we need to strangle the counter-revolution so that it can never return'. The council movement that existed parallel to Bavaria's parliamentarianism met with 300 delegates on 25th January. Despite the show of strength, the council movement failed to make the decisive move against the counter-revolution. On top of bourgeois parliamentarianism, a rising Bürgerwehr, the strength of the accommodating SPD inside the council movement, and the gathering of right-wing counter-revolutionary militias, the bolshevist Eugen Levine was sent to Bavaria to move the revolution towards Soviet-style Bolshevism (10th March).

In the north Bavarian city of Nürnberg, the majority SPD opted against the council movement. In Munich, the council movement celebrated by declaring the Bavarian Council Republic (7th April). With the celebrations over, the new government started on a serious revolutionary course towards communist-anarchism. Secretly, the pre-fascist free corps had already started a recruitment drive in Bavaria's north, further increasing the danger of a white coup d'état. Simultaneously, the council movement's plan for a Red Army remained in its infancy (10th April). The first attempt to end the revolution occurred on 13th April with the arrest of Erich Mühsam. The SPD supported the coup d'état. Despite 17 deaths and the fact that it was well financed by the Krupp Corporation, the coup d'état failed bitterly. The communist-anarchist council movement prevailed.

On 20th April a truce between pre-fascist free corps and the revolution was declared. Violating the truce, it gave the free corps the opportunity to march against Dachau and Ingolstadt (20th April). In several locations, Bavaria's Red Army tried to defend the revolution but failed to win against the counterrevolutionary whites (23rd April). The end of the council movement came on 30th April when a free corps called Görnitz marched towards Munich. News arrived in Munich about counterrevolutionary massacres. The counterrevolutionaries were well armed with flame-throwers, tanks, machine-guns and armed vans. Executions, rape, killings, etc. mark the march of the whites. The Anarchist Joseph Sontheimer was murdered (3rd May). Everywhere, revolutionary workers were killed. On the 6th of May, accused of being "Spartakists", 21 boys were murdered. Later it turned out, they were members of a catholic youth organisation. The counterrevolution was unstoppable as Gustav Noske (SPD) sent a "thank you" note to those ending the revolution in Bavaria. Eugen Levine was murdered.

With the end of the revolution, Bavaria was run by a reactionary military junta preparing for a nation-wide uprising. Barely one year later, the free corps' Kapp coup d'état of 1920 failed. Inside Bavaria's free corps under the leadership of Franz Xaver von Epp, people like Röhm, Hess, Dietl, Frank, and Strasser were found. Soon, they became leading Nazi figures. Erich Mühsam survived on brutal onslaught of the whites. He was put in jail but later murdered by the Nazis. Hilde Kramer migrated to the Soviet Union while Ernst Toller committed suicide in his New York bathroom in 1939. This is where Simon Schaupp's enthralling dairy of the three revolutionaries of Bavaria's council republic – Erich Mühsam, Hilde Kramer, and Ernst Toller – ends.

Armando Borghi 1882 to 1968

A short biography of Italian anarchist and anti-fascist militant Armando Borghi.

Born Castel Bolognese, Italy, 7 April 1882, died Italy, 21 April 1968.

The anarchist movement has always had its share of driving forces and tireless propagandists. Italy, ever since the days of the

First International, has produced a number of exceptional agitators - Carlo Cafiero and Andrea Costa, back at the beginning; Luigi Galleani and Pietro Gori at the turn of the century; Errico Malatesta, Luigi Fabbri and Camillo Berneri and Armando Borghi in more recent times.

With the death of Borghi in 1968, the Italian movement lost one of its finest repre-

sentatives. Over a 60-year period, Borghi forged relentlessly ahead with his activities with a truly outstanding belief and enthusiasm.

He died at the age of 86. Born in Castel Bolognese in the Romagna on 7 April 1882, he embarked upon his activities as an anarchist militant at the age of 16. In his major work *A Half-Century of Anarchy* he describes with his subtle and sparkling style the ups and downs of his frantic life as an activist and propagandist. He relates how, in 1898, when he was barely 16

See Page 18

Continued From Page 18 years old, and unbeknownst to his parents, he travelled to Ancona to attend the trial of Malatesta on the charges of justifying criminality and plotting against the State that arose from his having published the weekly *L'Agitazione* in Ancona. It was at this point that Borghi had his chance to view Errico Malatesta in the flesh (as he used to say) in the dock. He conceived a lifelong fondness for Malatesta. From then on, Borghi was up to his neck in activity and in the struggle.

In 1900 he settled in Bologna and there, following the assassination of King Umberto I by Gaetano Bresci (on 29 July 1900) he unreservedly endorsed the heroic act, in contrast to those socialists, republicans and a small clique of Rome-based anarchists who had condemned the killing. His first arrest came in Bologna in 1902, over anti-militarist propaganda. In April 1903, he won his spurs as a public speaker, again in Bologna, when he was chosen by the anarchists to address a huge rally called to protest at military expenditure. The young anarchist, then just 20, made his mark. He was welcomed to the rostrum by Andrea Costa. It was his very first success as a public speaker. He became the official spokesman of the anarchists at all rallies. A flurry of innumerable arrests and trials followed. His defence counsel at all times was Pietro Gori who always showed up for his trials. Armando Borghi was arrested during a demonstration in 1904 and spent several months in the San Giovanni in Monte prison.

In 1905, he was sentenced again in Ravenna to a five month prison term for "incitement to crime". Between 1903 and 1906, he spent longer behind bars than as a free man. In May 1906 he had barely come out of prison when he was commissioned in Ravenna as editor of *L'Aurora*, an anarchist weekly, taking over from Domenico Zavattero. It was from the columns of *L'Aurora* that he severely upbraided anarchist individualism. It was from the same platform on 9 July 1906 that Borghi marked Gaetano Bresci's assassination. He was indicted over this vibrant article which earned the author as well as the managing editor a year behind bars.

Borghi saw imprisonment again in Ravenna and then in Piacenza. He was freed early in July 1907. It was at this point that he agreed to take up a post as trade union agitator. He was invited to join the sec-

retariat of the Bologna and District Construction Union. However, he was not converted either to trade unionism or to anarcho-sindicalism but remained comprehensively and full-bloodedly anarchist. But he found it useful to mix with the workers in order to fight for their emancipation. The Bologna Construction Union was not affiliated to the CGL (General Confederation of Labour), but belonged, as did many another organisation, to the National Direct Action Committee.

Borghi stayed in Bologna as secretary of the Construction Union for over three years and, along with Giuseppe Sartini, represented the old Chamber of Labour which was independent of the CGL. But even then he did not neglect anarchist propaganda. When, on 13 October 1911, trooper Augusto Masetti fired a gunshot in the parade ground of the Cialdini barracks in Bologna at his colonel by way of a protest at the war in Libya while shouting out 'Down with the war! Long live Anarchy!', Armando Borghi and Maria Rygier immediately composed a special edition of

(USI) had been launched in Italy. It ought to be noted that Borghi, in exile in France at the time, had no hand in the launching of the USI but affiliated to it in his capacity as organiser for the labour unions independent of the CGL.

Which brings us to the "Red Week". A national campaign committee had promised protest rallies all across Italy in protest against militarism, the disciplinary battalions and to press for the release of Augusto Masetti. These were scheduled for the first Sunday in June.

Following a rally in Ancona - addressed by Malatesta - there were clashes between the crowd and the police and three young demonstrators were killed. A general strike was called in all of the big cities in Italy. In the Marches and in the Romagna region, the strike took the form of out and out insurrection. Betrayal by the leaders of the CGL prevented the revolutionary uprising from scoring the success it deserved. The government backlash soon gained the upper hand. Malatesta managed to evade arrest and fled to London. On 7 June Borghi

was speaking in Florence. The moment he heard of the deaths of the three young people in Ancona he made for the Romagna to do his bit in the uprising. To his great surprise, on this occasion he was not arrested.

In August 1914, the Great War erupted. In keeping with his basic anarchist principles, Borghi immediately declared his opposition to the war.

De Ambris, Corridoni and Masotti and other USI leaders hoped to 'convert' the USI-affiliated unions to the interventionist cause. They called a general congress of the USI in Parma in September 1914. Borghi steadfastly argued the need for the USI to come out against the war. The USI branches

endorsed Borghi's resolution by an overwhelming majority. Borghi took up the secretaryship of the Italian Syndicalist Union. The USI relocated its headquarters to Bologna and thereafter Armando Borghi's time was entirely consumed by anti-war propaganda. But not for long - because after May 1915 - when Italy entered the war - he was interned in Impruneta, a small town near Florence and later in Isernia in the Abruzzi.

When the war ended in November 1918, Borghi resumed his activities as USI secretary and director of the weekly *Guerra di Classe*. Ever by his side as a priceless collabora-

See Page 20



L'Agitatore welcoming the action of the rebel soldier.

Borghi's article was entitled "Anarchist revolts shines through the violence of war". The newspaper was impounded and a round-up of anarchists began. Maria Rygier was the first to be arrested. Borghi got away by the skin of his teeth and fled to Paris.

He stayed abroad until the end of December 1912, involving himself in active anti-militarist propaganda, giving lectures in France and Switzerland. After the Italian government offered an amnesty to mark the conclusion of a peace treaty with Turkey, he returned to Italy. In the autumn of 1912, the Italian Syndicalist Union

NEWS & NOTES

Earlier in the year, a one day strike over NSW Rail EBA (Enterprise Bargain Agreement) 2017 was called off. Following the decision of Fair Work Court to declare it illegal. Conveniently, for the Rightwing ALP officials of the RTBU, during an election period, recently the Fair Work Court has "allowed" some token industrial action by track maintenance workers. Secretary Claassens in his talking to the media about the reason for calling off the strike and the Fair Work Court decision, he unctuously referred to "always obeying the law of the land". However was there another side of the story? In this edition we blow the lid off shocking, massive rorts in the union office. (See article page 4.) These rorts must be seen as a major factor in the many sell-outs of jobs, conditions and cave-ins to privatisation over the years. Similar rorts of course affect all the other "Corporate/Bureaucratic" unions aligned with the ALP.

The EBA also opened the door to the rapid carve-up of the NSW railways for privatisation with the "Transmission of Business" and "Facilitation" clauses. Claassens and the media were ominously silent about the ramifications of these clauses. (See article page 3.)

In Sydney Buses, the most important news is of course the privatisation of Region 6. In this edition, we throw new light and raise questions on the role of the STA and the NSW Govt. in smoothing the way for the Transit Systems takeover. (See article page 5.) We report on a rally and blockade at the entrance of Leichhardt Bus Depot organised by STOP (Sydney Transport-users Opposing Privatisation) on Sunday 1/7/18. The rally was addressed by Jamie Parker Greens MP. (See article page 7.)

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WEB SITE:

www.rebelworker.org

A.S.N. DIRECTORY

ASN Sydney Local

PO Box 92
Broadway 2007 NSW

ASN Melbourne:

J.Dixon
Jeremytrewindixon@yahoo.com

ASN Newcastle

PO Box 106
Kotara 2289 NSW.

The Anarchist Media Institute

PO Box 20
Parkville Vic. 3052

SPARKS

(Anarcho-Syndicalist Transport Paper)
PO Box 92 Broadway
2007 NSW
Web site: <http://www.sparksweb.org>

Members' Voice

Grassroots NSW Public Transport
Workers' Organisation

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Email: Membersvoice2010@yahoo.com

Facebook www.facebook.com/pages/Members-Voice-RTBU-rank-and-file-Group/531240043571323?fref=ts
PO Box 12197

STOP

"Sydney Transport-users Opposing Privatisation"

PO Box 703
Leichhardt 2040 NSW
Facebook STOP Privatisation
(@STOPPrivatisation)

Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name

Address

General Secretary

PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

If undeliverable return to
PO Box 92, Broadway NSW 2007

Continued From Page 18

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Virgilia D'Andrea. Very active during the cost of living campaigns in July 1919, Borghi was an active, zealous agitator, not merely in his trade union organiser capacity but also, indeed primarily, as a fervent anarchist.

In late December 1919, Errico Malatesta returned to Italy and in Milan he ran the daily newspaper *Umanita Nova*. Borghi and Malatesta were on the same wave-length and their respective propaganda drives brought the Italian people to crucial revolutionary accomplishments such as the factory occupations in August-September 1920.

Armando Borghi was not in Italy at that time. In May 1920, he had left for Russia at the invitation of the Bolshevik leadership, keen to talk with a representative of the USI and, if at all possible, with its secretary. It was a particularly adventurous trip, as detailed in *A Half-Century of Anarchy*. In Moscow Borghi had an audience in the Kremlin with Lenin. Lenin asked him if he were opposed to centralism and Borghi replied: "You have that right. How could any anarchist be in favour of centralism?" To which Lenin retorted: "Freedom ought not to be the death of the revolution." Borghi countered with: "In the absence of freedom, the revolution would be a horror." Their conversation proceeded quietly.

Learning of the factory occupations back home, Borghi scurried homewards. This second journey brought him to Milan by 20 September, by which time the reformist trade union organisations had ordered the factories to back down on 17 September. There was nothing that he could do by then, but he declined an invitation from the government that he join, as representative of the USI, a commission drafting a law on workers' control. Meanwhile, the government was cracking down heavily again.

In October, Borghi, Malatesta and other anarchists were rounded up on no particu-

lar charges. In the San Vittore prison in Milan, on 14 March 1921, Malatesta, Borghi and Quagliano launched a hunger strike to force the court authorities to set a trial date. After nine months in prison on remand, by late July 1921, they were brought for trial to the Assizes in Milan. All of those charged were freed. Malatesta and Borghi had offered a zealous defence of themselves.

Fascism was now in the ascendant and the lives of antifascist militants were in the balance. Borghi and Virgilia D'Andrea were continually receiving death threats.

Armando Borghi fought against the fascists by promoting the "Labour Alliance" in an attempt to erect an obstacle in the path of the fascist victory. But after the March on Rome in October 1922, all attempts to fight fascism were in vain. Along with Virgilia D'Andrea, Borghi had to leave Italy in 1923 and they went into exile, first in Berlin and then in Paris.

In France he carried on his fight against fascism. He penned his first volume of memoirs *Italy Between Two Crises*. It was published in Paris in July 1924. In October 1926, Borghi left France for the United States. He arrived to find the campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti at its height. At the invitation of their support committee, he gave many talks and appeared at meetings. But even in the States he could not escape arrest and trial and was often released only on payment of huge bail bonds. An active contributor to *L'Adunata dei Refrattari* he often signed his articles with a pseudonym, with the police forever on his trail. Virgilia D'Andrea was always at his side. She was an active propagandist and a fine public speaker. But on 12 May 1933 she died while still quite young.

In the United States, Borghi struck up friendships with Gaetano Salvemini and Arturo Toscanini and his son, Walter. After the downfall of fascism he returned to Italy, landing in Naples in October 1945. Immediately embarking upon a frantic lecture tour.

In 1946, he visited all the major cities of Italy - Rome, Bologna, Ancona, Milan, Car-

rara, etc. In December that year his car crashed into a lorry. He came away with serious head wounds and some broken ribs but his travelling companions emerged unscathed. He spent a long time in hospital in Ravenna, followed by a lengthy convalescence. He stayed in Italy until March 1948, involving himself in active propaganda and affording his comrades the benefit of his long experience and his thorough knowledge of the many issues confronting the anarchist movement. Then he felt the urge to return to the United States, weary from his frantic, restless lifestyle in Italy. He stayed in the USA until 1953 returning to Italy that year and he was in perfect health when he took part in the March 1953 congress of the Italian Anarchist Federation (FAI) in Civitavecchia.

Once again, Armando was the centre of the Italian anarchist movement which was experiencing a promising revival. He settled in Rome, assisting Gigi Damiani and Umberto Consiglio in bringing out *Umanita Nova*. He stayed in Italy after that and his activities were genuinely beneficial to the movement. For twelve years up until October 1965, the presence of Armando Borghi in *Umanita Nova* in the shape of his lively, vivacious articles, left an indelible mark. He died on 21 April 1968.

By Maurice Colombo, (Le Monde Libertaire, Paris, No 725, 10 November 1988)

From the Kate Sharpley Library