

# REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL



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## ***Only International Workers' Control & Direct Action Can Tackle The Environmental Crisis!***



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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

P.O. BOX 92

BROADWAY 2007 NSW

E-mail:

rworke@chaos.apana.org.au

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## NATIONAL NEWS

### Award Stripping ALP Style

**The Rudd government's is back peddling again out of its promise that it would protect Australian workers after it watered down John Howard's 'Workchoices' legislation. When Rudd was looking for votes in the last election he promised no worker would be worse off under his 'Award Modernisation' plan. Under the plan thousands of Awards containing minimum wages and conditions applicable to all Australian workers are to be rolled into just 130 'modernised' Awards.**

The plan will take several years to complete as Unions and bosses argue over the changes. The union representing airline workers claims wages will be cut by \$300 per week. The Australian Industrial Relations Commission claimed in August that the modernisation process would increase costs for some employers and cut the take-home pay of some workers. Kevin Rudd is now claiming his earlier comments were an objective and not a promise. *Thanks to Sparx*

### The Liberals & Emissions Trading

**What we are seeing in the Liberal Party is not just a disorderly changing of the guard based on personality but a life and death struggle between the reactionary pseudo religious authoritarian old guard and those remnants of the Liberal Party bolstered by new blood like Turnbull who understand the price of political relevance is the purging of the Party of yesterday's men and women.**

The Liberal Party struggle surrounding Emissions Trading Legislation has become the final battleground for an old guard bolstered by support from a reactionary privately owned media who have captured many of the Liberal Party branches in the smaller states as well as the bulk of the branches in New South Wales. No amount of discussion will resolve this problem. The adoption of neo-Liberalism as the Party's main economic platform allowed the neo conservative pseudo religious faction to dominate the moral and social agenda in the Liberal Party.

Abbot, Andrews and Minchin have much more in common with the Ayatollahs in Iran, the Taliban in Afghanistan and the North Korean Communist Party than they have with the Liberal tradition. Manning a Trojan Horse within the Liberal Party, they have aimed to capture state power through the domination of the Liberal Party to impose their pseudo religious moral and social agenda on Australians. Sensing that Turnbull and Hockey, if successful, will smoke them out of the Liberal Party's Trojan Horse and confine this very ugly manifestation of the Liberal Party into the dustbin of history, they have decided to mount a Custer's last stand defence of what is increasingly seen by a growing number of Australians as a totally indefensible moral, social and political position.

### PATHETIC

**The Victorian government and Opposition's decision to support legislation that gives police the power to strip search anybody they like in a so called "designated" area, highlights "Police to have power to strip search at random", Sunday Age (29/11), how ineffective a Charter of Human Rights really is. The Victorian government's much vaunted "Charter of Human Rights" is not worth the paper it is written on. The government of the day can, as in the case of giving Victorian police sweeping powers to search people at random, suspend its own Human Rights Charter anytime it likes.**

Under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (whose sixtieth Anniversary was celebrated by the Australian government) human beings are born with inalienable human rights. Under the principles that were outlined in the Nuremberg trials after World War Two, it is the duty of every citizen to rebel against governments that legislate away their citizens inalienable human rights.

Governments that are serious about human rights incorporate their citizens rights in their nation's constitution. Unlike a Charter of Human Rights, where the government can at any time suspend the charter to pass legislation that removes people's inalienable human rights, constitutional human rights can only be removed by the people in a referendum.

Australians are, as we have seen over the past decade, particularly vulnerable (charter of rights or no charter of rights) to have rights they have enjoyed in common law for generations stripped away by governments who can legally remove their human rights at will because Australians human rights are not incorporated in the Australian constitution.

*Thanks to*

*the Anarchist Age*

# REBEL WORKER WEB SITE

## www.rebelworker.org

# N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

## The New Deal

by *Crimson Coconut*

Round One of the recent staff review was an unmitigated disaster for rail workers and their families. Now standby for even worse to come in Round Two, in the new year. Not only is RailCorp proposing another round of staff reviews but a new Enterprise Agreement (EBA) must be negotiated within the next year.

The rail unions have already asked for expressions of interest from rail workers for a log of claims during the EBA negotiations. The RTBU claim that there have been 1600 respondents to the call for a log of claims. This is highly unlikely for a few reasons.

Firstly, past efforts for a log of claims have been met with an apathetic response. The same apathetic response that takes place during voting in union elections where only small number of members bother to vote.

Secondly, the issues raised in the claim are unlikely to have come from the shop floor. For example the call for 1% top-up in Superannuation contributions is highly unlikely to have come from rail workers following the experience of the last world financial meltdown. Any rise in Super contributions is likely to detract from any pay rise offer.

Once again the union proposal is scant on detail and does not contain much that would advance or satisfy the cause of rail workers who have sacrificed plenty over the last few years. Deciphering what most of the clauses in the log of claims mean is an impossible task. For example, what is meant by the clause, "Measures to improve the dispute settling procedure" or "Better drug and alcohol testing procedures"? Unless these issues are spelt out, or preferably debated, they have little meaning to most workers on the job.

Anyway, the Log of Claims put forward by the union during the previous EBA never saw the light of day and the EBA became nothing more than a management tool for reforms. Despite the unions urgings at the time, that members were losing nothing, exactly the opposite occurred and members were thrown to the wolves.

The survey itself is nothing short of a sham in that it is weighted towards a particular

Most members were never advised that voting would take place on the log of claims at a particular time. At any rate, the discussion outside of the existing log of claims was to be disallowed on the grounds of simplifying the claims in the interests of unity. Some people only received an email from their union that voting would take place after polling had been completed. What a farce? Are these representatives really worthy of your union contributions?

Voting for this log of claims was apparently finalised on 18th December 2009. The unions must now wait for RailCorp to set a negotiating date. There is nothing to say that RailCorp will accept the Log of Claims and management is likely to have a Log of Claims of their own.

According to the survey the union is hoping that their members can achieve their Log of Claims by, distributing bulletins, collecting surveys, attending meetings or becoming a contact/activist. Isn't this what a union and they members should do anyway. This is hardly going to get up the nose of RailCorp or the NSW Government who would be happy to see any actions limited to such timid actions.

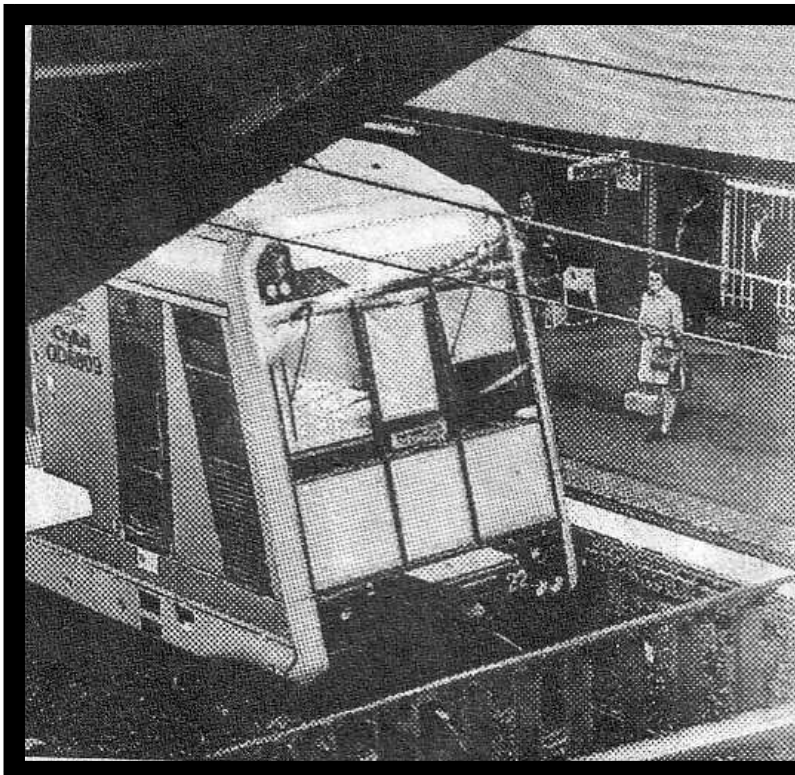
The demands (despite the unions willingness to trade our conditions) should contain a resounding clause that says we

will accept NO TRADE OFFS at all. Rail workers should settle for nothing less than this.

Going back to the Work a Job Redesign agreement over a decade ago, where we were promised pay rises based on productivity improvements, up till the present day, there has been a marked improvement in the productivity of every worker on the job. No matter what we use as a measure of improvement, be it increased use of technology, increases in passenger numbers, decreases in employee numbers and multi-skilling of employees, they all point to a massive increase in productivity for which we have not adequately been compensated.

The ambit claim of 5% increase in pay for members by the union is not enough considering the cost of living increases that

*See Page 4*



outcome. The "tick the box exercise" that was available to staff was disguised as a survey as if there was a general consensus around the issues that were up for discussion. There has been a very narrow focus on a just few issues. These issues have never been debated or explained to rail staff who have never been able to put forward their own suggestions. This EBA is being rushed through as if the fate of it is a foregone conclusion. Fellow rail workers should be very aware of of this undemocratic approach to EBA 2010 especially after what happened during the last bargaining round.

Why not have a discussion period before a log of claims is decided upon and endorsed? This top down approach to negotiation is not only undemocratic but will not ensue that the best outcome will never be achieved consensually.

*Cont. From Page 3* are in the pipeline from mortgage interest rates, proposed utilities price rises due to carbon taxes, the high prices for food and transport costs.

Just this week it was announced that the RailCorp CEO gained a pay rise of \$80,000+ PA along with similar pay rises for other senior managers. The government used the excuse that they have to pay these large sums of money to attract good

quality managers. Equally, RailCorp get the quality of employees that they deserve on stations and in train crews based on what they are prepared to pay them.

Already, many rail workers have resigned from the union in disgust at the way they have been treated in previous negotiations. Many more are on the cusp of resignation pending the final outcome of the previous EBA. Undemocratic behaviour and the failure to consult during the new rounds in 2010 will push even more people to consider resigning.

The time is coming when new democratic forces arise out of the disgruntled membership to form new bargaining units that can and will represent the true aspirations of rail workers. Maybe we should be doing that now rather than putting our energies into defending our conditions during the new rounds of negotiation over which we have little or no control.

## RAIL- BUS NEWS

### WE'RE WORKERS UNITED, WE'LL NEVER BE DEFEATED!!!

**Yeah, Right (Yawn!) Truth is, WE'RE WORKERS UNITED AND WE HAVE BEEN DEFEATED! We have been SOLD OUT by the unions and we've been raped by this Rightwing ALP criminals who purport to run the State.**

**Fact No.1 – CITYRAIL Station Staff Review:** Many Acting DM positions have been axed, with no consultation with the affected employees. They are to be redeployed in blue-shirt (flagging) station duties with an annual salary loss of up to \$25K per employee. Some of these A/DM's have acted in their positions for five years. However CITYRAIL HR is not the least interested in the fact that many of these dedicated employees have families to feed and mortgages to pay and will find

it much harder to make ends meet. Station staff morale is low with some CBD sta-



tions losing 50% of their staff. LESS STAFF equals LESS SAFETY.

And like Pontius Pilate, the RTBU has washed its hands of the matter, agreeing instead to give all lost CITYRAIL wages and salaries to their Rightwing ALP GOD, Nathan Rees as part of his payrise package. This utterly deplorable!

**Fact No.2 – State Transit Bus Operators.** New rosters introduced under the guise of RTA Fatigue Management Laws has reduced numbers of shifts on each and every line of work. A line of work for bus operators is 4 weeks long and general consisted of 10/11 or 11/10 days format. Now many lines are 10/10 and even 9/10 days format and mean less shifts which means less pay. Like their CITYRAIL counterparts, BUS OPERATORS are also paying for the payrise of the Rightwing ALP God Nathan Rees. In the same instance many routes, especially the shuttle runs (like short working) 389, 381, 360, 361, 400 Eastgardens, and inner harbour wharf runs have running times that even a person driving a car would find hard to keep to. And once again the RTBU has washed its hands of the matter preferring instead to side with State Transit. This rot has got to be stopped and the RTBU needs to be investigated by ICAC. I rest my case.

## STATE TRANSIT NEWS FLASH

### BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

The extent of the union officials' failure to recognise their problems is really amazing. At the last union meeting at Burwood, attended by the used car salesman and the "my hands are tied, slow person" (union officials), there was almost a need for a boxing referee. The meeting was called because the 2nd IC of the depot union delegate, had resigned from the union. On his resignation form, he wrote that his action was in response, to the inability of Redfern Union Head office to help members. The bus union show biz people took offence to the remarks and would not let the driver re-

join the union. Some drivers at Burwood took offence at this action and also resigned. I reckon that these so called elected officials, need to mature or go back to driving.

Burwood has lost over 50 lines of work as well as 24 Mercs to Leichhardt. I don't mind losing the buses, but it's sad to see drivers going to Leichhardt due to lack of work. I have been told that the management of Leichhardt treats them as lepers. Good on State Transit! Drivers bashing is still on the agenda.

The depot has a new actor in the leading role. We have a male to command a sinking ship, that was overloaded by a woman.

I heard that the staff manager was so angry at her appointment, that they changed her to a smaller office. It has only one door, so they could control the wild aggression. The new manager seems to be taking control of the depot in a positive way. With some of the old practices returning.

I am finding that to get a new uniform issued, is as hard as getting annual leave when you want it. I have been on 50% issue for the last 2 years. Is that another way for the bosses to save money?

I have noticed that State Transit has made approx \$42 million in profits last financial year, which included \$2 million in bonuses. It's about time, the bosses profit



shared, as each driver has earned them approx. \$11,000 per year. The EBA pay rise of 3 % from 12/6/09 and 3% from 12/6/10 making an overall 6% pa rise on offer, equates to about \$4320 pa. Way short of the approx. \$11,000 per year, that drivers have earned for the bosses.

The bonus State Transit has received, should be given to drivers. As our blood earned this money, not the overhead managers! This equates to a one off payment of \$500. What a Xmas present!

## BUS STRIKE

The strike held on Friday December 18th was called off by the union officials at 3pm due to an interim agreement being made with State Transit. It was based on the 3%+3% and allegedly without trade off's. However, as a result of this action by the

the problem has been a one and half inch steel plate covering a hole at the bowser caused by the cave-in of weakened asphalt near the refuelers' room. Latest news is that local union action, has pressured the bosses into tackling the problem. However, the real issue has been the constant stalling tactics of the bosses over the years so as to save a few dollars and a lack of integrity. Why wasn't action taken by the bosses when the problem first occurred? It's likely that the exposure of the refuelers to diesel fumes stemming from the problem could adversely affect their health. The manufacturers of the buses and the STA bosses appear to have been in a state of denial regarding the problem. Similar to the case with the bus brakes problem one and a half years ago, which led to quite a scandal.

**RW: What's happening on the privatisation front?**

**RW: What's your outlook for NSW under either an ALP or Liberal Govt?**

WB: In Nazi Germany during the 1930's and 1940's, there was a Bormann Brotherhood who pulled the strings on Hitler. In NSW, we have the MacQuarie Brotherhood of large corporations, the "Old Guard" of the biggest polluters. They manipulate every NSW Govt, in the interests of their Corporate agenda.

A recent ABC 4 Corners program focused on NSW Govt's blocking the construction of railways into the north western suburbs, Sydney's fastest growing suburbs. Where residents have been waiting years for an answer for the Govt's failure to construct a railway line. Intriguingly, the program, was silent about the Govt's favouring free-way development in the area which pour cash via tollways into Mac Bank. Perhaps for reasons of sensitivity toward the likeli-



union executive, a highly discriminatory situation has developed. Some drivers ended up being paid for the day, despite the strike. Whilst most weren't paid for the day. However only North Sydney depot services were operating from 3pm.

## WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

**Rebel Worker: What's the latest with the bus fuelling at the depot?**

Waverley Busie: For at least a year, Refuelers at Waverley have dreaded refuelling 3 big Volvo Bendibuses. Due to a malfunction in the fuelling mechanism on these buses where the nozzle goes down, fuel has been blown back on the refuelers, whilst fuelling. As a result, much diesel fuel has been wasted. It also takes a long time to refuel these buses. Contributing to

WB: To my surprise, I have noticed that many drivers are acutely aware about the issue. They are particularly alert to its harmful effects for our jobs in the shape of reductions in wages, overtime and less training. The ownership of the buses by large companies controlled by a few rich individuals is also likely to cause a lack of enthusiasm for the job by workers. Certainly the Bondi runs could be sold off quite comfortably due to various cut backs imposed by the bosses. In the case of the 326 and 327, on the off peak, services were drastically reduced from one every half hour to one an hour. It would form a corridor, and in would be in line with how privatisation of bus services have occurred in other states. In South Australia, different private bus companies acquired different corridors.

hood of being taken to court by the likes of MacQuarie Bank, there was no discussion in the program of its influence on NSW Govt transport priorities.

In other countries Governments have taken a tough line in tackling traffic gridlock and pollution. In the case of Toronto, it banned further freeways since 1976. Whilst London has imposed a tax of \$30 per day for motorists who drive their cars into the city. However, according to someone from the UK I was speaking to recently, this measure has not been sufficient to resolve the traffic congestion problem and travelling through London is still quite harrowing. However in NSW, the petro chemical companies prevent such initiatives. NSW Govt's have often short sighted approaches on the environment issue. In contrast to South Australia,

there is no refundable container legislation in NSW which favours the profit making of large soft drink producers such as Coca Cola.

Consequently, the NSW Govt's which are under the sway of the "Old Guard" of the biggest polluters, has acquired a slack and lazy approach in regard to environmental matters which will have catastrophic consequences.

**RW: What are your impressions of the ferries?**

WB: In recent weeks, I was down at the wharves, near Circular Quay. I noticed an unkempt look about the buildings in the area. I spoke with a retired ferry master who complained about the downsizing of the Ferry workforce. Whilst, the number of managerial staff in the office have

WB: For the past 7 to 8 years there has been a considerable increase in violence on buses particularly associated with the late night opening of liquor outlets. This problem was brought to my attention recently when two young girls under the influence of drugs got on my bus and punched another passenger. They engaged in considerable verbal abuse and swearing. Our safety is paramount. A positive development has been the recent police blitz against drug and alcohol fuelled behaviour.

## KINGSGROVE DEPOT NEWS

**RW: What's the latest at the depot?**



greatly increased. He mentioned that when he was on the job, the ferries did very well with a small management structure and made a tidy income.

**RW: What are your impressions of the major media's attitude toward the buses?**

WB: I was recently speaking to a mature lady on the bus, who wrote a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald congratulating us for our great work, in taking people to and from Olympic Park. The SMH refused to publish her letter. The lady was astonished to read in the SMH's rejection letter to her that they considered her letter was too positive and such items don't sell papers. She thought this rationale was weird. A more plausible explanation for the rejection, is that her letter didn't play along with the SMH's political game of undermining the ALP NSW Govt.

**RW: What's the latest in regard to violence on buses?**

**K i n g s g r o v e**  
Driver: There has been quite a scandal at the depot involving the union hierarchy. Currently our union rep is being trained up to become a corridor duty manager. Our vice union rep considered that he should be sacked as union rep for this breach of union rules. As he was taking on a management job. He approached the union hierarchy over the issue. However, instead of supporting his initiative, the union officials came

out in support of our union rep and moved to remove the vice union rep for his position.

## LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

**RW: What the latest at Leichhardt?**

Leichhardt Busie: Things seem to be working out smoothly with the merger with Burwood. Whilst in recent weeks, 3 drivers were put off, with one was told to leave. One of our most serious problems is inadequate running times. This is particularly the case in the AM peak. In starting our runs, we aren't allowed to use Balmain Road, so we have to use William Street and then go on to Norton Street to reach the commencement of the run, say at Abbotsford. Norton Street is effectively a parking lot. Just to reach the lights takes up to 10 minutes. The other day, I left 5 minutes early to reach the commencement

of the run from Abbotsford. However due to traffic congestion on Norton Street I was 12 minutes late in starting the run at Abbotsford. There has been some talk about the union doing something to get more time for preparing your bus for the commencement of your runs, but I have heard nothing further.

We have been continued to be affected by the increasingly corrupted green machines. At least once a week we have to cope with the ticket machines not accepting tickets.

**RW: What are your thoughts on the proposed enterprise agreement?**

LB: The pay rise of  $2\frac{1}{2}\% + 2\frac{1}{2}\% = 5\%$  pa (now increased to  $3\% + 3\% = 6\%$  pa) which we were offered is quite terrible. Whilst the bosses were demanding cutbacks to our remaining conditions for the rise in the shape of further cuts to our sick leave entitlement, more casuals and part timers. Already we are being considerably harassed over sickies with the issuing of warning letters if we take 3 sickies in a row. As a result drivers with serious injuries are being intimidated into going to work despite having serious medical conditions. In accepting the EBA proposal, drivers will be cutting their own throats. Showing a very short sighted approach given those on the job now and future drivers may need significant sickie entitlements if they end up in hospital and need to support their families. Whilst, they will be disregarding the important work the union did in years gone by to win these entitlements. Once our wages were on par with other transport occupations such as the hourly rates of train guards and ferry ticket sellers, our hourly rate has considerably slipped down.

## RYDE DEPOT NEWS

**RW: What's news at Ryde?**

Night Rider : There continues to be widespread disgruntlement amongst the grass roots with our union rep. We are particularly angry with his inability to get any action going to prevent the constant cutting of shift lengths. The shifts are becoming so short, you won't need a lunch break, only a tea break!

Another issue of concern to us, is the likelihood that part of the depot bus fleet and drivers will be split away to be based at the new depot in Parramatta.

# MARITIME TRANSPORT NEWS

## MUA officials reshuffled - and not an election in sight

The retirement of national officials Jim Tannock and Rick Newlyn has led to a reshuffle within the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) hierarchy. These moves occurred two years into the officials' four-year term, yet no elections took place.

These changes see Assistant National Secretary Mick Doleman moving to Deputy National Secretary and Sydney Branch Secretary Warren Smith and WA Assistant Branch Secretary Ian Bray filling the two Assistant National Secretary positions. WA Branch Organiser Will Tracey moves into the WA Assistant Branch Secretary position, Sydney Assistant Branch Secretary Paul McAleer becomes the Sydney Branch Secretary and seafarer Joe Deakin is now a Sydney Assistant Branch Secretary.

So why were there no union elections? The answer is MUA Rule 42 that covers casual vacancies. Appointing officials almost two years out from the June 2011 elections is fully in line with current MUA rules. Whether it helps the MUA and its democratic pretensions is another matter.

Rule 42 lets the MUA hierarchy promote like-minded officials and gives appointees the benefit of being a serving official when election time comes around.

Ian Bray from the militant WA Branch is something of an exception to this process. Given his intention to run for a national position in two years time, and the size of the WA Branch (around a third of all MUA members), his appointment is a concession to a likely 2011 victory.

The continued alliance of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) with the "left-wing" MUA bureaucracy sees the party rewarded with an Assistant National Secretary position (Warren Smith) while

retaining both the Sydney Branch Secretary spot (Paul McAleer) and one Sydney Assistant Branch Secretary position (Joe Deakin).

The CPA's Maritime Industry Program (2001) states that "the lack of involvement of rank and file workers in the affairs of unions is becoming more widespread". This will continue while officials are reshuffled and appointed - instead of facing rank and file election.

## Urine tests for drugs & alcohol: time to piss 'em off

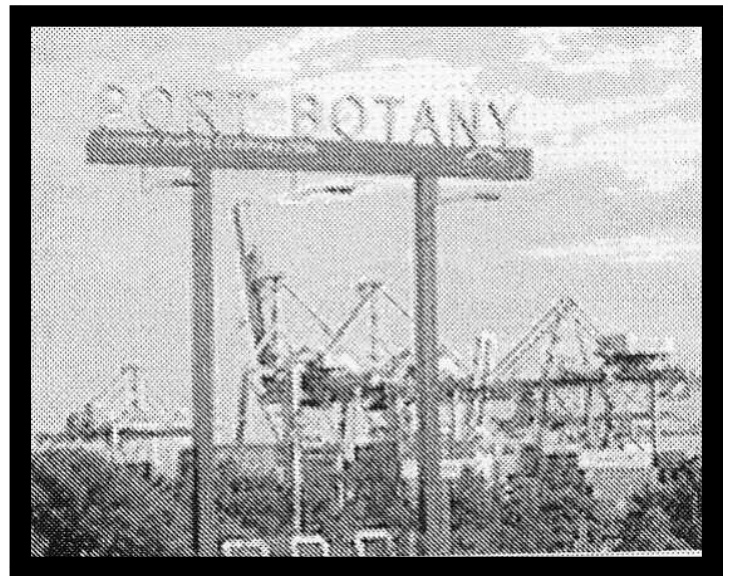
In what the CFMEU Mining & Energy Division calls a "break-through", the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) has ruled against the plans of Shell Refining to use urine tests for its random drug testing, and ruled in favour of oral fluid (saliva swab) tests. The MUA should use this precedent to remove invasive urine drug testing from the maritime industry.

The AIRC ruled that urine drug tests are "not only a violation of privacy but [are] also not as accurate in detecting possible employee impairment in the workplace". This is because oral fluid tests only detect recent use (making them less likely to detect drug use in an employee's own time), while urine tests can detect drug use from days before. The AIRC concluded that a positive oral test is far more likely to indicate actual impairment than a positive urine test. It also regarded drug use during non-work hours as "something which was not the employer's business".

Not only are urine drug tests unnecessary. Any form of random drug testing is unnecessary. A British study in 2004 has found no strong link between drug use and accidents in

safety-critical areas. Lack of sleep and excessive workloads were found to be far more likely to lead to accidents than drug use.

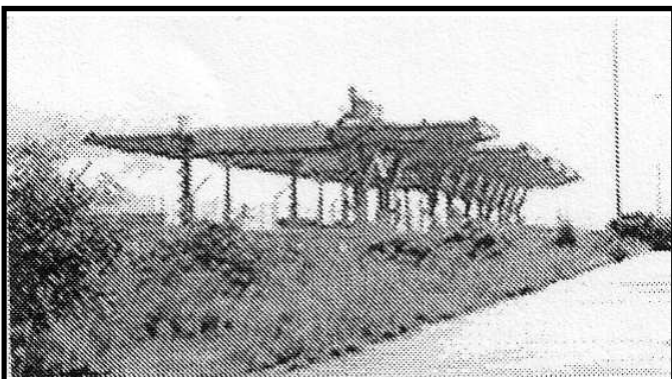
The Maritime Union should prioritise a campaign to replace urine testing with oral swab testing and bring an end to all random drug testing in the maritime industry. Fremantle DP World have since 2006 used swab and breath tests as part of their inci-



dent-based testing policy, and only use a urine test once a positive result is returned from either of the first tests. While not perfect, the policy at Fremantle DP World is a foundation for the MUA to build on.

[Information from Common Cause (CFMEU Mining & Energy), June / July 2009 and "Drug test ruling gives workers greater privacy", Sydney Morning Herald, May 25, 2009.]

(Article from "Vigilance" No.43 (Sept.30th 2009). "Vigilance" is a socialist bulletin for MUA members in Sydney produced by Shane Bentley- the "Port Botany Wharfie". See [www.vigilanceBulletin.org](http://www.vigilanceBulletin.org).)



# Victorian Railway News

## V-LINE CONDUCTORS' NEWS

*In issue 132, we spoke to two V/Line employees about a Conductor Supervisor at a particular country depot. In this issue, we interview two employees who have come forward to mention further problems with this Bully and the inaction of Human Resources to solve this problem. Also we take note of Human Resources using workers from Head Office to spy on Drivers and Conductors.*

**Rebel Worker: What has made you come forward?**

Do'nal and Deidre: We have come forward to tell you workers that Human Resources have done nothing about this

Do'nal: The conductor reported the supervisor to the On-Train Manager plus Human Resources.

**RW: What happened?**

Deidre: Nothing! As the On-Train Manager did nothing. He hasn't the guts to stand up to Human Resources, who despite many complaints about the supervisor are trying to brush the matter under the carpet.

**RW: Of course, they would do nothing. They appointed the Supervisor and if they remove him, they will have to admit they were wrong in appointing him.**

Do'nal and Deidre: You are correct, but not long after this incident another incident occurred with this jerk which resulted in a Conductor at another depot being suspended for two weeks and given a final warning.

Deidre: Human Resources did not want to know the facts. The person who jumped on the train breached the Railway By Laws and should have been fined.

**RW: Did any platform staff witness the incident?**

Do'nal and Deidre: Yes, some platform supervisors saw the person jump on the train, but management told them to go away. They did not want them to write any statements supporting the Conductor.

**RW: In other words management wanted to support this Supervisor and wanted to set up the Conductor for a final hearing.**

Do'nal and Deidre: If this is not all Human Resources has spies in the trains dobbing in both Drivers and Conductors if they are travelling in the Drivers' Compartment in a Sprinter or Velocity train.

Deidre: Yes, they do, but you see, sometimes Drivers call up the Conductor if there is a problem. Conductors have enough to do and shouldn't have to put up with spies from Head Office. In one incident a Driver was reported by some jerk from Head Office and it turned out that the driver had a trainee in the cab.

Do'nal: Yes, he was training the trainee as part of his job. You see these people from Head Office think that by dobbing in people, it will help them obtain a promotion, but in reality, management is using them up.

**RW: It is obvious there is a problem with Human Resource. They are a law of their own and they are trying to dictate a new policy to employees. They are run by academics who have no knowledge of Railway Operations.**

**Also you have train managers with no Railway experience who have not got the guts to stand up to Human Resources. The Conductor who got the final warning was only doing their job.**

Do'nal and Deidre: Finally, there should be a policy. Which is, "if you touch one employee, you touch all."

*RW: In concluding, I thank Do'nal and Deidre for coming forward. As for the Conductor Supervisor, there is an old saying that says, "The Wheel Turns" and as regards this person, one day it will happen.*



Bully.

**RW: In what way?**

Do'nal: Yes nothing has happened and this Bully is getting away with bullying conductors.

**RW: What has he done this time?**

Deidre: A couple of months ago at a Country location a conductor departed a train. This jerk came running up to the conductor and started getting into the conductor saying the power doors had not been shut. The conductor informed him that the doors were shut as the green indicator lights indicated all the doors had been shut. This jerk bawled out the conductor humiliating the conductor as other persons in the carriage plus a learner conductor heard the noise.

**RW: What happened then?**

Deidre: Just before a train was to depart the Conductor was looking to see that it was all clear. The power doors were shut and a person jumped on the train via the Van knocking over the Conductor. This train supervisor was on the train and came running out bawling out the Conductor in a way that other passengers could hear the noise. It was not the Conductor's fault, but this jerk put in a report resulting in the Conductor being stood down.

Do'nal: The Conductor had to front Human Resources. At the hearing, Human Resources took the law into their own hands. They suspended the Conductor and despite arguments from the Union gave the Conductor a final warning.



## V-LINE TRAIN DRIVERS' NEWS

*In this issue, Two Drivers who work for V/Line Passenger have come forward to talk to RW about various issues in V/Line that they have observed over the years. Once again names have been changed.*

**RW: What has made you come forward? This is the first time that I can recall interviewing drivers.**

Rastus and Roscoe: We have come forward to tell your readers about the way Human Resources have been picking on Conductors, V/Line management not having the guts to stand up to Human Resources and the double standards towards hiring new employees.

Rastus: I have worked as a driver for many years and I have noticed that our manager hasn't the guts to stand up to Human Resources.

Roscoe: We call him Doctor Dolittle.

**RW: Why?**

Roscoe: He does nothing. If a driver is in trouble, he runs and bleats to Human Resources and agrees with everything they say.

Rastus: In other words, he is weak. The previous train crew manager was able to sort out problems, both major and minor, without having to run to these jerks. Unfortunately, there is a woman who is high up in the department who whatever she says goes. She loves to belittle people who have to front her. She is hated by the drivers.

Roscoe: The Human Resources department loves to go around dobbing in Drivers and Conductors on trains. I was

disgusted with an incident which happened eight months ago. When a woman who worked in Human Resources dobbled in a Driver and Conductor running a train.

**RW: What happened?**

Roscoe: The train was put into a siding to await another train. The Conductor came into the Driver's compartment to ask the Driver how long the train was to be delayed. The Conductor had done the right thing and waited until the train was stationary before seeing the Driver.

Unfortunately this woman who worked in Human Resources was travelling on the train, dobbled in both the Train Driver and Conductor. I do not know what happened to the Driver, but the Conductor had to front Human Resources. As a result of the meeting, she received a letter from a Conductor Service Manager giving the Conductor a warning. The Conductor was devastated and she said they did not consider her work record.

**RW: This woman in Human Resources who dobbled in the Conductor was crawling to her superiors. She has wrecked a good conductor's reputation.**

Roscoe: You can say that again. I went to the Conductor Supervisor and said I was disgusted at the Conductor's treatment. This jerk lied to myself and said the Conductor was in the cab for the whole journey. In other words, he would not stick up for the Conductor.

Rastus: This department is a law of its own. About two years ago, one of our Driver's relations applied for a job as a Conductor. She completed all the tests and when she went for an interview with V/Line, she was asked if she had relatives working for V/Line. The girl being honest said her father was a driver. The interview

was cut short and the girl missed out on the position. The V/Line manager was distressed over the way these jerks from Human Resources lost interest in interviewing the girl after she mentioned her father. The Manager suggested that when another vacancy occurred try again. Well the girl tried for another position at another depot. She was not interviewed.

Roscoe: The girl's father was upset over what happened.

Rastus: What makes my blood boil, does Human Resources have a dislike over relatives applying for a job. I wonder because a job was advertised in Train Control a few months ago. A number of conductors applied for the position. No one obtained the position from within V/Line. The person who obtained the position was from off the street but was related to a senior manager in Human Resources.

**RW: This department has two sets of rules.**

Rastus: You can say that again.

**RW: This case shows that corruption is rife in this department. They want Yes men in these positions or relatives or friends of the Department heads. As for your Train Crew Manager, he should solve ongoing problems without referring matters to Human Resources.**

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say we both consider Human Resources as a bunch of bludgers and prostitutes. Also we wonder what these conductor supervisors do as most times, when relieving train crews, we see then smoking out on Spencer Street. Finally, we urge Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff if called up to face these people "Don't turn up."

## UNION BUSTING IN VICTORIA

**The Victorian Firefighters Union, the Victorian Branch of the United Firefighters Union of Australia has been singled out by the employers union, the Australian Industry Group 'AIG' and accused of the heinous crime of wanting a single wage agreement.**

The AIG's national director of industrial relations Stephen Smith has claimed that there is no way in the world the firefighters agreement should be used for clerks. The union claim is considered such a threat to corporate profits that a full bench of 'Fairwork Australia' (the panel set up by Kevin07, rather than repeal Howard's

'WorkChoices' legislation) has been convened. The UFU is after a new enterprise agreement to cover all workers employed in the same enterprise.

A single agreement for all employees would increase the bargaining capacity of the firefighters union and ensure that all workers cover by it would be entitled to equal conditions of employment like overtime, sick leave and a say in how the organisation is run. Employers claim the result will have implications for all white collar workers and that militant unions should be allowed in the door. Victorian fire service management has shot back and is trying to force through three separate agreements, one for Furies and Senior Officers, one for Inspectors and one for more senior officers.

The Union has been campaigning for a decent wage increase and a change to relativity's between ranks since early 2009. The campaign has so far seen a rally of 1500

firefighters on the steps of parliament, direct video hook ups between the firefighters in the USA, the UK and New Zealand. The right of all workers to choose if they want a single agreement is seen as so fundamental that the president of Fairwork Australia (former head of the national labour courts) Geoff Giudice will sit on the full bench and has allocated 5 full days of hearings.

The head of the ACTU Jeff Lawrence will appear and argue all workers should have the right to choose if they want a single agreement. The case is seen as the first test of Fairwork Australia's independence.

*Thanks to Sparx*

# CZECH LABOUR NEWS

## Wildcat strike in Hyundai on 2nd December

Thu, 10 Dec 2009

Wildcat strikes of Czech workers in Hyundai and Dymos get massive attention. Around 20 workers left the welding shop in Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Czech in Nošovice near Frýdek-Místek (Czech Republic) during their shift on Tuesday 1st of December 2009. One day later there was an hourly wildcat strike in assembly hall at the same company. On 3rd December workers in Hyundai subcontractor Dymos organised an hourly work stoppage too. On 7th December the union called a "strike emergency" (a symbolic pre-strike measure to warn the management that unless they start negotiations a real strike action will be called) in Hyundai. We informed about these strikes on our website on 3rd of December. In this article we try to sum up what actually happened, what positive and negative results we can see so far and how other workers can help.

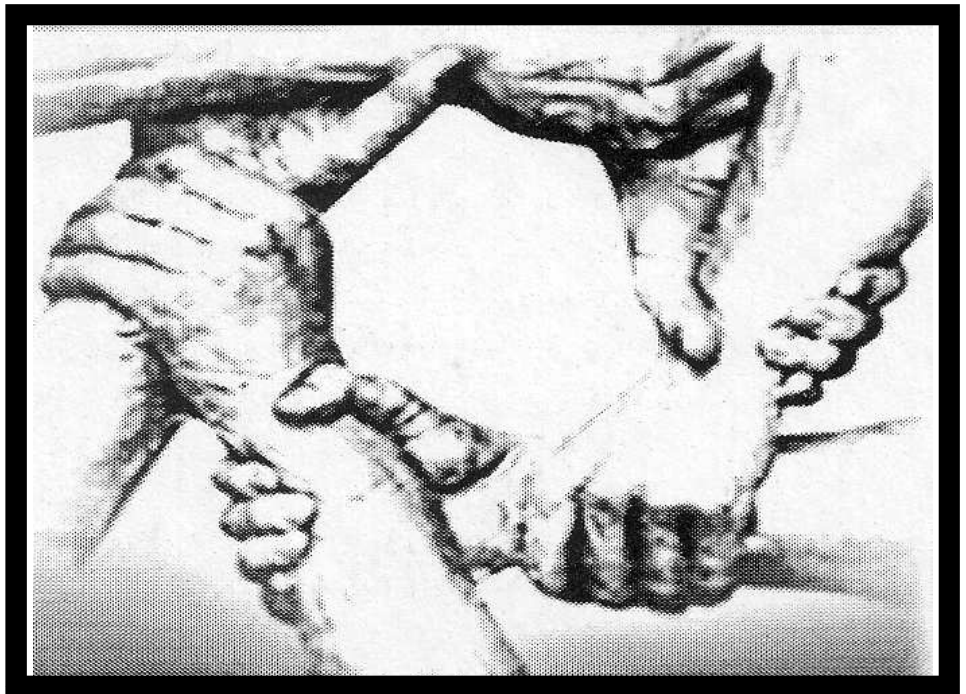
"The other day my wife came home, locked herself in a room and cried. When I came to her and asked what had happened, she told me little by little how things work there and what they have to endure. She's been bottling it up inside her heroically for almost 7 months. I can't understand how something like this is possible in our country. When I read statements of Petr Vanek (HMMC spokesman) I feel like I'm about to vomit. Chicanery, humiliation, threats = this is where Mr Rakovský and Mr Vanek are heading to." Reader's comment on newspaper website sedmicka.cz

## Wildcat strike in Hyundai on 2nd December

Around 400 workers stood up against obligatory overtimes, selective annual company bonuses, and workplace harassment. Workers were planning to stop production since the morning. When the overtime was supposed to begin, workers on one of the lines in the hall stopped production, and in a few minutes all the other lines joined in. The workers then assembled in the canteen. The management told them to choose a representative who would negotiate on their behalf, and they rejected this idea. They demanded the management to come to them and talk in front of everyone. A person from Korean

management along with the shift supervisor came to listen to their demands. After an hour of negotiations the workers agreed to complete the shift and continue negotiating within next days. They were promised that the overtimes on Thursday would be cancelled and the hour they spent striking would be paid.

## Wildcat strike in Dymos on 3rd December and management reaction



On Wednesday, December 3rd, one shift (approximately 100 workers) also went on an hourly wildcat strike in Dymos (also in Nošovice, see the picture <http://www.hyundai.phorum.cz/areal.php>), which is a subcontracting company for Hyundai also with Korean management. Reasons included overtimes, overexertion of workers and bad working conditions. Management of Hyundai is behaving defensively so far and trying to quieten the whole issue in mass media. On the other hand, management of Dymos reacted very quickly. According to information published on the Internet, on 4th December the management told the morning shift which had been on strike a day ago that the workers will lose all the bonuses and there will be a wage freeze.

## "Strike emergency" since 7th December - Unions trying to gain control over further development

The strike in Hyundai was organized without official involvement of the union (and work council) so that the union could not be accused of illegal action. There were some posts on the workers' discussion forum encouraging them to quickly join the union in order to gain strength. The union

has called a "strike emergency" on Monday, December 7th.

A possible solution was drafted by a union representative on the union's discussion forum.

He writes that the employees who took part in the strike will not be punished and urges that now "the employees have to distance themselves from all activities similar to what happened on Wednesday!!! You can strike only afterwards if there is no deal and no compromise with the management!!! Not sooner!!! It would be illegal and the negotiations would fail!!! Plus one technical info: 500 Czech crowns\* in cash instead of a Christmas box of chocolate for every union member, who paid his union fee in November!! :-)"

\* cca. 19 Euro

## Positive results so far

1) Self-organisation of the action. Workers' mobilization and their own action could encourage other workers, not only in Czech.

2) Information channel. The workers had established a public online forum long before they went on strike. This forum along with comments on media websites has become a space where they share information and explain their situation and current events. By doing so the workers have made a huge step forward and have been able to clarify their situation to everyone who has access to the Internet and follows the articles online.

3) Support from other companies. Many online posts from workers from other companies have been supportive. They shared their experiences with bad working conditions, unpaid overtime, overtime deleted from electronic databases, etc.

4) Support from abroad and examples of other actions. Examples of strikes from other countries were also mentioned (France, Korea...). We have also seen solidarity messages from foreign workers, e.g. from Slovakia, Poland, France... on the workers' discussion forum.

5) Media coverage. Mass media informed about the problem more or less neutrally, in any case there were no articles directly against workers. Hundreds of readers used the possibility to discuss on media websites.

The list could continue but it is too soon to evaluate the whole conflict.

## Some thoughts on future developments

Hyundai. "Strike emergency" means that the union will take control over the actions. No one can say what this step will bring. The negotiations of new collective agreement will start in January 2010 and the unions will want to take advantage of the workers' fighting spirit. The experience of Czech Skoda workers from 2007 in a similar case is, however, not very positive <http://protikapitalu.org/?p=30>. If the union succeeds in the attempt to convince the workers not to take independent actions, it will increase its power to decide about the agreement.

The union in Hyundai represents cca 350 of total 2000 employees and according to their treasurer Štefan Janík sees a big rise in the number of people interested in joining it.

Union demands are related mainly to overtime and management pressure on workers. The reason is probably that they count on the fact that other problems will be dealt with from January 2010 as part of the new collective agreement. We can only guess if the formulation of demands is in accordance with workers' opinions. Now it is important to hold the power to make demands and accept agreements in workers' hands, not unions'. That is, it should arise from discussions at mass assemblies of workers in the halls during working time (without presence of management representatives). The pressure on management would thus double - they would not only face a couple of unionists but the whole production sections that

would assert their power and make decisions. It is possible that now after the "strike emergency" was called, this power will be lost. Next weeks will show how the workers balance their power and the power of the union.

Regarding accepting of agreements, our opinion is that the procedure should be similar: every decision should be discussed and accepted at the mass assembly. Workers' delegates would be elected by the workers and they would report the demands to the management. Under no circumstances could they accept an agreement which would not be ratified by the mass assembly.

We also think that workers could start forming a strike committee. Usually it is composed only of union representatives but we think it should be autonomous - in the spirit of original autonomous actions. Every worker should have the possibility to be a member of the strike committee. Union membership does not matter.

Dymos. Dymos workers face a bigger problem. We do not have almost any information from them. We do not know how they reacted to the announcement about bonuses and wage freeze.

We do not even know if there is any contact between Hyundai and Dymos workers. Union demands do not mention Dymos workers. If Hyundai workers stand up for them it will certainly be a great display of solidarity and strength for the future.

*Thanks to A-Infos*

## GERMANY

### Berlin FAU ...Unionize a Success

*December 21, 2009*

300 people demonstrated against the court decision prohibiting the FAU (Free Workers' Union - German syndicalist group) Berlin from calling itself a union.

Despite freezing cold temperatures and the short mobilization period, the large crowd of demonstrators showed that they weren't going to take the de facto ban of the FAU Berlin lying down. The demonstration headed towards the Babylon Mitte cinema, whose managers had obtained the ban from the Berlin Regional

Court on the December 11, 2009. For this and other attempts to stamp out workers' rights, Babylon manager Timothy Grossman was presented in absentia with the Margaret Thatcher Award for 2009



during the demonstration.

The central theme of the various speeches was the regional court's scandalous decision, which is in flagrant disregard of the basic right to organize.

Also discussed was the roll of <http://ver.di> (a big union in Germany) and the Left Party (part of Berlin's ruling coalition), who together with the cinema's management undermined the workers' struggle. A few days earlier, <http://ver.di> - at the behest of the Left Party - signed a labour contract with the management, which was negotiated without the employees' input and involves conditions well below [ver.di](http://ver.di)'s own master contract with other cinemas.

In his speech Hansi Oostinga of the FAU Berlin said: "Our month-long struggle at the Babylon cinema has shown that self-organized, grassroots resistance is possible and can be successful, but also that all attempts will be made to stamp it out. A good union is one that the boss doesn't like."

*For more information about the ban see: <http://www.fau.org/verbot>  
[www.fau.zsp.net.pl](http://www.fau.zsp.net.pl)*

# BRITAIN TODAY

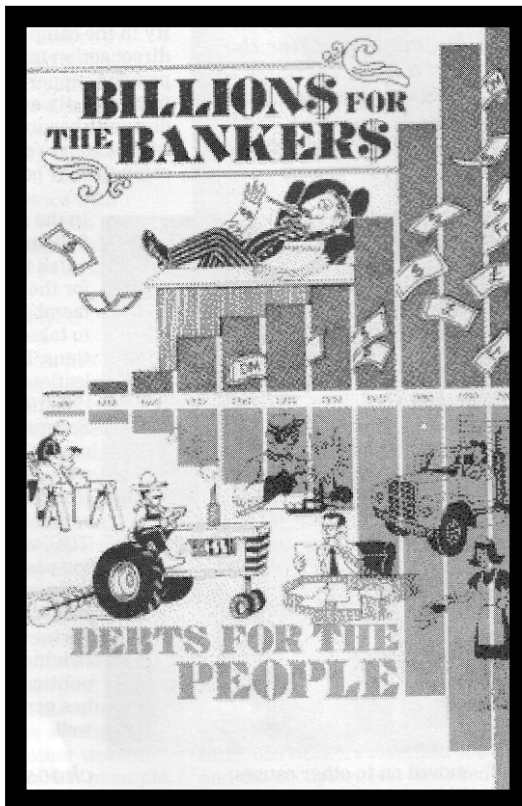
## Austerity Plans For Britain

The recent Conferences have seen one main issue debated by the major political parties: cuts. In the speeches of politicians, the pages of newspapers, and the coverage of the broadcast media, the message we are supposed to swallow is clear; We've had the good times, now come the bad times. We've had economic growth, and now that the system is in crisis, it's down to ordinary men and women to cough up for the mess out of our pay, pensions and services. Never mind that during the good times most of us never really benefited, as below-inflation pay increases meant stagnating wages for many. — Never mind that during the growth years, economic inequality reached record levels. Never mind that mass unemployment was a fact of life before the crisis threw many thousands more workers on the scrapheap. As far as mainstream politicians are concerned, it's up to us to pay for their crisis.

### All in this together? The Tories' plans for austerity Britain

The Tories had all to play for at their recent conference, as, in their view, it was their chance to sell the modern Conservative party as the reasonable caretakers of the British state. Following on from the Lib Dem and Labour conferences, it was down to shadow chancellor George Osborne to lay out the vision for a Britain under Tory rule. Unsurprisingly, it's a bleak one. Osborne's speech, and the agenda of the conference in general, was all about cuts, cuts and more cuts. Like their counterparts in the rival parties, the Tories needed to show just how brutal they could be with the quality of life of working class people in order to fix the budget crisis in the wake of the banking bailout. The core cuts will be to the pay of public sector workers, pensions and benefits. Public sector workers, who had to endure below-inflation pay rises (in other words, pay cuts) throughout economic growth will have their pay frozen if they earn over

18,000 pounds a year. The average UK wage, according to the Office of National Statistics, is 24,908 pounds. Not only will workers be expected to work for less, they will also be expected to work for longer. The Tories plan to fast-track the rollback of the retirement age to 66, meaning that men will be retiring a year later from 2016, and women from 2020. Meanwhile many working class people will be hit by the



withdrawal of benefits and tax credits from those on average incomes. At the same time, the party's millionaire friends are to be guaranteed cuts in inheritance tax. Though Osborne's message was that we're all in this together, nothing could be further from the truth. The fact that these policies are more about looking tough than anything else was proven by the emergence of a billion pounds hole in Osborne's sums, flagged up by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) in the days following the conference. On top of that, the proposals don't come anywhere near to denting the budget deficit, so if the plan is to balance the books (which, it has been suggested by leading analysts, is unnecessary anyway, and could turn a recession into a depression), then much more pain is to be expected.

## The Labour Party friends of ordinary workers?

Though the Tories' plans to hammer workers are frightening, we shouldn't pretend that the other parties aren't gearing up to do the same. Indeed, for Labour and the LibDems, it's really a question of emphasis. Many economists argue that severely cutting spending in the middle of a recession is a recipe for disaster, and Labour's plan to save the kicking until recovery, which they have already decided is around the corner. When speaking at the TUC conference in Liverpool, Gordon Brown outlined the need for cuts across the board, claiming at the same time that these would not affect frontline services. This was re-iterated at the Labour conference. What this means is not quite clear, but it's safe to say that if you are an admin worker, porter or receptionist in a frontline service like the NHS you're at risk. Students and workers in further education can expect hard times. Like the Tories, Labour are claiming that it is possible to cut spending without affecting services. Given neither party has demonstrated how this might be possible, we can only expect the worst. Details of policies are generally thin on the ground on the Labour side of the fence, except for Education minister Ed Ball's 2bn pounds cutbacks which look set to come from teachers' pay and school supplies. Still, Labour's willingness to hit the poorest hardest has been demonstrated by their recent Welfare Reform Bill, which came alongside cuts in job centres and welfare provision despite unemployment surging to near record levels. When faced with the need to make up the money spent on the banking bailout, it's clear that they can be just as savage as the Tories.

*Thanks to Resistance*

## First Buses - The Other Strike

03.11.2009

While all of the media attention was focused on the ongoing postal dispute, another group of workers were taking on their bosses in Greater Manchester this Monday. Over 800 Drivers for the First Bus Group based at depots in Bury, Bolton and Wigan joined thousands across the country who took strike action over an imposed pay freeze. Workers have expressed their dismay at the fact that the zero per cent pay increase comes despite First Group PLC recording profits of over 326 million pounds in the year up to March



2009, a 31 per cent increase on the previous year. Unite, the union representing the striking drivers, says that First are using the recession as an excuse to make employees pay for bigger profits and dividends for shareholders. "First Group made millions of pounds in profit this year, despite the recession, yet are refusing to play fair by the employees who helped deliver these results", Bobby Morton, industrial organiser at Unite said. "The decision to impose a zero per cent increase is based on greed." Duncan McGraw from First told MULE that in the current economic climate it is impossible to offer a pay increase, saying that while profits were up

last year, it's not clear that this trend will continue. The strikes meant that only a skeleton service was running on Monday for most of the First Bus routes, which cover much of northern Greater Manchester. This latest strike follows seven 24-hour strikes earlier this year by workers involved in this dispute. Unite are promising that this will become a series of rolling strikes if the management do not take action to end the dispute. The union say that they will happily bring the dispute to an end if the management offer a reasonable pay increase. They claim that the management has taken a hostile and aggressive stance towards the union but First claim

that their door is always open to union representatives. The two parties in the dispute are currently meeting with conciliation service, ACAS, in an attempt to put an end to the industrial action. A consultative balloting of union members taken earlier this year saw a massive 95 per cent voting in favour of industrial action. Unite say that all of their members took part in the strike.

*Patrick Smith*

## RUSSIAN LABOUR NEWS

### Persecution of Leftist Activists in Omsk Solidarity Appeal November 10, 2009

Unfortunately, in recent days and weeks, another wave of harassment of Russian leftists, oppositionists, and human rights activists seems to have begun. With the blows coming fast and furious, not all activists have the means or the time to prepare detailed accounts of the state's actions against them. [www.ikd.ru/node/11558](http://www.ikd.ru/node/11558) Authorities in Omsk have begun a campaign of persecution and coercion directed against members of the Siberian Confederation of Labor (SKT).

The SKT, an interregional trade union organization, was founded in 1995 by the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists. The SKT has a large number of supporters and is involved in defending their labor and social rights. The SKT also has a youth organization, the Union of Autonomous Youth (SAM), and supports a committee for the defense of former orphanage students. The SKT's active political stance has attracted the attention of law enforcement agencies, who have begun persecuting SKT activists. In this sense, they now practically function as a political police. The trouble began on August 31, when SKT activists organized a demonstration against the violation of civil rights and liberties on the part of law enforcement officers. The immediate cause for the demonstration was the recent murder of a man by two police officers. A large number of young people gathered for the event and the actions of the activists were widely publicized in the mass media. The authorities tested methods for disrupting the demon-

stration by using plainclothes provocateurs (who were, naturally, police officers) and the Young Guard of United Russia, who tried to interfere with the demonstration. After this episode, the authorities began in earnest to persecute SKT activists for their convictions. Subsequently [in October] another policeman committed a double homicide [and then killed himself]. A demonstration was organized by the Yabloko Party youth organization in which SKT activists took part. Despite the fact that the demonstration had official permission, it was attacked by approximately one hundred plainclothes police officers, who used

activist from another organization, the Left Front, which, in the opinion of law enforcement officials, is influenced by the SKT. The reason a criminal case has been opened against him is that the police allegedly found Nazi leaflets in his possession. In reality, SKT members themselves have always publicly taken a consistently internationalist and antifascist stance. Nevertheless, at a subsequent demonstration police provocateurs handed out a leaflet in which Elena and Vasily Starostin, two founders of the SKT, were accused of ties with the Nazi movement. In addition, the authors of the text alleged that the SKT manipulates former orphanage students by promising to solve their problems. In reality, the SKT has initiated more than 120 successful lawsuits and approximately fifty young people have been granted housing as a result of these court rulings. After this incident, the police began interrogating activists whom they had been able to identify during demonstrations. The Starostins were among those summoned. They were told by their interrogators that they were a bad influence on young people and they should cease their activities. The authorities have begun

to pressure Elena Starostin's employer by conducting various inspections: the goal is to coerce him to fire her. The authorities have also begun to pressure young people who participate in SKT actions through the university. They are summoned to the rector's office for discussions of their "extremist" activity and they are threatened with expulsion. As if that were not enough, the police have begun summoning their parents in order to pressure them

**НАЦИСТЫ, ФАШИСТЫ  
И ПРОЧАЯ МРАЗЬ**



**СЛЕДУЙТЕ ЗА ЛИДЕРОМ!**

Russian flags as weapons. The site of the demonstration was entirely cordoned off with buses [parked there by police]. Journalists were on hand, however, and Novaya Gazeta published an article about the demonstration. This greatly angered the police and local authorities.

In order to have an official excuse to summon SKT members and demonstration participants for questioning, the police have begun fabricating a case against an

to stop the activities of their children. In one case, an activist's mother has been threatened with being fired from her job, and other parents can expect the same fate. During their interrogation, police announced outright to the Starostins that the young people who go to protests and participate in the SKT will be unable to find employment in the city. In addition, police

have begun to hint that they are physically threatened, saying things like "Aren't you afraid that skinheads will break your arms and legs?" It is clear that the primary purpose of the actions of the police is to intimidate activists and make it impossible for them to organize new protests. Police officials do not want this story to go public beyond Omsk, and so SKT activists request

that this information be distributed as widely as possible. Leave a Comment Filed under leftist movements, political repression, trade unions Tags: Omsk, persecution of union activists, Russian police state, Siberian Confederation of Labor (SKT) .

## MEXICO- The Liquidation of Luz y Fuerz del Centro: Unemployment & More Attacks

**On the night of the 10th October 2009 the Federal police occupied all of the stations and centres of LyFC in parallel with the presidential directive announcing the closing of this company and lay-offs for nearly 44,000 workers, which the government admits will be "more than that authorised by law". The attack provoked a state of shock, anger and impotence. This is a new blow by the state against the working class. Faced with this situation we have to ask how our class can respond and express its unity.**

**This is an attack against us all, unity is our defence!**

The generalised crisis hitting world capitalism forces each national bourgeoisie to push through increasingly brutal measures, diverting the worst effects of the crisis onto the proletariat. All of its 'adjustments policies' are worsening the living conditions of all workers, by attacking pensions, wages, and social spending. This is the only way that the capitalists can keep their noses above water. Every country is 'reforming pensions' (that is, lowering them!), increasing the amount of years that have to be worked before retirement; wages are being pulverised from every angle, the working day is becoming increasingly unbearable and unemployment is the final insult in a life of daily misery.

What we are seeing in Mexico is not some form of quaint folklore, caused by the particular errors of the national capital. The state, which represents the ruling class - the bourgeoisie - has the task of representing its interests (whether it is a government of the Right or the Left). The liquidation of LyFc is an old aim of the

bourgeoisie, and if this has been delayed it is to give something back to the union apparatus: remember the support that the SME (Mexican electricians' union) gave to the candidature of Carlos Salinas (1988), the reward for which was the restructuring of the company.

The crisis, however, drags the bourgeoisie into a dead-end, where it cannot hide the catastrophic reality that it has brought about itself. It is therefore necessary for

to look 'privileged' and 'inefficient' in the eyes of 'public opinion'. This has led to a situation where many workers don't understand that it is necessary to struggle against this attack, because if today it is the electricity workers, tomorrow it will be the rest of us.

Workers cannot allow themselves to fall for the lies of the bourgeoisie and its acolytes. The closure of LyFC is not a 'benefit for the Mexican people': it is a brutal attack against the whole proletariat. The new contracts (perhaps 44,000 lay-offs?) will mean without doubt worse working conditions, while many other workers will be made redundant.

The bourgeoisie and its political apparatus want us to fall for the idea that the electricity workers have been able to do nothing despite the presence of a 'powerful union',

and this means that all workers must submit to the plans of capital and its state and resign themselves to new reductions in their living conditions. No, the proletariat cannot abandon its struggle against capitalism! Today's attacks are the harbinger of those we will all face if we do not oppose them as a class. Therefore, in the face of the attacks that have been unfolding in recent years along with the rise in prices and intensified repression (with the strengthening of the police-military apparatus) it is vital that all parts of the working class - employed and unemployed,

permanent and casual workers - understand the need for unity and put it into practice. In order to be able to do this, it is vital to know who our enemies are.

**The unions, government and political parties are all our enemies!**

In order to carry out this attack with the least trouble, all the forces of the

*See Page 20*



capital to reform its unions, and not destroy them as the left of capital claims. Workers are beginning to understand, deep down, that the unions' blackmail and grip on the struggle does not contribute to the realisation of their true aspirations. Despite all of their fine speeches the unions are the enemies of the proletariat, because the bourgeoisie needs them to better subdue the exploited.

Don't forget the huge campaign that has been unleashed in recent months against this sector of the proletarian class - the electricity workers - who have been made

# The Union or The Party

## Introduction

*The below article presents anarcho-syndicalism particularly as it relates to the British situation. However, given the many similar political and economic setups and traditions, we share with the UK, it certainly has important relevance to the Australian situation.*

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM HAS ALWAYS BEEN A THEORY of change derived from the practice of the working class. It started as a movement, expressing itself through action, and any theorists that emerged were militant workers who wrote for workers, not for social philosophers. They dealt with issues of the moment, not with metaphysical niceties that so impress intellectuals and academics. As such, their writings are not to be found in academic books but in pamphlets, newspapers and leaflets. Nevertheless anarcho-syndicalists have always had an overall, coherent view of ends and means.

## Class Struggle

The root of anarcho-syndicalism lies in the class struggle. There are exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed, capital and labour - only the complete overthrow of the existing social, economic and political order, along with the abolition of the state and hierarchical forms of organisation, can change this. This can only be done when the will of the workers to achieve it exceeds the will of capitalism and the state to prevent it. Victory will be by our own efforts. It was once said that while others played at class war like a child with a toy sword, only the syndicalists have constructed from it the appropriate and logical theory of action.

This shows itself in the rejection by syndicalists of political parties; even those who claim to represent the working class because, by their very nature, they deny the class struggle. Party membership cuts across class lines, it draws upon people from differing social backgrounds and economic interests. It attracts armchair socialists and intellectuals who often have an abstract interest in change and so can often ultimately betray the working class.

## Class Struggle

Socialist parties are dominated by intellectuals and professional politicians. Their basis is ideological, dependent on temporary and superficial agreements on matters of philosophy. The party, unlike the class, is an artificial organisation. It lacks the true solidarity that comes from direct economic interest. Their aim is to gain power by appealing to the lowest common denominator of agreement.

Whatever the method of change, be it by parliamentary means or through the "dictatorship of the proletariat", it results in substituting one set of rulers for another. Freedom and equality cannot be decreed from above but only achieved by action from below.

## Revolutionary Union

Anarcho-syndicalists recognise the need for the working class to organise to bring about a fundamental change in society and in place of the political party anarcho-syndicalists put the revolutionary union - the autonomous organisation of the working class. It unites the workers, not on the basis of some ideology or sentiment, but in their very quality as workers. Although the revolutionary union is a political as well as an economic organisation, it is not concerned with obscure questions of philosophy. The very reason for its existence is to fight the bosses, to defend the interests of the working class and to push those interests forward until the system of exploitation is abolished. Just as the parliament is the natural expression of the reformist, so the union is the natural form of organisation of the revolutionary working class.

Although the first fully fledged syndicalist union emerged in France with the formation of the Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT) in 1895 the ideas that were to form the basis of anarcho-syndicalism had first appeared in Britain in the 1830s and were pivotal in the formation of the Grand

(GNCTU). The aim of the Grand National was the complete replacement of capitalism and the system of competition with a co-operative system based on workers' control. Here we see further key elements emerging of early anarcho-syndicalist ideas. In particular, that of one organisation uniting all workers with the aim of direct workers' control of industry - an organisation based on the ideas of solidarity and mutual aid.

## Social General Strike



The GNCTU and the CGT also rejected parliamentarianism and the artificial separation of the economic struggle from the political struggle. Both saw political change coming through the actions of the working class organised at the point of production. Both saw the method of change to be strike action culminating in the Social General Strike.

Anarcho-syndicalist ideas spread at the beginning of the 20th Century and revolutionary unions were established in Europe and South America as well as having an influence in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the United States. One major difference between anarcho-syndicalism and the "industrial unionism" of the IWW is that anarcho-syndicalist unions are federated together; they do not form "One Big Union". Unfortunately, in Britain, the birthplace of many of these ideas, the nearest anarcho-syndicalist union came to being established was the Building Workers In-



dustrial Union in 1914. This was soon crushed under wartime emergency regulations with the support of the TUC (similar to the Australian ACTU).

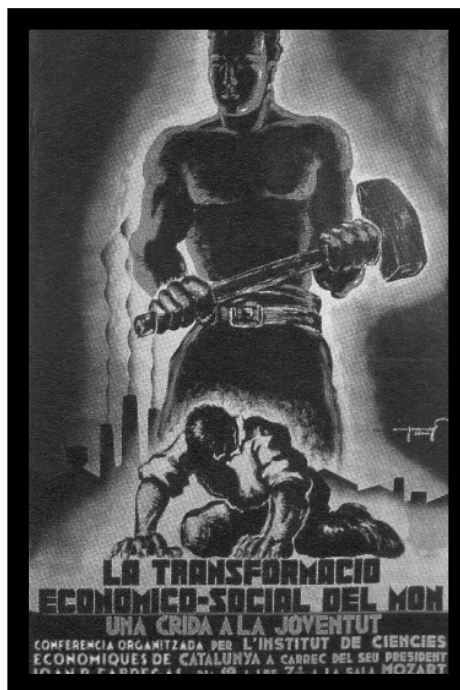
In 1922 the International Workers' Association (IWA) was established linking all the revolutionary unions together in one federation and the 'Principles of revolutionary unionism' were adopted. Each union federated in the IWA adapted the basic principles to the particular situation they found themselves in. The idea of the revolutionary union is to link the present with the future.

## Social Revolution

Direct action - strikes and other methods of struggle - encourage solidarity. Every strike, successful or not, increases hostility between the classes and stimulates further conflict. The aim of direct action is to win concessions from the bosses in the short term, but in the long term, to give workers the confidence and ability to make wider demands leading eventually to social revolution. It is defensive and offensive, destructive and constructive. Every strike is a step on the road to the final conflict - the social general strike, the beginning of the transformation to a free society. While the class struggle is waged, the future is being created. The union becomes the cell for the new society.

The revolutionary union is seen as a permanent organisation of workers that gives a basis for working class resistance while the intensity of the class struggle ebbs and flows. In times of low class struggle the revolutionary union would be mainly a de-

fensive tool while still advocating different forms of organisation and fundamental change. As the struggle intensifies it would become more aggressive and challenge the capitalist system and the state. This is what distinguishes anarcho-syndicalism from other forms of workplace organisation that see temporary organisations springing up in times of



struggle only to fade away.

Such organisations have their place and often emerge spontaneously at certain times but they can so easily be used by various political factions for their own ends.

Their political aims may be deliberately obscured to gain support but in an anarcho-syndicalist union the political and economic aims are plain and explicit.

The combining of the political and economic struggle in one organisation is unique to anarcho-syndicalism. Other political groups adopt a dual approach, that sees political elites trying to guide the economic struggle in a particular direction. Up to recently the Labour Party has been the main political outlet for the reformist TUC unions. Other groups have been trying to challenge this in recent years but with little success as yet. The various parties of the left will set up groups within the unions to attempt to gain influence and get their members elected into positions of power. These "front" groups will recruit from the wider union membership but will remain under the control of a particular political grouping.

## Self-Appointed Elite

Other revolutionary unions have been established over the years but they have been purely economic organisations that have taken the view that political allegiances should be left out of the union. In reality what has happened is that various political groups have tried to exert influence over these unions in various ways including joining en masse and taking positions of influence within them. This leads to decision making being taken away from the ordinary members and left to a self-appointed political elite.

Of course the revolutionary union is not only concerned with economic issues and is concerned with a range of other issues eg anti-militarism. Its federated structure means that geographical links between different industries and international links can be used to resist coercion no matter what guise it takes.

## Means and Ends

Anarcho-syndicalist theory and practice presents a fully harmonised programme of action. The strike, the natural form of conflict, is also the form of revolution. The time that workers could hope to achieve anything purely by insurrection is long past. The revolutionary union gives workers a school in which to practice forms of libertarian organising that reflects how a free society would function, with the ends and means well-matched to create the future society in the shell of the old. Edited

*Thanks to*

*Direct Action*



# THE BULGARIAN ANARCHIST MOVEMENT

By Jack Grancharoff

*The Second Installment of his article on the history of Bulgarian Anarchism which commenced in the last edition of Rebel Worker Vol.28 No.3 (204).*

At the same time in Kyustendil, appeared "The Anarchist" which later on became the illegal organ of the Federation. "Rabotnicheska Misl" came out as a magazine which due to circumstances, changed to "Free Society" as a theoretical journal. The latter played an important role in spreading anarchism.

The second, third and fourth Congresses took place illegally. Only the fifth one was held legally from 7th to 12th January in 1923 in Yambol. It was attended by 104 delegates and there were 350 guests from 89 local organizations. A report was presented describing the development of anarchism from the fourth Congress which was held illegally in 1921. The issues on the agenda were: internal and external situation, organization, transitional period, the dictatorship of the proletariat, peasants, cooperatives, syndicalism, propaganda, anarchist international and so on.

The Congress took place in the city square. Among the speakers were the oldest anarchist, Nicola. Stoinoff, and the youngest syndicalist, Jordan Sotiroff, better known as Manol Vasseff. The Congress was an impressive show of anarchism and the circulation of "Svobodna Misl" jumped enormously. Entering the political arena as an impressive social force to be reckoned with had not escaped the watchful eyes of authorities. The reaction was already preparing a Coup D'Etat and it had convinced the Government to pass a law against bandits, singling out the anarchists. It was a draconian law: shoot them on the spot. This legislation made Sheitanoff so indignant that he wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister. It is worth reproducing it.

Mr. Stambolyisky,

You know well the corridors of the central prison of Sofia. In these corridors in 1917, I often met your person. Then you often reminded us of Ivailo. Have you forgotten the patterns, have you? Some times destiny is a paradox. Today you wear patent leather shoes and perhaps a tail-coat.

In prison you completed your education. From others, you learnt about Stirner and Nietzsche. Let Stirner and Nietzsche be



blamed because they suggested to you that you are a "superman" and made a maniac of you.

You remember the riot in the prison that took place in the winter of 1917 do you? The then director of the prison walked among the prisoners with a revolver in his pocket and called them with his own name: scoundrels.

We, the anarchists, organized the riot. More than 1500 prisoners arose as a single person and all the iron gratings began to crackle. The guards put down their weapons and the "haughty" director turned his back forgetting his revolver. The day after the riot, Kosta Todoroff came with a mission from you and Genadieff. He told me: "The influence and daring you have shown in the riot has surprised all of us. With this courage and this influence you can break the doors of the prison and come out with all the prisoners, creating turbulence in the capital and, supported by some military

units which are on our side, stage a coup D'Etat. We are in contact with units at the front and as soon as they hear of it, they will set straightaway for Sofia and it will be the end of Radoslavov, Ferdinand and the war."

I did not put trust in the idea because I knew that you are people without principles and honour. The September's days of 1918 proved that. You treacherously left those who fell fighting in Vladaya and went to the palace. Today as an old bear you are entertaining the young "Bulgarian tsar." From that day began your tragicomedy. You had arrived on the political scene as a bull in glass warehouse.

I would never dwell on you, if you with your vulgarity and mania had not infringed our interests. Every day you target the anarchists to hide your own misery.

On the other side you raise a storm in a glass of water with the "bill" for brigands. You try to push forward a tendency that the anarchists are bandits. Be aware of anarchists Mr Stambolyisky! A long time ago they declared you a bandit. The anarchists are your enemy in Bulgaria. From Blagoeff to you and Radoslavoff — all of you are insignificant figures of a dirty principle — parasitism and violence. The People nourish, clothe and water you, what is your idea? Or are your byre in Sofia and the pigsty in Slavovitsa a substitute for your ideal? Perhaps you are not at fault for being ignorant.

How can anyone hold you, a mediocrity, to be responsible? But if you, poor in spirit, cannot see beyond the day — do not poke your nose at our doors - we will crush it. You can expect only a bullet from us. Sir, remember that Bulgarian anarchists and the anarchists around the world are forerunners of human awakening. They carry the scrolls of the great morrow.

The anarchists think that every person has an attitude towards himself: to look after his needs, to work and on the bases of it to build his spiritual perfection which is the aim of his life. In relation to the others we should never prevent them from doing the same. For the anarchists, the greatness of the man is within him not without. You, authoritarian parasites, who like to externally dominate the world, you are plebeians.

Aristocracy is not in the evil which you inflict on the people, not in the atrocities which you committed in your life. Aristocracy is the richness of the spirit, in unselfishness, in the suffering on the road towards oneself.

You are indebted to the people because you have harmed them. On the road to the spring of life you have kicked out your neighbour.

We, anarchists, think that the richness of the earth is enough for her sons. That is why we like to share it fraternally.

When labour and love of your neighbour, happen to become prerequisites of your consciousness, we will stretch our hand to you. Until then we will be enemies. If you don't retreat from the wretchedness whose world's traditions you uphold, then we will drag your country into the mud.

You are inebriated today by the noises made by the newspapers around your name. You fancy yourself as being a "great man". Sir it is a deception. You are an agent of a dying tradition in the world - Parasitism. You are making a career out of violence and stealing from others. This is a dirty job. You are too lazy to go to work and to live off your labour as your forefathers did. So, you rob the labour of the others by violence just like the lowest and most unscrupulous common bandit. In its awakening human kind will turn its face away from the names of the rascals among which you'll find your name too. Your name will be covered with the ashes of the dying tradition which you are supporting. Bulgarian spirit will never retain the name of Ivailovtsy, Turlakoff, Burlakoff, Burlakoff — Never! Time will retain the images of Bogomil, of Boteff. Time will preserve those values which prop up life, goodness, love, toil and peace among people, that is, the values of the anarchist ideal.

In our march towards this ideal, we, the anarchists of Bulgaria ask you to take off your hat and pay attention.

Georgy Sheitanoff (2:p.197)

The next step on the agenda of the bourgeoisie was to disarm the people in order to thwart their resistance to the plotted Coup D'Etat. The anarchists got a wind of this and decided to call a meeting to protest against the disarmament, which took place on 26 of March 1923 in Yambol. This provided the military-fascist plotters with an excellent opportunity to strike at the recalcitrants, the anarchists, disarm the people and clear the way to the eventual Coup D'Etat. Therefore, the repression was ferocious and about 30 to 40 anarchists were shot. Stambolyisky, having the majority in the Parliament, drunk with power and blind to reality thinking that he was invincible, foresaw nothing. The letter of Sheitanoff had no impact upon him. The warning of Alexandr Dimitroff, one of his ministers, who was shot by the Macedonians in service of Bulgarian monarchy, that "if he, Stambolyisky, does not watch himself his head will be next" fell on deaf ears. Two and half months after the

March slaughter of the anarchists, on 9th of June 1923 the Coup D'Etat took place, Stambolyisky was assassinated and then cut into pieces.

The new Government was a coalition of right-wing forces led by the notorious fascist, Alexandr Tsankof who twenty years later, while in the service of Hitler, stated that if the opportunity presented itself he would slaughter another 30, 000. Three years later he was succeeded by another right-wing, oppressive and pro-monarchist Government until the election of the Peoples' Block in 1931.

The path of the new reactionary Government was marked by death while the country turned into a slaughter house. There were about 30,000 dead. The death of Stambolyisky himself had not produced many tears. "Rabotnicheska Misl" No 3, 1923 published by Bulgarian anarchists in Chicago wrote: "Regarding the killing of Stambolyisky we are neither sorry nor happy. We will only mention that he got the same medicine he used to give to many workers." (1: p.364)

But despite anarchists' severe criticism of Stambolyisky, they had participated actively in the struggle against the new Government. The communists, on the other side, remained passive since they considered the struggle between the people and the plotters as a struggle between two bourgeoisies. Scolded by the Comintern (International Communist Party organisation) for their tactical mistake the leaders of the Communist Party, Vassil Kolaroff and George Dimitrov, made another tactical mistake. They followed instructions to organize an insurrection against the new Government in order to acquire prestige as revolutionaries among the masses they had betrayed.

The insurrection took place in September 1923. It was a failure from the beginning. The communists acted like Blanquists but without their conspiratorial tactics. The September upheaval was criticized by the Right, as well as the Left, communists as "thoughtless and adventurist, as fascist provocation", "a deliberate mockery with the hopes of the toiling masses." (1: p.354) Nevertheless, the anarchists participated vigorously in it to support the struggle of the masses against the advance of fascism. This adventurist tactic of the Communist Party, whose history is a history of tactics and tactical mistakes, or adventurism if it does not suit their policy, cost many lives. It provided the Government with another opportunity to continue its blood bath.

The experience of the Russian Revolution, the defeat of the Vladaya rebellion, the massacre in Yambol, the Coup D'Etat in June and the September botched upheaval staged by the Communist Party only intensified terrorism in the country. The trag-

edy of the people reinforced the idea in the head of Sheitanoff for a united front of all revolutionaries. For that purpose he left Ruse and took residence, illegally, in Sofia.

At the end of 1923 he put out, illegally, the newspaper "Protest". Then in 1924 he was able, legally, to bring out a weekly "Zov" (The Call). He succeeded in penetrating intellectual circles and had made acquaintance with many writers, journalists, artists and academics, such as, professor Balabanoff, professor Assen Zlataroff, Anton Strashimiroff, Geo Mileff, 'Christ' Yassenoff, Nikolai Khrelkoff etc. Contacts were established with left agrarians, such as, Dimitre Grancharoff, Nikolai Petrini, Petko D. Petkoff, Triphon Kuneff, with the communists Stanke Dimitroff, Dimo Hadji Dimoff, and also Macedonian federalists such as Todor Panitsa and others. Together with Geo Mileff, as editor, he founded the magazine "Plamak" (The Flame).

Sheitanoff's idea of a united front caused some consternation among many anarchists who were suspicious of it after the bitter lesson of the Russian Revolution. G.J in "Rabotnicheska Misl" No 83, June 22'1, 1923 wrote: "Power whatever its origin, has always been a predator on and an oppressor of the people... The etiquette bourgeois, democratic or proletarian is irrelevant. Our struggle against it should never waver." But in the struggle against fascism, the anarchists looked to establish a common ground with the revolutionary workers and peasants. "It is necessary in one or other way to find points of contacts with those suitable and revolutionary decisive elements within the party for a common struggle against the reactionary danger." (Rabotnicheska Misl, No 94, November 7th, 1923) What Sheitanoff had in mind was a kind of united front of rank and file revolutionaries, not a front of political parties.

When, in 1924, the Bulgarian Communist Party appealed to anarchists to join the, by now Comintern engendered, United Front the anarchist answer was: "Our stand is unequivocal, against us are all who inculcate power in the brains and apply it in their life... the issue of a united front with any authoritarian group or party is not viable." (1: p.374) The practical unity of communists, agrarians and anarchists that

*To Be Continued*

## NEWS &amp; NOTES

Some important news lately was the State Transit bus strike in Sydney and Newcastle on Friday 18/12/09. Whilst the strike was supposedly about the Rail Tram & Bus Union (RTBU) bus division enterprise bargain agreement negotiations. An important contribution toward the union officials getting the wheels moving for the action to be taken, is their need to dampen grass roots disgruntlement at many bus depots. Stemming from their many cave-ins to management on local issues. With union elections coming up in late 2010, they recognise the need to clean up their image amongst the grass roots. (See article page 4)

In RailCorp in NSW, important moves are afoot to launch a new wave of staff cuts and speedups in workers' jobs. The upcoming RailCorp enterprise agreement will be playing an important role in this onslaught. Already the union hierarchy has circulated a very slanted survey to manipulate membership compliance with the EBA. (See article page 3)

In the Victorian railways, after a "quiet" period due to the legacy of the Kennett Offensive and widespread privatisation, there is important evidence of the grass roots fighting back against management tyranny. (See article page 8)

Rebel Worker has an internet web site. Its address is [www.rebelworker.org](http://www.rebelworker.org) Many articles from back issues of Rebel Worker are available in the archive section on the site.

Help Build Rebel Worker! Your help is particularly sought with its distribution. So why not order bulk copies to distribute and sell at your local shopping centre on Saturday mornings, leave at the lunch room at work and at your local café or library or cinema.

Your assistance on the financial plane is also very welcome.

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## A.S.N. DIRECTORY

**ASN Sydney Local**

PO Box 92  
Broadway 2007 NSW

**ASN Melbourne:**

J.Dixon  
[Jeremytrewindixon@yahoo.com.au](mailto:Jeremytrewindixon@yahoo.com.au)

**The Anarchist Age**

PO Box 20  
Parkville Vic. 3052

**Newcastle Anarchist Group**

PO Box 532  
Newcastle 2300 NSW.

**SPARKS**

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

**JURA BOOKS**

440 Parramatta Rd  
Petersham 2049 NSW  
Ph. (02) 95509931

**SPARX**

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FIRE FIGHTERS' PAPER.  
[Sparx@firehousemail.com](mailto:Sparx@firehousemail.com)

**WORKING CLASS UNITED**

<http://workingclasunited.googlepages.com/home>

**Grassland Infoshop**

207B Nicholson St.  
Footscray  
3011 Vic.

**Where we stand:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**TO FIND OUT MORE**

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

Name .....

Address.....

General Secretary

PO Box 532 Newcastle 2300 NSW.

*Continued From Page 14* ruling class have divided up the work: some creating divisions amongst the electricity workers through a sterile electoral struggle between union factions; some by painting the attacks on the living conditions as 'attacks on the unions and democratic liberties'; while others are creating a lynch-mob atmosphere by presenting the electricity workers as 'privileged'. They are doing this in order to draw as many workers as possible into an ill-considered struggle to 'defend the union', and by extension to defend the firm and the national economy. These slogans are part of a strategy to make workers forget their demands as an exploited class.

Following on from this attack (10 October) this campaign has strengthened and taken advantage of the momentary surprise in order to spread feelings of defeat and demoralisation. The unions have been at the forefront of this. This shows that to try and struggle through the union leads straight to defeat, since it has been the union, along with other forces of the state, which has trapped the workers in this impasse. The unions certainly aren't going to advance the struggle, on the contrary. An example of this is the SME putting forward the idea that it is possible to freely resolve this struggle 'legally, through the courts', leading workers again into the dead end of bureaucratic judicial protection, making them forget how the unions, faced with the modification of the ISSSTE [Social Security for State Workers] created dispersion, diverted discontent and ended the struggle, all through the use of judicial protection! The judicial and legalistic terrain onto which the unions seek to divert discontent leads to sterile exhaustion, reducing workers to citizens who respect and defend the 'legal system' (which is only there to legitimise their precarious and miserable conditions) rather than acting as a class.

It is clear that the role of the union is not to unite and push forward the expression of

real solidarity, but to divide us. The fact that the government has been able to deliver such a blow against the electricity workers is not some bolt from the blue, but rather the result of the unions' work of division and sabotage over the years.

The bourgeoisie's strategy is to land a definitive blow in order to divert the electricity workers' real discontent and to stop the solidarity of their fellow workers being expressed. In order to do this it is using all of its forces to try and drag the workers onto the terrain of the defence of the nation and the unions; that is, they want to imprison us in a struggle that does not try to

port'. Real solidarity takes place through and in the struggle. Today, as at all similar times and situations, the electricity workers are being attacked and the rest of the proletariat must express real solidarity, which is nothing other than a will to struggle without distinction between the unemployed and employed, between sectors, or between regions. To express real solidarity workers must hold assemblies open to the whole proletariat (employed, unemployed and other sectors) where the situation that faces everyone is discussed and the discontent turned into a movement controlled by workers themselves and not by the union structure.

In order to carry out this attack, the unions are trying to isolate the electricity workers from their class brothers and to enrol them into mobilisations such as the one being promoted by Lopez Obrador which seek to enclose and hamstring the workers, to prevent them looking for their own means of struggle, to trap them in a false choice about state or private firms, thus leaving them open to attacks from all sides. Workers must reflect together, outside of and against the unions, in order to organise a struggle to try to stop the attacks. If we leave ourselves in the hands of the unions and the political parties, we are condemning ourselves to defeat. A slogan of the class war is being heard again in the world: 'the emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves'; and we have to remember that the exploited have nothing to lose but their chains!

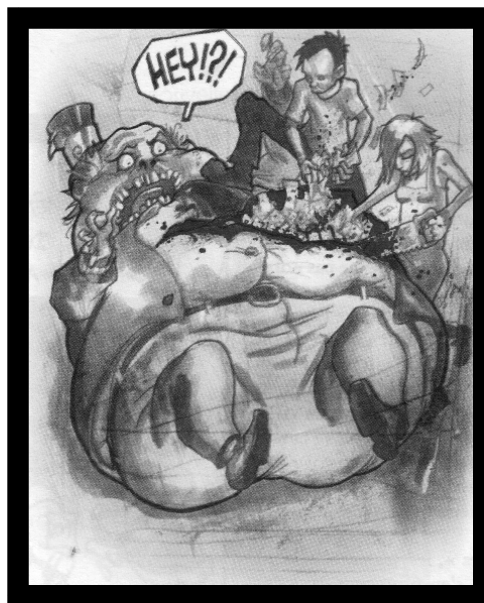
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*Grupo Socialista Libertario*  
[webgsl.wordpress.com/](http://webgsl.wordpress.com/)

*Revolution Mundial*  
[mexico@internationalism.org](mailto:mexico@internationalism.org)

*Proyecto Anarquista Metropolitano*  
[Proyectoanarquistametropolitano.blogspot.com](http://Proyectoanarquistametropolitano.blogspot.com)

*Thanks to Internationalism*



question the system of capitalist exploitation and, finally, they tell us that we can best express our discontent through our vote in the next electoral circus.

**Struggling together, looking for solidarity as a class...There is no other way!**

Solidarity is not some union pantomime where one union boss declares his support for another, nor is it fictitious 'moral sup-