

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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WHY NOT A 2 HOUR STOPPAGE TO SUPPORT THE GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION

STRIKE 20TH SEPT? WORKERS & UNIONISTS MUST SUPPORT EFFORTS TO SAVE

THE PLANET! THERE WILL BE NO JOBS ON A DEAD PLANET!



AMAZON WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL STRIKE P2; NSW RAILWAY NEWS P3; FAIR GAME PART (1) P5; THE 6 EMOTIONS THE BOSS USE AGAINST YOU P6; PERCEPTIONS OF WORKERS' RIGHTS P6; SYDNEY BUSES NEWS P7; VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS P9; BRITAIN TODAY P10; FRANCE: YELLOW VESTS P12; USA: UBER & THE GIG ECONOMY P14; BOOK REVIEW P15; EDGARD LEUENROTH 1881-1968 P18 BULGARIA P18; USA: BURGER WORKERS' STRIKE P20;

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.

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International Amazon Workers' Strike

By Joe DeManuelle-Hall

Amazon's biggest shopping days of 2019 so far —"Prime Days," July 15-16— saw walkouts and protests by workers in the U.S. and Germany. The protests were semi-coordinated, targeting Amazon when its warehouses are running at full clip and the company is in the media spotlight.

In Germany, Amazon workers organizing with the Ver.di union struck over the course of two days in an ongoing struggle over pay. The union claimed that 2,000 workers participated across seven facilities.

Meanwhile in the U.S., a small group of workers walked out at a fulfilment centre near Minneapolis. Others in a Chicago warehouse marched on their boss with demands. Workers and community supporters marched and rallied at two warehouses in Portland, Oregon.

Simultaneously, immigrant rights organizations led protests in eight U.S. cities to denounce Amazon's collaboration with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. Amazon hosts the on-

line database that ICE agents use to track immigrants they are trying to deport. The New York City rally was held at CEO Jeff Bezos's \$80 million mega-penthouse.

Minneapolis to Chicago

The fulfilment centre in Shakopee, a suburb of Minneapolis, has been the site of some of the most confrontational and successful organizing so far. Twice in the past year, Amazon warehouse workers there have walked off the job to protest management's ever-increasing productivity goals and discrimination against Muslim workers.

Those actions backed by the Awood Center, a worker center based in Minnesota's East African community, led to the first negotiations between Amazon and a U.S. labor organization. Workers affiliated with the center have organized under the slogan "We Are Humans, Not Robots," and are also campaigning against retaliation and health and safety problems.

Bolstered by the Minneapolis example, workers in an Amazon delivery center in Chicago on July 16 took Prime Day action of their own. They surveyed co-workers to develop demands, and settled on three: air conditioning, health insurance, and \$18 an hour throughout Prime Week.

Thirty workers on the night shift packed the shift manager's office during a 2:30 a.m. break to deliver the demands. After a lively back and forth, they secured a commitment to meet with the warehouse's top manager.

"Our goal today was to get a meeting with the person who has the ability to make the decisions around the things that we're demanding," said Terry Miller (a pseudonym), who participated in the action. "We knew the best-case scenario was meeting with the site manager, and that's what we got." (Read his firsthand account of warehouse conditions here.)

Co-workers abuzz

After the meeting, the delegation returned to work and finished out the shift. Workers who hadn't participated were buzzing about what had happened.

"[Other workers] saw that we were able to make the company pay attention to us," said Miller, who sorts packages for delivery. "People were asking me questions, catching up with me after the action. It elevated our visibility."

Delivery centres are the last stop in the Amazon warehouse chain.

Items arrive already packaged from facilities further up the supply chain, including fulfilment centres like the one in Minnesota. Workers in delivery centres sort the packages and load them into vans for delivery. These facilities have proliferated in major urban centres as part of the push for one-day and same-day delivery.

Workers in this Chicago warehouse normally make \$15 per hour. As an incentive, managers had promised to pay \$18 per extra hour worked on top of a regular shift—but the higher rate applied only for the extra hour, not the whole shift.

Many workers are not scheduled for enough hours to qualify for the company's health insurance.

The warehouse can get intensely hot, since its walls and roof are metal. Amazon publicized that it was installing air conditioning in its fulfillment centers in 2012 after public scrutiny and high-profile incidents, but air conditioners have not been installed in other facilities this one.

Small walkout

At the Minnesota facility, workers walked off the day shift July 15 to join a community picket. Workers said managers and police were staked out at the front of the warehouse, keeping track of who was exiting, which had a chilling effect on participation.

Organizers had hoped that 100 workers would walk out. In the end, far fewer did. Nonetheless, workers and community supporters picketed, danced, and rallied until rain and flash flood warnings ended the action.

Several Amazon tech workers from Seattle flew in to join the rally. They are part of a group called Amazon Employees for Climate Justice, which has organized an open letter signed by 8,000 employees demanding that the company expand its commitment to renewable energy and stop providing technological support for oil and gas extraction. *Dave Kamper contributed reporting to this article. This article was first published by Labor Notes. Thanks to Rank & File. Ca Edited*

A.S.N. APPEAL

The Anarcho-Syndicalist Network requires suitable cost effective premises. \$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

THE FIGHT FOR OUR LIVES

Crimson Coconut

While the fight for living standards and working conditions is still real, urgent, and ongoing, one issue that is confronting all people is about to overshadow any other fight that we've been involved in. That is the fight for survival and the prospect of human and life extinction. Everyday we hear and see new scientific reports that point to the grave danger that we are all in.

This summer in Europe heat records have been broken across the continent. Temperatures of 46 degrees centigrade have been experienced in the South of France while the Netherlands has recorded temperatures over 41 degrees C, an all time record. This heat wave was extensive, moving finally to the Arctic Circle causing the biggest ice melt in human history and destabilising the permafrost that has existed for thousands of years.

Just a review of a few recent headlines should have us all waking up and taking notice:

Drought and climate change blamed for the death of centuries-old sandalwood trees

Europe's heat wave is about to bake the Arctic

Today's Climate Change Is Worse Than Anything Earth Has Experienced in the Past 2,000 Years

The world's largest king penguin colony has collapsed, losing nearly 90 percent of its population

The accelerating climate crisis due to increasing CO₂, and other harmful gases in the atmosphere, leading to global warming is but one of the catastrophes that we face. Species extinction, war, water scarcity and river destruction, logging and removal of native vegetation all threaten our survival.

But why should this be of concern for unionists and workers?

The current crisis of populism, politics and democracy, springs from the same source as the environmental crisis. The elites that control over 90% of the wealth also are the same ones that have access to the earth's natural resources, often for free. The profit motive which drives environmental destruction benefits the few and not the many. Exploitation of nature and workers in a workplace is of the same dynamic. The elites only care about the wealth that they can extract, not about the people or nature that is left as collateral damage.

For example the Adani coal mining project in central Queensland will provide few jobs in reality, yet the multinational company has almost unlimited access to natural resources for a pittance. Australian Governments are pouring billions of dollars into providing infrastructure for the



project which will have negligible benefits for the majority of Queenslanders and other Australians. This is money that is being deferred from hospitals, schools, pensions, public transport and all manner of public infrastructure that forms part of the social wage for workers.

The gigantic mining project (447 square kilometers) will perpetuate climate change by continuing the carbon fuel cycle that pumps greenhouse gases into the biosphere. At the same time the Adani Carmichael Mine will have unlimited access to one of the largest underground aquifers in the world, the Great Artesian Basin. The water table is expected to drop

up to 300 meters during mining operations. Besides that, local rivers will be drained of 100's of gigalitres of water. The mine itself is expected to add 128 million tonnes of CO₂ P.A. to the atmosphere, that's more than the amount produced by a country with a mid-sized economy, such as Vietnam.

Why does this matter for workers?

Because it really will affect us all in multiple ways.

Firstly the uncertain future caused by the ecological crisis will without doubt end life as we know it. The cliché "there are no jobs on a dead planet" really rings true. Fighting for better working conditions still does make sense in such a predicament though. Working conditions also means a plentiful planet for all, not a world with shortages of food, water and scarcity. Ecological devastation usually means the end of jobs, quality of life and alienation from nature itself. Traditional trade unions won't exist if life itself becomes precarious, instead we will probably be involved in perpetual wars over scarce resources with all the misery that will bring.

Secondly, in the short term, our governments are not addressing the issues of the environmental crisis, so we have to be actively involved in changing the political debate, even if that means changing the political and economic system.

At the moment funds are being diverted away from our needs and towards the fossil fuel industry. Huge tax concessions already exist (or no tax at all) for the miners and loggers etc who are provided these natural resources for free. They also have infrastructure built for them at public expense. This impoverishes us, the workers, while those creating the crisis are profiting at the expense of the environment and our living standard. The environmental crisis and global warming is a union issue that will take all the work of human solidarity to overcome.

As public transport workers what can we do?

Public transport is a small part of the green solution that reduces our dependence on fossil fuels. Working in the industry should make us proud that we can be part of the solution. However, governments in Australia don't fully appreciate the bene-

fits of public transport so massive expenditures, \$10's billions, continue to be wasted on projects such as the WestConnex Motorway in Sydney or the North East Link in Melbourne.

To get people using public transport the fight against privatisation has to be won. We should examine the possibility and feasibility of providing public transport for free. Private for-profit services usually are less efficient despite government propaganda that tells us that it is necessary to increase efficiencies. Privatisation is purely geared towards profits and will often provide the minimum service. The privatisation of Newcastle buses, and Sydney's inner west buses and now the Adelaide Trains Metro shows so clearly that services are not run for convenience but purely for profit and at great public expense.

So far public transport union officials have not been up to the challenge of mounting an effective campaign against privatisation. We have to convince them that the battle for the future must also include, not just a fight against privatisation, but it's reversal. Where our leadership takes no heed we need to replace them with people who will listen and act.

We simply have to get cars off the roads and people into public transport. This would of course mean pressure for a massive investment program in sustainable public transport. Public transport unions have to change their neutral stance on privatisation and their complacency at getting coverage of private employees. In general, employees in the public sector often have far worse working conditions and wages than public employees.

As the reality of climate change and environmental destruction bite in the very short time that we have left to act we must convince those in our unions and our leadership that the fight for the environment is a union issue. The rich will always find a

way to survive while the poorest are already on the front lines of climate change and environmental degradation. For equality and solidarity alone these are union issues.

The fact that the elites are perpetuating climate change denial and that these people are the same ones bankrolling our politicians and suppressing our working conditions makes these issues Union matters. Climate change and environmental devastation is a Class issue. It's the poor that have no say, it's the poor that will suffer the consequences of climate change first and foremost.

In a public transport industry we are in a privileged position compared to other industries as we can offer part of the solution to avert the inevitable catastrophe. We can only realise the full potential of the industry we work in if we are prepared to stand up for a future in the industry. Privatisation will bring about the destruction of public transport as we know it.

Political activists such as Extinction Rebellion are blocking traffic to draw attention to the ecological emergency, yet our union leaders fail to grasp the metal. Political allegiances certainly would be one reason for the inaction on behalf of unions. The ALP does not have a viable policy at this stage to combat climate change. It is the Queensland Labor Government that have bent over backwards to accommodate the Adani, Carmichael Mine project. Meanwhile the Federal ALP, during the last election, also supported the project even though the public throughout Australia was positively against it going ahead.

As union members we need to support the Global Climate Strike in September 20th 2019. The School Strike organisers are calling unions and union members on that day to down tools and join rallies organised around the world to bring attention to

Climate Change. See if you can have some effect on persuading your union officials to organise in the workplace and attend this important rally for the future.

Unions such as the RTBU and ASU have "endorsed" the School Strike but so far have failed to call out their members for the Global Climate Strike. This has to change.

A list of unions endorsing the School Strike can be found here:

<https://www.schoolstrike4climate.com/partners>

Let's get out and support the students that have organised this rally on September 20, they have asked for our support. We have let them down in the past, we can't let them down anymore, they are fighting for their own futures. We all have a world to win.

More info about the Global Strike for the Climate can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/StrikeClimate/>

Sydney Trains Cleaners' News

Sydney Trains are using cleaners for Customer Service in time of disruption despite having removed the duties of customer service from the designated tasks and outsourcing cleaning. Cleaners are employed on a lower wage than Customer Service staff. So Sydney Trains can strip back the number of Customer Service staff to the minimum and cut costs.

NSW State Sec. and the NSW Transport Minister way back in 2018 or much earlier. Only direct action, can put a spoke in the wheels of this Constance/Claassens express to the dole queue!

SOUTH AUSTRALIA RAIL PRIVATISATION

The Privatisation of the SA Train Network http://www.rtbu.org.au/sa_public_transport_workers_launch_campaign_to_keep_our_trains_and_trams_in_public_hands

Unfortunately this will be similar to the failed campaign of the ACTU during the last election. The RTBU don't know how,

The 'Trojan Horse' of the New Interurban Trains

Some of the most important news in the NSW Railways is the new interurban trains to be introduced next year, originally scheduled for last March 2019, due to alleged 'technical' reasons. At the time of the 2018 RTBU elections, NSW State Secretary Claassens proclaimed triumphantly that a deal had been made with the Berejikian Govt. to retain guards on these trains. Subsequently the corporate media reported 'vaguely' on this deal. However, according to recent reports from the union hierarchy and the media, this deal appears to be

quite duplicitous and an expedient for the union hierarchy in the elections. As the Govt. is still wanting to change the guard role to customer service and undermining the job's safe working role on these trains and the industrial muscle of the guards. With the 'facilitation clause' in EBA 2018, needless to say, this changed role would be 'facilitated' to the Millennials and Waratahs. The sell out of the interurban guards and the 'charade of keeping the guard job' is likely to have been approved at one of those 'top secret' weekly meetings between the RTBU

or they don't want to, run a campaign against privatisation. This is a very weak statement from the RTBU SA Secretary. It promises nothing except a campaign up until the next election. By that time the issue will be over. And if Labor doesn't win you are stuck with the LNP again just like we are federally.

NEAR RAIL DISASTER COVER-UP?

According to a passenger on an inward train to the City caught at Stanmore Station, in the Newtown area, track maintenance workers frantically

An article in the Guardian today says that the train crews in SA are not guaranteed their jobs under the new owner, which someone has suggested to be SERCO.

flagged her train to stop. As it was apparent another train was coming from Central and heading on the same line. She recalls the date as Monday 23rd Easter of this year between 1pm and 3pm. One train had to back out. Whilst the NSW Govt. has outsourced track maintenance and safety to avoid law suits. Intriguingly 2-3 months

ago, two unpopular Inner West track maintenance supervisors were apparently sacked. Is it connected with the cover-up? We appeal to our readers for any further information on this potentially very serious incident.

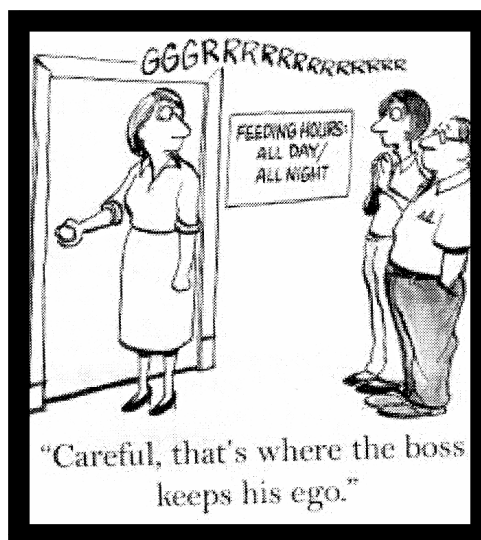
Fair Game (part 1)

Following on from A Tale of a Cover Up (RW Vol.37 No.1(224), a brief a story of how inept management have been given a virtual free hand to do as they will, including falsifying their timesheets, as long as they toe the line and regurgitate the "we're running a business" mantra. Today your editor asks the rhetorical question, is the game fair? And of course, the answer is a resounding NO! The deeper question then is, how did the game become so unfair and this is where it gets a little more interesting. It's all part of a greater plan, let me explain.

You see, it all started about 100 years ago, when politicians began implementing new laws without asking the people. This of course was in direct violation of the Constitution, that requires that before a new law can be created it must first be the will of the people, confirmed via a referendum. The politicians used the turmoil and hardships of the world wars to pass "emergency" laws like taxation to help fund the wars. (did you know that taxation was voluntary? No? well the politicians and the so-called government know.) These laws never got repealed and over time people accepted them as simply a necessary evil or something that was always there because that's how it all works, right! Wrong! The constitution requires that any changes to how the country is run must be put to a referendum for a vote by the people. **This was never done and because no one challenged the politicians and the government, they simply continued to create more and more new laws and with each new law they gradually transferred more and more power from the "people" to the government.** Politicians and Governments then began to sign international treaties and signing the "people" into membership of the United Nations with the enactment of the Charter of the United Na-

tions Act 1945, allowing the UN to implement it's created laws to override the Constitution. This was in addition to politicians and government creating laws without a referendum. For those that ask how the UN can tell us what to do, that's how!

The plot thickens, we have international treaties like the Lima agreement signed in 1975, a deliberate plan to deindustrialise Australia amongst others. In effect a deliberate plan to destroy



industries, jobs and of course your standard of living, without a referendum and all for some alleged utopian greater good! The creation of the Australia Act 1986 effectively put an overlay of sorts on the legitimate Constitution, by ignoring it and your constitutional rights in the process, again illegally, without a referendum.

To put it simply. We now have a situation where parliament can create any law it likes, when ever it likes and for what ever purpose it likes without going to a referendum. Laws that "override" Common law and individual Common law rights. These

includes laws that transfer public assets (i.e. the Commonwealth belonging to the people) to private corporations, called "privatisation" and/or "public/private partnerships" and selling water rights to private corporations while denying farmers the use of their own dams, claiming that farmers don't own the water, the government does! However, without a referendum it's theft by any other name! Government, the servant of the people has now become their master!

Government now claims the right to create smaller clones of itself, because it claims to not need the permission of the people to do anything and it creates local government (councils) and ever-increasing government "autocracies", like transport, police, courts, hospitals, environment, human services, etc, etc. These "autocracies" are effectively laws onto themselves and essentially create their own laws, that are simply rubber stamped by whatever politician happens to be in office at the time. Political parties of course play a role in this as a whole, however the individual politician in most cases is simply the sales person, selling a predetermined agenda, creating the façade of "democracy" and if they have the sales drive to delude and a capacity for spin they are well rewarded for their efforts, as with all sales people.

The heads of these government "autocracies", however are a different breed. These are the professional suck-ups, the deceitful yes men and now women. The ones who will swallow and regurgitate anything, back stab and betray anyone and anything to get up the next rung of the ladder. These are the ones who play the long game of "debasement" to get to the top and are predominantly concerned with expanding their power and therefore their capacity to gorge themselves from the public trough. These are the types who tell you they are running a business by spending bigger and bigger amounts of your money. These are the swap creatures of the "deep state", (yes, we have them here too)

the permanent heads of government “autocracies” no matter who gets “voted” into parliament. These glorified, pretentious and arrogant suck-up don’t like their actions questioned or to be held to account and so claim to have “management prerogative”, in other words the ability to do as they wish. This of course is not the case since their authority is delegated by parliament and parliament’s authority is delegated by the people. At least that’s the way it was meant to work before the creation of all those laws, without the authority of the

people by way of a referendum, as mentioned earlier. These created laws are used as precedent by government “autocracies” and their management to presume to have “management prerogative”. By claiming “management prerogative”, management are effectively empowering themselves to interpret and apply law based on their subjective view and even apply the same laws subjectively to different individuals. This includes exempting themselves from the same laws they would use against others!

The game is not fair!

Look out for “Fair Game” part 2, in the next edition, where your editor explains how the union movement has been co-opted to complete the betrayal of the people and the worker. We might even give you a hint at a solution!

Regards,

The 6 Emotions the boss uses against you!

What can destroy our workplace rights, pay and condition, our lives? The emotions lurking inside us, the ones the boss relies on to intimidate and bully you into accepting less than you’re entitled to, we’ve got to conquer these emotions before the boss uses them to destroy us. Here they are:

1. Fear

We are not born with courage, but neither are we born with fear. Maybe some of our fears are brought on by our own experiences, by what someone has told us, by what we’ve read and heard about. Some fears are valid, like going alone for “just a quick chat” with the boss! A bad move and you feel fear for good reason, your fear is trying to warn you of danger. You know it’s not just an innocent chat! But once we learn to always insist on our right to a support person, that flips the situation, the boss now feels the fear because they’re now on the spot of having to justify their actions. We don’t need to live in fear of it.

2. Indifference

What a tragic disease indifference is. Some will say, “It doesn’t affect me why should I get involved. I’ll just drift along.” But here’s one problem with drifting: We can’t drift our way to better workplace right, pay and conditions. The boss relies on your indifference when they incrementally encroach on your workplace right, pay and conditions. Don’t be indifferent to these allegedly “minor changes”. Your rights were never

given to you by the boss they always had to concede these rights to workers who had the courage to overcome their indifference.

3. Indecision

Indecision allows the boss to steal our opportunity. The boss will steal our chances for a better workplace, better pay and better conditions at every opportunity and our indecision gives them this oppor-



tunity. We have to purge this enemy.

4. Doubt

Sure, there’s room for healthy skepticism. We can’t believe that the boss is all bad or that all bosses are all bad. But we also can’t let doubt take over and delude us into thinking that the boss has our best in-

terest at heart! Many of us doubt the hard-fought struggles of the past, doubt that in times gone by our workplace rights pay and conditions were won by workers paying the ultimate price, their life. We doubt that the boss could be so cruel, doubt that the government would allow and even support violent action against workers, doubt the possibility that workers died fighting for workplace right, pay and conditions we have today. Worst of all, we doubt ourselves. Doubt will empty both our bank accounts and our hearts. Doubt is an enemy.

5. Worry

We’ve all got to worry a little, but we can’t let it conquer us. Instead, let it alarm us. Worry can be useful. If the boss suddenly announces that a major change is coming, we’ve got to worry. But we can’t let the boss loose like a mad dog that drives us into a small corner. Here’s what we’ve got to do: Drive the boss into a small corner. Whatever is out to get us, we’ve got to get it. Whatever is pushing on us, we’ve got to push back.

6. Timidity

Over-caution is the timid approach. Timidity is not a virtue (unlike humility); in fact, it can and is used to our detriment, by the boss. If we let it go, it’ll be used to conquer us. If we’re timid, we won’t get better workplace rights, pay and conditions. We’ve got to avoid over-caution.

So, we must battle with the boss, battle with fears, build our courage to fight for what’s rightfully and lawfully ours, what’s keeping us from a secure and safe workplace. We have to be courageous in our pursuit of the things that matter."

follow their request as it is a “reasonable direction”, however, you direct them to the relevant clause in the Enterprise Agreement which clearly shows that their request is in fact “unreasonable” as it breaches your workplace rights. Let’s say, that for now, management have decided that they would let this episode slide.

The Perception Of Workers Rights

Most workers feel that their rights are protected by certain instruments such as a Workplace Policy, an Enterprise Agreement, an Award, or even the basic law. But let’s see how this plays out in the

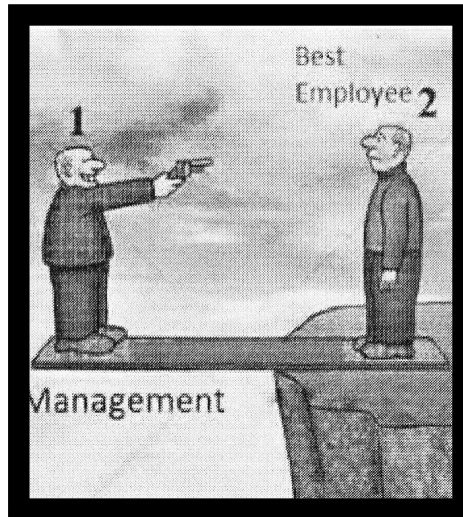
real world. Say, your manager asked you to do something that breached your conditions under your Enterprise Agreement, so you politely decline the request. Your manager then tells you that you have to

A couple of weeks later, they again ask you to follow a "reasonable direction", which in fact is another breach of your workplace rights, so once again you point out to your manager that their request is again "unreasonable" and again, politely decline their request and refer them to the appropriate clause in your Enterprise Agreement. This time, your manager says that your interpretation of the Enterprise Agreement is incorrect and insists that you follow their request. Knowing your rights and knowing that your interpretation is correct, you escalate the matter to higher management. The higher manager, knowing that you are correct, responds back by saying that they agree with your manager but to not allow the matter to escalate further, they withdraw your manager's request.

Now your manager decides that they cannot allow this behaviour to go unpunished, so they continue to ask you to do things that breach your workplace conditions. Again, knowing your rights, each time you politely decline and clearly state which condition would be breached, however, as it is now clear that the manager wants to make your life as difficult as possible, so you escalate the issue to higher management who simply side with your manager. You see that escalating the matter through the chain of command gets you no-where, so you submit an official complaint to be investigated internally. The investigation consists of referring the complaint to your management who respond by saying no breach has been committed. The investigation is now closed and no action taken against your manager.

As a result, this now emboldens your manager who reverts back to asking you to follow requests which would make your day difficult and breach your workplace conditions, quite simply, they are now trying to "manage you out". You, however, are quite aware of this but realise that any action taken internally would not have a positive outcome. So you decide that the only course of action which should have a positive result would be to take the matter to an external body. So you decide that you will submit a "Stop Bullying" order against your manager with the Fair Work Commission. You attend a pre-hearing, you decide to defend yourself with a work colleague with you

for support as the matter is simple and clear cut and you know your rights. They, on the other hand, have a team of lawyers on their side and apart from your manager, your manager's manager also decides to show up, all with the intent to intimidate you. But you hold strong, you present your case, you respond to their false accusations against you and you expose their lies. Everything is going your way. The hearing is adjourned for a later date and the Commissioner advises you to get representation from your Union. You go back to



work, all of a sudden your manager wants to place you on a performance plan, you question their reasons, their response is a load of nonsense, and you place the matter in dispute via your Union. The matter gets escalated through the dispute process, in the meantime, the Union declines to represent you at the Fair Work Commission as you did not seek their permission when you initiated the Stop Bullying claim. You ask the Commissioner to delay the hearing while you find a Solicitor. You then receive a "Show Cause" letter from your employer and are stood down. You reply to the letter, it is decided that your response is not good enough and you are dismissed!

As you are now dismissed, your Stop Bullying claim is immediately ceased as there is no longer a threat of bullying. Management have succeeded in their goal. Or so it seems. Your new found solicitors advise you that you can now take your former employer to court for "Unlawful Dismissal". They entice you by advising you that there is no cap on the

amount of compensation you could receive, as opposed to a 6 month cap for an "Unfair Dismissal" claim. You decide that justice must be served, truth is on your side so justice will prevail!

You start legal proceedings, what should have taken several months is now into its second year and no end in sight until well into the third year. In the meantime, your legal fees are piling up, your barrister wants to get paid and is asking for his money. You manage to find another job, it is worse than your previous job and pays a lot less too, it is too much and you resign. You are now going from job to job to try to keep your head above water so you can pay your bills and your legal team too. All this is placing a heavy strain on you and your family and for what? All you did was exercise a workplace right, that's what the laws are there for, that's why you have an Enterprise agreement, that's why your employer has their policies and procedures, so that everyone plays by the same rules... Right!?!

The problem is, if you have enough money behind you, you don't need to play by the rules. Yes, you may get caught out, but who will hold you to account? An internal investigation? Certainly not. What about our laws? Well if you can prolong the matter long enough, your accuser will eventually run out of patience, if not, then they are sure to run out of money before you do. So it's just a waiting game now. So if you knew from the start that exercising your rights would lead to this, would you speak up? Naturally the vast majority of people would not and this is why management do not have to follow the rules. But what would happen if someone actually decided to follow through? How would our scenario end??? I'll let you know once my court case finishes.

Optional: If you would like to support me and perhaps make a difference to our working conditions, so no-one else needs to find themselves in a similar scenario, please donate by following this link https://www.gofundme.com/f/un-l-a-w-ful-dismissal-legal-fees&rcid=r01-156205011274-637cd49f23854476&pc=ot_c_o_campmgmt_w

Sydney Buses News

Leichhardt Depot News

RW: What's the latest at the depot?

Leichhardt Driver1: In regard to the runs, a new leg has been added to route 470. Before starting and ending at the Terminus, it

now goes via Leichhardt Market Town. Drivers say it's a waste of time as no one is getting on for this leg. Most commuters going to Market Town are catching the 445 Campsie to Balmain route. So much

for "private enterprise" doing things better. In regard to the 445, this route is coming back to Leichhardt Depot. Is the reason the constant late running in the Kingsgrove Depot area due to bottle necks with often 15 drivers at the depot waiting for their buses? Route 389 which starts at the Maritime Museum at Pyrmont and

goes to Bondi Junction is now running out of Leichhardt instead of Waverley depot. We have now plenty of spare drivers at Leichhardt.

The most juicy news has been the sudden appearance at the depot in recent weeks of a "talent scout" from State Transit. The scout was distributing flyers and trying to encourage Leichhardt drivers to resign from Transit Systems, join the STA and come to Waverley depot to work. It appears the STA is no longer training its own drivers, but gearing up for a big cull when the Light Rail opens in the Eastern Suburbs next year. Will the Eastern Subs STA drivers made redundant be offered positions on the Light Rail or will they be put out to pasture? There is also coming up new Timetables in July. We are all awaiting what the changes will be.

RW: What is the situation with the unions at the depot?

LD1: We have not seen any RTBU officials for many months. However some woman has become the TWU rep. Other news is that Ryde is being tipped for the next STA depot for privatisation.

RW: What is the situation since privatisation?

Leichhardt Driver 2: Since the Transit Systems takeover of Region 6, of the 1200 drivers employed in the region prior to privatisation, 500 have left the job. They have either resigned, taken a golden handshake or transferred. There is definitely a push by management to replace the RTBU by the TWU in the workforce. They are using all manner of dirty tricks. **At Tempe depot where drivers are complaining of missing overtime, the real reason is that only TWU drivers are being given it.** As according to the

TWU Enterprise Agreement, TWU members receive a lower rate of OT, than RTBU members. Currently before the Fair Work Australia Court, there is a dispute between Transit Systems and the RTBU over the issue of payment for Easter Saturday. Under the RTBU EBA, drivers who are aren't driving on that day also are paid for it as a public holiday. In the case of the TWU EBA, payment for this day is only made to those working that day. Transit Systems wants to cease the payment of this entitlement of RTBU members.

I have also noticed that the management style of Transit Systems at Leichhardt is quite different from the STA. They don't seem to have to answer to higher-ups and can get away with mistakes affecting drivers and the public. **STOP PRESS: The new timetable changes have led to a cut in bus services.**

Waverley Depot News

RW: What is the latest with management at the depot?

Waverley Busie: We are likely to be facing a new vicious attack by the bosses. There is a proposal by them to impose block rosters for taking our holidays. As a result we wouldn't be able to take holidays when we want anymore. It's looking grim. It seems not about saving money, but showing they are in control and softening up drivers to accept privatisation.

RW: How is 'Madam Lash' these days?

WB: Again she is upsetting people. She is coming into the meal room to hold de facto "staff meetings". However drivers are not being paid for the 15 minutes attendance at these meetings. Is anyone attending? She is definitely not liked. She seems more of a 'figurehead' for the STA, than a real boss.

RW: I understand the STA CEO Steffen Faurby held a meeting at the depot?

WB: In early June, he held a staff meeting at Waverley. He was urging drivers to take all their entitlements such as Long Service Leave. He was also worried that many drivers could leave the job. However, he wouldn't raise the major reason many would leave such as the looming threat of



the privatisation of the Eastern Suburbs depots and the Light Rail. Interestingly I was recently speaking to a commuter. She mentioned that on a bus she was travelling, the driver appeared confused about the route and explained to her that he had been recruited to the STA from Adelaide to make up for staffing shortfalls.

Whilst according to Media Reports, the propaganda spread by Transport Minister Constance that Region 6 STA needed to be sold off because of poor running times has proved to be a pack of lies. As a Transport for NSW survey has shown Transit Systems Region 6 buses are much slower, than when the STA was operating them. The two groups running the buses in the city private and public aren't working together. Whilst the division is restricting the opportunities for drivers to transfer in STA and Transit System depots. However there is a case recently

where a driver who got into some trouble at the depot, was presented with the 'option' of a transfer to Transit Systems, to avoid the sack.

RW: What is the situation with the depot fleet?

WB: The depot is to receive shortly 9 to 10 new buses to replace the old gas buses. The depot's fleet has been steadily getting older and older over the years. There has been only a very slow upgrade of buses. However, in the case of the Railways, the old Silver Set trains are being retired and replaced with modern trains such as the Waratahs and new interurban trains built in South Korea.

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

WB: I was recently speaking to a driver from Randwick depot. He mentioned that the bosses have developed a new mad cap plan for buses operating along Anzac Parade when the tramway will be finished at the end of the year. There will be 19 stops for the trams, stopping at each stop. All buses are to go along the roadway. The buses are to run parallel to the trams on the bus roadway. In one section, the buses can operate up to 70 kmph. On one stop there will be no access for wheelchairs. The driver shook his head. Safety was paramount and he didn't think there was a very high degree of safety. In the past people have been injured and killed on the bus roadway.

RW: What is your impression of the 'union'?

WB: Its presence at the depot has greatly declined in recent years. With many seeing no purpose in joining. In the past those interested in becoming the union rep could attend union training courses at TUTA (Trade Union Training Authority). This has all gone by the way-side. It has become quite lethargic in regarding to assisting us with on the job problems and to fight the attacks of the bosses and the Liberal Govt. using the excuse of restrictive industrial relations laws.

RW: How is the job over recent years?

WB: In recent years there has been a certain 'disconnect' developing amongst drivers. With the introduction of the Opal system, there is now little opportunity to talk with commuters. Whilst there is a growing 'Stasi Climate' with the bosses constantly emphasising the message 'we control you' with intimidating notices they put up around the depot. As part of this strategy, they are also trying to 'micro manage' drivers creating a 'nanny state climate' whereby the excuse of OH&S concerns is used to cut back on various social aspects of the job, such as clamping down on indoor sports. With the loss of many iconic Waverley runs due to

privatisation of Region 6, the work has become drab and 'dead'. Many years ago a bus driver had the status close to a pilot, now that status has greatly declined.

Burwood Depot News

RW: What is the latest with the "Union" at the depot?

Burwood Driver1: We have heard nothing from the union about repaying the 4% loss in wages which we have suffered since privatisation. The union officials never come out to the depot. It is rumoured that one of the newly elected officials had previous TWU connections and since being elected has been orchestrating things for Region 6 drivers to be encouraged to join the TWU. They appear to be handicapped in doing anything to assist us.

RW: What are your thoughts on the closure of Randwick?

BD1: When we were privatised, we received no redundancy payments as we were just "transferred" to the private company "Transit Systems". In the case of the Govt's plan to close Randwick depot, under the law, the STA will have to pay redundancy payments to Randwick drivers as their positions will be abolished. Consequently, the STA bosses are doing whatever they can to encourage Randwick drivers to accept transfers or leave the job.

RW: How is the staffing situation Region 6 Transit Systems?

BD1: Officially we are supposed to be over staffed. Recently at Tempe depot, on one day there were 18 spare drivers. However I have noticed at Burwood often a driver shortage, due to many leaving the job.

RW: What's the situation at the depot since privatisation?

Burwood Driver2: Things have gone downhill in many respects. Now there are no mechanics at the depot on the weekends. We currently have 25 buses in the shed booked off. The bosses are cracking the whip at the new drivers. If they have two accidents they are sacked. There is no retraining. Overall there is a high rate of accidents on the road. This shows the poor standard of training for new drivers. Unlike the STA, the new bosses don't seem too worried about late running. If your bus is late to the terminus they just cut the return run. In the case of the run being cut being your last for the shift, the bosses can save money. In the case of the 420 Burwood to Eastgardens, due to the distance and the traffic, there is always late running with runs cut.

From 28th July, there is a new timetable. We are being kept completely in the dark regarding the changes. The bosses are still employing casuals and new drivers. They are being favoured with our overtime and shifts, as they are paid at a lower rate than old time/full time drivers. Consequently our wages are cut and career progression is being undermined. We also have a shortage of drivers. Our RTBU union rep claims to be powerless and is a waste of time regarding assisting us to fight these attacks.

TEMPE DEPOT NEWS

RW: What is that latest at the depot?

Tempe Driver1: There is a difference of opinion amongst us over whether we are worse off since privatisation. However most of us are up in arms over hours. We are only getting the minimum without overtime. This is supposed to be corrected with the new timetable coming up later in July.

RW: What are your impressions of the new timetables changes as of 28/7/19?

Tempe Driver2: I have noticed the bosses have cut many lines of work and running times have been tightened. Whilst there is a growing and big division at the depot between the new and older drivers. Currently there are approx. 50% of the workforce each, with the older drivers getting higher pay than the new drivers.

Kingsgrove Depot News

RW: What is the latest at the depot?

Kingsgrove Driver: We are being hard hit with unrealistic running times. The bosses are seriously screwing us with the rosters. In the case of the 492, it's always running late. Whilst there are often 15 drivers a day waiting for their buses for the second half of their shifts due to late running. Another concern of ours is that drivers from Kingsgrove who are transferred to Leichhardt aren't being given training for Parramatta Road. There continues to be a "divide and conquer" situation at the depot between the RTBU and TWU.

RW: What are the latest developments with privatisation?

KD: There has been some "privatisation by stealth" occurring with the transfer of STA operated runs to Transit Systems. In the case of the 389, which goes from the National Maritime Museum at Pyrmont to Bondi Junction, in the past it was operated from Waverley. Now it has been taken over by Leichhardt. A rumour is circulating that Pt. Botany is next on the list for tendering as part of privatisation. TransDev has been noticed sniffing around it.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

Over the last six months, Human Resources have been stepping up their efforts to sack employees who are on their hit list. Once again Drivers, Conductors, Head Office and Station Staff come together to discuss these events. As in previous issues names have been changed.

RW: What makes you a candidate for the hit list?

Rastus: You can make the hit list for a number of reasons:

- (1) Standing up to a Manager over Rosters and Bullying.
- (2) Applying for internal positions within V/Line and when you are unsuccessful, expressing your opinion about the selection process.
- (3) Contributing to Sparks.

Roscoe: That is why contributors to Sparks change their names.

Ichabod: Regarding Conductors and Station Staff it is known that certain Staff who stand up to CSM's, Station Managers and Staff in Human Resources are on the hit list. Also standing for your fellow workmates by refusing to 'dob' them in.

RW: What do you know about a Driver who certain Managers tried to set up?

Rastus and Roscoe: Human Resources tried to set up a Driver with the help of a SKID (Drivers Supervisor) who is hated by a number of Drivers saying that when running around a train at a suburban station that the Locomotive hit the carriages too hard, whilst coupling up to the train. It was alleged a passenger in a wheelchair was injured.

Penelope: The train was terminated at an outer suburban station due to a disruption closer to Melbourne. Before the run around the Conductor checked the train and no one was in the train and he gave the all clear to the Driver to run around.

Rastus: The Driver was stood down and at the enquiry the Conductor said there was no wheelchair passenger on the train when the run around was taking place. As a result the Driver was cleared.

RW: It was obvious Human Resources wanted to hang the Driver.

Abner: There was an incident at a Country location where a driver misjudged the length of a train and part of the rear carriage overhanging the platform.

Rastus: The train was locomotive hauled and when the train stopped on the platform, the Conductor released the doors. It was an honest mistake.

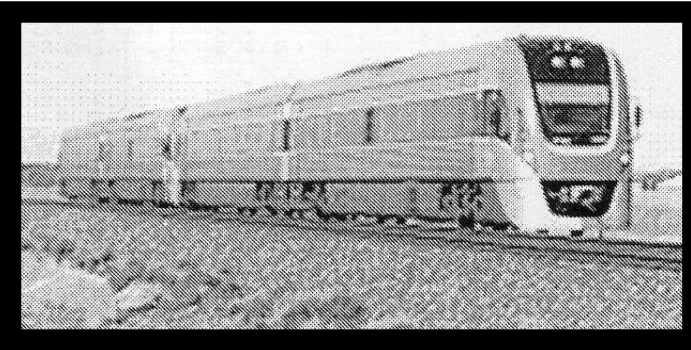
Penelope: The train departed and continued its journey. On return to the Country location, the Conductor was stood down and drug and alcohol tested.

Rastus: They went overboard over the matter, but some manager at the location did not have guts to stand up to Human Resources and support the Conductor.

Roscoe: When the train arrived at the station due to a rule, the Conductor was not allowed to look out the van door to see if the rear carriage was on the platform. If they had have, they would have been disciplined.

Abner: Due to a stupid rule that a Conductor is not allowed to observe the train when arriving or departing the platform.

Rastus: It has since been heard another Conductor was stood down over a similar incident but a third Conductor who was a management favourite was not



stood down over another incident.

Sheona: The Union got involved and the matter was sorted out and the Conductors were reinstated.

Penrod: This is correct but some clown had to be kept in a job. Think of the stress the Conductors were put through. They just don't care who they hurt but think of the stress the Conductors were under. In all my years as a Conductor, these stand downs have never happened before.

RW: What about the Booking Clerk who lost his case at Fair Work Australia?

Sheona: The hearing was held at Fair Work Australia and the Solicitors appearing for the Clerk had to fight six charges. A number of employees from V/Line appeared at the Commission to give evidence in support of the Clerk. Sadly they faced lawyers from V/Line.

Ichabod: At the conclusion of the hearing the case was adjourned for a couple of weeks.

Sheona: A decision was handed down in favour of V/Line and the sacked Clerk lost his case. Legal costs were awarded to V/Line.

Abner: We do not know who is to pay V/Line but knowing V/Line they will go after the lawyers for their costs.

Sheona: Within an hour the other Clerk who was stood down was terminated.

Ichabod: What concerns V/Line employees is will V/Line go after the employees who appeared at Fair Work Australia in support of the Clerks.

Rastus and Roscoe: It would not surprise us if they do. They do not give up.

Penelope: The other Clerk has been sacked has engaged lawyers to fight V/Line.

RW: What is the story about a shake up at Human Resources?

Sheona: Two H.R. employees have been removed. We do not know why the first employee was removed but the other employee was removed

over the hiring of a trainee driver who was sacked by V/Line five years ago.

Rastus and Roscoe: We will not discuss the incident but the reason he was sacked was that when he was a trainee driver he refused to 'dob in' his workmates but we do know that the incident had nothing to do with breaches of Rules and Regulations.

Sheona: Human Resources hate the driving grade and they have set out to dismiss a number of drivers to put fear into the grade.

Abner: What disgusts the Conductor grade is that Human Resources expect Conductors to 'dob in' Drivers and fellow Conductors.

Roscoe: The trainee who was sacked obtained a position with another train company and became a qualified driver.

Penelope: Most of the staff at V/Line thought the trainee was treated unfairly by V/Line and were pleased when he obtained the position as a driver with the other company.

Rastus: Due to a Driver shortage at V/Line due to retirements over the last twelve months there has been a large scale recruitment of Drivers both internal and external.

Roscoe: In the last intake of trainees the trainee who had been sacked was in the class.

Penelope: When the Conductors heard the trainee was in the class they were glad to welcome him back to V/Line. They were of the opinion he had suffered enough.

Rastus: The trainee was back in the class but after a few weeks Human Resources got wind he was in the job they conducted a witch hunt within their department.

Sheona: As a result of this witch hunt the HR employee who recruited him was removed.

RW: Once again we have run out of space. The way V/Line is going with stand downs the hearing may resemble a court of law but there is one thing missing, a judge and jury but the way things are heading, it may happen.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say both Drivers and other V/Line staff are pleased to welcome the Sacked Trainee back on the job and we give Human Resources a Message. LAY OFF THE TRAINEE! As for the H.R. employee who was removed, we Drivers say the H.R. employee was removed for SPITE.

STOP PRESS

As this issue goes to Press, word has reached our Correspondents that employees have been 'dobbing in' their fellow employees. This being prevalent around Southern Cross Station. More details in our next issue.

BRITAIN TODAY

SUMMER OF STRIKES

Some of London's most prominent institutions are bracing themselves for a summer of labour struggle, after the

United Voices of the World trade union (UVW) announced that staff in seven different workplaces are set to strike in protest at poverty wages and unfair conditions.

Government departments, city skyscrapers, top universities and even Britain's

iconic Royal Parks are among the employers that could be hit by the forthcoming walk-outs, bringing disruption to every corner of the capital.

"I have a huge responsibility, keeping wards clean and protecting patients from infection," said one UVW member who is employed as a cleaner at St Mary's, a NHS hospital in Paddington. "But my salary is below the living wage, and really poor. I don't get proper sick pay, or fair holidays.

Our managers discriminate between staff members, keeping everyone unhappy. We are going on strike to change things for the better - for us, for everyone."

The workers currently balloting for strike action include cleaners, baristas, security guards, chefs and till operators, and hail from dozens of different countries – ranging across the UK, Latin America, West Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Despite being employed by prestigious organisations in both the public and private sector, including the British government's Ministry of Justice and 200 Grays Inn Road – home to the production company behind ITV and Channel 4 News – many of the workers receive less than the London Living Wage and are denied basic forms of security like occupational sick pay.

"Low-pay London has had enough of exploitation and is fighting back," said Petros Elia, an organiser with UVW, the union behind the planned strikes. **"There are incredible riches in this city, and yet the hard-working people who we all depend upon to keep it running are often living impossibly precarious lives, struggling to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads."**

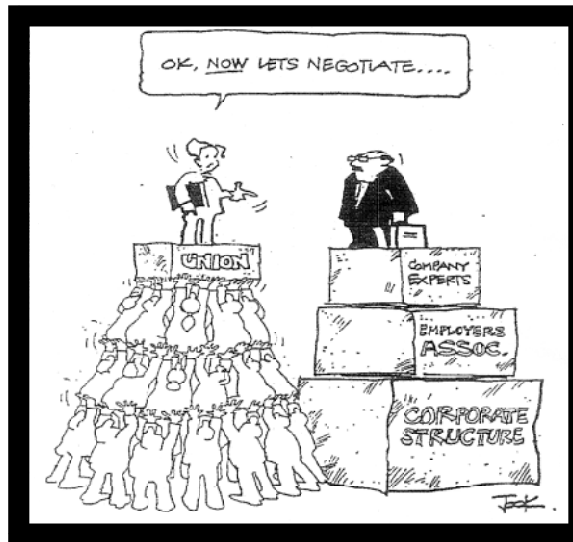
"Most Londoners will be outraged that the workers who clean their toilets, sweep their office floors, prepare their meals and ensure their safety are not even paid the minimum amount needed to survive in the capital," he added. "These are the silent, invisible individuals we all rely on – and they are refusing to stay silent or invisible any more."

Other workplaces affected include the White Chapel building, which houses the UK government's digital services operation and the London Museum of Photography, and two famous academic institutions: the University of Greenwich, on the banks of the River Thames, and St George's, a medical school that forms part of the University of London. All UVW members at the relevant sites will be formally voting on strike action in the coming weeks.

BRITISH BUS & FERRY NEWS

14/6/19 300 Stagecoach bus drivers based at Chorley and Preston depots in Lancashire went on strike for two days on May 31st - June 1st. They had already been out on strike for four days in May. These bus workers are demanding a 50p an hour pay rise and the decision to strike was backed overwhelmingly. Further strikes are planned for 12th June, 18th June,

In a major embarrassment for Buckingham Palace, among those walking out will be cleaners from London's Royal Parks, responsible for some of Britain's most famous green spaces including Hyde



Park, St James's Park, and Kensington Gardens. The parks are hereditary possessions of the Crown and managed by the UK government on behalf of the Queen, and yet workers who maintain the public facilities in them are paid only £8.21 per hour, substantially below the London Living Wage.

"I have worked at the Royal Parks for 24 years, but these poverty wages mean that, like many of my colleagues, I'm living a hand-to-mouth existence," commented Genevive Boohene, a Ghana-born Royal Parks cleaner. "We are denied occupational sick pay, many of us do not receive our legal entitlement to holidays, and managers ignore our suffering and concerns. Now we are coming together to change things for ourselves."

In common with most of the UVW members planning on strike action this summer, the Royal Parks cleaners are employed by an outsourcing company – in their case the French construction and facilities giant VINCI, which operates in more than a hundred countries and has been accused of a wide range of corruption scandals and labour abuses.

29th June, 13th July and 16th July. Meanwhile Stagecoach made a pre-tax profit of £95 million in 2018.

Woolwich Ferry strike

Workers on the Woolwich Ferry in London went on strike on 3rd June over health and safety and pay. The 31 workers went on strike in May for five days, with new strikes set for June 7th, 10th, 14th and 17th. The Ferry bosses have refused to grant a 6% pay rise and in addition have imposed new duties and have failed to deal with health and safety concerns.

Other outsourcing firms that will be targeted by the forthcoming actions include Sodexo, which made a net profit of nearly £600 million in 2018, OCS, and Baxterstorey.

"Many of the leading outsourcing companies that manage our members have a woeful reputation when it comes to respecting workers, including their legal right to join a union," said Elia. "But it is the major organisations that contract these companies – including the UK government and the NHS – that are ultimately responsible for their workers' pay and conditions. The days when powerful employers could hide behind outsourcing firms to excuse the exploitation of their staff are over: UVW is calling them out by name, and we won't rest until these injustices are halted."

UVW is an independent, members-led trade union that represents outsourced and low-paid workers in London and beyond. It has racked up a series of high-profile victories against prominent employers in recent years, including Topshop, Chanel, Sotheby's, Harrods, and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Two-thirds of those in poverty in Britain – a total of seven million people – have jobs, but are not paid enough to stay above the breadline. UVW has demanded that as a minimum, all workers should be paid the independently-calculated living wage, which is currently £10.55 in London and £9 in the rest of the UK, reflecting the amount needed to afford life's basic necessities.

The workplaces where strike ballots of UVW members will take place in the coming weeks are as follows:

The Ministry of Justice
The Royal Parks
The University of Greenwich
St George's, University of London
St Mary's Hospital
The White Chapel Building
200 Gray's Inn Road

Stagecoach drivers in Lancashire

16/7/19 Stagecoach, the transport company, recently offered the insulting 3p an hour rise over three years to its bus and coach drivers. A strike followed with 150 drivers and their supporters gathering at Preston bus station on 25th June., with a similar number at Chorley bus station. They are prepared to strike for another 15 days this July.

Arriva bus drivers in London

Arriva operates a fifth of London buses in the greater London area. It is increasingly

putting pressure on drivers to work on their rest days. This is not just a massive stress on them, but increases health and safety concerns over tired drivers lacking

concentration and losing control of their wheels. At 15 bus stations, bus drivers voted overwhelmingly- 1,854 to 69 - to come out on strike.

FRANCE: Report on the 3rd Assembly of the Yellow Vests

At their third assembly since January, Gilets Jaunes from all over France gathered to discuss ways of moving forward, strongly believing that their future is local. This article was written by Mathilde Goanec and originally published by Mediapart.fr on July 1, 2019. Translated from French by Joshua Richeson. The text has been minimally edited.

Last month some 650 Gilets Jaunes (Yellow Vests) gathered for a meeting in Montceau-les-Mines, in the heartland of France. Although the movement has struggled to unify and has fewer participants than before, the strength of its local mobilizations and its slow progression toward municipalism were on display.

In the streets of Montceau-les-Mines, dozens of cars with license plates from out of town were parked bumper to bumper and spilling onto the sidewalks: Gilets Jaunes from all over France had come to the department of Saone-et-Loire to participate in their third "Assembly of Assemblies" on

June 29-30, after the first one in Commercy in January and the second one in Saint-Nazaire in April.

Although the police, too, made rounds in the neighbourhood Saturday morning, they kept their distance from the Pouloux Sports Complex where the event was being held. The night before, the prefect himself had come down to inspect preparations and found nothing amiss.

A huge concrete block, a few posters about the RIC (referendum d'initiative citoyenne, or Citizens' Initiative Referendum) and two yellow flags waving at the end of the street were seemingly the only signs to guide visitors. But from the open windows of the gym where the first general assembly of the day was taking place, you could hear the familiar chant - "We are here, we are here!" - that for seven months of massive protests people have started singing at the drop of a hat in defiance of Emmanuel Macron.

DWINDLING NUMBERS ON THE STREETS

The 650 participants were delegates mandated by 250 roundabouts or assemblies to participate in the debates.

Some delegates, including two from the hills of the Diois region in the Drôme, had started driving as early as 3 or 4 a.m. to get there on time. "We're fighting for the climate and purchasing power, but then, as Gilets Jaunes, we're burning a ton of gas!" one delegate, Françoise, joked. The size of the assembly was the same as it was in Saint-Nazaire two months earlier. **This movement, which has been pronounced dead dozens of times, has not died. In the streets, one Saturday after another, in smaller numbers, or during local actions covered rarely or not at all, the Gilets Jaunes have been tending the fire they lit last November and continued to do so under the early summer sun at this national meeting.** With a humble recognition: "We call for departmental or regional assemblies, because here, we still only represent a minority of the movement, and that's too bad," one of the partic-



ipants said during the plenary session.

Nor did anyone contest the fact that the roundabouts have dwindled just like the number of active Gilets Jaunes. "You must take into account the police pressure we experienced, the wounds, the fines, and for some, prison," Thérèse Bénétreau, delegate from Eymoutiers, in the Limousin, warned. "We've been losing an insane amount of energy for six months now trying to get around repressive laws."

In the neighbouring city of Limoges there had still been a roundabout until recently. "It was destroyed. Our friends set up their trailer in a parking lot, and the police called for a bulldozer. Our friends had started a little community garden in a median flower bed that served no-one, and the police crushed their beans, their tomatoes, their salads..."

Watch this space for further news.

In Eymoutiers, haymaking season has kept others busy working full-time, Bénétreau pointed out to explain the reduction of troops. Françoise added that in the equally agricultural Diois region, seasonal workers have also gone back to work. "Last week, during the demo, there were 50 of us, and we're used to having 200 march. I came back home feeling hopeless. Seeing that we are still here, numerous, in Montceau-les-Mines, gives me hope again."

The "Magny" group, the organizers of this assembly named for the site of their occupation in Montceau-les-Mines, are among the most resistant. Each week, several dozens of Gilets Jaunes meet up in a general assembly, which has so far been spared the wrath of local authorities. "The mayor's office is buying social peace by pretty much leaving us alone," Pierre-Gaël Laveder, one of the pillars of the group, laughed. The organization, therefore, was on point; no one entered the site without being registered as either a delegate, observer or journalist.

Solidarity food trucks, book buses and large tents to host workshop discussions formed a kind of mini political summer camp surrounded by farmland. A burning sun bore down on everything, pushing folks to cluster together under the trees in search of a little shade. At the back, a few tents were planted in the grass, but most participants were staying with local Gilets Jaunes who made their beds or back yards available, or put up a hammock in the trees, for the night. "We're getting the royal

treatment at Rosa's place," Bénétreau assured, swiping on her phone to show photos of her host's house.

And despite the "wish tree," brought from Commercy, and the stage set up for the evening concert, the atmosphere was serious and the unrelenting discussion continued into the night as groups reworked their proposals, shared contact information and built regional networks by exchanging numbers and email addresses.

The Gilets Jaunes had two days to reflect on five topics in workshops before voting in a general assembly. "In Lyon, we marched for the climate and found ourselves walking with people who are pro-Macron," one delegate recounted, during the discussion about possible convergences. "That went over terribly. For a hundred of them, however, there

were a thousand of us, and that strengthened the movement. We can't abandon our label, we come as we are, with our demands."

One woman, aware of a drop in morale, pointed out: We were born in the dirt, we've had our noses rubbed in it, and we'll die in it. The 'de-growth' pushed by some is something we're already subjected to, and there is a kind of beauty to it... But we're all heading more or less quickly towards collapse, and it will be more or less painful depending on what you have to lose. Those are the people that we need to try to find, to touch. It won't necessarily be in the streets but rather in your networks, depending on your approach and your interest. We're not forcing anyone.

NOT ELVES, BUT REVOLUTIONARIES!

One delegate from northern France, Alain, spoke up from the other side of the circle to explain that convergence has already been practiced in his region for months, with civil disobedience now in view. "We are open to all actions for the climate, and I think that the Gilets Jaunes are contributing to the radicalization of activists on this issue."

Which did not stop another Gilet Jaune from Pau from complaining: "We go to the young folks' climate demos Friday, but nobody does the same for us Saturday. So that's really getting old..." Yet another delegate made a similar observation: "Our problem is that we feel isolated." In Coutras, not far from Bordeaux, the Gilets Jaunes seek "the right tool" for getting involved in related struggles without stretching themselves too thin.

The relationship with the media, on site, was similarly ambivalent. Although journalists were invited, they were not quite welcomed. Not even the "yellow autonomedia" teams who were covering the event and took to the microphone in a general assembly to complain about not being able to film or record the debates.

As one participant from Paris explained, after yet another discussion about the media's presence in a workshop, "The rules of the game, with the Gilets Jaunes, are that each assembly is sovereign, and just because the organizers told you 'yes,' this doesn't mean that the Gilets Jaunes in attendance accept your presence here." Afraid of being tracked and monitored by the government, and deeply angry with the dominant news organizations, the delegates exhibited a mistrust that rivalled what they suffered last winter and this spring, when the movement was regularly pounded by the majority of the media.

A similar ambivalence was apparent when the discussion turned to the subject of the

RIP (referendum d'initiative partage, or shared initiative referendum) - a proposal by the government on how to decide on the privatization of Paris airports. During a workshop on the issue, one participant lamented:

This movement is becoming a headache. We've got to deal with Macron, a nitwit who doesn't want to listen to us. We can take power by force, storm the place with bayonets, but we don't want to. It's the politicians who want the RIP and the risk for manipulation is real, but at this point, it's an opportunity for us.

Though not the RIC, which is still stubbornly championed by many Gilets Jaunes, the RIP is better than nothing, and the possibility of fighting against privatizations with an embryonic form of direct democracy is appealing. During the general assembly, the idea of lending support as a movement by helping to collect signatures and promote the referendum was adopted without difficulty.

Other debates were markedly more heated, such as the one about the fight against capitalism, which raised the tension and tried the patience of facilitators who wore themselves out at the microphone asking for silence and trying to let speakers speak in turn. The statement elaborated in the workshop was judged too soft by some, while others, a particularly small minority, still believed there should be mention of a potentially "virtuous capitalism."

Then, Fabien, from the Var, lost his temper and declared, "We don't have time to make improvements! This is an emergency! We're facing the sixth mass extinction of species! The Gilets Jaunes aren't a bunch of Keebler elves, we're a fucking revolutionary movement!" Cheers and applause erupted across the assembly.

Unable to agree on a detailed text, the 650 delegates committed to voting yes, with a large majority, in response to the question, "Must we exit capitalism?" Likewise, the answer to the question of inviting "movement figures" to the next meeting was affirmative, on the condition that they be mandated by a group. So far, the meeting of rather compatible, nationally known characters like Priscillia Ludosky, Maxime Nicolle and Francois Boulo has not happened, as the latter two have haughtily snubbed the assembly process.

Similar scuffles had already taken place in Saint-Nazaire and Commercy. There, observers had noted a rather large presence of veteran activists from the radical left, which was troubling at the time for an assembly that was still quite politically diverse. In Montceau-les-Mines, it was less clear-cut, but the "roundaboutists" seemed to have regained the upper hand over the more opportunistic "assembliests."

Above all, as it shrinks, the whole movement has shifted. Luc Gwiadzinski, along with Bernard Floris and the Gilets Jaunes of the Crolles roundabout, near Grenoble, collectively wrote a very moving book, *Sur la vague jaune* (On the Yellow Wave). "The movement matured quickly," he assured. "In six months, we saw debates go from a gas tax to unimaginable topics! The roundabout folks and the activists forged ties, from below, at the base. Ecology, the climate, the defence of public services - these are all now common positions."

LIBERTARIAN MUNICIPALISM AS HORIZON

Although there has been improvement in the speaking process and in the exercise of direct democracy, even on the larger scale of 650, numerous delegates were worried that they have been going in circles. Two calls had already been diffused after Commercy then Saint-Nazaire. A third would come out for validation by local groups at the end of the weekend. "We warned of the risk of bureaucratization during the previous assemblies of assemblies," one Gilet Jaune shouted out from the bleachers of the gymnasium, reminding the assembly that at its core, the movement was built by local and autonomous groups.

Conversely, Laveder of the Magny group, who had never hidden his affiliation with La France insoumise, was close to losing hope: "If at the end of the third assembly what we propose doesn't get presented to someone at the top of government, I don't know if I'll be able to keep doing this."

One glimmer of hope may be "municipalism." The subject was tackled at Montceau-les-Mines during a reflection on "local citizen assemblies" and could very well feature at the center of the fourth assembly of assemblies this fall. Many Gilets Jaunes are thinking about local government, ready to "leave the vest behind," as Elisabeth, delegate from Commercy, where the Gilets Jaunes have already been experimenting in that direction, explained.

The type of municipalism being discussed by the Gilets Jaunes is the one developed for example in Saillans, in the Drôme, but also under consideration, albeit with some caution, is Murray Bookchin's libertarian municipalism and anarchist modes of organizing. A young delegate from Montpellier named Daniel participated in the Indignados movement in Barcelona before leaving for Greece and then Mexico to study communalism.

"Hyper-presidentialism is ancient history. What we want to try to defend is

the idea of fighting where you live, hyper-local, in the most diversified way possible. And that idea is very gilet jaune.”

In the Gresivaudan valley, where a series of roundabouts were still valiantly resisting, as Gwiazdzinski pointed out, the Gilets Jaunes of Crolles have been testing out, day after day, “a metropolitan site” that siphons off the population around Grenoble. “It’s on a manageable scale, that’s the whole thing with working at the local level. But it’s not enough. I myself, for example, could be interested in national office...”

And so the Gilets Jaunes move to and fro. In Crolles, they fight alongside the unions and even the Grenoble mayor’s office

against the privatization of dams. Elsewhere, they invade a supermarket, or a fast food restaurant, before the eyes of a dumb-founded clientele.

Others “go underground” and as a group of 150 climb Mont Gargan, in the Limousin, to ring the bell in the ruins of a chapel. Some have taken back the toll-booths, like in Toulouse and Avignon on June 22. Some are seriously planning to disrupt the next G7 in Biarritz, to meet near Beaumont-sur-Oise near Paris in support of poor neighbourhoods, or to break up the Tour de France this summer.

In Paris, Gilets Jaunes can be found supporting the undocumented Gilets Noirs (Black Vests), the Blouses Blanches

(White Coats) on strike or the Stylos Rouges (Red Pens), a teacher’s movement. Scattered, often invisible, but everywhere.

Author’s note: I spent two days in Montceau-les-Mines and I was able to sit in on several workshops as well as the general assemblies, apart from those in which future “actions” were being decided. Most of the Gilets Jaunes refuse to give their last name, which explains why they are rarely mentioned.

Mediapart is an independent French online investigative and opinion journal created in 2008 by Edwy Plenel, former editor-in-chief of Le Monde. Mediapart is published in French, English and Spanish.

USA: Uber & The Gig Economy

On 8 May 2019 around 300 protesters, mostly Uber and Lyft drivers, blocked Market Street in San Francisco in front of Uber’s international headquarters as part of a global strike by drivers timed to coincide with Uber’s IPO. This brief analysis attempts to situate these struggles against working class decomposition, with its roots in neoliberal deregulation, and the rise of so-called “gig economy” work.

The Decomposition of the U.S. Working Class: Deregulation, Uber and the Gig Economy

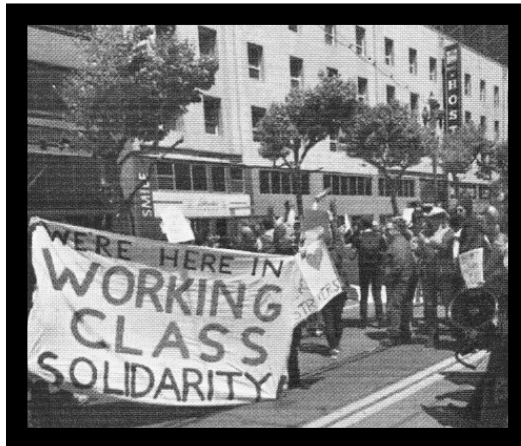
The strikes on 8 May 2019, as well as attempts in cities like Seattle and states like California to re-regulate the transport industry to allow unionization of drivers, require analysis of how the category of “independent contractors” came to be.

Here are some of the deregulatory changes that made “gig economy” jobs possible:

- 4R Act [Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act] (1976)
- Airline Deregulation Act (1978)
- Staggers Rail Act (1980)
- Motor Carrier Act (1980)
- Breakup of AT&T (1982), breaking 22 members of original telecom system into 7 new companies called the “Baby Bells” (1984)
- Dissolution of Interstate Commerce Commission (1996)

While Reagan often gets blamed for breaking up of many of these New Deal institutions, the process of Neoliberal

changes actually began with Democratic president Jimmy Carter. The ideology is that human well-being is best provided by “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms” with stronger private property rights, free markets and free trade. It emphasizes “contractual relations in the marketplace,” not regulations that limit and



control markets for the purpose of redistribution of wealth.

The New Deal was based on the ideology of “trust busting” and preventing monopolization, even creating government-sanctioned cartelization of transportation industries. But it wasn’t against capitalist social relations, it was against overproduction and crises created by cutthroat competition and attempted to stabilize markets — including labor markets (dating back to the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 — and the commission it created lasted until 1996). But opposition to New Deal always existed. Much of this is the perennial urban-rural conflict in the U.S., that is deeply rooted in American culture. Much of Trump’s recent victory

came from his ability to exploit this conflict and tap into the petit-bourgeois tendencies in rural areas, even the desire for upward social mobility of the rural working class.

The Motor Carrier Act of 1935 did not apply to agricultural trucking, but conversely led to the Teamsters to have a monopoly of labor for all other kinds of truck-based shipping. The MCA exemption for trucking food led to rural food production, including relocation of stockyards for livestock and rural factories for processing all food products. Ironically, connections between rural food production, independent truckers and suburban supermarkets led to “anti-state market populism that defined late 20th century [American] capitalism.” In this anti-authoritarian, anti-state, anti-union rural trucking culture there arose the ideology that gave birth in 1962 to Walmart and other new forms of distribution and retail in the same rural regions. Which spread across the planet, and with 2,300,000 employers is the world’s largest private employer. And except for Chinese Walmart workers in the government ACFTU union, all of them are non-union. Walmart notoriously has jets ready in Bentonville, Arkansas to fly anti-union managers to suppress any organizing attempt anywhere in North America. It defines itself as offering individual “freedom” from unions.

In 1961 Mike Parkhurst created Overdrive magazine for owner-operator truckers who were opposed to the Teamsters, government regulation, and big Fordist corporations that had “strangled the healthy growth of the free enterprise system.” This ideology, which in rural areas grew into support for Carter/Reagan era deregulation, is the same as what Silicon Valley financiers promote today for the “gig” economy. Overdrive and Parkhurst were part of the successful efforts to pass the de-

regulatory Motor Carrier Act of 1980, but strangely it was authored in Congress by Ted Kennedy, it was supported by the NAACP and Ralph Nader in the name of lowering prices for consumers, and studies by the Brookings Institution claim that MCA and the Staggers Act in 1980 both transferred \$20 billion dollars from unionized and benefited workers back to the ruling class. Today, railroaders work still retain decent benefits but truckers, especially non-union independent contractors, operate in poverty. It was a way to externalize the costs of owning and operating a truck onto its owner — meaning that they receive “piece-rate” pay, with no deductions for Social Security, nor do they accrue other benefits like unemployment and disability insurance, and unless they retire having saved money themselves, there are no pension or medical benefits.

The gig economy, like AirBnB, Uber, Lyft and all the other forms of labor disguised as ‘independent-contractor’ work, is a result of all the above efforts to destroy labor protections of the New Deal and make labor more precarious and benefitless. And like Walmart’s use of labor whenever it needs it, there are no stable schedules and workers labor pos only exploited when the bosses need it. Many of the “sharing economy” firms, many now basing their gig economy companies in San Francisco, got their start-up financing from venture capitalists like Pe-

ter Thiel and Y Combinator. Thiel co-founded Paypal in 1999 and part of his goal was not only radical deregulation, but also “disrupting” traditional industries. He wants to “lessen the control of government over money” by turning his company into an initiator of Schumpeterian “creative destruction.” He said “I knew Milton Friedman, so that’s probably the one I’m personally the most biased towards.” Thiel’s belief system is as “a mixture of unapologetic selfishness and economic Darwinism,” and he was one of the only Silicon Valley supporters of Trump. He wants a return to the classic economic thinking of the 19th and 20th centuries, matched with his contemporary Libertarian ideas based on Ayn Rand, of unregulated exploitation of the working class.

The bosses running Uber and Lyft, like Thiel (an investor in the latter), create the fiction that drivers are entrepreneurs running their own companies. But this has been challenged with slowly increasing success. The port truckers at the massive Los Angeles/Long Beach port complex, calling themselves troqueros (the ones who shut the port down by 95% on May Day 2006!), have been challenging their independent owner-operator status, legally both with the Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration. The IRS defines an independent contractor as someone who can control: 1.) the time, 2.) the place and 3.) the man-

ner in which they perform their work. Sincetroqueros — and Uber/Lyft drivers — are doing piece-rate work, where the boss-dispatcher/algorithm defines when they need to perform the work, where work the work goes, and has requirements about the manner the job must be performed, the IRS has forced some trucking companies to reclassify truck drivers as waged “employees” and the bosses have had to retroactively pay drivers back for the benefits they didn’t get.

The SSA has declared some truckers trying to retire weren’t paid properly — declaring them as “employees” as well — and has forced some trucking firms to pay back benefits. But this is a legalistic solution where the results are individual. Yet the LA/Long Beach troqueros have had many strikes and forms or collective direct action since the mid-1980s. The latter should be a model for the Uber/Lyft drivers to emulate. **The rideshare driver organizers in Los Angeles started creating security protocols to prevent boss infiltration years ago, so that Uber/Lyft drivers can communicate and coordinate among themselves. The result of their bottom-up rank-and-file organizing was the global strike on 8 May 2019. While not perfect, it is a start.**

By Hieronymous

Thanks to Libcom

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

A Beautiful Idea: History of the Freedom Press Anarchists by Rob Ray Published by Freedom Press

British Anarchism: From Class Struggle to ‘Looney Left’

The most significant evidence of the so called anarchist movement in the UK many may have noticed recently, courtesy of sections of the corporate media is the ‘media stunt’ protest by the Class War Group against Boris Johnson then Frontrunner for the Tory leadership (now Tory leader) outside his girl friend’s home in late June. The wasting of limited resources and personnel on such pointless stunts highlights how the UK British anarchist milieu has moved from an important factor in the labour movement such as during the years of the Syndicalist upsurge and strike wave movement focusing particularly in the mining, transport and engineering sectors in the periods 1910 to 1914 and around the end of WWI. At these times it was interwoven with the wider syndicalist move-

ment and a significant threat to the ruling class. In sharp contrast to today where it’s confined mostly to the fringes of the Looney Left. Apart from such stunts other symptoms of

this demise and degeneration in recent years is the engulfing with collective hysteria of many so called anarchist conferences, Book Fairs and Festivals by the bizarre exhibitionist antics of deranged Feminists and other identity politics ‘nut jobs’ whose ‘performances’ meet rapturous applause. Other manifestations are the proliferation of the navel gazing identity politics and Stalinist legacy informed hypocritical ‘political correctness displays’ such as ‘Safe Spaces Policies’ and assorted women’s, queer, black, crimson and brindle ‘identity spaces’ in various Anarcho groupings and their centres. Certain to alienate militant workers outside the Leftist Milieu. This is not beautiful!!!

Whilst work place oriented outfits copy on a micro level various aspects of the Corporate Unions aligned with the TUC (Trade Union Congress) and the Labour Party. Playing at activoid

superheroes/lobbyists/pseudo social workers. Revealing grossly simplistic notions of how to build an alternative syndicalist/grass roots controlled industrial union movement and an abysmal level of theoretical and historical research, bereft of extensive industrial experience. Failing to focus on strategic industrial sectors such as transport industries, which could tackle the challenge of the employer offensive with its neoliberal agenda and help generate strike waves and so facilitate transitional steps toward establishing mass syndicalist unionism. Other groupings are drawn into aping and competing with the Trot groups in regard to recruiting students to play at childish “numbers games” by pandering to all manner of identity politics informed rubbish, symbolic environmental protests and other issues fashionable in the middle class/student leftist milieu.

This disarray and degeneration of the contemporary British anarchist milieu highlights the success of the bourgeois cultural, educational, media apparatuses and agencies of the USA ‘Deep State’ such as the CIA in undermining potential revolutionary opponents, through the promotion of identity politics. Together with the impact of its

largely middle class/student social base renowned for 'oppression mongering and guilt tripping' and the Stalinist/Trotskyist legacy.(1)

The book under review throws important light on these problems besetting the British Anarcho milieu contributing to its marginalisation by focusing on the history of the Freedom Press Group. It examines a series of historical phases and the key personalities active in the group at these times. This Group has been an important node of this milieu and so called anarchist movement and longest running such grouping/newspaper in the UK. The volume concludes with some short biographies of key figures in the history of the Freedom Group.

1886–1895 Victorian anarchism

The author locates the origins of the commencement of the publishing of Freedom in Oct. 1886 to an anarchist current in middle class socialist groupings at that time such as the Fabian Society and the Social Democratic Federation. The most important militants being Charlotte Wilson who was involved in the radical wing of the Fabians and played a critical role in the launching of the paper and was subsequently its editor and publisher/chief financier until 1896. The other key figure and editor being Alfred Marsh, an ex-member of the Social Democratic Federation.

1895–1927 Ossulton Street

This address was the head quarters of the Freedom group during this period. In this section the author looks at the difficulties the Freedom Group faced during the Boer War due to their antimilitarism such as jingoist harassment and in WWI, when its members and HQ were targeted by the State. Prominent in the group were Thomas Keel, Alfred Marsh and John Turner. Whilst from 1910 to 1914 associated with the global rise of syndicalism, Freedom launched the agitational paper 'Voice of Labour' edited by John Turner, a shop assistants union official. However focusing on direct action instigated by official structures, not by the grass roots. Whilst the group and the anarchist milieu in the post WWI period was hard hit by the rise of Leninism/Stalinism associated with the Communist Party financed heavily by 'Moscow Gold', workers illusions in the outcome of the Russian Revolution and the post war economic slump.

1928-1945 The wilderness and World War II

In this section, the key figures focused upon are Thomas Keel, Vernon Richards, M.L. Berneri, Tom Brown, George Cores and Albert Meltzer. The author looks at the disconnected aspect of the history of the Group and paper at this time associated

with a number of papers which have been linked to the Freedom heritage. The Spanish Revolution/Civil War of 1936-1939 where the anarcho-syndicalist CNT (National Confederation of Labour) played a prominent role particularly contributed to a revival of British anarchism and its publications. These papers included: Freedom Bulletin 1929-1932; Freedom (New Series) 1929-1936, Spain and the World 1936-1938, Revolt! 1939, War Commentary 1939-1945 and 'Workers in Uniform' bulletin 1940-1944. During WWII the paper was the organ of the Anarchist Federation of Britain (AFB) and still had some revolutionary orientation encouraging revolts/mutinies amongst the workers in uniform and publishing the clandestine AFB bulletin in the military, resulting in its editors facing State repression and prison sentences in 1944-45. **However, according to veteran anarcho-syndicalist militant Albert Meltzer, quoted by the author, the 1940's saw a middle class hijacking of the Freedom grouping associated with an influx of those involved in the Peace movement including many conscientious objectors.** Illustrative of this middle class

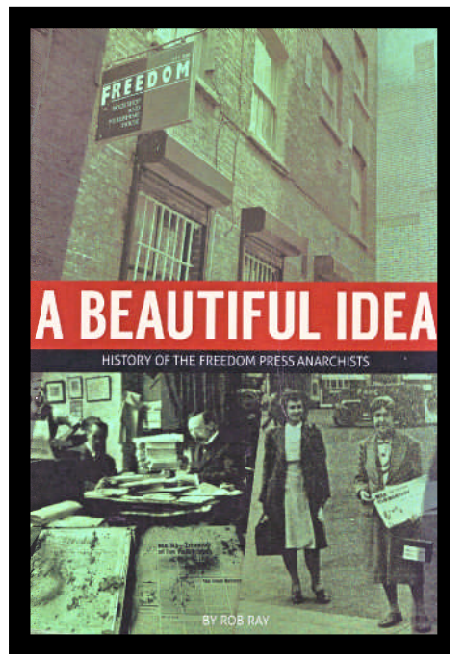
takeover/ultra liberal drift was the Freedom editors refusal in these years to allow a page of industrial news from Scotland, which was the major base of the movement with significant working class support.(2) Culminating in a split leading to the publication of Direct Action by syndicalists hostile to the hijacking. It was to become the organ of the Anarchist Federation of Britain (AFB) and from 1950, renamed as the Syndicalist Workers Federation.

1945-1969 Rebuilding the movement

The author shows that some of the key people in the group in this period were Vernon Richards 'the proprietor', M.L. Berneri, Philip Sansom, John Hewetson and John Rety, mostly middle class elements. Whilst the Jan. 1960 Freedom Reader Survey – showed the three largest constituencies were individualists, philosophic and pacifist. With letters pages being a total bedlam with an individualist pacifist lean. The second reader survey in 1993 confirmed this trend. 87% of readers were professional or retired. The author sees no problem with the ultra liberal ori-

entation such as Freedom group's championing various ultra liberal causes in the 1950's which today have become accepted parts of bourgeois society such as lifestyle issues, identity politics, various civil rights, etc. Failing to realise that the focus of a genuine anarchist group should not be attempts to perfect dimensions of bourgeois society but its overthrow.

However the author shows in the 1940's and 1950's Freedom continued some focus on the class struggle, but increasingly became drawn in an ultra liberal direction. At this time the paper had not put on its front cover and inside pages the kind of exotic rubbish which would feature in the 1980's. The most important off-



shoot in this period was Anarchy magazine edited by Colin Ward published from 1961 to late 1970. It had an 'ultra liberal' slant and according to its major critic Albert Meltzer espoused a pacifist anarchism which would help capitalism out of its difficulties via proposing various reforms. Colin Ward, an architect was another middle class element drawn into the Freedom group through the peace movement. The author is critical of Vernon Richards the owner (since toward

the end of WWII) and major financier of the setup in regard to wasting much money and resources producing many virtually unreadable editions of Freedom with an ultra-liberal orientation shared by the Anarchy journal and in the case of The Raven, an academic orientation. **However, he doesn't see this squandering of resources stopping any revived class struggle oriented anarchist current. Failing to recognise how Freedom and allied publications with an increasing ultra-liberal orientation facilitated confusion in the anarchist milieu in the Anglo World in the 50's onward.** This confusion together with the student/middle class social base contributed to the dysfunctional nature of the revived Anarchist Federation of Britain in the 60's (a hopeless 'talk shop'), which the author shows Freedom was its unofficial 'organ' and the later blooming of many identity politics informed 'poisonous weeds' in the anarcho milieu in the UK and elsewhere. Certainly with the continuing stranglehold of Labourism, Stalinism via the Communist Party and later in the 1970's

Trotskyism on the British labour movement, even with much more resources, any syndicalist industrial organising is likely to be marginalised. Until after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

1970-1980 Out in the cold

In this period the author shows some prominent editors were Mary Canipa, Jack Robinson and Philip Sansom. The paper particularly focused on the side show of the squatting movement in the mid 1970's and the Persons Unknown case involving state repression of anarchists. Whilst being critical of the anarchist urban guerrilla group 'The Angry Brigade', Freedom was targeted by the media, for being associated with it, as it was the most important so called anarchist institution in that period in the UK.

1980-2001 The long goodbye

Some of the most prominent figures in this phase were Vernon Richards and Stu Stuart. The author shows that during this period Freedom championed and reported extensively on the 1981 Brixton Riots and much activoid spectacular antics such as the Stop The City protests of 1983-84 with 3,000 people rallying at London Stock Exchange, J18 Carnival Against Capitalism on June 18th 1999 as part of an international protest against German G8 Summit. **These actions were precursors of the 'Anti-Globalisation' movement. Another off shoot was the 'The Raven' journal edited by Heiner Becker and published from 1987 to 2003. It was very much aimed at the academic milieu with most copies being unsold.** A further significant offshoot was 'Green Anarchist' published from 1984, focusing on environmental guerrilla/elite protest activity and was heavily repressed by police raids in the late 1990's. Absurdly the author defends one of the more outrageous front covers (see page 183) in the 1980's on the basis that newsagents, etc were engaging in censorship by refusing to sell it. Completely oblivious to the terrible impression this sort of rubbish gives to militant workers outside the leftist milieu of anarchism. In this phase Freedom was notorious for its hostile comments about the British Miners in their Strike against the Thatcher Govt. in 1984-85.

2001-2018 Third Millennium

The author shows that Freedom during this period extensively covered the Anti-Globalist movement which emerged internationally associated with G8, G20 and WTO Summit hopping and was uncritically supported by the paper. The outcome of this wave of mass spectacular protests, has not been any challenging or curtailing of the global employer offensive. In fact the ruling classes in the UK and elsewhere have

taken advantage of these symbolic protests to facilitate the Neo-Liberal 'Strong State' in its various dimensions such as more aggressive policing, increasing numbers of CCTV's, and ever more restrictions on civil liberties, etc. The author appears oblivious to this outcome.

Some key figures at this time in the group were Toby Crowe and the author who was editor from 2003. **According to the author the involvement of Crowe led to a re-orientation of the paper toward class struggle anarchism – associated with Anarcho-Syndicalism and Anarcho-Communism and overtures to the 'anarchist federations' to become involved in the paper. Whilst some members of the Anarchist Youth Network which had formed out of the Anti-Globalist movement became involved in the paper.**

The impression given by the author of the Freedom editorial/production groups over this and previous periods is one of mostly dilettantes going through some 'radical' phase and incapable of any serious long range work relevant to the workers control/revolutionary project. Falling out over 'storms in a tea cup' and hair splitting. Tellingly one of the supposedly more serious class struggle oriented editors, Toby Crowe went on to become an Anglican Church Priest!

The author mentions that at the 2009 Anarchist Book Fair, the Freedom editorial group presented a proposal for it to become a non-sectarian paper for all national federations e.g. Solidarity Federation, Anarchist Federation, etc and for Black Flag(anarchist magazine) to become a pan movement theoretical magazine. These papers could be sold at book stalls and demos and supplemented by Local Free Sheets. The problem with this proposal is that it fails to take account of the mostly middle class/student social base of these groups and inability to pursue long range industrial organising in strategic sectors and the influence of sect building, stemming from the Stalinist/Trotskyist legacy and corporate unionism upon them.

From Middle Class Leftist Sub-cultural 'Dark Abyss' to Class Struggle?

A more appropriate proposal particularly with the disarray and declining influence of Marxist Leninist groups on the industrial front since the 1990's, would be the launching of a grassroots syndicalist paper in the transport industries which could provide regular industrial news to a revived Freedom (perhaps re-named as 'Direct Action'). Still of critical importance despite the emergence of driverless vehicles. This initiative would inspire militant workers

in other key sectors and together with intensive 'outside-the-job' assistance could lead to the launching of similar papers and the crystallisation of associated networks in these industries also feeding copy into it. **Freedom could apart from helping develop readers' circles and networks in other industries also provide a forum for debate amongst militant workers regarding industrial organising and strategy, whilst contributing to the theoretical and historical/strategic development of key militants. In this context, the 'federations' which are currently effectively sects and dysfunctional regarding serious strategic industrial organising could dissolve into a 'catalytic' network providing this 'outside the job' organisation.** Its key militants assisted by a periphery of the less committed but capable of some consistent work, must be prepared for the bank rolling when required, the inevitable terrible hard yards, going through 'hell and high water' with the handling of crises, which such an initiative must involve. Aware of the stern gaze of history upon them if they stuff up.

With the launching of strike waves, turning the tide against the employer offensive, transitional steps toward mass syndicalist industrial unionism would occur. In the context of locals of the new union movement, unemployed members could link up with employed and working class community struggles pursued. Whilst syndicalist influenced transport workers could assist syndicalist union organising drives in less strategic sectors. Breaking out of the current encirclement of the corporate/bureaucratic unions of the TUC. In this process, mass distribution networks and readership would develop for the paper. Whilst the basis would develop for financing full time staff and infrastructure allowing moves toward weekly and daily frequency. Maybe then a 'Beautiful Idea' can become closer to reality!

In conclusion, the author does a good job providing a sketch of various phases and prominent militants in the history of the Freedom Press Group. However he fails to recognise sufficiently the serious negative impact of the Group's drift toward ultra liberalism due to its middle class leftist hijacking for the UK and international anarchist and syndicalist milieus in the post WWII period.

Mark McGuire

Notes: (1) See 'Report on the 'Workers Control Conference' for a discussion of these layers experience of contemporary capitalism in the archive section www.rebelworker.org (2) See 'Interviews on the History of Anarchism in Scotland' in Library Section of libcom.org

Edgard Leuenroth 1881 - 1968

A short biographer of Edgard Leuenroth German-Brazilian anarchist who was an indefatigable propagandist and activist for anarchism.

Edgard Leuenroth was born on October 31st 1881 in the city of Mogi Mirim, in the state of São Paulo, Brazil into a German immigrant family. His father died whilst he was young and he moved with his mother to city of São Paulo at the age of five. As a young man he worked in crafts, as a store clerk, typographer, journalist and an archivist. He became involved in the workers movement and became interested in socialist ideas. He then became an anarchist under the influence of the Portuguese anarchist Neno Vasco who had moved to Brazil in 1901, and remained one for the rest of his life. In



1904 he became part of the editorial group for O Trabalhador Gráfico (Graphic Worker). In the following year one he began working with Neno Vasco on the weekly A Terra Livre (Free Land), one of most important anarchist papers.

He had a very active involvement in both writing and publishing for the libertarian press over his life time. He wrote under his own name but also as Frederico Brito, Palmiro Leão, Len, Leão Vermelho, Routh and Siffleur. He was a founder of Folha do Povo (Leaf of the People) which later became a daily and shortly afterwards, in 1909, of A Lanterna. Other publications he was associated with were O Boi (The Ox) A Lucta

Proletaria (The Proletarian Struggle) Ação Direta (Direct Action), "Spartacus," "A Guerra Social" (Social War), O Combate, (The Fight) the daily A Voz do Povo (Voice of the People) which he edited in 1920; two others he founded were A Plebe (Common People) and The Vanguard. He started publishing A Plebe in 1917 and it had a very strong impact on the working class of the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and further afield, becoming a daily in 1919 and continuing up into the 1950s.

In May 1912 in São Paulo, the Ecole Moderne opened, established on the principle of rationalist education recommended by the Spanish libertarian Francisco Ferrer. Edgard was one of its four founders, alongside Neno Vasco, Oreste Ristori and Gigi Damiani.

He took part in organising many of the first workers' and anarchist congresses, on a regional and national level. He was a founder of the Confederaçã

o Operária Brasileira (COB- Brazilian Labour Confederation) and the Communist Party of Rio De Janeiro, which was then like many early Communist Parties, a mixture of anarchists, syndicalists and left socialists. By 1913 at the second congress of the COB of which Edgard was secretary in Rio de Janeiro there were 117 delegates from eight states including two state federations, five local federations, fifty two unions and four libertarian publications.

In July 1917, a 3-day General Strike erupted in São Paulo following the killing of the anarchist shoemaker Antonio Martinez by the police during a demonstration in support of textile strikers.

A Workers' Defence Committee was formed, composed of six people, including the anarchists Leuenroth and Gigi Damiani. Barricades were built and street fighting broke out. Despite heavy repression, the strike spread to Rio and elsewhere and by the end of the month there was an almost hundred per cent stoppage in industry. For his part in organising the general strike Edgard received the longest prison sentence of his life. This did not deter him from his activity over the coming years, despite dictatorship and repression.

He was active in international defence campaigns for many anarchists, including Ferrer, Sacco and Vanzetti, Durruti and Makhno.

In December 1948, he was an organiser of the Brazilian Anarchist Congress, whose objective was the creation of an organization to pull together the various anarchist groups from around the country.

He died on September 28th 1968 in Sao Paolo.

After his death, Leuenroth's family donated his vast archive - newspaper cuttings, articles, photographs, etc. - to the State University of Campinas, which organized the Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth in 1974, one of the most important historical sources of the 20th century social and workers movements in Brazil. It quickly went underground until 1986, surviving dictatorship intact by being cemented inside a wall.

Nick Heath

Sources:

Edgard Leuenroth and the 1917 strike; <http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/tqjr3g>

Anarchist Encyclopaedia entry: <http://recollectionbooks.com/bleed/Encyclopedia/LeuenrothEdgard.htm>

BULGARIAN LABOUR NEWS

23/5/19

A new organisation - the Autonomous Workers' Confederation (ARK) was established by workers, representatives of autonomous trade unions from Sofia, Plovdiv, Vidin and Varna this weekend near the sea capital. Individual workers joined it.

The Presidents adopted the statutes and rules of the new organization, confirming in a document and the principles that will

guide it, among which: "The Autonomous Workers

Confederation is a trade union organization that is independent of state, business, political parties, foundations and foreign embassies.

The Autonomous Workers' Confederation is a class organization that is open to workers, unemployed, students and retirees - regardless of belief, sex, age, race, religion or ethnicity. The Autonomous Workers' Confederation rejects the union syndication and trade union bureaucracy.

The internal organization, strategy and tactics of the trade union sections of the Confederation are based on self-organization of workers.

The Autonomous Workers' Confederation does not participate in the "trilateral" or other forms of "social dialogue" with employers and the state. The Autonomous Workers' Confederation is a part of the international workers' movement and maintains links with related objectives and principles, groups and organizations. "

The immediate objectives set by the workers of the new Confederation are to assist other

See page 20

NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important news in the NSW Railways is the duplicity of the Berejiklian NSW Govt. and the union hierarchy regarding a supposed deal made back in 2018 to retain guards on the new interurban trains. As part of this scam, there is an on-going case in the 'un-Fair' Work Australia Court. Driver Only Operation on these trains will open the doors to a similar push on other trains and is interwoven with Govt. privatisation of the Railways plans. (See article page 4.)

Lately the ASN has been agitating on the job in NSW and Victorian public Transport for industrial support of the upcoming World Climate Strike. It's being held on Sept.20th 2019. With the ever worsening environmental crisis, this initiative merits hard hitting industrial support. (See article page 3.)

In this edition, we look at problems associated with handling management harassment and targeting on the job. (See articles pages 5 to 7.)

In this edition, we throw more light on the worsening conditions of bus workers and reduced bus services associated with the privatisation of Region 6 of State Transit. (See article page 7.)

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

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Members' Voice

Grassroots NSW Public Transport
Workers' Organisation

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Email: Membersvoice2010@yahoo.com

Facebook:www.facebook.com/pages/Member-Voice-RTBU-rank-and-file-Group/531249043571323?fref=ts

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.

USA: Burgerville Workers Union Launches Strike

10/8/19 Members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organized into the Burgerville Workers Union officially launched a strike today as negotiations with Burgerville corporate broke down, following a year of stalling and refusal on the part of bosses to address worker demands. This report first appeared on It's Going Down.

Over the past several years, It's Going Down has covered the rise of the Burgerville Workers Union, which has grown into a network of several stores which have been officially recognized as union shops, bolstered by a strong base of support within the wider community and labour movement. The union has also called several strikes and pulled off multiple job actions and pickets since they first launched.

Over the years, time and time again Burgerville corporate has targeted union members and organizers for taking part in strike and union activity with unjust firings and the hiring of anti-union thugs to harass IWW members and picketers.

As BWU wrote:

Burgerville is not bargaining in good faith. After stalling for months on nego-

workers to organize themselves in their trade union sections and to establish a solidarity network for mutual assistance between the sections of the Autonomous Confederation and other struggle formal and informal trade unions and collectives: autonomous trade unions are not the only trade union organizations leading class struggle, but on the contrary, we look at our trade unions as part of the struggling organizations of the working class, along with many others.

That is why we aim to build relationships with other workers and trade unions. The

tiating over wages, they cancelled our bargaining session today because workers were prepared to strike if they brought nothing to the table again.

After months since our last bargaining session, we had finally agreed to meet. However, yesterday their lawyers emailed us and said they were cancelling the session because we had planned a strike and demanded we postpone bargaining until there is no threat of a strike. They accompanied their email to us with a strange email from CEO Jill Taylor to all workers trying to justify cancelling the bargaining session by claiming, "Burgerville is changing the way we do business." Don't get it twisted, the company is refusing to negotiate based on our legally protected right to strike at any time.

Around 12 PM on Friday 9th August, the Burgerville Workers Union officially announced that it was on strike, stating that workers from three different stores had walked off the job:

We are ON STRIKE!

This morning, workers from across three different Burgervilles walked off

goal is not everyone who struggles to protect the class interests of workers from joining an organization but rather to build a solidarity network of cooperation and coordination among all those who lead this struggle not in the interest of an organisation, but in the interests of the workers as a whole. "

Sydney Metro Fiasco

New info has come from Ray Hadley's Radio 2GB Program this morning Wed. 14/8/19 re Sydney Metro and latest stop-

the job, because none of us can afford to wait any longer for a raise. If strike is what it takes to get Burgerville to bargain with us in good faith and bring us a serious proposal on wages, we're here to prove with our actions that we're ready.

Earlier this week, Burgerville decided last-minute to push back a scheduled bargaining session, because they heard we might be going on strike that day. That was supposed to be the bargaining session where they brought us a better proposal on wages than the 13 cent raise they offered us nearly six months ago. But workers can't afford these repeated delays in bargaining. With what we're currently getting paid, workers often have to choose between making rent, buying groceries, or paying other bills, and sometimes face eviction as a result.

On Wednesday, we took legal action and filed an Unfair Labour Practice charge against Burgerville for bargaining in bad faith. Today, we're taking direct action to back that up. You can take action too, by donating to the BVWU Strike and Hardship Fund to compensate workers for lost wages during today's strike: <https://www.gofundme.com/bvwu-strike-and-hardship-fundraiser>

Follow the Burgerville Workers Union on Facebook and Twitter for updates on the strike.

page on Tues. 13/8/19. According to Hadley the trains were actually built in India. It may mean faulty construction explaining the break downs, not just 'teething problems' and commuters on the train could only catch chartered replacement buses in one direction. In the other direction they had to catch normal buses, etc. Also Hadley came out in opposition to the elimination of train crews on these trains and accused Transport Minister Constance of covering up the number of break downs. Constance claims four break downs, but Hadley claims much more.