

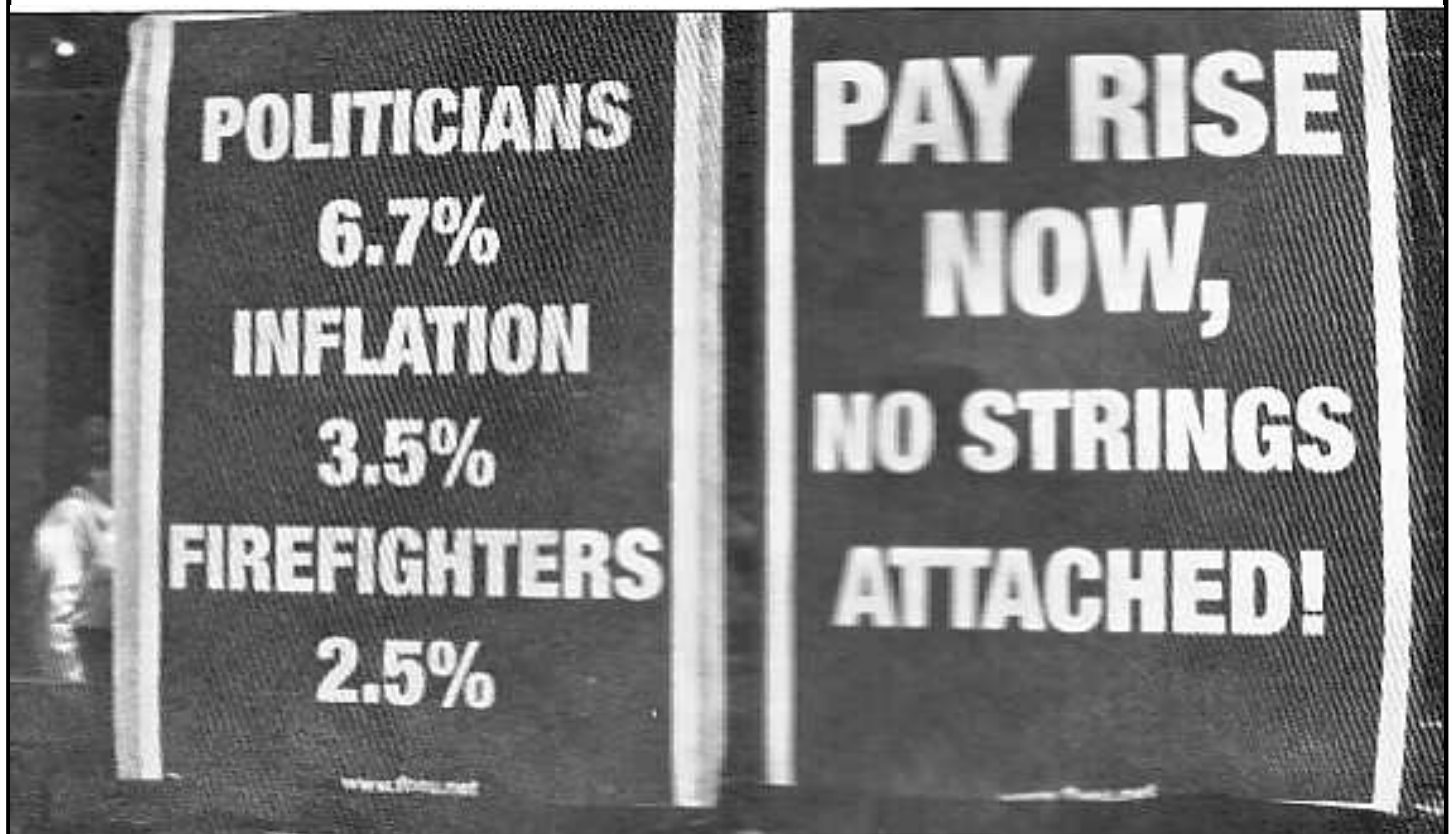
# REBEL WORKER



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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

ONLY DIRECT ACTION WILL BREAK  
THROUGH THE IEMMA GOVT. PUBLIC  
SECTOR PAY RISE STRAIGHT JACKET!



**MELB. VIOLENT BOSS OUTRAGE; WORLD YOUTH DAY & THE  
N.S.W. RAILWAYS; STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH; SYDNEY  
MARITIME NEWS; MELB. MILITANT CABBIES MEETING; VIC.  
AUSTRALIA POST WILDCAT; VIC. RAIL NEWS; BRITAIN TODAY;  
POLAND; BOOK REVIEW CORNER; ADVENTURES IN SECT LAND;  
INDIA TODAY; NEWS & NOTES;**

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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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## National News

### Violent boss has charges dismissed

**Anthony Elliott, the owner of the Elliott Group of companies in Melbourne, had all 15 charges against him dismissed after a 4 day court hearing. The case related to a community assembly that was held outside the premises of Elliott Engineering on May 4th last year. The assembly was organised by Union Solidarity in support of 48 workers in the Latrobe Valley who were chasing Anthony Elliott for almost \$1 million in unpaid entitlements.**

Elliott bought the engineering plant in the Latrobe Valley from Skilled Engineering and then shut it down after about 18 months. He locked the workers out and refused to pay them their full entitlements. The Latrobe Valley workers picketed their site for over 34 weeks in an attempt to stop Elliott removing the plant and equipment from the premises. The action in Kilsyth was designed to put added pressure on Elliott to pay the workers what they deserved.

Some of the workers had worked at the Latrobe Valley plant for over 20 years and many were owed tens of thousands of dollars. But through dodgy accounting and the setting up of shelf companies, Elliott found a loophole in the laws and claimed that he did not have to pay the entitlements owed to the workers. This is nothing more than the theft of workers' wages on a grand scale.

On the day of the community assembly Anthony Elliott drove not one but two trucks through the picket line. The second truck collected four protesters who were forced to cling onto the bull bar of the truck or be run over and potentially killed. Elliott was only forced to stop the truck more than a kilometre down the road by a protester in a pursuing car.

The police had witnessed the entire event on the day and pledged to ensure Elliott was punished with the full force of the law.

Unfortunately the police were extremely unprepared for this case and the police Prosecutor Sergeant Murray Phillips seemed disinterested throughout the entire hearing. The strategy of Elliott's defence was to spend half of their time trying to trip up the witnesses about specific details from the day and the other half attempting to discredit the witness's credibility. Some of the witnesses were accused of collusion and another had his evidence dismissed by the magistrate simply due to a prior unrelated conviction.

The other two witnesses, Dave Kerin from Union Solidarity and Anthony Main from the Socialist Party, were attacked at length for their political beliefs. In his summary magistrate Brian Clifford said that "Kerin told the court he was a teacher. I believe he is a teacher of civil disobedience", and "civil disobedience is merely a euphemism for breaking the law".

Clifford also said that "ringleader" Kerin had set up Union Solidarity as a vehicle to break the industrial laws and that he had perhaps stopped thousands of trucks dating back to his time in the BLF (Builders Labourers Federation). He said that the protesters were engaged in illegal conduct on the day and that they were "not afraid to break the law and ride on trucks." "I believe that Mr. Kerin is an experienced bull bar rider" he said, "And I do not believe that he had any regard for anyone's safety".

Clifford described Main as the most obnoxious person in attendance at the picket line on the day. He seemed more disgusted that Main had yelled at Elliott about the unpaid entitlements and called him a "dog" than the fact that several people were nearly killed by the truck. Clifford said that Main gave evidence to this court saying that he is a strong advocate of democratic rights.

Main is the absolute antithesis of that ideal and his credibility is therefore zero.

In his judgment Clifford implied that the rights of Elliott as a property owner were more important than the rights of the protesters or indeed the rights of the workers who are owed hundreds of thousands of dollars. He said that the protesters were engaged in unlawful industrial action on the day and that they had unlawfully hindered Elliott. Clifford said that the protesters were in no danger and that Elliott had not contravened the law. "If there was any danger at all on the day it was the protesters who created it" he said.

Not only did magistrate Clifford dismiss all the charges, but to flaunt his contempt for the protesters he asked the defence lawyer, Sean Grant, if he would like the court costs to be awarded against Main and Kerin!

The magistrate and the defence lawyer shared a laugh when the defence replied "we would love to your honour but unfortunately there are no provisions to do that". In this case it was almost like the witnesses were on trial rather than the defendant who had nearly killed several people.

The magistrate contradicted himself many times in his summary and showed little respect for his own laws. Usually the ruling class, and their representatives in the judiciary, attempt to disguise the class bias in the legal system by pretending that the system is fair. In this case, however, the magistrate was very crude and open about the fact that he saw the rights of the boss to enter and exit his property as paramount to the safety of everyone else.

This case, if nothing else, proves that there is one law for the rich and another for the rest of us. In the past workers have been jailed for much less than what Elliott did on the day. As one of the workers employed by Elliott in the Latrobe Valley said "The courts are no place for workers to win". Socialists see the courts as an instrument of the state. They are there to serve the interests of the ruling class over those of ordinary people. The fight for these workers to get paid their entitlements is still continuing in the Federal Court. Unfortunately as this worker said "In this case even if we win in the Federal Court we lose".

*Thanks to*

*Socialist Party Reporters*

# N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

## Update on RailCorp EBA 2008

As we go to print papers are being sent by the Electoral Commission to Union members homes in a ballot seeking approval for "protected industrial action". Because negotiations over the EBA have stalled the unions are now seeking approval from the Industrial Relations Commission for the ability to carry out industrial action in support of their claims.

Rail Corp are remaining steadfast offering only a 2.5% PA wage rise for the next 2 years. 4% PA is on offer, if, and only if, there is an agreement on the shedding of 417 rail station jobs, the cutting of appeal rights and tighter "absence control" measures.

The conditions imposed for getting a 4% rise have been largely rejected by rail workers.

However, approval for the right to flex some industrial muscle, whatever form that takes, is now contingent on the unions gaining a 51% consent from their members.

This is not guaranteed. In most union elections something less than 30% of union members vote. Also some may be frightened away from taking industrial action due to financial stress that would see their pay docked during any industrial action. Some may not be prepared to risk the loss of one mortgage payment. Already workers are being penalised as the EBA was to be finalised by Apr of this year. Since the State Government is not allowing backdated pay rises rail workers have already suffered a pay cut as inflation is running at close to 4%.

This all takes place in light of a report commissioned by the NSW Independent Pricing Tribunal which recommends that Rail Corp expunge all of its City Rail Guards and hundreds of Station Staff. If this doesn't happen according to the report rail fares are set to rise to astronomical levels. This effectively drives a wedge between commuters who already pay exorbitant fares and rail staff who are fighting for their jobs and a very moderate pay rise.

The unions and their members must now get out win the hearts and minds of the travelling public before any industrial action begins. There will be little public sympathy for rail workers if and when action takes place.

So far no strategy or agreed goal has been set in place by the unions. This must be articulated and debated by the union members at the shop floor. We all need to know what the agreed fall-back position will be if we fail to persuade Rail Corp to accede to our claims. The acceptance of 2.5% wage rise is not an option. Any reduction in staff numbers and alteration to conditions or work practices should be rejected. What will be our demands?



Sparks reiterates its position of an immediate 10% pay rise with no trade offs in any form, just so members can keep their heads above water.

We urge all union members to vote in favour of industrial action against the proposed Rail Corp EBA. We urge all members to immediately call for union stop work meetings (preferably a mass stop work meeting) once polling confirms that a majority are in favour of industrial action. Any proposed action must be debated, agreed and voted by on by all union members.

Above all we cannot afford to lose this one and it must be done collectively and democratically if we are to have any hope.

## STOP PRESS

There are signs that the vote for industrial action is a rort. Many people have received empty envelopes from the Electoral Commission. When they have contacted the union they have been told that a ballot paper would be faxed to them from the union office. This is odd since the union is not running the election and all envelopes are numbered. I smell a scam here.

Simultaneously the union has produced a

bulletin saying that the ballot for protected action is for a 4% pay rise. It warns that if the 50% +1 target is not met then this is a signal to the union that workers are accepting the 2.5% on offer.

Latest news is that 95% of voters in the ballot approved "protected industrial action". The union officials then threatened strike action during the World Youth Day period. Subsequently the officials backed down on their threat due to a supposed break through in negotiations with the Govt. Involving 417 job losses being taken off the agenda. However, according to the Daily Telegraph 9/7/08 the bosses are still demanding job losses "targeted job cuts over the next few years." The claimed "victory" was just an "illusion"!

## It's Time for a Campaign on Shift Work

Recent health research points to the devastating health effects of working continuing shift work.

In the transport industry it has all been well documented for years. Train drivers for instance have a life expectancy several years below that of other workers due to the working of irregular rostered hours.

Now new research looks at the mechanisms at play that contribute to worker sickness and premature death. The World Health Organisation's research into cancer announced recently that shift work involving disruption of circadian rhythms was "probably carcinogenic"

Dr Ron Grunstein, the head of sleep research at the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research in Sydney, quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald, admits that "A majority of studies support that shift work – particularly rotating shift work – seems to be a risk for different types of cancer."

Although research is inconclusive animal studies "suggest it's potentially got something to do with the circadian system" according to Dr Sally Ferguson of the Centre for Sleep Research at the University of South Australia.

One line of research suggests that alterations to melatonin levels in the brain due

to shift work may have an effect on cancer growth. Grunstein says that "Melatonin is thought to be a substance that retards growth of cancers". Melatonin is reduced in shift workers.

Shift workers are also more likely to be overweight, physically inactive, pay less attention to symptoms and signs and they are more likely to suffer from stress, hypertension, elevated blood sugars. The effects of shift work on the cardiovascular system have been known for years.

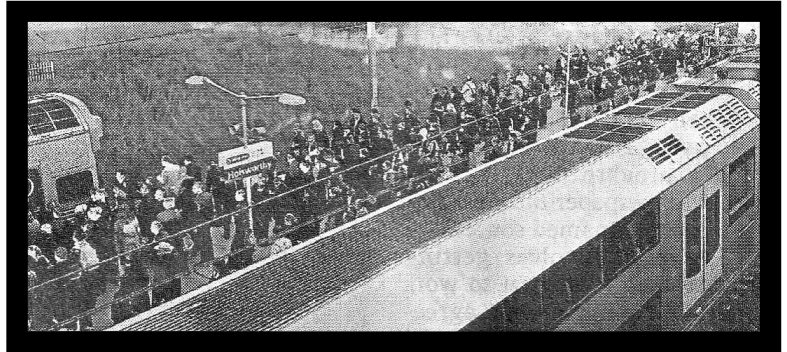
Given that there are now more or less arguable proven links between rotating shift work and shift worker illness and premature death there may soon be fields for litigation against employers opening up.

In the meantime public transport workers should be properly compensated for the threats to their health, their lack of social interaction and alienation.

The present wage arrangements for shift workers are very limited as they only offer a shift allowance on weekday work. In effect most public transport shift workers are

only paid an allowance for a maximum of six or seven days per fortnightly roster. Any overtime work or weekend work does not include a shift work allowance. This is a ludicrous situation as it denies workers the recognition that this rostered rotation is creating havoc within their bodies and minds.

A campaign in recognition of the supreme sacrifice of shift workers should begin immediately with the demand that all work out of normal hours is compensated with a reasonable and just monetary allowance regardless of whether it is time worked at



overtime or on weekends. This campaign should begin immediately.

# STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH

## PORT BOTANY DEPOT NEWS

### Rebel Worker: What's happening at the Depot Lately?

Port Botany Driver: In recent weeks one of our young drivers here, a really, nice, decent young guy with a young family who wouldn't hurt a fly, recently got toasted by the new digital video system. Due to the intense scrutiny his driving was placed under, courtesy of the 5 cameras on his bus watching him, he's been put him up on criminal charges and he is facing a possible gaol term. The other driver had no such scrutiny placed on his driving because private vehicles don't have 5 digital cameras mounted in them. So all the evidence is loaded and mounted against our guy. As unlikely as it probably is, the other driver could have had his eyes shut or been peering at some woman on the footpath when this accident happened, but we will never know that. All the cops and STA will ever

know is every single blink and movement of our STA driver. The guys at the depot are not that happy about the Union's handling of the matter. The way I see it, STA drivers are being subjected to unfair scrutiny that no other driver on the road is subjected to, and the overwhelming amount of evidence taken from bus cameras that STA is going to be able to produce each time there is an accident is always going to weigh heavily against STA drivers where there is any doubt about who was at fault. It doesn't seem to be an even playing field any more. Our union officials should never have allowed the policy to go through in its present form, but they refused to even consider making changes or negotiating a fairer policy. I've heard that the discussion and suggestions that the Union should try to negotiate a better policy during that Executive Meeting was guillotined by the Randwick Delegate with the support of every other Delegate present, except of course our former PB

Delegate. They didn't even TRY to get a better policy out of STA that would have ensured that the cameras would be used for our protection, not our prosecution.

### RW: What are your ideas for tackling the camera monitoring issue?

PBD: I really hope that some momentum could be built on this issue to push for a Work To Rule campaign. All of us as STA drivers really need to be concerned about what has happened to this young PB driver. We just have to stop doing all those numerous tiny favours we do for STA every day, stop taking those little short cuts we do to keep the buses moving on time. Isn't it ironic that you can work your guts out for STA, rushing around trying to keep the buses on time, then you sneak a split second peak at your journal sitting there on your AFC to make sure you're still on time and wham! A bike, car or pedestrian can come out of nowhere and change your life forever. Is STA gonna back you up and say what a great employee you've been

and that accidents happen? No way! They're gonna blame you for looking at your journal, even though they are the ones who gave it to you and told you in your training to put it there on your AFC so you can see it while you are driving. For a start we ought to put those f-ing journals away somewhere so we can't see them while driving, so we're not tempted to speed or cut corners, and just completely forget about trying to stay on time. We can't afford to keep taking these risks if STA are gonna scrutinise our every movement to this level and help put us in the joint.

## WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

### RW: What jokes have you heard lately?

Waverley Busie: There has been a joke going around which has great relevance to our workplace. Little balloon is State Transit. He gets out of his bed and tries to get comfortable with his parents on their bed, to better engage with staff and passengers. To fit in between them, he lets a little bit of air out of dad balloon meaning STA staff, but still he's unable to fit in. So he lets a bit of air out of mum balloon, meaning passengers. Still unable to squeeze in, he lets out a bit of air out of himself and then he can snuggle in. When dad wakes up in the morning, he says to little balloon, "son, last night you let me down! You let your mother down! And you let yourself down!"

### RW: What do you see as the remedy for the STA bosses' constant corner cutting?

WB: I was recently speaking to a mechanic who said the STA has the labour and equipment to provide the necessary bus services to meet the increased passenger demand, stemming from increased petrol prices. However, the STA is still lost in the old corporate model of corner cutting to boost productivity. Such as the cutting out of the X84's at Waverley. Instead, the STA should return to being run as a community service, not as a business. Productivity comes from putting more people on seats and providing adequate staffing such as more inspectors. This notion is gold.

### RW: What are your ideas for improving the STA's budget to avoid the STA's short sighted corner cutting?

WB: Currently the STA is allowing thousands of school kids to evade fares reducing revenue. Why isn't the STA taking action on this issue? Another obvious area is the need to eliminate consultants on high salaries. The employment of these fat cats is likely to be just part of some ALP Rightwing jobs for the boys scheme from the under belly of the STA. Management

needs to take advantage of our experience regarding how to run the buses. Another area is the money squandered on providing at all depots security guards, 7 days a week 24 hours a day. Costing \$260,000 pa at each depot. Where is the money coming from? Is this expenditure justified? I think not. It's just a result of Howard Govt. inspired anti-Terrorism paranoia and there is no genuine case. If some terrorists want to capture a bus, there are plenty of opportunities for them on the road and at terminuses. The saving of money by such



pruning measures would definitely provide the funds for employing more drivers and more buses to be put on runs and greatly improve bus services.

### RW: What are your impressions of the fat cats' basket at Strawberry Hills?

WB: The senior executives certainly have a "cut! Cut!" approach to running the buses. They are completely missing out on the importance of improving bus services to put more bums on bus seats. A more responsible approach would involve making genuine attempts to connect with us to take account of our ideas for improvements in bus operations.

### RW: What are your thoughts on the sacking of Chris Mansergh who was union rep at Port Botany?

WB: I and others at Waverley are lost for words and thoroughly disillusioned over this dastardly action by management at the depot. Chris was elected by a majority of drivers and was very active in bringing workers together in the fight against the bosses and changing the union culture at the depot away from sneaky and shady ways which pervaded for many years to openness and truthfulness. The STA bosses say "No" you can't have this improvement and sacks him. Subsequently, they also tried to sack our union rep Wendy. Is this an example of how the bosses try to raise productivity? It appears to me an example of arrogance and ignorance.

The union hierarchy also played a contemptible role in the affair, highlighting its

phoniness. They were quite uncooperative toward him. They failed to stand behind him when he was under attack by the bosses and their co-thinkers on the job and found lame duck excuses to deny him desperately needed legal help and bad mouthed him. They have also egged on their co-thinkers on the job to spread such slurs as "he was getting above himself". What appears to have occurred is that Chris was operating out of the slimy and phoney box of bureaucratic unionism, which frightened the union fat cats and the bosses.

### RW: What do you know about the bike bus group?

WB: I recently attended an environmental fair and met some people engaged in the group. It involves finding ways for push bike riders to get more quickly around the city via using back streets and avoid creating problems for bus drivers and being safer for the bike riders. Currently push bike riders create a lot of problems

for us on the road as we can't overtake them and they often weave in and out of traffic, creating hazards. The Government needs to get fully behind this initiative. In South Australia, in Adelaide, there is an excellent push bikeway system. It consists of 6 zones and forms a huge comprehensive system. Pamphlets, maps and guidelines have been extensively distributed about the system. The State Govt has got fully behind the system and is widely encouraging it. In comparison, Sydney is very much in the dark ages in regard to push bike corridors.

### RW: What are your views on the STA traineeship issue?

WB: I recently spoke with a bloke who is a trainee and he said that in 3 months you can complete all the training you need for the job and the STA's so called training program just goes over the same things. The requirement for 2 years is completely bogus. He also complained that at the end of the unnecessarily long 2 year period of the traineeship, that you are still not guaranteed a job. During the traineeship period, you also have less entitlements than permanent drivers. We don't need this bosses' scam! 6 months should be the maximum length of the probation period for new drivers, as occurred in the past. Whilst, a lot of knowledge of the job, is usually provided to the newer drivers on the job, by the more experienced.

### RW: How are things with the bus cleaners?

WB: I feel for the cleaners. They do an amazing job given the often appalling state of some buses. They are doing it tough stemming from the STA bosses' addiction to the old management model. Involving raising productivity through corner cutting and associated short staffing and relentless speedups.

**RW: What are impressions of the ALP lately?**

WB: The underbelly of the NSW ALP Govt. has been certainly been exposed lately over the issue of privatisation and political donations. Despite 85% of people as disclosed by public opinion surveys being opposed to privatisation and overwhelming opposition to Electricity industry privatisation at a recent ALP state conference, the Lemma Govt. is proceeding with the move. After the Ferries which has already been targeted, we are also likely to be in the corporate gun sights. No doubt hefty donations from such corporate heavies as the MacQuarie Bank, CabCharge and Veolia will be playing an important role in the Govt's carve-up of State Transit. I believe big wigs of international capitalism are behind this privatisation surge. The Fortune 500 conference held in Sydney during 2005 was a likely venue where the ALP and Liberal politicians received increased pressuring from major international capitalists to get cracking on privatisation.

**RW: What's the latest with the sickie crackdown?**

WB: As part of the current enterprise agreement and the provision of a meagre pay rise of 4%pa over 2 years which the union hierarchy sold to us, the bosses were given greater opportunities to mess around with our sickie entitlements. Latest news is that Depot administrative personnel are ringing up those of us in their jurisdiction who take sickies and are interrogating them regarding the nature of their ailments. Despite lacking medical qualifications. We need to be wary that these admin staff are acting in a patronising fashion seeking to intimidate and pressurise us from taking any sick leave. Particularly those of us from overseas, with inadequate knowledge of their entitlements, maybe put off from taking sickies. In the case of those who take large numbers sickies, there may be some basis for the bosses to check up on them on the sick leave issue. The current sickie interrogations are just like when you have your journal stamped and are called into the office.

My advice is that if you need to take sick leave, you should get a medical certificate. If the bosses query the sickie, you should direct them to contact your doctor. They have no authority over your Doctor. Due to confidentiality regulations affecting doctors, they can't reveal the nature of your

condition to 3rd parties, without your permission. Also we must remember that in our type of job, if you come to work feeling unwell, and unable to cope with the job, there is a strong likelihood that you could become involved in an accident.

**RW: What's the latest with the gas buses at the depot?**

Waverley Driver: In recent weeks I have noted a dramatic improvement in their performance. Could this change be explained by senior management reading Sparks and bursting into action? In the past, the gas buses have been absolute slugs on the road. Another development in regard to the gas buses, is that a new version has been built for the STA fleet to replace the Mk2's and Mk3's. However, the RTA has not allowed the delivery of these buses to

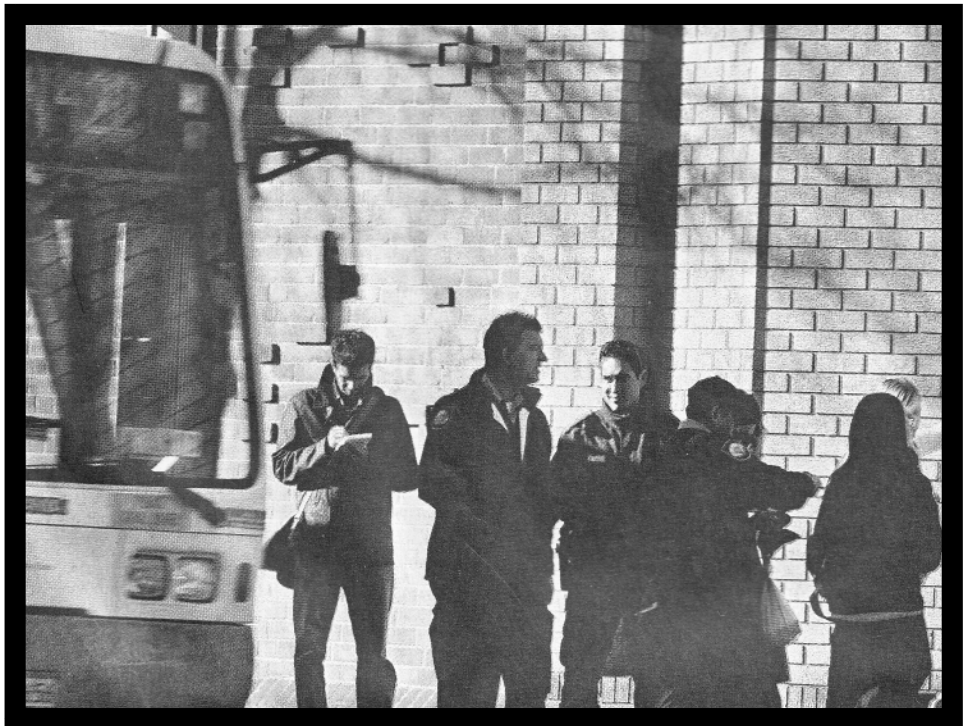
of other candidates, were obviously genuinely produced by themselves using their home computers. Latest news is that the officials' candidate has been elected to the President position.

## BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

The election has come and gone, but there was a change occurring. As the Rightwing ALP officials did not win it without a fight.

Do not be surprised to see your traffic fund subs increase. As I believe the funds are used as a slush fund to pay for things like election material. Do not approve an increase in subs without a set of books to show where the money is going. Remember it's our money, not the union officials.

The management at Burwood is at it again.



the STA, due to issues relating to the weight displacement of the gas bottles in these buses causing them to become overbalanced.

**RW: What happened at Waverley during the recent election for the position of the President of the union bus division?**

WD: Overwhelming drivers on the PM shift at Waverley supported Ken Mason for the position. From reading his program presented in his flyer, we were inspired by his genuine intentions to establish grass control of the union and take the union in a militant direction and so return our union to its pedestal on which it was once placed in its glory days, many years ago. We are disgusted with how our existing officials are always caving into the STA bosses' demands. I noticed one of the candidate's flyers were very professionally produced indicating possible union hierarchy assistance. Whilst the flyers

They love to show us how smart they are, but in fact all they do is show the drivers they can read. They have no people skills and go from crisis to crisis without direction. Complaints about anything are more important, than the drivers. THEY LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT BUSES NEED DRIVERS TO OPERATE THEM, NOT THE MANAGEMENT TEAM. Reduce the numbers in management positions and give us MORE PAY!

Also remember the following fact: THEY CANNOT FORCE YOU TO SIGN ANYTHING. This includes incident forms. If you have a major problem on the bus, return to your depot. Tell the DI you want ROR and sign off and go home and think. Go to your GP or phone for legal help. DO NOT TALK TO MANAGEMENT WITHOUT INDEPENDENT ADVICE. This is your right. Do not be bullied by management

# SYDNEY WHARFIES' NEWS

## **Rebel Worker: So what is the latest news on the Sydney waterfront?**

Port Botany Wharfie: The most important news is the ongoing enterprise agreement negotiations that are happening at DP World (formerly P&O Ports).

The national negotiations that deal with Part A of the EBA are still ongoing. The major point to note here is the claim that the Maritime Union is putting forward of a 20% wage rise over the three years of the agreement. Whether we get this or not is of course another story. The new EBA which just got voted up at Toll (formerly Patrick Stevedores) gave wharfies a 5% per year wage rise, so I would be surprised if we ended up with any more than that – not without taking any form of industrial action anyway.

## **RW: What about the local component of these EBA negotiations?**

Port Botany Wharfie: This is the interesting part. While the DP World EBA does not expire until the end of June, the local site committee here has already reached in principle agreement with management on the few Part B issues that the committee put forward.

The approach of the local site committee seems to be to demand as little as possible in order to get the negotiations over and done with as quickly as possible.

On the operations side of the workforce, there have been a couple of extra permanent jobs created – one or two extra operations clerks and rail co-ordinators and a new health, safety and environment facilitator.

Since these plum jobs have little to do with the day-to-day of stevedoring cargo, some of the more cynical among the workforce think that members of the union site committee will end up with these jobs for “services rendered” to the company. But only time will tell.

Some of the other changes include the inclusion of a requirement for quay crane/portainer drivers to swap with their partner mid-run. This makes good sense from an OH&S perspective. No one should be compelled to drive cranes for 3 ½ hours straight. In practice most quay crane drivers have been doing this anyway.

The problem is that this only covers a minority of crane drivers in the terminal. Most drive the Rubber Tyred Gentries (RTG's) that operate in the yard and not over the ship. Work organisation means that RTG drivers are expected to drive for 3 ½ hours straight, with only a com-

puter-generated message popping up on the RTG screen every hour reminding drivers to take a 5-minute stretch break. Good OH&S should dictate that RTG drivers swap mid-run as well.

The other bone of contention is the alignment of break times which will see all shifts with a 3 ½ hour first run and a 3 ¾ hour second run. To have the longer run at the second half of an 8-hour shift is ludicrous – especially on night shift.

The Part B of the EBA will – if agreed to – see the hours in the general maintenance roster extended from 33.6 hours a week to 35.5 hours a week. Apparently management were complaining that they were

that raised a number of good demands. These included 8% a year pay rises; more permanent jobs; no one to work overtime until all labour was exhausted; an automatic upgrade process up the casual to permanent ladder; an increase in the number of shifts that casuals can make themselves unavailable for; rotation of RTG drivers and a more regular shift allocation for casuals. All good stuff.

Some members of the site committee saw this as an attack on their little empire-building games – instead of interest, involvement and constructive criticism of the negotiating process.

## **RW: So what approach do you think the**



paying too much overtime! While it has been agreed to that will be more pay to cover the extra hours worked, whether or not the overtime component has been taken into consideration or not is anyone's guess.

## **RW: What has been the reaction among the workforce?**

Port Botany Wharfie: A mixture of grumbling, cynicism and resignation to the inevitable. The leading lights on the present site committee were also responsible for the last EBA that saw our two breaks (1 30-minute and 1 15-minute) get replaced with one 45 minute break, in exchange for a reduction in roster hours for operations permanents.

The composition of the present site committee is also a sticking point for some. With the exception of the one women's representative that happens to be a casual, the present site committee is made entirely of permanents. So some will feel that (just like the last time) these negotiations are another case of permanents negotiating only in the interests of permanents – and not the whole workforce.

A bright note was the circulation of an anonymous letter a couple of months ago

## **union should be taking to the EBA?**

Port Botany Wharfie: Well the first would be to actually encourage involvement of the rank and file. Work meetings should have been called to draw up a list of claims that would have the support of the workforce.

The second would be to take into account our longer-term interests as workers, not just the immediate stuff. We certainly should NOT be increasing roster hours, but reducing them with no loss in pay. Similarly, while 20% over three years or 5% a year is better than the current EBA's 4% a year, the only way to really safeguard against inflation is to put in place a cost-of-living / wage indexation mechanism that would see wages always rise in line with inflation (at the minimum).

The third is to realise that, if we are ever going to win demands such as these, we will need to take some form of co-ordinated industrial action. The give-and-take of the present negotiation process will never be enough – we need to flex our industrial muscles.

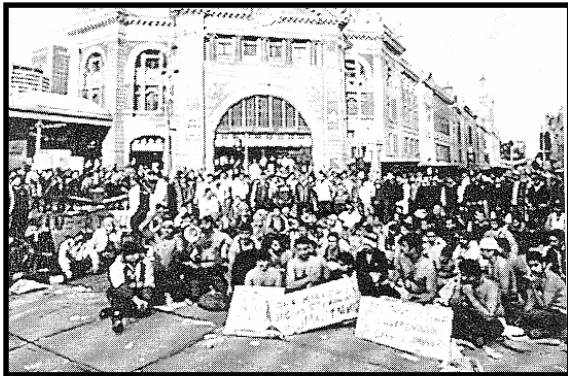
# MELB. MILITANT CABBIES' MEETING

Report from 19th June taxi driver meeting in Melbourne

by Liz Thompson,  
June 23, 2008

I arrived at the Flemington Racecourse with several Melbourne University students who had come along to show their support. We had a placard that read "Melbourne University Student Union supports cabbies". We were informed by someone called Alister Morley, that on orders from the Minister's office, we had been asked to leave the venue. We refused, were threatened with charges of trespass, and still refused to leave.

Eventually we were allowed to stay. Ex-



pecting many hundreds of cabbies, we had brought leaflets about the Southern Cross rank protest on June 29th, information about activist legal rights and information about how to put in a submission to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) taxi fare review, due on July 1st. In the end, only 50 cabbies showed up.

Arun Badgujar of the VTDA had repeatedly requested to the Minister's office that the meeting be held on a Monday afternoon. Instead, it was held on a busy Thursday, at 12pm at a time that was particularly difficult for students and night drivers to get to. And we were constantly reminded that Lynn Kosky was very busy and had other places to be...

Despite these problems, and the tight stage-managing of the event by Lynn Kosky's office, there were some victories. After constant pressure from the VTDA in the face of a rumoured back down, Lynn Kosky announced that screens would be

mandatory from 10pm – 5am. Some drivers pointed out that this would be difficult to organise because night shift does not start this late. The Minister had no response to this problem being raised.

The WorkSafe representative talked about the complex management structure of the taxi industry making Occupational Health and Safety in the industry very difficult. My conversations with him, and subsequently with his department, indicated to me that Worksafe has a very poor understanding of the taxi industry.

The Minister talked briefly about the Essential Services Commission review into fare structures, indicating that the ESC would not only include the cost of safety screens in any new fee structure, but also that the ESC would address bailment agreements. Unfortunately, indications from the ESC's own interim report (which runs to more than 220 pages) are that this is not the case. The ESC has washed its hands of any responsibility for improving the conditions of drivers through

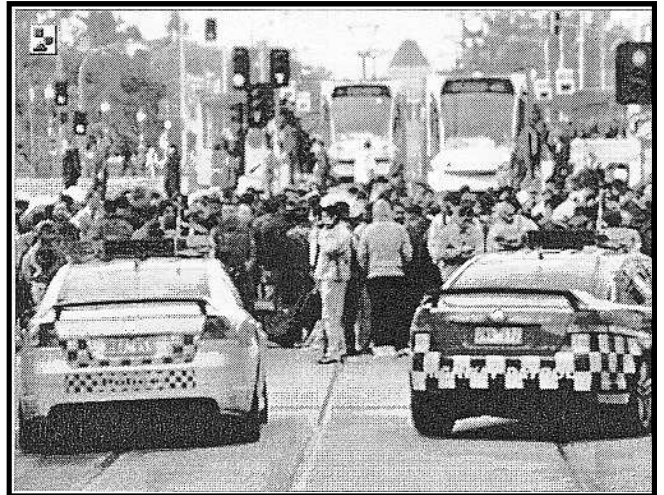
fairer wages, or monitoring the bailment agreements to ensure they are fair for drivers. From page 30 of their interim report: The Commission's recommended approach to the taxi industry is for the Government to progress pro-competitive reforms, wherever these can be identified, and wherever the case against doing so is unsubstantial.

The onus should be on the proponents of regulatory restrictions to demonstrate their public benefit.

As one driver pointed out to the Minister – the Essential Services Commission has a strong ideological bias towards competition, regardless of the impact on workers and passengers. The Essential Services Commission has so far recommended increasing the number of licenses, but also, in direct contradiction to advice received from the Victorian Taxi Drivers Associa-

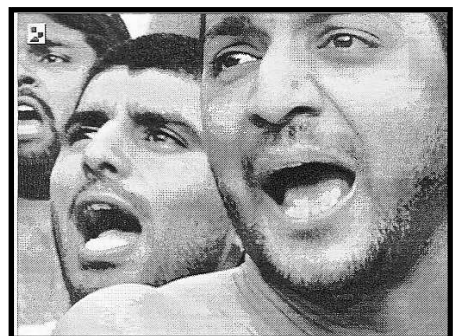
tion about what is in the best interests of drivers, they are pushing to reduce the flag fall, thereby making street pick-ups and short trips even more difficult for drivers!

Some of the loudest applause came for the contribution from an African driver – he noted the big problems police cause for drivers by fining them outside hotels and in other areas where passengers need cabs, that if the government really cared about the opinions of drivers, the meeting would have been held at the airport or at a



better time, and that taxi drivers are divided along ethnic lines, but that they need to unite to fight against these problems.

The meeting was notable for the almost total absence of night drivers and student drivers, whose brave actions forced the government to meet with the drivers. However, Jalwinder Singh was there. Jalwinder was swamped by media, and still looked quite weak – he was supported at all times by friends. 13 CABS have been calling for contributions for Jalwinder's medical bills (though I am



sure I remember the government promising to pay for them...)

Arun Badgujar proved to be an impressive spokesperson for cabbies, and one can only hope that the VTDA maintain their defiant stance in the face of the Essential Services Commission review into taxi fares.

Thanks to Leftwritres

## MELB: POSTAL WORKERS' WILDCAT STRIKE

**Postal workers in Melbourne returned to work today after taking unofficial action yesterday (June 12th) against a bonus cut.**

Mail into and out of Victoria was also be affected by the snap strike by mail workers at the Dandenong letters processing centre, which normally is staffed by up to 1200 people. The workers walked off the job yesterday afternoon over the loss of special Sunday shifts that took about \$160 out of their pay packets.

The strike stopped about four million mail items being delivered though parcels and express post mail were unaffected by the strike action.

A picket was held by a group calling itself Union Solidarity outside the Nathan Road centre from about 5.30pm yesterday which helped stop any letters being han-

dled and stopping postal drivers from collecting the mail. But by this afternoon sorting services had returned to normal as the picketers allowed access back onto the site.



Australia Post has attacked the unexpected strike as "irresponsible" and said it occurred without warning, first hearing about it themselves from the police.

Communication Workers Union secretary Joan Doyle said it had not sanctioned the strike, but could understand workers' frustration about unexpectedly losing \$160 from their pay packets.

"The mail officers got their pay packet and realized management had

taken \$160 from their pay because ... they cancelled their Sunday shift.

"Management have been saying that's a trial that they're extending next year, so we had a lot of talks, but management were just arrogant and said they were going to do it.

"I think once the mail officers saw how much it had cost them they just basically had a bit of spontaneous combustion and walked out the door."

She denied having anything to do with the strike, but said Australia Post had sought orders to stop further industrial action against her union in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

Ms Lyford said while the the action happened at just one processing centre, it had created flow on effects for mail coming to and leaving from Victoria last night.

*Thanks to Libcom*

## VIC. RAIL NEWS

*V/Line is the authority which runs the Country Rail Services in Victoria. It is owned by the Victorian Government. Recently our Victorian Correspondent has interviewed a V/Line employee about conditions in the organisation.*

**Rebel Worker: How long have you been at V/Line?**

V/Line Employee: I have worked for over thirty years in the industry in various customer service jobs.

**RW: What is happening in V/Line?**

V/Line Employee: We are going through various changes. The bosses are people with no railway experience. They are idiots and they would not know what the operations employees have to put up with.

**RW: In other words they wouldn't want to know.**

V/Line Employee: For example they try to make us run trains with defective equipment. If they cannot fix it up in time. If the train is cancelled and replaced with buses, the company is fined.

**RW: I have been informed they tried to sack a Conductor who was honest with his passengers about poor carriages.**

V/Line Employee: You are correct, this Conductor was honest with his passengers and told them, why the carriages were defective. Remember it was a hot day and they still ran the train. The Conductor's comments made it into the Border Mail in Albury.

**RW: I understand management wanted blood.**

V/Line Employee: You are correct. They sacked the Conductor, but he was reinstated. In fact V/Line's Human Resources Department tried to get other employees to set this person up and make out he was difficult to work with. But the Union said if he was not reinstated, there would be trouble. You see most of us have a policy that it is you touch one employee you touch all.

**RW: Good to see solidarity.**

V/Line Employee: Yes but, we do have crawlers on the job, who think the com-

pany is great. In fact some of these people think they will get promotion but in reality management uses them up and they get nowhere.

**RW: Tell me about the selection process for promotion.**

V/Line Employee: They advertise the job and people apply for the position. This is in theory, but in practice they put their lackeys in the position and they have these people perform the job.

**RW: This smells of corruption.**

V/Line Employee: Yes it is corrupt but you have to prove it. Most of the employees think the Human Resources Department is corrupt. In the last few years they have employed these people who have no knowledge of the positions on the railways.

**RW: Enough said!**

V/Line Employee: If a customer complains they believe them and they say hang the employee. They only believe the customer not the employee. In fact one of our employees refuses to answer any complaint, so some Service Officers are known to make up an answer to keep the peace.

**RW: You know what should be done.**

V/Line Employee: What?

# BRITAIN TODAY

## Shop stewards' conference analysis

**65 delegates registered at the North West conference of trade union activists on 19th April 2008, making it perhaps the most successful rank and file gathering in Manchester for a long time. Since the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) was officially founded last year this Manchester assembly was second only to the London regional conference (74 delegates in numbers). Among the delegates in Manchester were a number of radical syndicalists including supporters of the Northern Anarchist Network and members of the editorial panel of Northern Voices.**

There was criticism of the failure of union officials and, in particular, from Steve Acheson who talked of their involvement on local building sites in enforcing the blacklist against trade union militants, but others in the white collar jobs talked of the drag of the full time officials on their disputes.

The electricians have just drawn £90,000 between the three of them for being victimized for trade union activities. Another speaker spoke of thirty years of defeats for the trade union movement and said we have to use the NSSN 'to understand these defeats' and to turn the tide.

Just before this NSSN conference the Office of Fair Trading had accused many major construction companies, including Balfour Beatty and Carrillion, of forming Cartels to rob the tax payer, amid claims that they are involve in bid-rigging and price fixing.

What does this mean to anarchists and the National Shop Stewards' Network? It means that very often we are little more than a Dad's Army reacting to agendas set by others such as big business and people in the offices of State.

This has been a systemic failure of the British left for generations from the anarchists and environmentalists to the left-wing socialists. Whether in the trade unions or in the leftist parties there are no pro-active policies or strategy for change.

That is why it was thoroughly depressing to hear Pat Sikorski, assistant Secretary of the RMT (Rail Union), tell the Conference of the need to look: for another left party to solve our problems. Fortunately the NSSN has a reasonable radical syndicalist contingent that is anti-party political and has a libertarian fringe. In the London region

one of the leading activists is a member of the Solidarity Federation (Syndicalist grouping) with contacts among the Underground workers and rail workers. In the North East where there have been regional meetings in Newcastle there are reports that the militant anarcho-syndicalist Dave Douglass may be getting involved in the NSSN there.

*Brian Bamford*



## PUBLIC SECTOR:

### End of workers' rights legislation?

Britain has now reached a point where the government sees no further necessity for major acts of Parliament to ensure the rights of the nation's workers, according to one of its leading members.

Just as the government unveiled new rights for agency workers, the business secretary has signalled that the era of major new workers' legislation is over. His comments attracted a good deal of criticism from unions, who are said to be expecting further concessions from Labour, which badly needs cash to keep the party from bankruptcy.

The government also looks set for a summer of strikes as public sector workers are overwhelmingly rejecting sub-inflation pay deals.

In a speech delivered on 29th May to the centre-left Fabian Society, John Hutton, who heads BERR, the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, said: "we have reached the end of the era of considering major new regulation as the best way of improving standards."

Outlining what the government's current and future framework for workers' rights is, Hutton couldn't have been more explicit: "we need to challenge the automatic assumption that the only way to deal with exploitation in the workplace is by passing new laws," he added.

Hutton made it clear that the government was not going to do anything that would harm the economy: "we need to ensure that our framework of employment rights continues to support the competitiveness of our labour market."

It is a message likely to appeal to business leaders, who a week earlier agreed a new deal with the government over temporary and agency workers' rights. Under the new laws, agency staff will have the same rights as permanent workers after three months of continuous employment, as opposed to the 12 months they previously had to wait.

The move came on the back of months of intense lobbying by unions, who will be looking for further concessions from the government, particularly as the Labour Party is believed to be in close to £24m of

debt. However, this speech is believed to be Labour's way of signalling to business that they won't be expected to bend any further.

Hutton explained that he sees a light touch role for government: "In future, beyond minimum standards, we must place increasing emphasis on government creating the opportunity for workers and businesses to work out what is best for their own circumstances."

But GMB general secretary, Paul Kenny, did not have much kind to say about uberBlairite Hutton's comments. "If working people in this country have to rely on John Hutton to protect them, then frankly the best advice is to pack your bags and leave," Kenny said. "He is an absolute non-starter."

## REFUSE WORKERS IN DISPUTE

**Bin workers across the UK have been flexing their muscles as industrial disputes gather apace. At the end of May, bin workers in Glasgow took to wildcat action over pay, while other official strikes were looming in the rest of the country.**

**On Friday 23rd May, 170 bin workers walked out because of an overtime pay dispute with bosses at the local council. Workers at the Queenslie and Eastern**

**depots left 15,000 homes without refuse or recycling collections as their employers had failed to cough-up to £4,000 in extra payments.**

Bin workers for Copeland council in Cumbria are out on an indefinite strike over a fight to reduce their working hours. The council has to reduce working time from 45 to 37 hours per week, in line with nationally agreed levels, but to compensate wants workers to put in nine hour-plus shifts.

In East Dunbartonshire, workers at the Hilton refuse collection depot have been fighting severe wage cuts. Staff there have voted 95% in favour of strike action against the local authority's single status pay deal which could see salaries slashed by up to 25%.

In Leeds, refuse collectors and street cleaners could go out on strike again if a single status pay deal is rejected by the GMB workforce. Leeds council came back to workers with an improved offer of pay after three days of strike action last month.

Staff have now suspended their dispute, but if no satisfactory settlement is achieved by 23rd June up to 200 workers will again walk out. A further 800 council employees could be involved in the dispute.

Bin workers generally have a strong track record in fighting cuts. Earlier this year 200 Brighton bin workers took successful wildcat action against management bullying and under-staffing.

## Summer of public sector strikes looms

**In what looks set to be a summer of public sector strikes, 850,000 local government workers are being balloted for action against a sub-inflation pay offer.**

Unison is asking its members to vote against a paltry 2.45% settlement, the latest in four years of real-term pay cuts. An array of council workers, from carers to librarians and school cooks, could potentially be involved in the mass strike action.

Council workers are being hit hard by the looming recession, with prices for basic foods, fuel and housing up by 40%, 20% and 8% respectively. A 2.45% pay increase for the two-thirds of council staff who earn less than £15,825 per year would mean a meagre £7.45 extra per week in their pockets.

The results of the ballot will be known later in June.

*Thanks to Freedom*

# POLISH BUS NEWS

*by laureakai on 15 June, 2008*

**A couple of weeks ago I wrote about how Ukrainian bus drivers made a Wildcat strike in Warsaw. We helped a bit, but ultimately the protest got pacified and the strikers (at least the ones we knew) are gone. You probably all know that's how it goes sometimes.**

## Protest and Wildcat Strike: Bus Drivers Angry but have no Effective Strategy for Struggle

The public transport system in Warsaw is controlled by ZTM, (the Municipal Transport Board) but various companies are contracted to operate Warsaw's buses. The largest company, MZA, is operated by the City of Warsaw but also several private operators running bus lines. These companies usually have won contracts

through public tenders. One of these companies is PKS Grodzisk Mazowiecki (further PKS GM) which is a privatized "worker-run company". (Such companies in Poland usually are worker shareholder schemes, quite far from any idea of collective self-management by the workers.) PKS Grodzisk Mazowiecki, like most other companies which pay shit wages, has trouble finding people to work and recruits people from impoverished areas of Poland and the Ukraine.

In May, members of Union of Syndicalists (ZSP) heard about problems people were having in PKS GM from some of the Ukrainian drivers. Drivers are expected to work very long hours, despite the fact that work time regulations clearly limit the hours a driver can work to 9 per day and require that they have two free days per week. However, it is not uncommon that the drivers were made to work 10, 12 and even up to 17 hours per day - without over-

time pay. Many Ukrainian drivers worked 60-75 hours a week or even more. This is not only abusive, but extremely dangerous for both the workers and passengers; one bus driver fell asleep at the wheel in May and had a serious accident. PKS GM also committed other infractions and abuses. Members of ZSP documented how drivers had money taken out of their wages (even up to almost 50% of their salaries) for going over "gas limits". The company set strict limits (which they often don't tell the drivers about) for how much gas should be used during a typical route. If a driver gets caught in one of Warsaw's notorious traffic jams and burns more fuel than the limit, this gets docked out of their salaries. Other problems that workers experienced included that fact that PKS GM were holding workers' passports so that they couldn't leave and that the company was holding their drivers' licenses. Not to mention poor living conditions, etc. On May 13, workers held a wildcat strike. Not all of them went on strike. Mostly it was the Ukrainian drivers, although a few Polish drivers supported the protest. We went to talk to the workers and see if there was anything we could do. Basically, workers in this position have limited choices. They

can take radical action, but then they should have a plan: storm the office of the company, make an action to get in the media, block the streets or the routes where scabs were driving, or some sort of radical direct action. Or they could go the legal route and file suits against their employees. Unfortunately it turned out that many of the Ukrainian workers were not convinced that anything they would do could help them. It wasn't exactly true. Some pressure was put on PKS GM. A few articles got into even the mainstream news, we also gathered evidence of the firm's violations, sent them to the appropriate authorities, sent them out to the city, politicians, the transit board, etc. so that should the workers want to pursue legal action, the documentation would be there in Polish. Had the workers decided to organize themselves and take action, whether direct action or legal action, they would be in a good position to stop the abuse.

On June 15, Zenon Marek, the head of PKS GM came to the depot and gave out envelopes filled with cash to the striking bus drivers. Of course this was done without any receipts or calculation as to how much was really owed to people. But it was enough to calm down some people, unfortunately. Additionally, drivers were given a 10-day vacation to go back to Ukraine. Ostensibly, this rest was to make up for being overworked, but in reality it was just another strike-breaking technique. Unfortunately there wasn't much we could do to convince people that they need to stay and fight at that moment so we agreed to meet in June. The bus drivers we knew are no longer working for PKS GM. There was conflicting information as to whether they just quit or whether they were not allowed back. We were getting different information from people we spoke to. Disturbingly, it seems that rumours were being spread about the Ukrainian bus drivers.

One Polish driver told us that the problem with the gas was that the Ukrainians had been stealing it; it isn't clear whether the source of the rumour is the boss or whether some Polish drivers started it, but appar-

ently new Polish drivers hear that explanation for the labour problems. Some workers seemed very scared to talk to us. Others told us different stories: that the payments were made correctly this month, or that they had illegal deductions made. We are still trying to work out this conflicting information but it seems now that the company is selectively abusing the workers and that the new guys, the ones just recruited, with no knowledge of Polish, with their passports confiscated, are the ones most likely to have their rights abused.

At the same time, workers in the other bus companies are also dissatisfied, but the workers and unions have not decided to try to get together and cooperate. In fact, the workers in the different bus companies more or less defacto compete against each other. This is especially true since contracts with the city awarded by public tender usually go to the lowest bidder, so in giving this work this way, ZTM is encouraging bad labour practices since these firms offer low prices by overworking people and paying bad wages. The City Council had allocated money for bus drivers from MZA to get wage increases, but the management of MZA instead decided that this money would be turned into an efficiency bonus. Last year drivers had threatened to strike unless they received more money.

This year, some unionists organized a protest on June 5th demanding better working conditions but it was not a grassroots action organized or attended by the workers - instead it was a union action mostly attended by union functionaries, even from other cities. Of course the workers of MZA need to be more proactive and not leave this struggle up to union leaders. MZA has already started hiring bus drivers from Belarus as "an experiment". Rather than improving working conditions so that Polish drivers will consider working in Poland, rather than in Ireland, it's more convenient to find some people who have lower expectations - and who better than workers trying to escape the misery of Lukashenko's regime.

A sad thing may also be that some Polish workers may feel resentment towards these workers or may be in-

clined against them. Apparently some drivers in PKS GM were eager to believe in stereotypes about "crooks from the East" and the bosses used this against the workers. By no fault of their own, these workers are used as pawns by the bosses against other workers who are fighting for better conditions.

Managers from MZA also openly spoke about why they started to hire women bus



drivers: they were more likely to do their work, not make trouble, and to stay on the job than men. Of 3000 bus drivers from MZA, only a couple of dozen are women. Although salaries in MZA differ, most drivers start out at less than 400 euros a month. In Warsaw, this is not a living wage. You can only survive frugally on such wages if you have very cheap housing and are not paying commercial rent, just common charges. If you agree to live like the Ukrainian bus drivers at PKS GM - 4 people to a 10 sq. meter room on bunk beds in barracks built from containers - then you can even manage to save something from this kind of salary. All of the workers have got to get together in common struggle for decent wages but for now, they are divided, passive and not resolute. Direct action, with the support of passengers, who also have everything to gain from the overthrow of the elites and bosses who control the transport board, is clearly the way forward for the drivers.

*From Strike bulletin nr. 3. Write to Warsaw@zsp.net.pl for an online copy.*



*Continued From Page 9* **RW: If a passenger's complaint is upheld just call a meeting and pass a motion asking that person who complained to be taken to court for defamation.**

V/Line Employee: This did happen. A Conductor was stood down and when he threatened legal action against the passenger who complained, management went to water and reinstated him.

**RW: This is the way to deal with people who like to complain!**

V/Line Employee: Yes it is called fightback and it frightens human resources.

**RW: I must close the interview, but in future issues I will interview employees from other areas of V/Line.**

## Poland: Unionists Protest Lionbridge the Cowardly Lion

### Unionists Protest Lionbridge the Cowardly Lion

*Mon, 7 Jul 2008*

*By Laura Akai, ZSP*

On July 4, proceedings started in the Warsaw Labour Court in the case of Jakub G against Lionbridge Technologies. Jakub was fired in February 2008, shortly after becoming a representative of a newly-formed union in the Warsaw branch of that company.

### No Arguments in Court

Lionbridge was represented by not one, but two high-priced lawyers from the Warsaw office of a well-known international law firm. The courtroom was full with observers from no less than three trade unions, some left political groups, four mainstream newspapers, the independent media and Jakub's friends and supporters. Lionbridge claims that Jakub published an article on the internet using confidential information, that he used the company e-mail to transfer confidential data and that he acted to the detriment of the company.

Jakub prepared all the evidence to prove that the allegations were false and it was already submitted to the court. This included many source documents that had to be translated and notarized. Instead of dealing with these documents, which had been used by the company as the basis for their dismissal (the court documents referred to the article written on the Polish internet site 'CIA'), the lawyers tried to submit an interview with Jakub made by the Slovakian group Priama Akcia as evidence of Jakub's 'disloyalty to the company'. The court, naturally, would not admit this evidence as the interview was made after Jakub was already out of the company and could not constitute grounds for dismissal.

The lawyers also claimed that the alleged confidential information was leaked not in the Polish version of the text, but in the English one and that Jakub was especially trying to withhold copies of the English versions of the text. This was quite amazing since both the dismissal letter and the court documents referred to the Polish version of the text and the only reason that everything was submitted in Polish certified translation was because that is the official language of the court and documents, as a rule, should be submitted that way. The head of Lionbridge told the court that he had to go on vacation and asked for the next hearing to be postponed one month.

### False Claim with No Chance

The lawyers also made quite an interesting claim that the alleged 'confidential information' which was leaked was information concerning the company's revenue. They claimed that this type of information

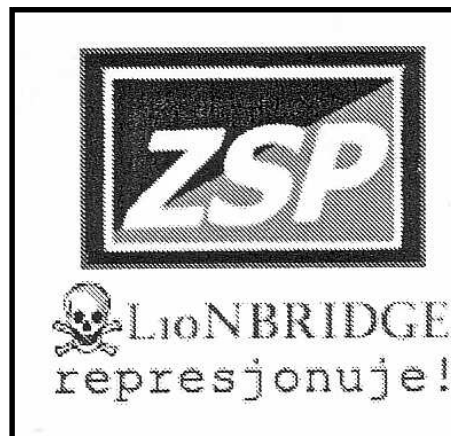
of large public listed companies is generally public, especially in the United States where financial reports of companies with more than a certain level of assets and shareholders must be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on a 10-K form. (Lionbridge is an American-based global company.) Revenue information is available not only to shareholders, but is published on the web pages of the Commission ([www.secinfo.com](http://www.secinfo.com)). On Lionbridge's 10-K forms, published openly on the internet, anybody can find out the revenue of any of Lionbridge's local offices. Anybody can also just type in the words 'Lionbridge revenue' to see that it was common practice for Lionbridge to release information about their revenue to the press. The revenue of the Polish office was also printed in the Polish press.

It is quite hard to believe that a professional lawyer would not check this information, even more so as I submitted a letter to the firm, which Lionbridge submitted to the case as evidence, giving all the sources of information for the article in question, 'Lionbridge, Globalizing Low Wages'. Among the sources I submitted were the sources of information on the company revenue. There is no chance that the false allegations of leaking confidential information for the article can stick.

This leaves the company with only one strategy: to try to convince the court that, for political reasons, they should be spared from having to reinstate their former employee.

### The Lion's Red Herring

The court date was preceded by an international solidarity campaign on behalf of the unfairly dismissed unionist. Protest letters were sent and solidarity pickets took place in Slovakia, Portugal, France and Belgium. The attention drawn by these pickets unnerved the Polish management of the company. In an attempt to weaken sympathy with Jakub, two letters were sent by management to workers of the Warsaw office, one of which was later leaked. The letters accuse the unionist of



is 'strictly confidential, was never published anywhere and was known only to Lionbridge employees'. This was the only 'proof' of leaking confidential information offered in the court.

It is hard to judge whether the lawyers could be so astoundingly incompetent that they failed to check this or whether this was just a shameless attempt to introduce false arguments in the case solely to buy time. Information concerning the revenue

threatening the financial stability of the company because of the protests and warn workers that their job security could be on the line should the firm suffer because of the negative publicity.

Such logic is typically used in global corporations and this is not the first time such comments could be heard in the Polish office. Upon the creation of the union, Jakub was told essentially that unions undermine the competitiveness of the company. It was sometimes heard in the firm that the employees were all competing with Indian and Chinese workers and that acting out of line in anyway could mean that their jobs would be quickly lost to those countries.

In a letter to the employees and later (in an interview with a journalist from Poland's leading newspaper), Jacek Stryczynski, head of Lionbridge Poland, gave an emotional account of the inappropriateness of the protests, especially fixating on a stuffed toy lion used in Slovakia. (See picture [here](http://lionbridge.zsp.net.pl/?p=19): <http://lionbridge.zsp.net.pl/?p=19>) He told the journalist that he was 'being persecuted by the Communist International'. (For some people, anybody who criticizes a corporation must be a communist.) The letters sent to the employees could well be considered red-baiting. They constantly speak of anarchists and anti-globalists and insinuate that these actions have nothing to do with the welfare of the workers but with Jakub trying to make a career in the anti-globalist movement. (The fact that

Jakub isn't an anti-globalist is another matter.) One letter implies that people with such political ideas cannot work in global companies which appears to be evidence of discrimination on political grounds - another violation of the Polish Labour Code.

## Protests on the 4th of July

Protests in front of Lionbridge's Polish headquarters were seriously hampered by a downpour of torrential rain but a good crowd of hardcore activists came anyway and protested in the storm. (Thanks to peo-



ple from ZSP, WRS, IP, FA, LA, SMS, etc.)

The management must have been thoroughly panicked after the visit of Priama Akcia to the Zilina office with a stuffed lion toy so long before we arrived, four vans of riot police appeared to protect the office from potential toy-carrying unionists.

There were some speeches and slogans. Besides that, ZSP (Union of Syndicalists) submitted a request for a translation job to the company. ZSP asked Lionbridge to translate an article about violations of workers' rights into all languages to be published on their website. (We don't think the firm will take the job.)

On the same day, solidarity actions were also held in Ireland, Copenhagen and in Madrid. (Huge thanks to everybody who took part in these actions or will take part in the ones planned for the future.) Leaflets were handed out with basic information about the case and about worker organizing.

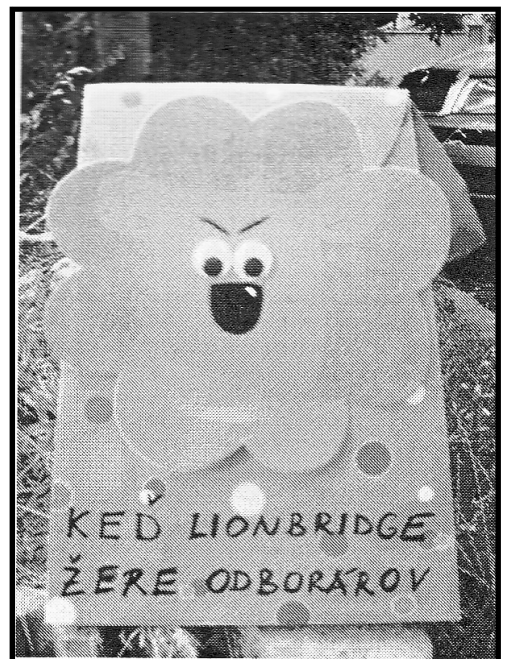
## Employee Reaction

In Ireland, employees were warned against talking to demonstrators or taking their leaflets. In Poland the employees had been warned beforehand that the demo was going to take place during working hours and of course leaving

during working hours could carry serious consequences. A few might have been genuinely frightened by the totally unnecessary police presence and the amount of people from security filming the demo, so only a few brave ones came out and talked to the rain-soaked protestors. Unfortunately, a couple of employees later sent nasty emails to Jakub about the inappropriate form of protest in Slovakia (concretely, the mistreatment of the stuffed toy), but for every mail like that, Jakub, myself and others have received dozens of letters of support from Lionbridge employees and contractors around the world, especially freelance translators who also complained that they are often paid very late.

As one can expect, there are others in Lionbridge who may not be so gung-ho on the corporation's practices and who were genuinely offended by the e-mail sent to employees suggesting that people with certain political views shouldn't be employed by the company. This does not seem to be limited to people with leftist or liberal leanings: one person who wrote to me a couple of times in fact seems to be a quite patriotic Ameri-

can who is just genuinely concerned about good jobs being outsourced around the globe. (This earned Lionbridge a place on CNN's Lou Dobb's 'Exporting America' list of US firms sending jobs abroad.) That person wrote that he wishes us well on the fourth of July and saw the case as an attack on freedom of speech and political thought, which are values he hopes every American would fight to uphold.



# BOOK REVIEW CORNER

## Bookchin and Kropotkin.

**A Review Essay by Graham Purchase of Social Ecology and Communalism, by Murray Bookchin, California; AK Press, 2007.**

### Introduction:

Bookchin (1921-2006) in the later 20th Century became America's best-known disciple of Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921). Without question Bookchin's 1960's pamphlets (see Post-Scarcity Anarchism) were brilliant and timely. Like Kropotkin Bookchin called for the evolution of socially, technologically and environmentally integrated human eco-communities for practically addressing ecological, economic and political concerns and problems.

Despite their brilliance there are few original ideas in Bookchin's 1960s pamphlets. They did little more than highlight the continuing relevance of Kropotkin's social, scientific and ecological thinking. This is not a criticism or shortcoming. History moves too slowly. Humanity is only now awakening to the environmental crisis and, the social-ecological necessity of adopting many of the outlooks, life-ways and technologies first discussed and promoted by Kropotkin.

After showing considerable promise as an anarchist pamphleteer and journalist Bookchin authored a number of long, wordy and ponderous books that had no influence upon an environmental movement rapidly pervaded by trendy left-liberal, middle-class and petty bourgeois characteristics. Bookchin was equally appalled by 'stupid tree-hugging hippies', post-eco-what-ever-isms, boutique anarchisms and the silly or pathetically inadequate response of the traditional Left to capitalism's onward march to environmental self-destruction. It is not difficult to sympathize with the pervading spirit of exasperated despondency and isolation characterizing Bookchin's later work. Those who (unlike Bookchin) chose to seriously organize within the remnants of the traditional anarchist movement can fully understand his sense of frustration and annoyance with the banality and idiocy of 21st century consumer capitalism unopposed by ineffectual liberal substitutes

and unpalatable pseudo-left 'activist' cults and organizations (e.g. New Age festivals, Stop the City Marches, Amnesty International and Food not Bombs).

Bookchin suggests that Social Ecology and Communalism is his final and definitive philosophical presentation or statement. In my opinion it is a less than competent, somewhat spiteful and shal-lowly uncritical re-presentation of some of Kropotkin's ideas and preoccupations.

### Dynamic, Developmental and Homeostatic Systems:

Bookchin begins by outlining his idea of natural systems. He correctly observes how most people possess a "static and immobile" conception of nature comparable to picture-post-card photography and other popular representations of 'timeless' natural beauty.

In contrast Bookchin suggests that his social ecology introduces a new "non-linear" and "developmental" idea of "process" in which natural systems are "forever changing". He opposes this view to the pre-modern conception of the Earth as "one living organism". Bookchin concludes that natural "flexibility" and continual evolution, leads to "increasing differentiation" and change. Natural systems are not amenable to "analytical" study but require a "developmental" approach and explanation (p. 23-5).

Kropotkin is usually considered as a geologist who specialized in geomorphology. Introductory texts upon geomorphology sometimes make historical reference to him as a founder of the modern scientific discipline.

What is not appreciated is that his influential work on European and Asian ice sheets and his reflections upon geoclimatic change also make him a pioneer of the study of geoclimatology. His interest and contribution to this subject is not restricted to his first published book: The large and seminal work on ice ages that he wrote whilst imprisoned in Russia. In middle age he published learned articles on Central Asian palaeo-ecology and global palaeoclimatology. His life long interest and conclusions about past changes in continental and global climate inform his philosophical conceptions of evolution, society and revolution.

Kropotkin's scientific work upon ice ages was a major pioneering contribution to geoclimatology. Kropotkin presented

incontrovertible geological evidence establishing the fact of hemispheric glaciation upon Earth in the very recent past (geologically speaking). In professional geographical articles that Kropotkin wrote towards the end of his life he discusses how new evidence was leading to the conclusion that the Earth's geology was dynamic and unstable and that there had been numerous ancient and recent global climatic changes.

In Kropotkin's opinion scientific evidence concerning recent ice ages was "pointing in the direction of a simultaneous glaciation of both hemispheres—though not necessarily to the same extent—and to simultaneous development of glaciers in the mountain regions of the equatorial regions." Kropotkin penned articles upon the discovery of tertiary flora in the Arctic<sup>1</sup> and geological work in South America<sup>2</sup>. The fact that the Pampas had once been covered in ice and the Arctic in temperate forests revealed that, the Earth had been more uniformly warm or cold at different periods. Kropotkin concludes that, "we must accustom ourselves to the idea that climate, like everything else on the earth, is a changeable element".<sup>3</sup>

Kropotkin also published an original thesis upon climatic trends in the recent palaeo-ecology of Central Asia in the post-glacial period; as the predominant terrestrial ecosystems changed from lakes to prairie and then forest land over thousands of years.<sup>4</sup>

Bookchin's assertion that his outlook is a radical break with static notions of natural stability is belied by the fact that instability for Kropotkin was the hallmark of a living system. Like the universe, processes upon Earth couldn't be characterized in terms of static and unchangeable order. In an article upon the spectral analysis of stars, whilst discussing the formation of new stars from nebulous clouds, Kropotkin concludes that, nebulae are "living" at a very "much more rapid speed" than had been previously conceived. "In the movements of these remote agglomerations we learn to feel the continuous life of Nature, its continuous change, its evolution."<sup>5</sup>

Kropotkin's practical and substantial scientific contribution to our knowledge of Earth's geomorphology and palaeo-geo-climatology was, combined with a revolutionary conceptual outlook that saw natural systems in terms of dy-

namic instability; a very modern conception of nature that none of his contemporary cofounders of ecology ever articulated.

Kropotkin's philosophy of nature and society can be characterized as evolutionary, developmental or emergent processes involving both continual modification and revolutionary transformations in response to environmental change and novel challenges.

### Dynamic Systems and Homeostatic Organisms:

Bookchin's rejection of the organism analogy (p.25) and his idea of nature as a non-linear developmental system is simply a restatement of Kropotkin's highly original outlook developed through his practical and theoretical study of the biosphere.

Kropotkin is unique in comparison to the ecologists of his time in a number of respects, including, his denial of equilibrium and constancy in nature, a rejection of organism analogies and the idea that the perceived harmony of ecosystems could be explained purely as a byproduct of individualistic competition between organisms.

Early ecological contemporaries of Kropotkin generally characterized environments and human societies in terms of organisms. Kropotkin did not employ organism analogies in his descriptions of natural or social systems and, it is not surprising that one of his chief intellectual rivals was Spencer. "Spencer thought that the biological community, what we would now call and ecosystem, was a kind of organism"<sup>6</sup> American ecologists of Kropotkin's time such as Cowles and Clements portrayed ecosystem development or succession as equivalent to the growth processes of an individual organism. Cowles believed ecosystems "began as an embryo, passed through a series of developmental stages, attained maturity and eventually died"<sup>7</sup> For Clements, the growth of an ecosystem "was not just analogous to ontogeny; it was ontogeny."<sup>8</sup>

The notion that biological or human communities are in some way larger organisms is entirely rejected today because the biosphere and its local or component communities are more usefully characterized as super-systems rather than as super-organisms, as Kropotkin, Bookchin and the majority of contemporary ecological scientists suggest.

### Developmentalism:

Bookchin explains that his "developmental" approach: "encompasses the development from the inorganic into the organic and from the less differentiated and relatively limited world of unicellular organisms into that of multicellular ones equipped with simple, then complex neural apparatuses that allow them to make innovative choices. Finally, the acquisition of warm-bloodedness gives to organisms the astonishing flexibility to exist in the most demanding climatic environments." (p.23-4).

This is all Bookchin has to say about the



"developmental process" that he highlights in italics as fundamental to his ecological theory.

There is no scientific reason to associate flexibility and individuality with "warm-bloodedness" as Bookchin suggests. Extremophile bacteria are capable of living in environments far to harsh for warm-blood beasts, e.g. on plutonium or at incredibly high temperatures. Extremophile bacteria also exhibit incredible genomic intelligence and flexibility. Every E coli cell is unique possessing individual differences and preferences.<sup>9</sup>

More to the point is the fact that Kropotkin examined in considerable detail what role non-hierarchical, collective, symbiotic and mutualistic processes may have had in the evolution and development of life and multi-cellular complexity. Not just in *Mutual Aid* but also in Kropotkin's early articles on symbiosis<sup>10</sup> and in his book *Evolution and Environment* upon theoretical and developmental biology. In this book Kropotkin opposed Weismann's Centralist Dogma of Inheritance and Embryological Development. Kropotkin in *Evolution and Environment* rejected Weismann's centralized, static, hierarchical, preformist and uni-dimensional approach to explaining embryological development and inheritance processes.

It is through Kropotkin not Bookchin that humanity was introduced to the modern philosophical hypothesis that

biogenesis and increasing complexity developed from mutualistic and symbiotic associations of related and unrelated autonomous elements collectively combining in fluid and decentralized ways for the creation and reproduction of novel organisms and ecosystems.

### Animal & Human Social hierarchies:

Kropotkin's most significant and consistent scientific and philosophical error and eccentricity contained in his book *Mutual Aid* is, his belief that animal groups are structured and function like egalitarian communes. Prominent ecologists, naturalists and evolutionary biologists whom were either influenced by or followed Kropotkin's leads during the 20th century (e.g. Allee and Wynne Edwards) see competitive group hierarchies as characteristic of animal social ecology. Some animals (e.g. cockroaches and goldfish) naturally live in small egalitarian groups but the majority of intelligent social animals and all primates establish hierarchies of economic and/or reproductive dominance through social competition among members of the group or population. Meerkats although functioning economically as some ideal egalitarian commune also create rigid reproductive hierarchies enforced by a dominant female.

Kropotkin and Bookchin's allied belief that early human society was marked by an absence of inter-generational systems of status, prestige and leadership can be easily challenged. Large and elaborate jewelry items that were clearly status symbols have been found in ancient settlements at periods when hunter-gatherers were just beginning to form into permanent villages. The evolution of human social hierarchy seems more of a natural development emerging from tendencies existing in animal social ecology and pre-modern human societies rather than some unique perversion in the evolution of human culture.

Bookchin implausibly claims that "social ecology's anti-hierarchical analysis" (p.71) uniquely influenced and shaped the New Left and is solely responsible for the contemporary focus by opposition and radical groups upon "hierarchy" rather than "class" (p.84). Why should the study of hierarchy be personally associated with Bookchin's philosophy when Anarchism, as Kropotkin clearly states "refuses all hierarchical organization."<sup>11</sup> The idea that humans naturally exist or are most fulfilled within non-hierarchical communities or egalitarian groups is classically and incontrovertibly the central concept linking Kropotkin's biological, social anthropological and political philosophy of the commune. *To be continued*

# Trouble in Sectland

## DSP splits over failure of Socialist Alliance

**On May 10, 2008, the majority faction in the DSP (Democratic Socialist Perspective), led by National Secretary, Peter Boyle, decided it would expel the minority faction, the LPF (Leninist Party Faction), led by former National Secretary, John Percy. The expulsion went ahead on May 13.**

The DSP's descent into factional polarisation occurred as a result of discord over the Socialist Alliance project. The Alliance was an adventure that the DSP embarked upon in order to capitalise on the mini-upsurge in militancy and street activism that began in 1998 with the Maritime Union's struggle for survival and the launching of the anti-globalisation demos in the following year.

## An Alliance is born

When the mini-upsurge hit in 1998/99, and people began demonstrating in the streets, the DSP leaders mistook this temporary irruption for a generalised radicalisation of epochal proportions. Naturally, as convinced vanguardists, they began to consider how best they might fulfil their historic responsibilities by taking the situation in hand and steering it in a revolutionary direction.

They came up with the idea that what was needed was a new and larger organisation, one that would draw into it as many of the existing left groups and sects as possible, as well as some of the newly radicalised elements of the anti-globalisation generation, but one that would be under the control of the DSP. They envisaged that it would be like a joint-stock company of the left sects with the DSP as the majority shareholder. One of its major functions would be to help the DSP to neutralise, if not dominate, their major ideological opponent and competitor for cadre, the ISO (International Socialist Organisation, now called Solidarity). In addition, it would bring into the DSP's sphere of influence the handful of tiny left grouplets like Workers' Liberty and the Freedom Socialist Party that, tired of holding their meetings in phone boxes, would be eager to join if invited. An assortment of individuals,

including some superannuated ex-activists, revived by the excitement of the moment, would also be drawn into the process. The Alliance was an ingenious way of achieving a de facto increase in the DSP's membership base without having to go to the trouble of recruiting fresh members or poaching them from other sects.

Of course, the DSP leaders well understood that the anti-globalisation generation – carnivalists, autonomists, etc. – would find DSP-style authoritarianism and dogmatism repellent, so they resolved that the new organisation, in order to achieve maximum appeal, must go easy on the Leninist claptrap that was such a staple of day-to-day DSP life. It had to present a face that gave the appearance of being a democratic alliance of equals, and sell itself as a broad-left, non-sectarian formation that was suitable for every variety of leftist. They gave this organisation the name, Socialist Alliance, and held out very high hopes for it.

## A history of dodgy dealings

The DSP's 'partners' in the Alliance were asleep at the wheel. If they had their wits about them they'd have smelled the rat, but they were blinded by their own desire to use the Alliance for their own ends. It was, after all, well known that the DSP had a history of trying to expand itself by opportunistically feeding off of other organisations. For example, in 1984 it infiltrated and tried to take over the Nuclear Disarmament Party, an attempt which, although unsuccessful, ultimately led to the NDP's demise. And later in the '80s the DSP invited itself aboard the Communist Party's New Left Party process, and when this came to nought, attempted the bizarre but memorable amalgamation with the Moscow-line Socialist Party. This latter episode, incidentally, was the DSP's first 'socialist alliance', an electoral coalition

that fared just as abysmally as the current one. In more recent years the DSP attempted to enter the Greens, an effort which, fortunately, was foiled by vigilant Greens. The current Alliance project was just another opportunistic attempt at DSP expansionism in a long line of them.

## The Percy group's sudden awakening

Just as the Alliance's roller coaster ride had passed its zenith and was beginning its plummet back to earth a group around John Percy sensed that something was not quite right. This uneasy feeling caused this



group to begin a fervent consultation of the Leninist classics, during which they discovered, to their horror, that the Alliance had not been such a good idea after all, that in fact it constituted a grave political error – that of Liquidationism.

Undoubtedly, if the Alliance had been chugging along nicely they'd have found convincing theoretical arguments to vindicate it, but, in the event, as it had become an abject failure, they had little choice but to oppose it as a strategy, justifying their new position with the usual Leninist mumbo jumbo. Of course, the main reason they turned their backs on the Alliance was because they no longer enjoyed the feeling of looking like fools, while the Alliance's sole activity was to score less than 1% in the polls. The group around Peter Boyle, however, apparently having no problem with looking like fools, continued to sing the Alliance's praises.

## From the ashes a Leninist Phoenix arises

With the decline in the mini-upsurge, whose last hurrah was expressed in the series of demos against the US invasion of Iraq, came the decline in the *raison d'être* of the Socialist Alliance. When the streets became quiet the Alliance was left with nothing to do but achieve extremely poor results in bourgeois elections. The inevitable frustrations that flowed from this caused the DSP to start throwing its weight around within the Alliance; its Dr. Jekyll façade of enlightened reasonableness transmuted into a Mr. Hyde of mad vanguardism and sectarianism. As night follows day, this behaviour resulted in the departure of the other left groups.

About a year ago an internal DSP election elevated Boyle to the National Secretaryship while Percy got kicked upstairs to the Presidency. This event became the impetus for the foundation of the Leninist Party Faction by the minority, which nostalgically hankered after the pristine certainties of unadulterated Leninist authoritarianism, and decried the decadent perversities of liquidationism. Thereafter existed an uneasy co-existence of the two factions until the matter was recently settled by the expulsion of the minority.

Not long after its expulsion the LPF transformed itself into the Revolutionary Socialist Party. According to its website its revolutionary duties consist of:

1) Putting out a paper, *Direct Action*, whose name they stole from the Wobblies



of a century ago, and which is named after a tactic that vanguardists don't use anyway, preferring manipulation and subterfuge instead;

2) Engaging in "solidarity work", which means uncritically peddling the propa-

ganda of the sclerotic dictatorship on the island of Cuba, the Napoleonic presidency in Venezuela, and the state capitalist regime in Vietnam;

3) Establishing relations with what's left of vanguardist parties elsewhere in the world, but especially in the Asia-Pacific, with whom the RSP is looking to ingratiate itself in order to acquire 'internationalist' credentials;

4) There is no 4.

Fortunately for workers in this country there will be no outreach project targeting them because the RSP regards the class struggle in Australia as being at a very low ebb and not worth worrying about. This is the only RSP policy with which I am in full agreement! At least they won't be bothering workers with their paper peddling, Lenin-mongering and dialectical bullshitting, thus leaving the stage clear for the sensible and sober approach of syndicalists, who assist workers in developing their own struggles at the point of production.

I hope that all vanguardist sects will follow the RSP's wise example by adopting the policy of non-involvement with the working class. It is truly the most constructive contribution to the cause of workers' emancipation they could make.

PJS

## UK Petrol Tanker Drivers' Strike: Solidarity Fuels The Struggle

**At the beginning of June, 641 Shell tanker drivers struck for four days to increase their pay levels. This strike occupied the media headlines for several days, and some petrol stations ran out of fuel. It was settled with a 14% increase over two years (9% this year and 5% next). The Unite union and media made a lot of noise about the size of this award but it was only 0.7% more than the original offer (7.3% this year and 6% next).**

This strike, though only involving a few hundred workers and being resolved quickly, was an important expression of the developing wave of class struggle. From the beginning of the strike workers from other haulage firms expressed their solidarity though respecting the picket lines or joining in their protests "Last night striking drivers at the Stanlow refinery in Cheshire were joined by about 15 BP drivers who refused to start work. In Plymouth, union leaders said the strike action

had been joined by drivers from every company and fuel supplies in Devon and Cornwall could start to run dry by tonight. Up to 25% of BP's petrol deliveries are believed to have been impeded, and some



drivers for Wincanton, a firm which distributes fuel to 3,700 Total and Chevron filling stations, have refused to work out of solidarity with the strikers. The Wincanton (a large haulage firm) drivers joined Shell drivers in protests at Cardiff, Plymouth and Avonmouth, leaving tank-

ers stranded behind picket lines." (The Guardian, 14.6.08). This solidarity took on a new dimension on the third day of the strike (16th June), when workers from other haulage firms joined the Shell workers picketing the Grangemouth oil refinery in Scotland in protest at the suspension of 11 Scottish Fuel drivers for refusing to cross picket lines. This was potentially a very explosive situation, given that the struggle was taking on a demand beyond those of the Shell tanker drivers - the defence of workers from Scottish Fuels. A demand that if not resolved could have drawn in more and more drivers and potentially other workers into the struggle. The Grangemouth refinery workers had struck in April over pensions, the first strike for 73 years and would have been aware of what was happening at the gates. Not surprisingly the bosses and unions moved rapidly to stop this by reinstating the suspended workers. Unite dismissed the workers' determined defence of their comrades as a "misunderstanding".

For the working class it was an example of the power of proletarian solidarity. It should not be forgotten that such action is illegal, as was that by the Wincanton and other *See Page 20*

## NEWS & NOTES

We have reached an important mile stone in the history of anarcho-syndicalism in Australia with the 200th edition of Rebel Worker. We who stand before the mast head of RW, have come along way, but still we have a way to go in regard to assisting the emergence of mass syndicalist unions and the transitional steps to achieve such bodies.

While many are excited by the possibility of spectacular protests and exotic antics during the Pope's Visit to Sydney during World Youth Day, the ASN has been busy on the unglamorous industrial front. Entailing assisting militant rail workers to expose a nefarious contrick by the union hierarchy in league with the bosses and the media regarding the current Rail Corp Enterprise Agreement negotiations. It involves the union hierarchy falsely claiming a victory in the negotiations in regard to preventing job losses in the CityRail Station Network. (See article page 3.)

Currently, the ASN is assisting a nationwide effort by militants to uproot the ALP fat cats which dominate the Rail Tram & Bus Union and achieve grass roots control of the union. Associated with this push is a move to orient the union away from its current path of constant cave-ins to the Govt and the bosses' demands and privatisation, toward the pursuit of direct action and the achievement of workers control of industry.

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

Help Build Rebel Worker! Your Help is particularly sought with 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.

Your assistance on the financial plane is also very welcome.

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## Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## TO FIND OUT MORE

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

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*Continued From Page 18* workers who joined the struggle. However, we did not hear a word about this in the media. Why? They did not want to highlight the fact these workers were not only showing solidarity but also were not intimidated by laws brought in to stop such expressions of solidarity. Such defiance could inspire other workers. So-called independent drivers, those with their own rigs or hired as sub-contractors, also showed solidarity by not crossing picket lines.

This was no easy action for them because they could lose money, possibly contracts and future sub-contracting work. Most of these drivers are former employed drivers or see no real difference between themselves and Shell and other drivers, and were willing to put solidarity first, despite the risks. This solidarity by other workers meant that Unite was not able to keep the Shell drivers isolated from the rest of the class with their æown' demands against ætheir' boss. Instead other drivers saw the Shell drivers' strike as part of their common struggle because they are under the same attacks.

It also threatened to explode into wider solidarity movements as the situation at Grangemouth showed. Thus, despite the unions and bosses stitching together a deal little different to the one the workers had rejected, the Shell and other workers came away from the struggle with a greater sense of their own ability to struggle and above all of the importance of solidarity. In this sense it was an invaluable gain for the whole working class.

*Phil 4.7.08*

*Thanks to "World Revolution"*

## INDIA TODAY

### India- Riots Strikes

*July 9th, 2008*

*by Ed*

**Violence rocked India's diamond capital Gujarat last Sunday as at least 40,000 angry workers who have been demanding better pay for a while, attacked small factories and homes of their owners.**

The security guards hit back and one person died while others were injured in the firing. Workers are demanding a 20 per cent raise. Currently, they are paid anywhere between 15-25 Rupees per diamond which they say is inadequate in these times of skyrocketing prices.

At least 45 workers were injured in the stampede that followed the firing, stone throwing and police lathi charge. Some security guards and staff of the management were injured in the stone-throwing.

The day after the diamond polisher was killed during protests in Bhavnagar, police arrangements were beefed up in Varachha, Katargam and Kapodara areas



of Surat on Monday. Heavy police deployments were made at Varachha and Kapodara areas along with the battalions of the State Reserve Police (SRP), at various other sensitive places. The police carried out patrolling in different areas under the supervision of senior police officials. Sources in the Surat Diamond Association said that the owner of the Sutaria Diamond

factory, situated at Kohinoor Society in Varachha, had dismissed 160 workers after they demanded 20 per cent hike in their wages. In Navsari, tension prevailed during the day, over the issue of a 20 per cent hike in the wages of diamond workers. Over 500 workers of Godhani Diamonds came out of the factory and raised slogans against its owner Shantilal Godani, in the Jalalpore area.

Thousands of workers at units in Gujarat cut and polish the raw materials until they are priceless jewels which are then exported to the US at huge profits. But workers say they are paid very little and the pay structure is inconsistent.

Some get paid Rs 25 per diamond while others get just Rs 15 and wages have not been revised in years, despite the inflation. The agitation by the diamond cutting workers have spread to Rajkot, Junagadh, Palanpur and other areas in the State. In a bid to break the impasse, the Surat Diamond Industries Association announced its decision to implement a 20 per cent hike in the wages with immediate effect.