

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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

***After Federal Elections Outcome - Govt & Employers to
Open Fire on Jobs & Conditions with Savage Austerity Drive!***



NATIONAL NEWS; CAPITALISM & WAR; POSTAL PARANOIA; NSW
METRO CASH WASTAGE; NSW RAILWAY NEWS; STATE TRANSIT
NEWS FLASH; NSW FIRE BRIGADE UNION NEWS; CANBERRA BUS
NEWS; VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS; ROMANIA LABOUR NEWS;
POLAND; NEW ZEALAND NEWS; BRITAIN TODAY; BRITISH
SYNDICALISM; DEBATE ON INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY; NEWS & NOTES

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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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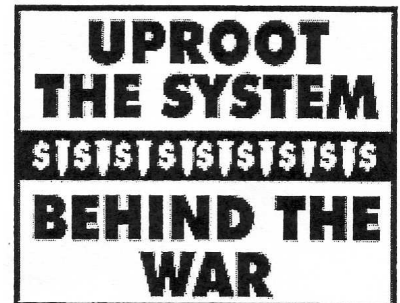
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destroy al Qaeda, and remove the Taliban. Not one of these objectives has been achieved and there is now little if any chance any of them will be.

Barrack Obama has publicly stated the US will start withdrawing its troops in 2011. This announcement came as the New York Times reported the US military had plotted the entire countries topography using military satellites and magnetic imaging technology. The US military industrial complex has discovered monstrous amounts of Iron, copper, cobalt and the richest deposit of lithium in the world. Lithium is the rarest and most valuable ingredient in mobile phone and laptop batteries. The demand for lithium is forecast to increase 20 fold over the next 10 years as Indian and Chinese demand for lithium increases.

It is now obvious that the US will soon start negotiating with the Taliban to ensure US and Australian mining companies get control of the mineral wealth. The claim

that we are fighting to bring democracy and freedom to Afghanistan will soon be replaced with a claim that we are building infrastructure to 'develop' the country. The war is now about who controls the



super profits which will come from these minerals. Not one more life should be sacrificed for the profits of greedy mining company bosses. Too many people have died for the weasel words of politicians.

Postal Paranoia

Australia Post has been dragged into court for spying on its workers after it tried to sack 6 posties working the Coogee run. The case was brought against Australia Post after it claim the posties had been falsifying records and not delivering enough mail. The corporation was using computer records to check if the posties had been using personal identification number (PIN)s

to open street-side red letter boxes to collect mail. The posties union argued the 'NSW Workplace Surveillance Act' requires all employers inform workers if electronic surveillance is being used to monitor them. Australia Post argued it is not covered by NSW law and had every right to spy on posties to monitor the rate at which they work. *Thanks to Sparx*

National News

War and Capitalism

The war on Afghanistan is now the longest war Australia has ever fought. The death toll after nearly a decade is climbing and the cost of the war is increasing. Dutch and English armies are now leaving Afghanistan amid claims the war has become bogged down and cannot be won. General David Richard's, the English armies Chief of General Staff has claimed western military forces should now start negotiating an exit strategy with Afghan war lords.

The recent deaths of 3 Australian commandos in a helicopter crash was caused by engine failure due to the high altitude and thinner air of the Afghan mountains. With no roads, bridges, rail lines or air-strips western armies need helicopters to move soldiers and supplies throughout the country. An extremely risky and expensive way to move people around any country. Especially when local Taliban are armed with hundreds of US supplied stinger missiles. When the USA first invaded Afghanistan it set out 3 objectives for the war. To capture Osama bin Laden,

\$500 Million Down the Drain

Documents released in the NSW Parliament have revealed the NSW government wasted \$500 million of our taxes preparing for two separate 'Metro' light rail tracks through Sydney. The first 'Metro' was supposed to be 38 kilometres long and had 13 new stations each one would be granted a special consent for medium and high density development. Property developers (the largest group of political donors in NSW) stood to make billions of dollars. That plan collapsed when the trade union movement stopped the government selling off the electricity industry.

The next plan was for an inner west Sydney 'Metro' at a cost of \$5 billion but running only 5 kilometres. Again the new line was to be given special consent for medium and high density development at its 5 stations. Again developers stood to make buckets of money. The wheels fell off this plan when the public

became so offended by the plan that it was clear it was going to cost local politicians votes. The end result - \$500M that should have gone on new hospitals, schools or fire stations gone forever. Lost by the people who tried to cut our wages and reduce our annual leave and shut fire stations throughout NSW.

Thanks to Sparx

REBEL WORKER

WEBSITE:

www.rebelworker.org

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

Time for Action NOW on Rail Corp EBA 2010

by The Crimson Coconut

Recently a majority of RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) members voted in favour of industrial action in regard to the Rail Corp EBA (Enterprise Bargain Agreement). Now following some effective activism by Members' Voice militants involving the issuing of a draft log of claims flyer and a petition calling for a 24 hour rail strike, the union hierarchy has been pressured into taking more significant action. The officials have now had several changes of mind from just a threat of a strike, to calling a 4 hour strike on Thurs. 12/8/10 and now are also calling a 24 hour strike on Wed. 18/8/10 if the Government does not resolve the dispute. This proviso could also provide an excuse for the union officials to claim a fake victory and call off the action. Several fare free days are to be held.

It is almost 4 months since the expiry of the old Enterprise Agreement and the start of a new Agreement. That's 4 months that RailCorp have refused to pay us a pay rise.

RailCorp will be happy to cruise along like this right up to the NSW Election when a sweetener in the form of a small pay rise may be delivered. An eventual 5% pay rise, if granted, will already be discounted by the period within which it was withheld. A 4 months delay of a 5% pay rise would mean that the effective pay rise in the first year would be just 3.35%. The longer this goes on the more we lose.

So far RailCorp have not entertained any of the progressive claims in the log put forward by the unions. Simultaneously the Unions have been unable to apply any pressure at all to RailCorp for the Unions log of claims. This is both a result of incompetence on behalf of the Union leadership and compromise tactics that have their roots embedded in the NSW ALP.

Members Voice believe that industrial action in its many forms is an essential weapon in the armoury of workers defending their living standards and conditions. However industrial action should never been used in isolation and must be tied to concrete demands.

While rejecting outright the extravagant claims of management many rail workers

will relish the chance to dish out a rebuff to RailCorp and the NSW Government. Most of us are, however, left in the dark due to the lack of a concrete set of demands during any planned industrial action. A "fallback position" or "line in the sand" that we will not cross has never been discussed.

Claims around industrial action will remain hazy in the minds of most rail workers because they have not been part of the negotiating process.

If approval for industrial action is gained then mass "stop-work meetings" should be called so that workers on the job have a chance to have an input into the fight back process and understand why they are taking action.

Members Voice calls on the Transport Unions for mass "stop-work" meetings where discussion and voting takes place on the demands, type and duration of the industrial action.

The outcome and success of any actions decided on is difficult to judge before it takes place. Success will depend on how willing workers and the unions are to pursue their own log of claims and how willingly management and the NSW Government are willing to hold their ground.

The very fact that the unions are prepared to contemplate industrial action shows just how the ranks are no longer prepared to sit back and accept the rollback of working conditions and cuts to income. Also, there is a widespread contempt for politics and politicians amongst workers. Laid out before them to see are the double standards where they are continually asked to tighten their belts and constrain wage demands while politicians and RailCorp management line their own pockets and feed from the public funded trough with no restraint at all.

We should all support protecting our jobs, wages and conditions. Industrial action is necessary in this case, as management and

the NSW government want us to trade our conditions away for a pay rise at a time when rail workers household budgets are strained and work has intensified.

As the quality of public transport deteriorates the need for decent and affordable public transport in the community increases. We will have to fight for public services to be maintained and improved.



Taking action helps all of the people of NSW, as any industrial action is going to send a strong message to the NSW Government that cuts to public transport will not be tolerated.

This time a failure by the unions to carry out the wishes of members or just to let off a bit of pressure from below will be seen for what it is. Members must keep them on their toes and punish them when they don't live up to the hype. The Membership Team will be continuing to do that in no small measure (and a lot more).

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STOP PRESS

Management is making as policy in Sept. some Rail Corp EBA proposals despite lacking RTBU membership approval of the EBA document.

Draft RailCorp Log of Claims by Members' Voice

Draft RailCorp Log of Claims by Members' Voice

58% of members voted in a recent strike ballot with 97% of votes in favour of industrial action regarding our EBA. Despite this the RTBU leadership has not offered a clear set of demands. Members' Voice is offering a popular set of demands that could be incorporated into EBA 2010 if members had control over the negotiation process. Union members are encouraged to push for these items to be included in a new log of claims. Members are also encouraged to debate, modify, and add to this list of claims.

*No trade-offs. Real wage increases that are equal to or better than the cost of living. Let's put the idea of trading off our jobs and hard won conditions for pay rises far behind us. The dignity of rail workers has been eroded over the last couple of decades by this practice.

*Proper compensation for productivity improvements such as staff reviews, staff reductions, increased workloads, staff shortages and other "innovative" improvements. This has always been promised but never delivered.

*A catch up pay rise of 8% to 10%. The recent ACTU wage case for low paid workers sought a \$30 - \$40 per week catch up pay rise following wage restraint during the global financial crisis. The ACTU cited cost of living increases for the claim. The claim equates to an 8 to 10 percent pay rise and that is what we should strive for.

The NSW Government's wages policy restricts wage rises to 2.5% pa. This is government policy rather than a restrictive industrial clause. We are not duty bound to follow this policy direction. This is especially the case since we are covered by a Federal Award which can be only adjudicated by a Federal Court.

*Generous increases in shift penalties based on new research and information regarding the deleterious effects that shift work has on individuals. Lift penalty rates on Shift Work to 30% of the hourly rate. New findings show that fatigue, related to shift work, causes arterial disease and heart attacks. Also shift work fatigue is a significant factor in cancer, obesity, mental illness and other sleep disorders. As a result, the life expectancy of shift workers is somewhat less than that of the rest of the population. At present workers are paid a

pittance for their sacrifices of good health and a social life. The attitude towards shift workers and shift work needs to change and be taken seriously.

*Fill all vacant positions by a fair and transparent selection process. There are many (hundreds) of vacant positions within RailCorp where staff have been allowed to "act up".

Mostly the staff selected to act in these positions have not been chosen on any particular merit. Selection has typically been at the whim of a particular manager or group. This can cause disillusionment amongst employees who believe in a fair and transparent process. It may lead to low morale and adversely affect teamwork. Persons "acting-up" in a particular position can

*Stop the downgrading of positions. e.g. At some locations CSAs who are doing the work of booking clerks are not paid the same rate as clerks doing the same job.

*Extend use of Home and Duty Passes to include private buses. This costs the Government very little as most trips by transport workers are outside of the peak periods. Most private buses during this period run pretty close to empty. It would also free up space in rail commuter car parks for full-paying passengers. It also removes the worry of insecure parking for public transport employees. The present system is also inequitable as staff who live in areas serviced by public government buses e.g. Inner Western Sydney and the North Shore have free access to bus ser-



gain an unfair advantage when jobs are finally advertised. If there is a temporary vacancy all those eligible to "act up" from the grade below must be given the chance to do so. All vacant positions should be filled as soon as possible — a simple and easy thing to do.

*Respect for work grades when allocating shifts. Lower graded staff are often placed in higher graded positions when staff at the higher grade are available to work. Staff at the proper designated job grade must be given first priority to work at their grade. That does not mean that staff at the lower grade should not be given the opportunity to learn or to act in higher grades.

vices whilst those living in Western Sydney etc. do not. This reflects the general demographic bias in the government's public transport planning.

*Better, easier and more flexible access to Long Service Leave (LSL). No reasons should have to be given to access LSL which presently relies on the whims of an intermediate manager or CSM where denial becomes purely a cost cutting device. We need the ability to defer, split and save annual and accumulated leave more easily.

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RAIL- BUS NEWS

By the Transport Scrutinizer

RAILCORP

It is very obvious that the last lot of Staff Reviews fell flat on its face. Staff shortages and unmanned stations are not doing the image very well, are they? Not only that but constant complaints from customers on intercity services about crowded 4 car Oscars and V sets, especially on the Newcastle, Central Coast services aren't doing the Rightwing ALP Government any favours either. It was transport that won the day for Neville Wran and it will be transport that will lose the day for the Keneally State Government.

With more trade-offs being offered by RailCorp in EA 2010, we can only hope

that sanity prevails and the grassroots Union membership force the Unions to strike for the right to better pay and conditions. Rail workers unite! Fight for your rights!

STATE TRANSIT

The second lot of 3% pay increases have been implemented, giving Bus Operators a total of 6% for 2009 and 2010, something that may not have happened if Bus Operators did not strike for their rights (Rail workers take note). Meanwhile new buses continue to be delivered and old buses slowly retired. However, all is not as rosy as it seems. As heavy traffic, cyclists clogging bus lanes, taxis illegally pulling up in B-light bays and some of the most unworkable schedules in living memory, continue to cause stress and decaying

health for Bus Operators. Whilst some Band-Aid solutions have been implemented, something more realistic needs to be done.

At Kingsgrove and Waverley Depots, Union Delegates and Members have forced STA Management to conduct timing checks on Route 400 Burwood to Bondi Jct services. As many of these runs can arrive at either terminus, anything up to an hour late. Hopefully new timetables with improved running and recovery times will be introduced.

With the introduction of Metrobus, one wonders why a separate livery and a separate operations system is necessary to operate it. Is this setup a model for eventual privatisation? Speaking of privatisation, our world famous Sydney Explorer and Bondi Explorer are all set to be sold off to private enterprise. Yet another example of transport doom for the Keneally Government.

Transport Forum Stage Managed

The RTBU hierarchy brazenly showed how in the pocket of the NSW ALP Government they are at the Transport Forum held in late July.

At the forum Rail Corp Union Reps were led to believe that they would be able to quiz the Transport Minister on various issues. However, when reps attended the fo-

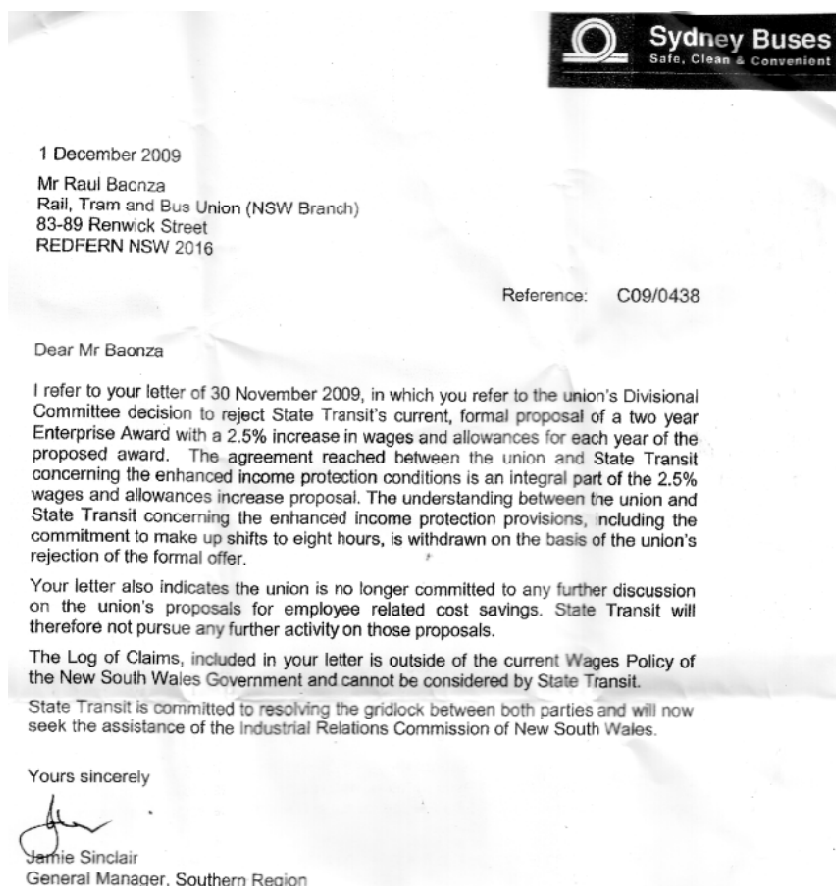
rum, they were informed by "order of Union Head Office", they could only ask set questions, which the Minister could be feel comfortable in answering!!!

STATE TRANSIT NEWS FLASH

What Conditions Bus Drivers Have Lost in EBA 2009

The main item is the loss of a build up to 8 hours on our shifts. If you refer to the letter opposite, you will find State Transit offered it to our senile Bus Committee and then withdrew the offer. I understand that they wanted in return, was access to more casual drivers. That was never disclosed in the Depot Union meetings. How much does the stupid game cost you, the drivers, day in, day out, you are given 7 hour shifts. The loss in wages would amount to thousands of dollars over the coming years. The only build up given was to the casuals' wages. What a joke are our Bus Division Secretary and Bus Division President.

The second condition lost is the On-Call allowance. Did you vote for this allow-



ance to be dropped? This alone saves State Transit over 100 thousand dollars a year. The loss of this Allowance is straight out of your pockets.

For the Depot Delegates not to know of these conditions losses and if they knew, not to act against the Enterprise Bargain

Committee, is nothing short of criminal. All Depot Delegates should resign along with the Bus Division President and Secretary, to make way for Officials who care about ordinary Bus Drivers, not just to take the money and bury their heads in the sand.

Remember in November, these so called elected Officials are up for re-election. Vote them back to bus driving!

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

Rebel Worker: What's the latest with the union hierarchy?

Waverley Busie: A couple of months ago, a female organiser from Unions NSW came out to the depot to gather our suggestions for a campaign to oppose privatisation. At a meeting of 30 to 40 drivers I attended, she expressed her openness to hearing our suggestions regarding courses of action. However, she was also pushing the approach of the union hierarchy entailing getting both ALP and Liberal candidates in the upcoming NSW State elections to endorse a statement that public sector workers should be left as public workers. As we are more capable of running the remaining 6 or 8 Government owned utilities, still in existence due to our ongoing experience. This approach by the union hierarchy appeared to me to be a little too late and the union hierarchy was again being caught on the hop. It also seemed quite naive, given the monumental lies that the major parties engage in about their secret agendas. In the case of South Australia, when the Liberals got into power they promised not to privatise the electricity industry. However, 6 months later they did just that.

One contender for large slices of Govt buses in NSW is Veolia. It has won a huge lot of contracts around Australia for public services and recently won the contract for operating the Kurnell Desalination Plant. The Unions NSW campaign certainly doesn't have enough clout. At the meeting I argued for a major action to gain media publicity for the anti-privatisation campaign by public sector workers. It would involve a march from 3 different directions to one large rally involving 20,000 to 30,000 people. I noticed at the meeting a state of complacency and an associated lack of a sense of urgency to the meet the privatisation threat. In emphasising the seriousness of the issue, I made the point that some consequences of privatisation for us would be large cuts in our pay such as \$200 per week, casualisation, loss of superannuation and long service leave

entitlements. Why hasn't the pay out these entitlements to those who don't want to be employed in a private company, been looked into?

Recently, I was speaking on the bus to a woman who worked as a driver in Bus West which is operated by Veolia in Western Australia. I was surprised to hear her mention that she was on \$27 per hour. Whilst we are on \$23-\$24 per hour. This relatively higher hourly wage, no doubt was a bribe by the Veolia bosses to secure trade-offs in conditions by Bus West workers and their compliance with the selloff.

RW: What do drivers who have worked for private bus companies think of the

part of some hidden agenda, that the bosses aren't telling us about? There is no room anymore for fun on the job. There is no encouragement to be on the job. The STA just hopes that you survive. The STA could at least organise a regular raffle as a social event. Strawberry Hills is too tough on workers. It's one way. Their way or no other way!

RW: What's the latest with overtime?

WB: Some drivers have complained that they are not being paid OT when its booked up for late running. According to our union rep, the STA has not been conducting internal checks to ensure we are receiving our correct wages entitlement. It doesn't want to reaudit the payslip. Despite its duty of care responsibility.

RW: How are things with the mechanics?

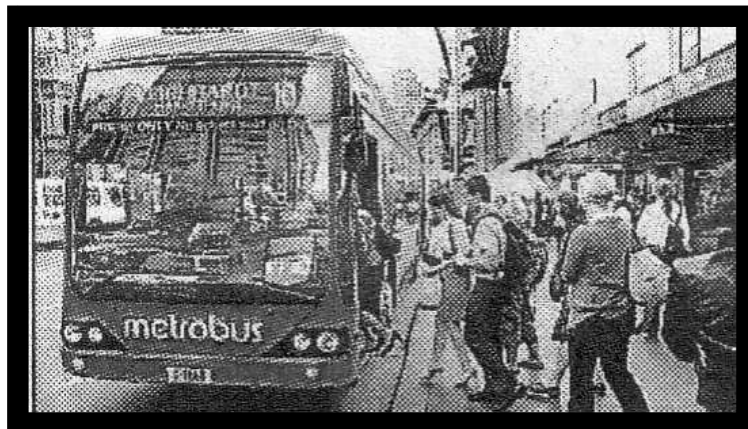
WB: The mechanics have mentioned that there are serious problems with 6-8 of the old Mercedes low floor gas buses, some of which are 12-14 years old. The problem which affected these type of buses, a while back, involving fine hair line cracks in the chassis has re-appeared. In the previous episode, all these buses had to be taken off the road for maintenance work,

which disrupted bus services. Lately, the mechanics' union, the AMWU has raised the issue again with the STA bosses, who had been again ignoring it. Threatening that all these buses would be taken off the road, if the chassis weakness was not remedied.

There needs to be a balance. If we are having to put up with reduced leisure time due to having to work ever more overtime, through sitting in traffic on our runs, Strawberry Hills should at least fix the buses.

RW: How are drivers handling the job?

WB: I was recently speaking to one driver who said he can't be with people. However to do your job you can't ignore passengers. We need to be happy with people and work with people. As it makes our job easier. As part of this approach toward passengers it's important we help passengers regarding paying correct fares, so they don't get fined. The approach of the STA is to ignore the whole issue. Their attitude is we should just focus on driving



privatisation threat?

WB: Recently I spoke to one driver who had previously worked for a private bus company. He agreed with me that privatisation of State Transit will have major negative effects for us. It's likely everyone would be made a casual with shifts being offered to a pool of casuals. Safety would also go downhill with much more accidents. However, he thought it wouldn't work. Due to all the corner cutting and after 2-3 years, the privatised bus system could be at the point of collapse.

RW: What's the situation with social life at the depot?

WB: Everything is tame. The workplace has lost its spark. Everything is contained, deodorised and sanitised. The bosses frown on kids with their parents coming into the yard. Apart from the Xmas show, there are no other shows or parties. The boot camp was also cancelled. The STA appears to be encouraging a fear factor in the workplace, in line with the anti-terrorism phobias encouraged by ALP and Liberal Governments. Is this all

and ignore the whole issue of passengers being fined for paying incorrect fares. There needs to be some interaction with people and to be of service.

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

It seems that the only talk in the depot is when the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) elections are coming. The union members are asking who is running against the pretenders. The union hierarchy's only move this week was to remove Transit Times (STA Staff Magazine) from the depot due to a mistake in the information supplied in one of the articles on working hours. This was in response to a fax from the sleepy Redfern union head office, but still it took two days to be received.

The depot manager has a new bee in her bonnet for the Burwood yard. In short, boom gates and a fence inside the yard to stop trespassers. What a waste of money. What is required is a new front fence with

TWO GATES IN A DIFFERENT POSITION, so the longer buses can exit the depot in safety without hitting the fence. The depot was built for 10.5 metre buses?

I hope Kingsgrove enjoyed our Volvos they borrowed.

LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the latest at the depot?

Leichhardt Busie: Since the renovations, it's become very much a show depot, with all manner of managers bearing clip boards and even OH&S (Occupational Health & Safety) people coming out to check us out. It's become very impersonal. Our union rep Marta has been off for some time on sick leave. Its expected she will return to work within a month.

RW: How are things with the rosters?

LB: The union hierarchy has been spouting about so called "Life Style" rosters. These rosters lack Saturday shifts. While most of us hate working Saturdays, we need the money so we work them. The un-

ion officials disclaim any salesmanship and say that they are just seeking our opinions on the rosters. There is quite a bit of roster queue jumping, with some drivers on shifts commencing early in the morning when they are not supposed to be and some who should be on these shifts, but are not. Our current roster clerk is doing a very good job, in sharp contrast to previous holders of the position.

RW: How are things with Compo?

LB: For those of us who get injured on the job and go on compo, they aren't being properly supported. Recently, in the case of one driver, who returned to the job following being off on compo, she has faced difficulties with the bosses. She presented a medical certificate stating that she can only work 4 hours per day. However the bosses are demanding that she works 5 hours. Recently, two drivers were sacked. One was "retired on medical grounds" following going on compo due to head and neck injuries caused by looking into Mercedes mirrors. He is fighting the sack in the courts. It is rumoured another driver who was sacked received a large payout.

The problem is that this new roster opens the door to the phasing out of the current roster come EBA time.

Productivity Forum? No thanks

The proposed Productivity Forum, where company and MUA members discuss how to improve productivity, must be opposed. Industrially, such a forum can only lead to the company devising ways to make us

SYDNEY WHARFIES' NEWS

DP World Botany Labour Review: the good and the bad

DP World (DPW) Botany's long running labour review looks set to be finalised on June 16. MUA members will vote on a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that offers 24 new permanent operations jobs, three new maintenance jobs and a new roster for 48 operations employees.

The MOA also proposes the setting up of a joint employer-employee productivity forum, 24 staggered GWE to VSE upgrades linked to productivity benchmarks and changes to the VSE panel system.

New jobs

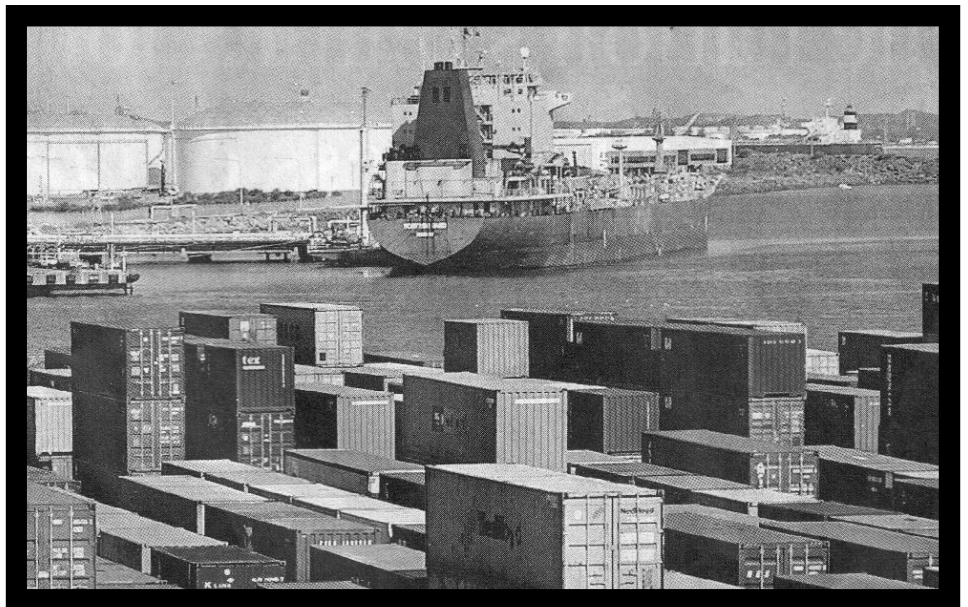
Twenty four new permanent operations and three new maintenance jobs are on offer. This is not to be sneezed at.

But only last year twelve maintenance jobs were lost as a result of the economic downturn. Along with the round of voluntary redundancies, around 20 jobs disappeared.

These 27 new jobs only get us back to where we were before the downturn. But container volumes have greatly increased since then. DPW reports show that container volumes bounced back in the second half of 2009 and grew another 6% to 9% in the first quarter of 2010 (see www.dpworld.com).

These new jobs are a big step forward. But is there scope for a continued push for more permanent jobs? Absolutely.

New roster



The new 35 hour Operations Roster for 48 permanents gives DP World the extra weekend coverage it has been pushing for (with five weekends out of every eight to be worked). On the other hand, it also has one full week off work every eight weeks and higher earnings than the current roster.

work harder with less labour. Besides, any productivity gains that a company makes will not benefit workers. They will only boost profits.

Ideologically, such meetings are based on the idea that workers and bosses have

common interests. This is wrong. While we want higher wages, they want to hold our wages down. We all want job security, while they would prefer to undermine it.

Workers have no common interests with the company. Their productivity should not be our concern. The MUA should have no involvement with any proposed Productivity Forum.

Don't link GWE to VSE upgrades to productivity

The proposal to link 24 GWE to VSE upgrades to various container rate benchmarks must also be opposed.

Linking job upgrades to productivity encourages workers to speed up, cut corners and work unsafely. This is a dangerous precedent that must be stopped dead in its tracks.

Don't touch the VSE panels

The MOA also proposes to change the day that VSE panels change over from Sunday to Tuesday. Why? It is of no benefit to VSE's, but it does make it easier for DPW allocators to roster VSE for the weekends.

If we fight – we can win!

The May 18 yard meeting at DP World voted for a range of measures to pressure DPW into handing over more permanent jobs. Within a week the company was forced to come to the MUA and negotiate in good faith. The speed with which the company came to the party and agreed to the Memorandum of Agreement surprised many of us.

It is possible that agreement between DPW and the MUA had progressed further than what we were told at the May 18 yard meeting.

(One rumour suggests that the figure of 24 permanent operations jobs and a list of who will be getting these jobs was decided as far back as in March).

Even if this is the case, the fact that the company did return to the negotiating table only a week after May 18 yard meeting point to one fact. And that is – if we fight, we can win.

The 20 plus jobs on offer are a step forward. This number of permanent jobs has not been offered to us by the company for years. The new 35 hour Operations Roster is, apart from the extra weekend work, a step forward.

On the other hand, the Productivity Forum, the productivity-linked GWE to VSE upgrades and the changes to the VSE panel system need to be knocked on the head.

The way forward is to lock in the best parts of the Memorandum of Agreement now, and continue the fight to overturn the parts of the MOA that are of no benefit to us.

Fight called off without a yard meeting vote

On May 18 the MUA held a yard meeting in a bid to break the deadlock in the DP World Botany labour review (see previous

article). The two-hour meeting voted in favour of a range of measures that would pressure management into handing over more permanent jobs.

It appears that these measures had the desired effect. By May 26, the company had agreed to meet with MUA site committee members on June 4 and negotiate in good faith – as long as the measures that MUA members had voted for were lifted. This was agreed to and the workforce was informed of this decision.

Problem is, site committee members should not have made such a decision. Basic union principle dictates that any vote made at a mass meeting can only be reversed at another mass meeting.

PO Death leads to 24 hour Strike

On the morning of 14/7/10, Steve Piper was killed at PO Appleton Dock, Melbourne. By midday work had stopped at all PO docks for 24 hours.

STOP PRESS: On June 16, MUA members voted for a MOA (memorandum of Agreement) that offers 24 permanent jobs and a new roster for 48 operative employees.

(Articles from Vigilance No.46 & 47 (June & July 2010) Vigilance is a socialist bulletin for MUA members in Sydney produced by Shane Bentley - the "Port Botany Wharfie". See www.vigilanceBulletin.org)

N.S.W. FIRE BRIGADE UNION NEWS

A Year in Review

The last 12 months has seen a serious turnaround for the union in NSW. With the newly elected leadership now settled into office it is worth reviewing where we have been and just exactly where we are going. After a particularly dirty electoral campaign the first 12 months started off on a very rocky footing with the secretary called into the labour courts to explain why he shouldn't be charged with contempt of court based on an article he wrote condemning an Industrial Relations Commission's (IRC) decision. From the first day the union leadership was on the back foot with the IRC.

In this time we have seen the department undermine our promotional systems for Inspector by acting outside the Award. If/when the government attempts to amalgamate the 2 fire services it will now have a precedent to bring in operational com-

manders from the RFS. Likewise with station officers the system has been undermined. Logistic Supply Vehicles (LSV) have been privatised to facilitate an increase in permanent staff desperately needed by regional communities. An expansion that should not have come at the expense of our operational capacity.

Station delegates an essential part of any half decent trade union have been either ignored or undermined. A number of delegates have now withdrawn their positions after being left out of the loop when the union has been cracking deals with management. To add insult to injury, delegates are now being told to stop whinging and being self-centred by union employees.

With senior management now in total disarray and a number of senior members of the HR section resigning. The union should be going ahead in leaps and bounds in bettering our wages and conditions. Instead we are told the union is being ignored and frozen out of input into major

changes in our industry. With the Commissioner now praising the union leadership for its support and cooperation, alarms bells should be going off for every member of the union. With only a matter of months to go before the next state election, we should now be sorting out what and when we will do to ensure we don't get left behind in wage negotiations.

The biggest issue for our union however has been how the leadership in NSW deals with the UFU. Our national union was set up so no single state could control it and dictate to any other branch how it should run its affairs. Whichever way you look at it NSW will end up in the federal labour courts. This means we will either need to negotiate with the UFU, affiliate with another national union or set up our own national union. The membership in NSW has been split and if there is a plan we still haven't been told what it is. If the leadership now pays any money to the UFU it will be in breach of rank and file policy, if

it doesn't pay money it will be in breach of federal law. We are now in a very dangerous place at the very time the union should be on the front foot dictating to government and management.

were collaborating to drive down our wages and increase our work. A decision was made to form a National Union and give us a body bigger than any single employer. Commissioners and Chief Officers



Should I Stay or Should I Go

Most people understand that unionism is about sticking together and that the more we stick together the stronger we are. This is why a fire from Sydney named Jim Lambert organised meetings of fire fighters from all over Australia in the 1960's. These fires realised fire service bosses

all over Australia were so worried about a National Union that they fought us all the way to the High Court of Australia. We won that fight and created a constitutional precedent for all workers in Australia to form National Unions. The United Fire fighters Union of Australia (UFUA) is the body which will protect our wages and conditions when the ALP is tossed out of power in March 2011.

When union bosses in NSW used communist dogma to fight against the 10/14 - fires in NSW called in the UFUA eventually delivering us the 10/14. When the Howard government tried to privatise airport fire services - the UFUA stepped in to protect jobs. When Western Australian fides were copping it from a hostile state government - the UFUA helped them win the best wage rates in the country. The UFUA has 24 delegates, NSW - 8, Victoria - 4, Qld - 4, WA - 2, SA - 2, airports - 2, ACT - 1, Tasmania - 1. These delegates meet at least once each year and last year voted for a National Secretary and President. In 2009 the NSW branch secretary nominated for National Secretary and lost to the Victorian branch secretary. Shortly after NSW union bosses started sledging the National Union leadership (sounds familiar?) and tried to get members to resign from the National Union.

Splitting our National Union is bad for fire fighters - good for fire service bosses. When the NSW labour courts are abolished by the incoming state government the FBEU's registration will lapse and we will be left without the protection of the federal labour law. We pay our union leaders big dollars to fix exactly these types of problems. Winning the support of just five additional delegates would save us hundreds of thousands of dollars, hold our union together and allow the union to fight for all our interests.

Thanks to Sparx

CANBERRA BUS NEWS

Canberra bus drivers – industrial ACTION!

A 24-hour strike by ACTION bus drivers in Canberra on Friday, 25 June brought Canberra's public transport system to a halt.

The strike was the result of months of futile negotiations between management of the publicly owned bus service and the drivers' union, the Transport Workers Union. All 600 drivers at ACTION's two depots refused to drive buses for the day, with about two thirds of the 600 drivers attending picket lines outside the depots from 4am throughout the morning. TWU organiser, Klaus Pinkus, addressed mass meetings of workers at the two depots reporting back on the state of negotiations and presenting options of ongoing industrial action to the assembled drivers.

Further action favoured by the drivers would see a ban on collecting fares from passengers which would enable services to the public to continue, giving members of the public a free ride while hurting the financial interests of the employer.

The main issue in dispute is management's insistence of removing a long-standing requirement that a minimum 60% of ACTION bus drives be employed on a full-time basis. Instead the bosses would like to have no limitation on the amount of part-time drivers that could be employed in future. Drivers are already waiting up to four years to become full-time with many choosing to leave because of this long wait. If the proportion of part-time drivers is increased there could be no limit to the amount of time drivers are left waiting for a full-time job.

Also at issue is that many part-time drivers often work 40 hours a week or more but only accrue superannuation on their base hours, at most 30 hours per week.

Management also want to force drivers to work weekend shifts without penalty payments. After eight months of negotiations ACTION bosses have refused to make any offer of a pay rise even though other ACT public servants have recently been offered a 2.5% pay rise, without trade-offs. Bus drivers are the only public sector workers in Canberra who are being required to give up hard won conditions for a pay rise that is likely to be less than the rate of inflation.

The drivers' claim is simply to maintain their existing level of pay, currently an annual 4% pay increase, and conditions.

by Max Stirner

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In recent editions of Rebel Worker, issues have been raised by V/Line employees in various grades regarding work issues, Human Resources Department interfering in award conditions and discipline of employees. In this issue a few employees from the Locomotive Division, Salaried Section plus daily paid employees have combined to talk about these issues.

Rebel Worker: It is sure good to see the Locomotive Division, Salaried Section and daily paid employees combine.

Rastus and Roscoe: Being drivers, we see the need for employees to unite.

Seamus: Yes we have a number of issues at Spencer Street. What makes myself sick is various employees who dob in their fellow employees, so as to gain favours with management.

Clarence: Yes in one instance a Service Officer dobbed in another Service Officer to the Station Manager. He claimed the other Service Officer was loafing in the back room of the coach terminal. It is unbelievable what happened but the Service Officer who was lugged in was having a break after working his guts out despatching buses that were replacing buses.

Rastus: What a snitch!

Clarence: Yes when the other employees heard what happened they avoid the snitch.

RW: What about the CONTROL ROOM at SPENCER STREET.

Seamus: This room is for the operation of trains but it was being used by this particular snitch to spy on employees during his shift.

Rastus and Roscoe: This room would be used to spy on Drivers. We do not trust Service Officers. In fact they may dob in drivers.

RW: I have been told that the Government has given the Green Star parcels to V/Line.

Seamus: You are correct. When the station authority was disbanded when the new station was completed. The information centre was transferred to Metlink and Green Stars was taken over by V/Line. V/Line Senior management did not want the business so they are trying to kill off the business. So you see Green Stars handles all the urgent blood supplies and these parcels have been banned from being carried on Sprinter and Velocity trains. The parcels can only be carried on passenger trains. This effectively means Green Stars on the Ballarat line has to go by road.

Clarence: The Government through the Health Department subsidises this service as the private couriers will not handle the service because it would lose money.

Seamus: Management hates running this service and would like to kill it.

Rastus: The same with the operation of Heritage Trains. This operation was placed in V/Line hands because the Heritage Groups could not obtain accreditation to operate these trains with their own crews. You see the drivers want to operate these trains and not having these Heritage groups use volunteers to operate these trains.

RW: I hear these groups use their own crews in Tasmania and New Zealand.

Roscoe: This is correct but the Union has input and the Heritage groups use drivers from KIWI RAIL who volunteer on their rest days. I do not know about Tasmania.

Rastus: If you give these train lovers the right to run these trains, you may create a future scab force which could be used if a dispute happens within a Freight Company.

Clarence: These train lovers think they own the railways and at times some of them try to bully station staff, but one call to the signalmen and train examiners will block these trains. These train lovers soon understand. Finally V/Line tried to get out of running Heritage trains years ago and the union stopped them.

RW: What about the Career Change within Spencer Street?

Clarence: What career change? They only place their mates in the job. In fact the last issue of Sparks mention was made about a number of conductors applying for Authorised Officers. The conductors were unsuccessful. In fact the person who obtained the position was a friend of one of the managers of the security department.

RW: It smells of corruption.

Clarence: It certainly does. I will tell your readers about a conductor who was declared medically unfit to work on trains

and was placed in the booking office on light duties. After a couple of months, Human Resources tried to remove her saying there was no position in V/Line for her. The union intervened and was able to get her trained as a booking clerk. She was trained and when a position became vacant she applied for the position and was not successful. She was then told by Human Resources that the only vacancies at V/Line were for conductors so she was terminated as medically unfit.

RW: It was obvious that Human Resources wanted to get rid of the conductor.

Rastus and Roscoe: You are correct. You see both of us observed the conductor whilst driving motor trains and travelling per passenger trains and she was doing a good job. She got stuck into fare evaders and people placing their feet on seats. This upset V/Line management as it did not suit their image. You see management wants conductors and station staff to be punching bags with the public. They do not care conductors cop it from the public. If the public complain, they always believe the public.

Seamus: The union found the conductor a position with another train operating company.



RW: Regarding the booking office, V/Line employees should be give an opportunity to leave the position.

Clarence: You are correct, but management does not see it that way. You hear management say they will put who they want in the booking office.

RW: You mean the crawlers. Also what about the conductor who was given the final warning over the person who jumped on their train.

Clarence: This issue is still ongoing. You see there is a woman in Human Resources who wants to put employees on a 12 month final warning. It is either her way or no way.

Rastus and Roscoe: This woman thinks she owns Human Resources. Most of the Drivers hate her guts.

Seamus: You see a Platform Supervisor saw this incident but management put pressure on the supervisor not to make any statement. I think the supervisor is frightened because Service Officers may put the boot into the person.

Clarence: You see the union is trying to get the case reopened but this woman will not budge. We will keep on trying.

RW: In concluding, most employees have no time for snitches. Regarding Green Stars, if any attempts are made to close it down, then industrial action should take place. The case of the Conductor who lost her job due to being medically unfit was sad. She should have been employed in the Booking Office. All employees be given a chance to learn the booking office as well as the control room.

Seamus: In having the final say, there persons who dob in fellow workers. One day you will slip up and be cast adrift.

Clarence: As regards the conductor who was given a final warning. Human Resources should be reminded – Touch one employee, you touch all.

Rastus and Roscoe: As we said in a previous edition of RW, we have no intention of retracting our statement about Human Resources. If you have to front them, don't turn up! If station staff, conductors and drivers unite you could give the Bludgers the boot!

ROMANIAN LABOUR NEWS

“The people have nothing to lose...” – Interview with a Romanian Anarcho-Syndicalist

The following Interview was first published on the 29th May 2010 in a German Version on Syndikalismus.tk. The following Interview about the announced social cuts of the Romanian Government was done with Comrade Diogenes (30) from Bucharest. He is an Anarcho-Syndicalist and a social worker under contract by the town of Bucharest. He is directly affected by the recent announced wages cuts and public service layoffs.

On 19th of May more than 50,000 workers, teachers and pensioners in Bucharest marched in the streets. Their shouted slogans demanded the sacking of the government.

S.tk: Do you think the demonstration was an success and that the government will take back their decisions of the social- and money cuts? What do you think about the demonstration from 19th of may?

Diogenes: The protests that took place on May 19th were initiated by the trade unions that are operating in Romania. These unions have nothing to do with defending worker's rights – in my opinion, and they are very close to the definition of yellow unions. Many of these union's leaders are millionaires and these unions are collecting huge amounts of money (1% from the gross income of an employee); and because the law obliges the employer to sign a collective labour agreement (which must be negotiated with the unions), even if you refuse to contribute in the account of such a union, the Romanian state, will automatically stops 0.6% from your gross salary under the pretext that this money will form a special fund for collective bargaining.

There are a huge amount of money – millions of Euros per month. That's pure mathematics, no speculation at all. Administating all that amount of money - why they need also to rob those people that refuse to join the union? I guess that if you'll rent the Hermitage Palace for the collective bargaining it would be a cheaper business. Within these unions there is no transparency at all. The union leaders hold their positions for life, I never heard about sessions within the union and

without any result and I think also that the opposition sees the current situation as an opportunity to replace the current poor governance with another one – equally poor, but a governance of their own. I am convinced by the fact that all this criticism that is put on the government by the unions, it represents, nothing more but an asset for the opposition. Why would a union leader compromise his position? They will stay for the interest of the opposition because the government is compromised anyway. Until an authentic spirit of rebellion won't come out to the surface, nothing will be changed.

I don't know if the government will cancel the wage cut decision but I know that this crisis will be set on the shoulders of the poor however - as it is set right now within this government's project of wage cuts or within any other alternative project of the government or of the opposition in the parliament.

This is the state policy guideline. This is its morality.

S.tk: In foreign countries, also in Germany, large demonstrations have occurred against Govt. Austerity policies. Especially in the left radical and the official FAU - report is the expectation that in Romania mass protests against Austerity policies will occur like in the case of Greece. Is this expectation realistic?

Diogenes: Such a great expectation will lead to great disappointment if things will follow another path. How should be that possible knowing the activity of the unions that are activating in Romania? General strike and massive protests must start at the initiative of the workers without the interference of these



also no elections. The conclusion that necessarily resulting is that these unions are a dubious business and have nothing to do with defending worker's rights.

S.tk: What do I think about the protest that took place on May 19th?

Diogenes: Sorry to say this, but I think a mob of 50,000 people was taken there

so cold unions - which I have no doubt - will make everything possible to misappropriate the worker's revolt towards something unproductive and in favour of a government or another. However - the possibility for massive protest to take place it is born right now, caused by the increasing poverty within the working class: growing unemployment, the inability of borrowers to pay their rates for their ugly, small and very expensive houses, etc. The main conditions for these protests to take place are: 1. to take place spontaneously and 2. To be organised outside these parasitical organisations that are operating under the mask of syndicalism. The conditions that generate massive protests in Greece are much softer than the harsh conditions that Romanian's workers have to deal with.

We'll see if the solidarity spirit will be as strong as the solidarity among the Greeks... but we must notice that Greeks have a long tradition in operating with grass roots unions and also they are familiarized with radical ideas, while Romanians are not. However - we must create precedents for these kind of situations and anarchist agitation would be very useful in these times.

S.tk: In the past in Romania, general strikes have been called several times by the specific branch unions. The mass of the strikers stayed at home and brought the protest not on the street and not to the public. Are the unions at all able to create real pressure? And in which branches do you see the most success of union-actions?

Diogenes: A large part of the employees that was called to participate remained not at home but at their work program under the pressure of the employers. I said before - the yellow unions are monopolist and all this situation smells of a fraud. Who announced the employees that it will be a large protest? Not the union leaders. The employers did that and the employers also decided who should go to the protest and who should stay at work. There is no communication at all between these leaders of the unions and the members of the unions. Bosses and leaders of the unions have no will and no interest to make real pressure. However - I was impressed, as you were impressed, by the actions taken by pensioners. I know several pensioners associations are activating in Romania but I can't tell who organised them so well. Driven by despair, they have

shown solidarity as no one expected. They also announced that on Monday May 31st they will protest again tied with chains to show their slave condition.

Their social category is one of the most disadvantaged and they fight for survival. I don't exaggerate telling you that 2010 and 2011 would be the years with the most increased number of mortality among the pensioners. With their subsistence pensions they could not afford more than food in the past. With this 15% cut from pensions, with no medical assistance (the government already closed many medical units) and no subventions for heating and other necessities, these years that are coming will be the worst years in the last 60 years for them. This cut is nothing more than genocide.

S.tk: Are colleges of your branch also involved in the protests? Is there a discussion among your colleges about the cuts and for common actions?



Diogenes: I am not a member of the union and I don't want to be. In case of reorganisation, because I am not a member of the union I will be the first to become unemployment because the employer will make a list with all those people that will have to go and that list will be negotiated with the union leaders. This is more than sure.

Discussions with my colleges are related with these reorganisations and many of them decided to join the union and participate in protests. Also the discussions about these cuts incite to revolt but a revolt that is repressed inside before it comes out. Propaganda by word is not enough to make this revolt explode just like that. The people must become conscious by their huge power that is at their hand and it is called: solidarity.

S.tk: What is your estimation of the mood of the people? Especially in the working class? Are Topics like class struggle and the fight for an anti-capitalist society on the agenda?

Diogenes: The outrageous situations determine the mood of the people. It cannot be something else but rage and that is predictable. The unions know that, the government knows that and the opposition take advantage of that. It's nothing new under the sun. How much is orchestrated in this protest manifestations and how much is authentic - that should be the question. In this situation when people fight for survival the protests should reach and follow the concept of illegality. Having these parasite unions on our back, you can imagine that anti capitalism and class struggle are not common topics on people's agendas and more limited solutions are more influential amongst people, like progressive taxation instead of salary and

pension cuts. The minimum salary here is 705 lei per month. That means - at the National Bank currency - 160 Euros. On the other hand, the prices here are sometime bigger than prices in Germany. After 20 years of capitalism, when you have to pay 65,000 Euros for a one bedroom flat although most of the workers gain around 200, 300 Euros per month - that simple fact should make people realise that capitalism simply doesn't work.

S.tk: Was there a notable participation of anarcho-syndicalists or anarchists in the protests?

Diogenes: Not really. I am not organised and there are no grass roots unions here. The anarchist movement in Romania is at its beginnings and it is more active among artistic manifestations and in underground culture.

S.tk: What would be the best way, to stop the attacks of the government?

Diogenes: General strike to paralyse the economy and I would add, as a hobby - sabotage against the banks that robber of the whole existence of the people. People have nothing to lose. Anarcho-syndicalism for the future!

S.tk: Thanks a lot for this interview

POLAND TODAY

Interview with the Polish ZSP

Jul 20 2010

An AWSM member recently conducted an interview with the Związek Syndykalistów Polski (ZSP), an anarcho-syndicalist union based in Poland, about their activities and the class struggle in Poland.

The ZSP is an anarcho-syndicalist union in Poland. Can you tell us a bit about it, when did it form and has there been similar organisations in Polish history? Where has it drawn inspiration from? ZSP was formed in 2007 with a small group of people from a few cities and has been growing ever since. Before the war there was an anarcho-syndicalist movement in Poland but it was smashed by the Nazis and then by the communists.

AWSM: ZSP was formed because of the need to have such a group in Poland now. What is the membership like? Where in Poland does ZSP exist and does the group seem to be growing since forming.

There are different people. Recently more young people started joining as well. The two biggest groups are in Wrocław and in Warsaw, but there are also groups in Szczecin and regional groups in Silesia, Mazovia and in Mazuria. Now some individual members are popping up and trying to form groups in new cities. There is also an education section which is spread around Poland.

AWSM: Is there a high level of class consciousness in Poland and a strong working class movement?

Class consciousness? Not really. The irony of living in a post-communist country is that, since many people rebelled against the system, people developed a very strong pro-capitalist mindset. The working class movement exists, although not as strong in some places. Union membership is comparatively high in Poland, but this has traditionally been in the budget sector and state-run or formerly state-run factories and in heavy industry. But high union concentration does not always mean that the workers are involved in any struggles. In some cases, the unions actually prevent the struggles from happening.

AWSM: What are the main problems for workers in Poland and what is the current focus of the ZSP?

Poland is Europe B. This means that wages are quite low here and working conditions are bad. There is relatively high unemployment and people are expected to really overwork to make ends meet. Then there is the constant threat of losing one's job or being replaced by somebody who will work cheaper. These are usually people from the countryside or foreigners but they can also be, for example, students. Right now, ZSP would like to grow as an organisation but also to participate in some real workplace conflicts and get practical organising experience. So our focus is to reach out to working people in various ways: to inform them of their rights and struggles, to help when they have conflicts and encourage them to action. Judging from the ZSP website, there appears to be a lot of activity, particularly picketing workplaces.

AWSM: Is the ZSP generally very active and is this having an effect?

In the two larger groups, yes. The level of activity is partially related to the size of the

the bosses, giving them a headache when they do something wrong, showing opposition and getting the word out about these problems. And that's the thing: sometimes the effect is not that you win demands but that other workers hear about it and maybe realise their rights were violated or feel encouraged to fight also. And it is sometimes the case that the negative attention scares the business that are violating workers' rights and they stop - at least for a while.

AWSM: ZSP has an Educational Section currently holding weekly actions outside schools, can you tell us about that and how it's going?

Now there is a break in the summer. Basically, this was to inform students and teachers about the processes involved with the commercialisation of education - something generally supported in Poland. One of the results is that education workers have become largely aware of how their rights and working conditions are changing and some have invited us to lecture on the topic at universities. In some cities, the most precarious workers, doctoral students working as lecturers, have organised or are organising themselves in



groups and the experience it has had. I think anybody considering anarcho-syndicalist activity and workplace organising has got to have a sober look at reality: it is possible to have an effective campaign, but not every campaign is, and some can be, but only after a long period of building and doing consistent work. This means that, yes, we have had some victories and have helped in numerous concrete cases. The majority of our campaigns bring some results, even if not completely what we were demanding. On the other hand, there have been a few things which haven't brought any result yet. But we look at the latter also positively because it is about trying, not giving in to

networks - some are in ZSP. Students have not been too responsive though.

AWSM: What is the Bologna Process?

It is a process which is implemented slightly different in different countries belonging to the Council of Europe. Basically, it lays our ideas and guidelines for making education a more commercially viable product and for getting education to serve the needs of the capitalist labour market.

AWSM: Does the ZSP face the problem of police repression or attacks from fascist or others? How is this dealt with?

Rather no. Although of course from time to time some of our members are arrested

at something. The worst things fascists do is spam our Web pages. Many Polish workers have moved to neighbouring countries in western Europe in recent times in search for better wages. After the financial crisis, it has become harder to secure work abroad.

AWSM: Has this changed the situation for workers in Poland and what is the result?

Good question. Some Polish workers moved to different countries which before were less attractive. Others have come back to Poland and, in some areas and jobs, this has depressed wages.

AWSM: Do you see the class composition and society in Poland as fertile ground for anti-capitalist revolutionary struggle?

The mentality of people is currently quite conservative and right-wing. The class composition is not the only thing that determines whether the ground is fertile.

AWSM: What are some of the long-term political and organisational goals envisioned by ZSP and its members?

As mentioned before, one of the first priorities is to expand our organisation so that it can function in more places and simply do more. The size of the organisation in part will determine our goals. We concentrate now mostly on short-term goals and of

course, we never know what conflicts will appear on our door. But if we'd say anything about the long-term, of course we would like to be an organisation which can fight abuse in the workplaces and which would encourage people to self-organise in a truly grassroots manner. Like most people of our tendency, of course we would like to overthrow the capitalist system, etc. etc.; we will never give up this dream, but for now, in order to go forward, we like to concentrate on building up in areas where we and the working class in general are weak.

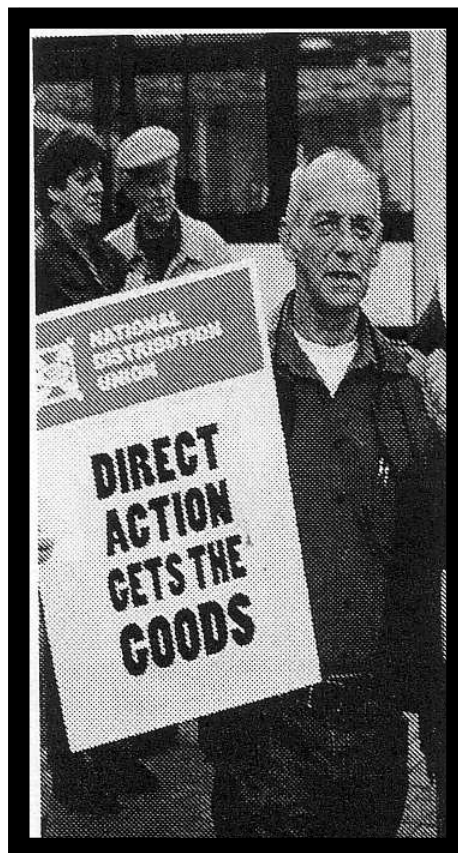
Thanks to AWSM

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

The Fightback Begins 8/10

About a thousand people recently took to the streets to protest National's law changes such as the 90 day fire-at-will bill which directly threatens job security for workers and their rights (see inside for details). Protests took place on the 18th of July in Auckland and Christchurch, the 19th in Wellington and the 16th and 24th in Dunedin. Some of the unions present at the mobilisations included the CTU (Council of Trade Unions), NDU (National Distribution Union), EPMU (Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union), and Unite and organisations included AWSM, Socialist Aotearoa, and the Workers Party amidst other left groups and of course loads of indignant individuals. John Key let off a string of unconvincing lies and double-speak in his announcement of laws designed to cripple the labour movement during the National Party conference in Skycity Grand Hotel in Auckland. At the same time, some 300-400 pissed off workers and unionists picketed the hotel entrance and eventually broke through police lines briefly causing chaos within. No arrests took place but police assaults on protesters were many. A giant rat was inflated at the entrance of the hotel where union heads gave speeches outside. On the same day about a hundred people took to the streets in Wellington waving banners and placards and chanting class war slogans. A little over than a week later taxi drivers were on their second day of strike action. They demonstrated at parliament, calling for the bill to be thrown out. In Dunedin, protests took place on the 16th and again on the 24th

seeing hundreds of people take to the street and an unplanned march on the 24th disrupting traffic briefly. Meetings have been taking place in major cities with workers, unions and left organisations dedicated to



securing workplace conditions that were won over centuries of workers struggling. Christchurch witnessed one of the largest gatherings of community activists, union officials, delegates and workers seen in recent memory. Around 100 people, with

less than 17 hours notice, met at Cathedral Square on Sunday 18th July to make their feelings heard after National's policies were leaked late last week. Since the initial demonstration, called by Unite Organiser and AWSM member Matt Jones, there has been an emergency meeting held where a group of 40 people discussed further actions as well as what we need to do to get the message out in the longer term. "This wasn't some CTU(NZ ACTU) backed structured meeting. It was in fact an open discussion where everyone was invited to engage and debate. The CTU's silence since the beginning has been deafening. What it has done however is allow space for resistance and action from the bottom up, we are witnessing the strengths of anarchism in action, where we refuse to stand by and be told to tow the line!" said Matt. The meeting lasted just over an hour and by the end of it plans for action were made: Demonstrate! Sunday 8th August, 12pm Cnr Colombo St & Hereford St, Christchurch City Centre. "This area is home to McDonald's, KFC and Burger King, where the staff are some of the most at risk from the newly announced bills. We hope to bring a lot of colour and enthusiasm to the event!" said Matt.

Beneficiaries Burn Bennet In Rotorua

Just like in 1991, National is attacking both the waged and unwaged wings of the working class at the same time. We interviewed Paul Blair of the Rotorua Welfare Action Group about their response to National's assault on beneficiaries (for example, by cutting emergency benefits and forcing many sickness and domestic purposes beneficiaries to work). They held an incendiary protest on July 12 in Rotorua.

AWSM: Can you give some specifics about the recent beneficiaries demonstration in Rotorua?

Paul: The rally/demonstration theme was chosen so that if only a handful turned out the demonstration could still go ahead without losing credibility. On the other hand if a good crowd turns up we could march on the road. As it turned out we had about a hundred people turn out so we marched around to the National Party Offices with our demands. A good turnout for Rotorua in the middle of winter. The core aims included to get the issue of attacks on beneficiaries and their children out into the public media to lift the level of debate and to expose the lies and deceit of the National Government and their plans for the future of the Welfare State in NZ. To continue to build a genuine legitimate and authentic political fight back from the class of people outside the paid workforce and now under attack from Minister [for Social Development] Bennett and John Key's right wing National government. To create a media and community platform from which to call for solidarity between the "working poor" and the "not working" poor or so called social security claimants. To bring out the interconnections and shared experience between low paid workers and beneficiaries. We burnt minister Bennett in effigy to get media attention to our plight and to put our own militant stamp of "direct action" on the demo. Also Bennett is lying to the media and to the public about the intended welfare reforms and the most vulnerable people in NZ are being attacked by her. As the march took off from WINZ on the way to National Party HQ in Rotorua some construction workers across the road started yelling out "get a job" etc. Mostly the public just came out of the shops and looked at us in amazement. Good pictures of the burning in Rotorua Daily Post and NZ Herald, Te Karere and some snippets on TV1. Yes for the reasons given it was a success and the crowd of 100 grass roots people all on social security benefits were militant and powerful.

The demo was organised by a loose coalition we called the Rotorua Welfare Action Group (RWAG). My Union the RPU (Rotorua Peoples Union) played a key supportive role in the organisation of the demo. The RWAG was a core group of about 6-8 activists/people. The RPU mails out to about 350 social security claimants. To read the interview in full, go to <http://awsms.org.nz/?p=405>

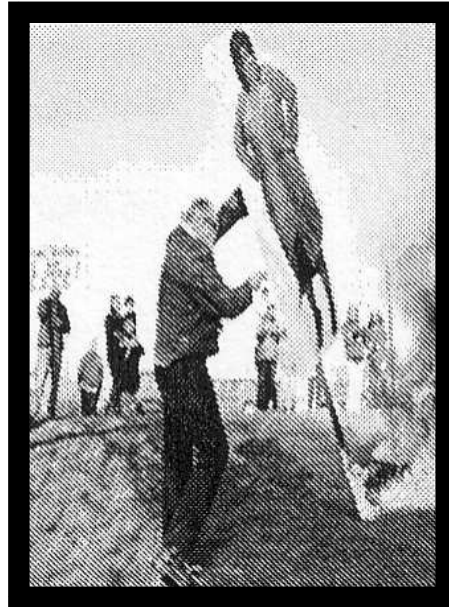
Workers Set To Face More Attacks

The National Government recently announced a series of new attacks on work-

ers across New Zealand. The raft of proposed changes to the anti-worker Employment Relations Act (ERA, brought in by the previous Labour Government in 2000) and the Holidays Act will serve to further cut job security, wages and conditions for hundreds of thousands of workers in both the public and private sectors.

AWSM: What are the changes?

Perhaps the biggest change is the expansion of the 90 day fire at will scheme. Under this, any worker can be fired within the first 90 days of employment without any



way to legally challenge this. When originally introduced following the 2008 election, this only applied to workers in workplaces with 19 or fewer employees (around 1/3 of the total workforce) however the proposed expansion would see it cover all workplaces. Since it was brought in, approximately 22% of workers hired under the scheme have been fired within 90 days, many given neither a reason nor a warning of what was about to occur, leaving them financially screwed. A number of changes have also been proposed to the personal grievance process and the way the Employment Relations Authority works. All these changes make it harder for workers to challenge harassment, unjust firings and other problems and while making it easier for the bosses to get their way in a system that is already slanted in their favour. We will also be pressured into working more often. The time honoured tradition of pulling a sickie is under attack. Meanwhile, the 4th week of annual leave will soon be able to be exchanged (for cash), as will public holidays (for other days). National is declaring that both of these exchanges must be initiated by the employee, but in reality many workers will no doubt be pressured by their bosses into making them, especially those workers in the first 90 days of their contracts

who are in constant fear of being fired! This all adds up to more work for an already overworked population. Workers who want to join a trade union may find it much harder if the proposed changes go through. Unions will require permission from the employer before they can set foot on the property, meaning it will be especially difficult for unions to get onto sites where they don't already have members. Additionally, companies will be able to communicate directly with workers during collective bargaining meaning yellow unions (unions run by the company) may become more common, with the associated drop in wages and conditions. Separate from this lot of law changes but also coming up soon is a private members bill from National MP Tau Henare, which would place further restrictions on strike activity. The bill, which would force unions to hold secret ballots for all strike activity, would give bosses another avenue with which to have strikes declared illegal, at a time when workers are already heavily restricted in their choice of industrial activity by the ERA.

What can we do? Talk to your workmates: Build a culture in your workplace where you all support each other when there's an issue, even if it only effects one or two people. Collectivise problems – it's much harder for the boss to ignore a larger number of workers. Take industrial action where possible: Work to rules, go slows, taking lunch breaks at the same time, strike activity and more. As workers we produce the wealth that lines our bosses pockets – by threatening that profit we can force bosses to give into our demands. When we do engage in industrial activity, make sure it is controlled by us, not by trade unions.

While unions can sometimes be useful (for legal protection, resources etc), industrial activity is our weapon, not theirs, and should be controlled by us without interference. Support other workers' struggles: We're all in this together, and one strong workplace won't be enough. If you hear of another workplace that's going out on strike, and you can make the picket line, go and stand with them. If you can't, support them in other ways - there may be a strike fund you can donate to, or even just go in when they're not striking and let the workers know that you support them. Don't rely on the trade unions or the Labour Party: The response of the Council of Trade Unions (the umbrella body for NZ unions) to these latest attacks has been pitiful. They have announced they will distribute 20,000 copies of a "Fairness at Work" leaflet – not even enough to reach 10% of their affiliate unions' membership, let alone the millions of unionised workers. The Labour Party introduced the anti-worker ERA in its last term in power

and has shown time and time again that it is no friend to the working class. In opposition it may encourage members to attend protests, but in Government it'll just be more of the same. This is our fight: These attacks impact on all of us who are forced to work to survive. We, the working class, must stand together and fight in our workplaces to not only protect what little we have, but to create a better future for us all. Separate we will fall, but together we have a chance to win.

On Pulling Sickies

An important part of the proposed attacks on workers is the attempt to suppress sickies. Bosses will be able to ask us to get a medical certificate for just taking a day off work. Rabid millionaire PM John Key (pictured above haranguing a journalist) has said chronic absenteeism is wrecking profits, particularly in the meat industry. His industrial reforms are all about restoring the profits of his capitalist mates during a recession. To do this he must further reduce our wages and conditions. With

strikes being outlawed except when negotiations have broken down, taking a sickie is a common and essential form of resistance to the dictates of bosses. Indeed, there is some evidence as that as the numbers of strikes have reached record lows, taking sickies has increased. We take sickies because bosses force us to work hard and long hours in shitty conditions. Unrelenting work pressure makes us stressed, tired and unfulfilled. So we take a day or two off to relieve this pressure, and to temporarily reclaim our lives from the drudgery of wage slavery. We use sickies not only to look after sick family members, but also to chill out and live a little. Union bureaucrats have distanced themselves from throwing sickies.

They've blamed them on a few 'scallywags', while the majority of workers supposedly take legitimate sick days. Sure, taking time off work when you're sick is an essential right. But it's also just as legit to throw a sickie.

Informal resistance, like taking sickies and slacking off at work, is a crucial element of our resistance to bosses. This resistance

often requires co-operation between workmates, such as sharing someone's job when they are taking a sickie, in the knowledge that when you are off 'sick' they will do the same for you.

Informal resistance and formal resistance – such as strikes – are complementary. They need each other. Indeed, you can't have a successful strike if you haven't tapped into the informal co-operative networks between workers. We need to resist this attack on taking sickies just as much as we need to resist the rest of National's proposed anti-worker legislation. As we are forced to work some of the longest hours among OECD nations, we need to take more sickies. Some have suggested a national sick-day, which seems a great idea. In the end, we need to push for not only more pay, but also less work!

Thanks to "Solidarity"

Syndicalism in South Wales: The Origins of The Miners' Next Step

By Bob Pitt South Wales Miners Federation

This article was written in 1987 to mark the 75th anniversary of the publication of The Miners' Next Step.

Three quarters of a century ago the celebrated syndicalist manifesto *The Miners' Next Step* was published. Written by a group of young socialists from the Rhondda, nearly all of whom were themselves working miners, the pamphlet occupies a prominent place in the revolutionary traditions of the British labour movement. Rejecting the conventional reformist aim of securing state ownership of the mining industry through parliamentary legislation, the authors of *The Miners' Next Step* proposed to reconstruct their union as a revolutionary industrial organisation, directly controlled by the rank and file, which through an uncompromising pursuit of the class struggle would become powerful enough to take over the collieries and oust the coal owners. This programme found an enthusiastic response throughout the British coalfield among militant mineworkers who were opposed to the industrial pacifism of their union leaders and disillusioned with the performance of the Labour representatives in parliament. Indeed, the strategy outlined in *The Miners' Next*

Step was to dominate the outlook of revolutionaries in the coalmining industry for a whole period up to and beyond the formation of the Communist Party.

The publication of *The Miners' Next Step* provided dramatic evidence of the transformation that had taken place among the South Wales miners since the late 19th century, when they had acquired a reputation as among the most backward in Britain from the standpoint of labour organisation and class consciousness. The breaking of the Amalgamated Association of Miners in 1875, after a series of intense disputes, had resulted in the imposition of the sliding scale system, whereby miners' wages were automatically regulated by fluctuations in the selling price of coal. No coalfield-wide union existed in South Wales for over two decades after this, and the few local organisations were mostly little more than company unions. The then dominant figure among the miners was William Abraham (known as Mabon), a staunch advocate of co-operation with the Coal owners, with many of whom he shared Welsh nationality, Liberal politics and a nonconformist religion that preached the harmony of classes. When the Miners Federation of Great Britain (MFGB) was founded in 1889, on a policy

of fighting the sliding scale, Mabon's opposition ensured that the MFGB gained no more than a small foothold in the South Wales coalfield.

The subsequent eclipse of Mabon's authority, and of the social philosophy he represented, was the outcome of a complex process involving the waning influence of Liberalism and nonconformity over the miners and the dilution of a distinctly Welsh culture by large-scale immigration. But the underlying factor was the economic changes taking place in the South Wales coal industry.

A major turning point was the great strike of 1898, in which the South Wales miners did battle against a sliding scale system that had failed to give them a living wage. Their eventual defeat at the end of a six-month struggle, rather than leading to demoralisation, made clear the need for stronger organisation.

In September 1898 the various local unions therefore came together to form the South Wales Miners Federation (SWMF), which affiliated to the MFGB a few months later. After a vigorous recruitment campaign the SWMF successfully established itself in the coalfield and in 1903 finally put an end to the sliding scale.

The opening years of the new century saw an increasing embitterment of industrial relations as productivity, which had always been low in South Wales due to difficult geological conditions, continued to decline with the exhaustion of the richer and more accessible seams. Constrained from

See Page 18

Debate on Industrial Organising

Project "X" - Worker Solidarity Network Manifesto

We have a problem. Australia currently has the lowest rate of strikes and industrial action in history. The Fair Work legislation, and previously the WorkChoices legislation, limits the legality of industrial action to a complicated system of "protected" action, where workers must vote in favour of industrial action, which can only be carried out during a limited bargaining period. Any industrial action taken outside of these strict laws can lead to union organisers and workers copping massive fines.

At the same time, there is clearly a need for industrial action. Australians work the longest hours of any OECD country. This work increasingly includes more and more unpaid overtime. The instances of deaths and major injuries on building sites has sky rocketed since the ABCC was introduced. The system of individualised work agreements and the simplification of Awards mean that our work rights are continually being eroded.

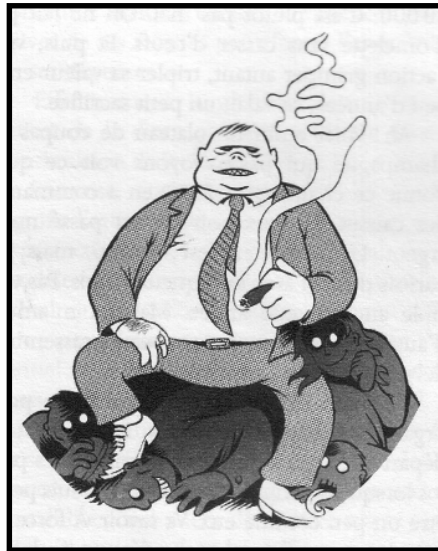
Industrial action leads to better pay and conditions. It's no coincidence that Australia has a strong history of industrial action, and has also traditionally enjoyed some of the best pay and working conditions in the world.

This is where Project X comes in.

Project X is a new rank-and-file workers network that can do what unions can't or won't do. It's an independent network aimed at lending solidarity to workers' led industrial campaigns and challenge management when workers are under attack. The purpose of Project X is to support fellow workers to fight for decent wages and working conditions. As workers from different industries and unions, Project X workers can operate without the same fear of employer harassment in a particular dispute.

And by communicating with fellow unionists and other members of the general public, Project X can help win industrial struggles by generating effective community solidarity and support.

Project X aims to make contact with other enthusiastic, like-minded workers who are or wish to be engaged in industrial action and support others who are in the thick of it. From this we would like to see the growth of strong, active, grassroots trade unionism. We also wish to assist people in other areas to develop their own networks. Project X has no ties to any political party,



group or ideology. We are not interested in seeking office within trade unions or engaging in political lobbying or parliamentary activity.

A Critique of Project "X" Now known as the Worker Solidarity Network

The problem with the Project "X"/Network is that it implies just a greater co-ordination of the efforts of Leftist activists who often use the "anarchist" label. Over the years this activity has involved activists tailending various workers' industrial disputes, particularly helping out on picket lines, the distribution of propaganda in various forms, etc. Certainly the evidence is that this staple activity of various Leftist groups has not been sufficient to counter the employer offensive and strike major blows at employers. With the development of the neo-liberal

"strong state" associated with more heavy handed policing such tactics as picket lines are becoming increasingly obsolete.

In NSW after the APEC conference held in 2007, where there was a massive display of police power with the curbing of various civil liberties and even an attempt by police to capture the remaining protestors at the end of the march, the police riot squad was used to break up a picket line at McArthur Express on 26/9/10. (1)

The project has of course no focus in regard to where the relatively small numbers of Leftist activists who wave red and black or circle A flags, should focus their energies. Particularly important would be at least some discussion of the employer offensive at various moments in Australian history and periods of workers upsurge and raised militancy. Any analysis of these moments would reveal the importance of strategic sectors in the Australian economy as being flash points of employer and worker offensives.

An obvious example is maritime transport in the case of the Patricks Dispute of 1998. It was recognised by employers and the Howard Government that by striking a devastating blow against workers in this industrially strategic sector, with the smashing of the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) and imposing of individual contracts, that workers in less strategic sectors would be demoralised and their offensive greatly assisted. In this case, whilst the workforce was successful in fighting off these attacks, the militancy of the wharfies was significantly weakened and important conditions were lost. This lowering of the wharfies' morale has played into the hands of the MUA officials in assisting employers further attack wharfies' conditions via enterprise bargain agreements and other ploys. The "Project X" promoters have of course no notion of assisting the long range, day to day activism of militants in such sectors in their self organisation and rebuilding militancy. It would particularly involve the publication and distribution of workplace papers over many years. It is also of critical importance that direct action movements have bases in such sectors which can cut the arteries of the capitalist economy. In terms of defying repressive IR legislation, inspiring and assisting similar movements in other industries and unions. Leading to the establishing of an alliance of grass roots controlled unions. A key step toward the formation of a syndicalist union confederation. The "Project X" promoters seem to be attracted to just the exciting moments when industrial disputes blow up. However, the day to day class struggle and associated grass roots organising work is just as important.

What are the causes of this activoid approach implicit in "Project X"? The legacy of mass Stalinism in the mid 20th Century and the influence of identity politics within the general Leftist milieu in Australia, apart from the proposers' obvious industrial inexperience, would throw some light on this problem.

At a segment of a Conference held in Sydney entitled "See through the Empire" held in September 2009 where what has become "Project X" was initially unveiled this unwholesome influence was manifested.(2)

One topic at the segment was supposed to be a talk about the British Shop Stewards' movement of WWI and immediately afterwards. No analysis was provided of this movement's history. After a very short presentation, the segment was subverted into a bizarre "role play" where the pairing of attendees occurred, with one imagining they were a British Shop Steward and the other a contemporary union rep/workplace activist. Whilst this manoeuvre squashed any serious discussion of the trajectory of the British Shop Stewards' movement. It was also likely to be some sort of psychological manipulation ploy to

recruit to this emerging sect/Project X. When discussion was allowed during the segment, its free flow was precluded by the female activoid who was chairing it, with the use of a speakers list informed by the leftist group navel gazing of "gender balance" and desire for a political correctness display. Most at this conference segment appeared to express no displeasure with these Stalinesque antics and the nonsense of "identity politics" informed meeting chairing practices.

However the climate of such gatherings and the absence of vigorous debate and stimulus to engage in research on various topics encourages the aimless industrial activism of the "Project X" promoters. Consequently, the holding of the meetings of this group is likely to become an end in itself. So as to have an excuse for social occasions and getting over the alienation of bourgeois society. It can also only lead to the wasting of the limited energies and resources of the activoids in all manner of side shows, and their eventual "flaking out" and "burning out". Whilst the employer offensive becomes ever more devastating.

Where major blows have been struck at the momentum of the employer offensive, there is important evidence that the alternative approach of long range strategic organising has played an important role in this success. An important example in NSW is the defeat of restructuring for privatisation in the City Rail station network in September 1999 associated with "Customer Service Management" in which long range assistance by ASN militants helped militant rail workers achieving this victory. (3) The recent resurgence of grass roots organisation, in RailCorp in the shape of "Members' Voice" is also associated with this long range, serious work.

mark

(1) See "APEC - Step Toward A Strong State" RW Vol.26 No.3 (197) Oct-Nov 2007.

(2) See "Debate on Australian Shop Steward's Network" RW Vol.28 No.3 (204) Sept-Oct 2009.

(3) See "Anarcho-Syndicalist Strategy for Australia Today" RW Vol.20 No.4 (172) Aug - Sept 2001 in the archive section of our website www.rebelworker.org

Cont. From Page 16

raising prices by competition on the overseas markets where a high proportion of South Wales coal went for sale, the owners maintained their profits by cutting labour costs, with the main pressure falling on miners' wages. For their part, the SWMF rank and file angrily resisted attempts to reduce their earnings, the purchasing power of which was already being eroded by a steep rise in the cost of living. How things had changed, a local paper commented in 1909, since the days when "it was accepted almost as an axiom that the interests of Capital and Labour were identical. Today that statement would raise a laugh of derision".

The period was also marked by a tendency towards the concentration of ownership in the South Wales coal industry, the most notorious example of this being the expansion of the Cambrian Combine, which under the directorship of D.A. Thomas absorbed a succession of local collieries until by 1910 it employed a total workforce of 12,000 in the mid-Rhondda. It was large companies like this which headed the drive to reduce labour costs. They were able to rely on the support of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal owners Association (M&SWCA), which

provided financial backing for individual companies to impose lock-outs as a disciplinary measure against recalcitrant workers. In contrast to the organised power of capital, the SWMF was a federation of autonomous districts, a form of organisation that obstructed united action against the coal owners' offensive.

The miners' position was further weakened by their leaders' support for the conciliation system which had replaced the sliding scale. Based on a Conciliation Board composed of union officials and employers' representatives with a supposedly independent chairman, its purpose was the regulation of wages through peaceful negotiation. It enabled Mabon to preserve the cosy relationship with the coal owners that he had enjoyed during the sliding scale period, while others found their former militancy smothered by participation in the conciliation machinery. This leadership faced mounting opposition from a rank and file demanding a more aggressive response to the owners' attacks. "Napoleon once said that lambs will be led by a lion but lions will never be led by a lamb", one angry miner declared in 1909 after his district official had negotiated a compromise deal with the employers. "It is better to be without leaders than have a lamb at the head who won't lead."

The SWMF bureaucracy's industrial moderation found its political equivalent in their continued adherence to Liberal-

ism. The four SWMF MPs who took their seats after the 1906 general election these included Mabon, William Brace and Tom Richards, respectively the president, vice-president and secretary of the union refused to join the Labour Party, and in defiance of a coalfield ballot supporting Labour Party affiliation they remained as part of the trade union group in the Liberal Party until the MFGB as a whole transferred its allegiance to Labour in 1909. The campaign to break the SWMF from Liberalism was led by members of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), which had been a significant influence in the coalfield since the 1898 strike, one of its achievements being the election of Keir Hardie as MP for Merthyr in 1900. The ILP's policy of independent political action attracted to its ranks a number of SWMF militants, notably several of those later to co-author *The Miners' Next Step*, who during 1906-9 held prominent positions in the party's Rhondda organisation.

The assertion of their independent class interests inevitably brought miners into conflict with the chapel. Welsh nonconformity identified the source of working class poverty not in the pursuit of profit by the employers, many of whom were respected members of chapel, but in the sinful lives most especially, the intemperance of the workers themselves. *See Page 20*

NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important news in NSW has been the launching of industrial action in various forms in the NSW Railways over a dispute by rail unions with the RailCorp Enterprise Agreement 2010. An important factor for the calling of this action, has been the dynamic emergence of the "Members' Voice" Public Transport workers movement.

As a result of its on the job activism it has been successful in pressuring the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) hierarchy into calling more serious industrial action over the EBA. So far the campaign has been run by the RTBU officials, who are heavily involved in the ALP Rightwing Machine, in a highly bureaucratic fashion. They have refused to allow membership control of the campaign via the holding of mass meetings to discuss it and have failed to take on board grass roots input for the Log of Claims. This authoritarian approach is no doubt designed to engineer a "smoke and mirrors" performance. Whereby the union officials and media proclaim a so called "victory". When in fact none has occurred and workers are given the illusion of winning a pay rise without any trade offs. So as to stampede them into approving the EBA, which in the fine print includes many nasties. (See article page 3)

On the Federal Level, we have recently seen the coup against Prime Minister Kevin Rudd by Julia Gillard and the NSW ALP Rightwing Faction. One factor behind the coup appears to be Rudd's unwillingness to pursue "austerity policies" as required by international capitalist forces. Following the outcome of the Federal Elections, the "austerity knives" will no doubt be out. Certainly Tony Abbott's threat of 12,000 public service job losses is in line with this approach. The RailCorp EBA 2010 with the employers' demand for the abolition of redundancy packages for retrenched workers seems very much connected with the Govt. "Austerity Agenda". This EBA will certainly set precedents throughout the public sector, and assist the austerity drive and upcoming privatisation landslide.

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Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name
Address.....
General Secretary
PO Box 532 Newcastle 2300 NSW.

Continued From Page 18 The solution was to be found along the path of personal redemption, the chapel insisted, not through collective class action. The great religious revival of 1904-5 itself represented something in the nature of a popular revolt against the alienation of the nonconformist hierarchy from the lives and problems of the working class.

BRITAIN TODAY

IN THE FIRING LINE

Political activists are being targeted by a new European wide initiative to monitor the activities of 'political extremists'

The UK government has signed up to a European surveillance programme that allows state forces to gather and share personal information, and monitor the activities of suspected 'radicals' from across the political spectrum.

A confidential report obtained by State watch, the civil liberties monitoring group, reveals a programme of 'systematic data collection' by police and security agencies across the EU as part of a strategy of surveillance that undermines both individual civil liberties and the right to privacy and association.

The plans, originally intended to monitor potential Islamic terrorism threats, has now been widened to include threats posed by left wing, anti-globalisation and pro-nationalist activists.

The Council of the European Union agreed the plans in April, without debate or consultation from national or European

And after the revival proved incapable of effecting any real change in social conditions many young miners who had been active in the movement looked instead to political action, with a consequent expansion of the ILP.

Some of these new recruits to socialism began to find their way towards a materialist outlook, but even those who retained their Christian faith were confronted by the hostility of a chapel establishment that was closely associated with the Liberal

parliaments. The secret document offers a means in which greater co-ordination of information to be gathered and passed on. Part of the initiative is to "facilitate and improve information sharing between agencies, institutions and Member States".

Intriguingly the targets of surveillance are not those who plan or commit terrorist acts, which is already covered by criminal law, but people and groups who hold radical views which include the unspecified "extreme left" and "anti-globalisation".

This is particularly troubling for political activists in the UK, who have no association with violence or terrorism, but who may find themselves monitored, along with family members, friends and work colleagues because of their political beliefs.

The UK has the most sophisticated intelligence gathering operation in Europe with an extensive range of institutions that already hold data, and gather intelligence on a variety of activists, causes and campaigns.

In the UK, the police have developed a centralised monitoring apparatus to spy on "domestic extremists", an umbrella term with no legal definition which, in practice, includes law-abiding environmental protesters, anti-war activists and anti-racist campaigners. Several agencies keep information on a central database that has been criticised for having no accountability, such as the private body Association of

Party. When the future MFGB general secretary A.J. Cook, for example, attempted to continue his work as a Baptist lay preacher after joining the Perth ILP in 1906, he came under strong criticism for taking up social issues in his sermons and was forced to resign from the chapel. By such actions nonconformity exposed its fundamental class allegiance, and its hold over the minds of militant miners was correspondingly diminished.

Chief Police Officers (Acpo), and the central intelligence database of the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU) which has previously admitted holding over 1,822 images of political protestors on a permanent record. It is believed NPOIU also hold such information as names and addresses, vehicle registration numbers, descriptions, political affiliations, friends and associates, political events and meetings attended.

The implications of State watch's new revelations are far reaching, as a further step in a long-standing attempt to create a pan-European database of individuals whom police suspect could cause trouble at large demonstrations.

EU officials, principally led by Germany, have tried repeatedly to widen the shared data on suspected terrorists and serious criminals to include political activists, defined in documents as "troublemakers" who attend "large public gatherings".

In commenting on the document, Tony Bunyan of State watch warned: "Under both plans any and all 'radicals' could be targeted and everyday political life could become contaminated by unseen and unaccountable suspicions manufactured by agencies of the state. Open, legitimate political discussion and activity could be yet another casualty of the 'war on terrorism'."

Thanks to "Freedom"