

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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

Future ALP Govt. & Union Hierarchy to Impose
Abbott's Harsh Budget Measures! Only Direct
Action can effectively Bust It!



BUST THE BUDGET RALLY, IN MELBOURNE, JUNE 12

**OPEN LETTER TO STRIKE AGAINST THE BUDGET; NSW RAILWAY NEWS;
OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF SYDNEY AND NSW TRAINS; PRIVATISATION
DOESN'T WORK; STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH; VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS;
OUTSOURCING IN THE UK; AMNESTY FOR ARGENTINE OIL WORKERS;
POLAND; SPAIN: CNT VICTORY; IRELAND; EURO TRANSPORT WORKERS
STRIKE WAVE; BOOK REVIEW CORNER; NEWS & NOTES; INDIAN STEEL
WORKERS' STRIKE**

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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

P.O. BOX 92

BROADWAY 2007 NSW

E-mail:

rworke@chaos.apana.org.au

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Industrial Action Against the Budget!

Call for industrial action and state-wide delegates meeting to build the fight to reject the budget

The Liberal National government's proposed budget is one of the biggest attacks on workers and welfare in the last 30 years. The attacks are aimed at pushing a user pays, market logic further into education, healthcare and welfare, to cut essential services and rights.

Abbott has made clear he is also looking to scrap the minimum wage and penalty rates.

There is massive public opposition to Abbott and the Liberal government. The 20,000 at Melbourne's stop work rally showed the potential to beat Abbott. We need to strike hard now to stop the budget while we still can.

We can't rely on the budget being blocked in the Senate or wait two years for the next federal election.

John Howard was almost a one-term wonder, but the anger against his first term attacks was allowed to dissipate and he stayed on for 13 years.

Unions NSW has initiated an important all-unions and community rally on Sunday July 6.

But Abbott's budget is an attack on all workers, and it will take all our unions, and mass opposition and strike action to fight it.

We need a rank-and-file run campaign to reject the budget.

The unions' Your Rights at Work campaign, that was central to defeating the Howard Liberal government, had workplace and local campaign groups and most importantly mass national days of action and strikes.

Crucially, the strikes and mass rallies of hundreds of thousands of workers were built out of mass delegates' meetings of thousands.

The well-attended delegates meeting organised by Unions NSW on June 12 unfortunately did not discuss amendments for further industrial action but support for this was clear.

We need further mass delegates meetings to plan the next steps in the campaign.

We the undersigned call on our unions and Unions NSW to:

1. Organise another daytime mass delegates meeting of all unions the week after July 6 to plan for a NSW-wide strike; and

2. Call a week-day stop work protest against the budget and co-ordinate with the ACTU and other state union peak bodies to turn this into a national day of action.

INITIAL SIGNATORIES: Susan Price (NTEU); Nick Riemer (NTEU); Jim McIlroy (retired CPSU); Liam Cohrs

(MUA); Pip Hinman (NTEU); Joanne Faulkner (NTEU); John Gauci (NSWTF); Michael Karadjis (NTEU); Raul Bassi (TWU delegate); Andrew Chuter (NTEU); Noreen Navin (NSWTF); Anabel Morales Noguees (PSA Central Councillor); Howard Byrnes (CFMEU state councillor, cttee management construction division delegate); Sarah Gregson (President NTEU UNSW); Sharlene Leroy-Dyer (NSW Division Indigenous Representative on the Indigenous Policy Committee (NTEU)); Peter Perkins (National Assistant Secretary (Railway Sector) RBTU); Mark Goudkamp (NSWTF); John Morris (NSWTF); Stephen Stephenac, CPSU delegate, Bureau of Meteorology; Jean Parker (NTEU); Kevin Lin (NTEU); Matt Meagher (NSWTF); Clare Fester (NUW); Jimmy Yan (NUW); Steve O'Brien (PSA/CPSU delegate); Shane Bentley (MUA Sydney); Mich-Elle Myers (MUA Sydney); Vin Francis (MUA Sydney); Campbell Duguan (MUA); Doug Heath (MUA); Adrian Evans (MUA); Paul Keating (MUA); Damien Martin (MUA); Garry Keane (MUA); Greg Tarlinton (MUA); Luke Miller (MUA); Antonin Stonjek (MUA); Tanith Sweetnam (MUA); Erina Daymond (MUA); Paul Maney (MUA); Warren Nugent (MUA); Anne Picot (NTEU); Evan Gray (NSW Teachers' Federation, NUS); Brad Tarlington (MUA); Yarni Stephens (CPSU); L. Ward (MUA); Max Schulzer (NUS); Anna Fowler (NUS); A Johnstone (NUS); Bea Bliele (NTEU);

A.S.N. APPEAL

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

Please make out Cheques to Black Cat Media and forward to P.O. Box 92 Broadway

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

STOP WORK TO SAVE OUR CONDITIONS

Management is remaining steadfast in cutting working conditions and jobs through proposed rolling reforms it hopes to achieve through EBA 2014.

The NSW government is adamant that they will not budge from removing clauses out of the new EBA which relate to Salary Maintenance and to Voluntary Redundancy. After September 2016 management are proposing that "excess" employees will receive just 12 week's notice that they are surplus to requirements, receiving just 25 weeks redundancy pay regardless of how long they have worked. This is a pittance by any standard.

They are also proposing that employees receive Salary Maintenance only for 3 months if they are forced into lower graded jobs. Most worrying are proposals that seek further reforms to be carried out during the terms of the agreement, by negotiation or by changing the agreement by consultation with those affected. If we are to have an agreement at all, changes to working conditions and conditions of employment have to be spelled out before hand within the agreement. Otherwise there is no point to having an agreement at all. We do not want management or the State Government to spring nasty surprises on us as they did with EBA 2010.

As I write this, union delegates are meeting to consider a response to management's latest proposals. The decent thing to do would have been to consult with members first, before the delegates meeting and before responding to management. Will we possibly be handed down a recommendation from the union hierarchy without much input from the general membership?

Already 1000's of members have lost jobs through reforms since EBA 2010. The remaining staff, whether on stations, train crewing or in administration are feeling very insecure as they do not know where the axe will fall next. They have also had to pick up the workload of the displaced employees. Despite this, management is of-

fering a miserly 3% increase on ratification of the agreement, a further 3% in 12 months time, then a final 1% 24 months later, (with conditions of course).

Unless we stop this rot in its tracks It is very probable that within a few years front line staff will be either part-time or casual, managed by a handful of full-timers.

At this stage we do not know much of the proposed detail in EBA 2014, (we should by the way), but from the glimpses that we

On the London underground management proposed the sacking of all ticket selling staff and the elimination of most of the station staff. They did this under radical reforms which could be a pointer to what could happen here once the Opal Card is bedded down in NSW. Also, similar to what has occurred here, management in London were refusing to budge.

But instead of just accepting this attack on London rail workers the RMT, the union



have seen there is an attack on our conditions that is fairly unprecedented.

Already many union delegates have rejected the proposed changes to the enterprise agreement. I have no doubts that many staff are also horrified by many of the proposed changes and want to do something about them.

It is time to stop dilly dallying. Management has had long enough to bargain in good faith. They are not willing to compromise on much at all. We must be prepared to draw our own line in the sand and begin immediately to build an industrial campaign from our workplaces.

Cleverly (if not illegally) management has tried to head off any threat of industrial action by offering a 2.27% back pay from 1st April 2014 which is contingent on not taking any industrial action leading up to the signing of the agreement. To my mind this would contravene the Fair Work provisions which allows limited protected action during the negotiation period. The threat to withdraw the back-pay could be construed as a form of coercion.

representing rail workers on the Tube, called a series of rolling 24 hr stoppages which went ahead. British newspapers and television carried pictures of commuters walking to work and lining up to catch overcrowded buses. They lambasted the union for the "inconveniences" meanwhile forgetting to put forward the workers real reason for the strike. The strikes have now been put on hold and management has shifted its position and are willing to negotiate. There is some hope now at least of saving some of the jobs which were forecast to be axed. Without the willingness to take part in industrial action the earmarked jobs on the London Underground would have been axed. We can cite numerous examples in other industries here in Australia of the very same tactic. Strike action enhances rather than hinders the outcome for workers when their backs are against the wall.

We have to be prepared to resort to industrial action. If the NSW rail EBA 2014 in its current form is implemented it will be too late to do anything. We must act now.

Just imagine if we shut down the CBD for one day? It's not the same as the 60's, 70's or 80's when no one cared. Many more people and businesses rely on public transport today than they did in the past. There would be hue and cry from all quarters, which we should be anticipate.

Some staff are saying that "the unions are not strong anymore" or that they are weakened in some way. This is far from the truth. The transport unions are some of the strongest in the country, they have the best union density of any union movement in Australia. They have the power in the membership and they are strategically placed in an industry that cannot afford to be shut down from a business point of

view. However the leadership lacks the will for a fight, preferring to place their faith in the election of a Labor Government at the next election, even though history has shown that this changes very little at all.

However, if this is what's needed for management and the government to take us seriously, then that's what we must do. It's getting to the point when we have few options left. We are already haemorrhaging staff members and draconian workplace changes are taking their toll on everyone. In our workplaces we have no respect and relations between management and staff are at an all time low.

There is only one way to win back the respect we deserve. That does not mean that we should wait and vote for this or that political party. We need to organise and take action ourselves, sooner rather than later. Only then will we not look weak in the eyes of the Transport Minister and her cronies managing Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. Maybe we can even get them to budge. However we will never know what's possible if we don't try.

By Angry Rail Worker

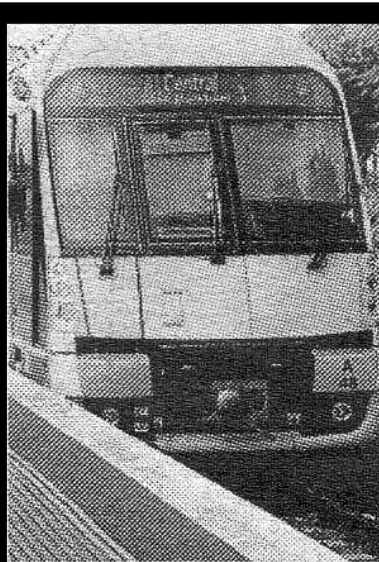
Letter to the members of Sydney Trains and NSW Trains

I would like to raise matters concerning the future of your jobs. Over the last twenty years we have all seen the deliberate destruction of what was once a major employer and the erosion of the morale of its workers.

I was once proud to announce that I was a third generation rail worker. My brothers, my father, his brothers and both my grandfathers all were on the job. A job you knew was a secure job, for life with great prospects for advancement. My father raised twelve kids and built two houses on Guard's wages. He was proud of what was once a family tradition and every mate he had, was met on the job or through it. How has it come to today where we wait each year to see how many more sections will disappear?

Remember juniors on stations, porters, swosas, hairy legs, shunters, telegram boys, parcel clerks, booking window clerks and all the other jobs connected to the rail that were the lifeblood of the country towns. Now we have no prospects for any kind of career unless we become a manager and show how good we are at cutting out positions and saving money for an employer that treats its staff with utter contempt, by declaring in the media that they are all lazy and a waste of tax dollars. They see the only future is to get rid of us all and privatise and we all know how well that worked for all the other great employers of the past, like Telecom, the Post Office, Water Board, Gas Board, Electricity, etc. We all know how cheap all our bills are now, they all are run as corporate entities. We all paid our taxes and expected and received all those services in return. We did

not expect them all to make massive profits or if not, then cut out jobs and services. We expected them to employ our kids in real jobs with a future and the benefits that went with it. How are young people supposed to plan a future with part time jobs at twenty hours a week, where the hope of



accumulating long service leave and a worthwhile superannuation is a pipe dream. They will need two jobs just to pay rent, as they will never get a house loan with jobs, that are only given on eighteen month contracts that may not be renewed, like many of the recent train cleaners positions.

Our employer has now shown us all, it's clear intentions to make more job cuts with the insistence that the policy of no forced redundancies and salary maintenance must go. They want to cut jobs and not have an expense

of looking after their obligations. We have seen year after year, of cuts under such names as Job and Work Redesign, Station Reform, Staff Reviews and Operational Changes. We were told these were all necessary to secure the future of the remaining

jobs, but when is enough, going to be enough? Have any of the savings actually been ploughed back into infrastructure or has it just been to pay for the ever increasing management bureaucracy that thinks trains run on red tape and intricate corporate layers while investing in clever, beautiful brochures with colour photos of our glorious leaders on them.

The latest bit of wisdom is to have us throw away many millions of dollars, by throwing away our perfectly good uniforms. I myself had over forty shirts, twenty pairs of pants and all the other attire in perfect order, all this will be replaced with new, at the expense of a few more job cuts. I am sure this will make trains a safer option for travel and cheaper too. Before you all vote on the upcoming EBA agreements (Yes, two agreements not one, and if you think there is no hidden agenda behind separate agreements I will sell you a bridge from Melbourne to Hobart). Ask yourself, what good is a pay rise that may see you on the unemployment line. Do not accept an EBA just for a pay rise that may boost your superannuation, as you may find you no longer have a position to earn any super doing. Don't think it won't be you. I have heard some say it won't be me, because they need full time employees to drive trains. Anybody old enough can remember the days of Sydney Buses that employed many people on many shifts. Ask around about what happened when split shifts were introduced. Massive job losses and those left with four hours in the morning and four in the evening. They were not paid for the two hour or more break the middle of the day, which was wasted life for the most of them. Would you like to work a ten or twelve hour day for eight hours pay with trains, that run in peak times? How long will train lines such as Kiama to Nowra, Port Kembla to Wollongong, Moss Vale, Scone and Dun-

gog to Newcastle remain? Any bus company will take over these sections like what happened to the lines West of the Blue Mountains.

Ask yourself why they need a "Facilitative Clause" in the EBA. It means whatever they don't get in the EBA they will introduce once it is signed off. They will offer a once only payment to induce affected staff to vote for a measure that will be good for a few, who are ready to retire, but will cut jobs for any future employees. Ask the carriage cleaners about how underhanded tactics were used to pressure an agreement to new staff cuts by making offers done in private meetings with no representation. Some were given false information as to

what they were agreeing to, but nothing was written down and no witnesses were there to attest to it. I warn you now, that any clauses put forward in this EBA should be treated warily.

Do you really believe that they are interested in delivering safe clean trains for the public and ensuring a future for you? Their consideration is the dismantling and privatisation of the railways. Why do you think they wanted multiple agreements? Divide and conquer! Tell your union a single agreement for a single united workforce is the only option. We should not accept two. Do not accept a reply of this is the best offer they will make. It is long past time our union says "enough al-

ready". Will we wait until we don't have the strength or numbers to stand up? If they can put in a clause that says they can come back and make more cuts and changes after the EBA is signed off, why can't we put in a clause that says no more reforms for the life of the agreement? Demand your union fight for this and not just settle for the best management offer.

If we are not willing to fight now, we will prove to management that the back down before the Pope's visit was proof of just how afraid you are to stand up for your job, your conditions and your future.

Privatisation! It Just Doesn't Work

It now seems that Transfield's contract with Sydney Trains has now been cancelled. Station Cleaning will come back under the control of the various Customer Service Managers, while train cleaning will revert back to the management of Fleet Maintenance.

In 2011 Transfield won a huge contract to manage Transport cleaning services for all of NSW Public Transport from 24-Oct-2012 to 23-Apr-2016.

Transfield also have major contracts with other States and National Agencies. The contract with the Department of Services, Technology and Administration Services, for example, is worth A\$540 million and the contract with the Australian Government for the incarceration of asylum seekers on Manus and Nauru Islands is worth A\$1.2 billion. This is just the tip of the iceberg as far as the extent to which Transfield gained lucrative State contracts around the globe. While managing transport cleaning Transfield's management was invisible to

most people, even though on paper they had a bureaucratic structure that exceeded the old transport hierarchy. Since gaining the original contract for trains and stations, cleaners and cleaning have lacked direction. As a consequence both trains and stations have become filthy.

The public transport cleaners from the old RailCorp have suffered as a result. They



have had many offers of redundancy over the years and have had the sword of privatisation hanging over their heads for the last 2 years. Redundancies are still on

the table for cleaning staff even though they won't be transferred over to Transfield now. It is likely they will be replaced by part time and casual employees in the longer term.

The privatisation of Sydney Water shows what can happen when public utilities are privatised. The sale of Sydney Water added to the corruption of politicians within the NSW and Federal political system. The people of NSW were ripped off by unscrupulous businessmen and politicians who fed from the public purse. Householders in NSW picked up the tab and water charges skyrocketed. So far not one of these crooks have been prosecuted. Barry O'Farrell surrendered his job, yet received no charges. Yes, "NSW is" definitely "open for business" and the criminals got away with the booty.

Unions and their members need to draw a "line in the sand" over the privatisation of public assets. We need to begin a campaign now in our communities, on stations and wherever privatisation raises its ugly head. We could start by having an awareness campaign using posters and leaflets. A campaign that leads up to democratic public meetings. Union members and others need to volunteer to hand out the leaflets, flyers and posters. The final line of defence against privatisation is industrial action which we must never back away from. Privatisation is nothing more than theft, pure and simple, and we are the ones that they are stealing from.

Sydney Trains has a new position for station staff

Sydney Trains has a new position for station staff that it wants to introduce via the

upcoming Enterprise Agreement. The position will be called a Customer Service Officer. It is proposed that this new position will:

1. Be a multi skilled position.
2. Have no home station.
3. Replace current augmented relief positions.
4. Have working hours between 4 and 12 hours per day, at their discretion.
5. Be rostered between 20 and 60 hours per week, at their discretion.
6. Not attract any penalty rates, until a yearly quota is reached.

Sydney Trains say this about being flexible to meet our customers needs, but we already have that in place with Relief CSA's and SDM's. This is really about slashing

the conditions of employment that we currently have. This proposal is akin to having a casual position that attracts no penalties or travelling expense claims. It will also create a distinct division between station staff, effectively carrying out the same job. The proposed Customer Service Officer position does not detail whether it will be salary, wages or contract. It also

does not specify whether it impacts CSA's or SDM's. Some of the details of this proposal can be found by looking at Government Proposal 5 General Rostering and Deployment Arrangements. The upcoming EA is your EA. Be aware of exactly what Sydney Trains is proposing. Get active and get involved with your union. Contact your local dele-

gate and let them know what you want. Solidarity, knowledge and patience are our best defence against attacks on our conditions.

STATE TRANSIT NEWS FLASH

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the latest developments with Newcastle Buses?

Waverley Busie: Recently I have received some important info from a contact in Forest Buses. He advised that Gladys has been making some sly behind the scenes moves. Newcastle Buses have been detached from Sydney Buses and is now self funding. Whilst the tender for Newcastle Buses comes up for review in 12 months time, just after the upcoming NSW state elections. This contact advised that the likely company to take the tender is Scott Dunn, a cashed up UK based company, out to acquire various tenders. It just recently purchased Telfords.

BRUTAL SPEEDUP IN THE JOB

RW: What's the latest with the bosses?

WB: I have noticed that the office staff now mainly consist of young people in the late 20's and 30's, who the higher bosses have equipped with menacing, highly polished "Hitler Youth" style jack books. There appear to be no older experienced people there. In the morning when you start the job there is always one or two of them, waiting for you out in the yard, as part of a new campaign of harassment. If we are even a few minutes late leaving the depot or terminuses, the bosses may send warning letters over the issue to scare us. Associated with this campaign, the bosses have posted people at the gate and terminuses, checking buses departing. In the office, I have noticed coloured graphs showing percentages of drivers leaving the depot and terminuses on time. On the graph a line showed 92% leaving on time and another line showed 94%. The bosses want to get 98% leaving on time. This latest attack follows the notorious "Optimisation" concept implementation. It's believed, the architect of the successive waves of this onslaught is a former business manager,

you know who I mean James, who acts like a megalomaniac. The bosses have even barged into Opal Card training meetings to peddle their lateness crack down crap!

RW: What do you see as the bosses' hidden agenda behind this latest viciousness?

WB: This ridiculous attempt to "micro manage" our job, to the extent of fretting about a few minutes lateness, seems in reality all about creating the pretext for disciplinary action against us. It fails to take account of various causes for delayed departures, which are out of drivers' control. We have only 10 minutes to prepare for the start of our runs. In that time they want us to sign for the bus (what is the point any-

suals. It's also alleged that the bosses have a "hit list" of drivers who they consider to be "trouble makers" and want to fit up for the sack. Despite many of these drivers having good records and having 10 years plus on the job. However, not all staff are gung ho in participating in this viciousness. Some of the staff appear to be quite embarrassed. The use of the lateness crack down to put black marks on records is also a way to discriminate against us in say the list for bendibus jobs. Qualification for such jobs should be based on seniority, not merit. My approach is to work for the passengers and oppose this latest management campaign to make us jump through more pointless hoops.

I am particularly outraged by this increased peering over our shoulder and the bosses' ulterior motives behind it. As drivers, we have a huge responsibility in dealing with the public and are subjected on the



way? As we are not being required to sign off for the bus at the end of the shift. The whole idea is just pathetic!), start the bus, check for faults and check the Opal data and GPS connections are working. Many of these factors are out of our control or just forgetting the keys, can contribute to delays in leaving the depot. By means of this intense scrutiny of our jobs for a disciplinary dividend, it's alleged the bosses want to sack full time permanent drivers and replace them with part timers and ca-

road to ever worsening conditions. Contributed by the lax policing of laws. Particularly, we have problems with cyclists, some of whom lack safety equipment such as red lights and pedestrians engrossed in their mobile phones. We often have to second guess the likely next moves of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Recently, 2-3 people have died in the city due to collisions with buses. We should be applauded, as our skill in driving has avoided dangers and a multitude of people being

killed. We should be cherished, rather than submitted to vilification due to "Big Brother" GPS monitoring and the silliness of the bosses fretting over minutes leaving the depot for runs. I'm sure a similar onslaught is affecting other depots. The other day, I came across a bloke who was handing out cards for a "bus drivers' day". So we can be given credit for our efforts on the road. Let's take up this idea!

I have heard similar successive waves of attacks are affecting other parts of Transport for NSW, such as the railways, private buses and the ferries. In the case of the ferries, a big dispute has recently broken out over a new vicious attack. Following a "honeymoon" after privatisation, the new operators are now demanding a large pay cut to ferry workers wages! There was a similar big attack on bus drivers in Adelaide, following privatisation twenty years ago. The new operators imposed a pay cut of \$10,000 pa, which works out to be \$18,000 pa today! How do I know this? Following privatisation, these drivers who had been in our union, transferred to the TWU. Recently the TWU have demanded a hefty pay rise for these drivers.

INTEGRITY: THE BOTTOM LINE

RW: What do you see as other aspects of this new boss attack?

WB: I think it's a resurgence of the punishment regime we experienced under the Greiner Government 18 years ago, when the bosses were keen to fine us over any trivial thing. It also expresses the general lack of integrity of the bosses. Without integrity you have nothing. If things like this continue in the STA, the whole thing will just collapse. This lack of integrity is occurring on various scales in NSW. At the political level, in the Baird Government down to Peter Rowley STA CEO and to the lower rungs of depot administration. We have seen how the Liberal politicians such as Hartcher, have been enmeshed in a web of corruption via slush funds. Former, Premier O'Farrell, a fairly popular leader was implicated in the bottle of wine affair and lost his job. Whilst, 4 to 5 years ago, Rowley as CEO must be held responsible for the sacking of Chris Mansergh, involving a web of deceit associated with him being fitted up for the sack. Chris had been elected as union rep at Pt. Botany and had been effective in assisting the grass roots in the fight against bosses, particularly by holding frequent yard meetings. Consequently, he was a thorn in the side of the bosses and union officials. As a result of the depot staff involvement in these constant attacks us, with the exception of the inspectors, it shows they are all rotten to the core. The successive waves of the campaign has increased the intimidation, frus-

tration and aggravation of drivers. It raises the whole question of what they are there for. Are they there to thrash us or to seize an opportunity? In regard to the latter option, some years back there was a competition between depots to reduce fuel consumption. The drivers at the winning depot which was Waverley, received \$100 each for their efforts. As a result, enthusiasm for the job was encouraged. This is the sort of thing the bosses could be encouraging, rather than their current ruthless authoritarian approach to us.

RW: What do you see as ways to tackle this intensified attack involving Auxiliary Staff, including roster clerks, peer support people and Human Resources Staff?

WB: I propose we issue them with a survey consisting of four questions, with a deadline for them to complete and return it. Some suggestions for questions include: Q1: How can you improve your understanding of us? Q2: How do rate us as supervisors of our work? Q3: How can you assist us in performing our work? Q4: How do you see us in the future of the STA?

RW: What has been some of the fallout from the bosses corner cutting, speed up and intensification of the job?

WB: To save money the bosses don't want to deal with the gas buses, which require more maintenance than other buses. Consequently, the Kingsgrove gas system has been closed. Whilst Tempe and Waverley are getting gas buses from Kingsgrove. As a result of low wages due to curbs on overtime and redundancies, more mechanics are leaving the STA contributing to more faulty buses. Now with the elimination of many inspector jobs, we are reliant for advice from the radio room, which are often out of touch with the practicalities of our on the road problems.

In the new May rosters, the bosses made various computer generated changes which have tightened up our shifts. In the case of AM shifts they are being scrambled around a lot, with some of these shifts being shortened to only 7 hours! Whilst a stack of brokeners are starting earlier resulting in \$40pw cuts in drivers' pay packets. The number of straight day shifts has been reduced. Consequently the bosses are gouging additionally, perhaps thousands of dollars a week, out of us. All WAD has been cut out and only here and there are gaps between runs in shifts. Combined with the bosses intimidation of us over lateness leaving the depot and terminuses, the roster changes have greatly tightened the screws of the speed up on our jobs. We are also continuing to face glitches with the Opal Card system and the Green Machines at the start of runs, which are out of our control. Causing more tired and fa-

tigued drivers, with many encouraged to leave the job. This is a completely wrong approach to run the STA, the bosses should be working with us, not against us. The union and bosses should be monitoring the fatigue this onslaught is causing us. With the Federal Budget, there will be more pressure on the state government to attack us. So we can expect even more of these cutbacks in the pipeline. Over the last 10 to 15 years, enormous cutbacks to the STA have been delivered. All the fat on the STA was cut out, and now under the Liberals, it's been reduced to a skeleton. Virtually the heart is being taken out of the job. Currently the experienced drivers are holding the STA together, not the bosses. They don't know what they want. The passengers are definitely on our side, they can see how frustrated we are. It's likely one day, the STA will just implode, due to all this hollowing out. Gladys doesn't know what she's doing. She doesn't know whether she is Arthur or Mather and what a monster she is creating!

RW: What are your impressions of the NSW Govt. expenditure on new public transport infrastructure and technology?

WB: I recently noticed at Eastgardens, near Westfield, a depot is being constructed for the Light Rail system. How is this and the new Opal Card being funded? It's being funded by such measures as cut backs to our wages and reductions in mechanical staff!

RW: What do you think of the new campaign by the Govt, bosses and the media against workers wages and conditions and the environment?

WB: Alarmingly, even some drivers have been taken in by this propaganda. One driver the other day was complaining that our wages are too high! The media and the Abbott Government, particularly spread misinformation about the wages of GMH workers, grossly inflating the amount. Saying they were all getting \$34 per hour, to support the move to close down the auto industry. Whilst, the small business association and other business associations are complaining about going broke over a 50c per hour pay rise recently awarded to low wage workers and demanding penalty rates are reduced. In the case of Abbott's Budget, so much of the attacks on us are hidden in the fine details of the budget papers. Abbott is also using the Royal Commission into union corruption, to create a broad brush to paint all unions as corrupt. Abbott is taking us back 30 years on environmental issues with the budget cutbacks. However, the Liberal NSW Govt. is continuing with policies to reduce pollution, which were introduced by the previous ALP Govt.

RW: What new mischief is the Baird Govt. getting up to?

WB: Latest news, is that Transport for NSW wants to charge us \$80 each to get a certificate that we work with children! It's

affecting both public and private sector transport workers. This money should come out of the STA's finances, not our pockets. The union has advised not to pay

it, until next year. The issuing of this certificate looks to be a way TfNSW bureaucrats are trying to cover themselves due to changes in legislation requirements.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of RW, we will discuss the termination of an employee at a country depot. This is a story of back stabbing and the determination of Human Resources to terminate this employee. Once again Drivers, Station Staff, Conductors and Head Office staff will discuss this issue. As in previous issues of RW names have been changed.

RW: Can you tell us why this employee was terminated?

Clarence: Yes, they wanted to put the fear into other employees, that Human Resources were in charge.

Rastus and Roscoe: We, drivers have heard rumours of a station manager, who was a bully at this location.

Jethro: You are correct. This person was appointed from outside.

RW: How did he get the job?

Jethro: He was a mate of the previous Regional Manager. He worked in the retail industry, where it was alleged he used to bully junior employees. He left his job under a cloud and his mate at V/Line made sure he obtained the position.

RW: Can you tell us about this Regional Manager?

Roscoe: He came from Human Resources, where he was a PIG. We drivers hated him. He got the position through his mates at Human Resources over other employees.

Sheona: They wanted a Yes man.

Rastus: He knew nothing of the Rail Industry.

RW: Why did he leave V/Line?

Clarence: He resigned under a cloud because it was alleged that he sent an email to an employee by mistake. You see the email was one of his bright ideas was to cut costs at this depot.

RW: What was his bright idea?

Sheona: It was to replace full time conductors with part time conductors. Also it was alleged that in this email, was a recommendation to terminate an employee.

Jethro: When the union found out all hell broke loose, which eventually led to this manager's resignation.

Rastus and Roscoe: His mates in Human Resources found him a position at Yarra Trams, where he is now depot manager at Camberwell Depot.

Jethro: He is at Camberwell Depot, where he is hated.

RW: Hope the employees there stand up to him.

Rastus and Roscoe: Meanwhile talk at this depot is that the Station Manager was bullying conductors and trying to standover drivers. He particularly picked on the weak employees.

Clarence: One employee stood up to him and would not submit to him or cop his bullying.

Rastus: This employee was a conductor plus a holiday relief clerk at the station.

RW: Why was he terminated?

Clarence: He was set up and was terminated on four charges. These charges were: 1. Passenger complaint. 2. Mishan-

Sheona: They try to keep matters of discipline secret so as not to arouse fellow employees.

Clarence: In other words hush it up. This conductor had the guts to discuss the charges with fellow workers.

Sheona: He was stood down with pay.

Jethro: Yes and the case dragged on for three weeks.

Rastus and Roscoe: They certainly know how to waste money. I think of the overtime budget at this depot plus the number of relief people sent by other depots.

Sheona: They don't care, as long as they nail a person.

RW: When this matter was known, other employees should have refused to work on their book off days.



dling money. 3. Insubordination. 4. Discussing the previous three issues with fellow employees.

The first charge was false, as the conductor was very good to his passengers. As for the second charge, this conductor never stole money. This charge was never proven. In regards to insubordination, this is rubbish. This was trumped up because he stood up to this bully. Finally. He was no thief.

Rastus and Roscoe: As for the forth charge, he discussed his charges with fellow employees. We said in previous issues of RW to talk charges over with fellow employees.

Rastus: They should have, but Human Resources through these crawlers on the job, put out rumours that these people are in the wrong and there are selfish people who would work regardless of the matter. There was an issue years ago where employees stood up for a stood down employee, but these crawlers sabotaged other efforts.

Clarence: As for the stood down employee the time he was stood down was causing stress for his family.

Sheona: It would, sitting around doing nothing.

Jethro: Finally, they held an enquiry where they found the charges proven.

RW: What happened?

Rastus: When a new CEO was appointed to V/Line, who wanted to put fear among employees, said terminate the person and this is what happened.

RW: What did the union do?

Clarence: Because this person was a member of the union and as well as this station officer also had been a member of the union, the union had to handle the case with a fine line.

Jethro: The employee took his case to FAIRWORK AUSTRALIA on unfair dismissal. It was heard with the union representing him. The employee wanted to clear his name and wanted his job back. The hearing was held and he was cleared of the mishandling of money.

Clarence: V/Line would not give him, his job back, but he got a substantial payment.

Rastus: Would you want to go back, as they would find something to terminate you.

RW: Has the matter of this station officer been sought out?

Clarence: No. He kept his job despite the way he treated employees and if he can get away with it, he still tries to stand over employees.

Jethro: Employees should ignore him.

RW: This matter should have been sought out from day one.

Rastus: It should have, but Human Resources would not listen. You see, they appointed him and to remove him, they would have to admit they made a mistake.

RW: This person has caused enough trouble and a way should be found to remove him. Not be dismissed, but a transfer to another depot. If he causes trouble there, then remove him.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say, this manager should be removed. This would solve problems at this depot. It may be illegal, but it would solve the problem. As for the terminated employee, he should have gone to another depot. He would have got support. The worse part of this, is the stress the stand down caused to his family. Finally, as we have said in previous editions of RW, if facing a disciplinary hearing, discuss the matter with fellow workers. As for Human Resources, they STINK!

OUTSOURCING IN THE U.K.

An investigation into the ways in which outsourcing and the threat of outsourcing is used as a weapon of class warfare and labour discipline in the public sector, as well as possible tactics for fighting back.

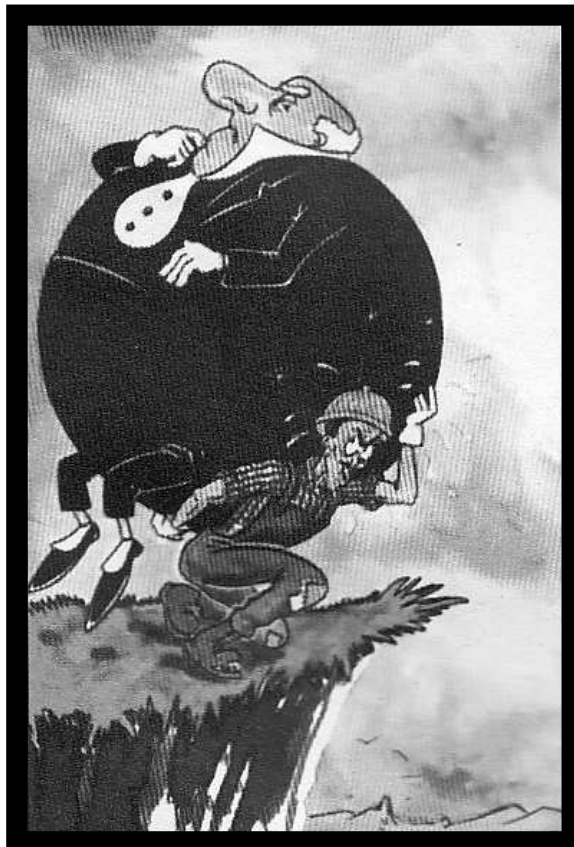
The outsourcing of public services has become major news in recent years. The UK is now the second largest market for outsourced public services in the world and with the combination of ongoing budget cuts and the neoliberal demands for 'efficiency' and private provision outsourcing is a major consideration across the public sector. However a focus simply on numbers and statistics can overlook the impact of the threat of outsourcing as a weapon of class warfare and labour discipline.

My own experience of this comes from being an admin worker in an NHS department that went through a lengthy outsourcing review before being given a last minute reprieve a couple of months ago. Whilst not wanting to generalise too much from one experience, I thought it would be worthwhile sharing some of my conclusions about the effects of this process, its effectiveness as a form of class warfare and possible ways in which we may be able to fight back.

Outsourcing, job security and labour discipline

In an era of increasingly casualised and precarious working conditions most pub-

lic sector organisations retain a degree of job stability that gives workers a degree of industrial strength. Permanent rather than fixed term contracts generally remain the



norm whilst disciplinary processes follow a formalised format, with opportunities for challenge and appeal by the workers involved. Furthermore, whilst the major public sector unions have long retreated from pushing much in the way of workplace action in their role of 'labour side representation' they do play a role in ensuring processes are followed and limiting

the arbitrary power managers are able to exert. As a result with the exception of major misconduct cases public sector employers lack the ability to hire and fire at will, giving greater power to workers to resist demands for ever greater workrates, longer hours, etc in the workplace.

Outsourcing and the threat of outsourcing undermines this job security. Public sector employees involved in an outsourcing may find themselves 'TUPE' transferred to the private company taking over the contract, transferred formally on the same contract and with the same protections as before for the first 12 months, but at high risk of having their terms and conditions challenged or being forced out in favour of workers on the new companies own terms and conditions (which are generally significantly worse). Alternatively, even TUPE transfer may not be an option; in my own case the outsourcing plan was to move the department to a centralised national location hundreds of miles away, with me and my co-workers offered possible redeployment to another department or, if that failed, being made redundant.

This means that consideration of outsourcing creates uncertainty for what were previously fairly secure jobs. As a result workers in departments being reviewed for redundancy are put in the position of being effectively forced to beg their employers for their jobs. Employers usually expect workers to show a willingness to 'be reasonable', to capitulate to their demands if they want to have any hope of remaining in their posts.

Monitoring, statistics gathering and the quantification of services

As part of a review the department is likely to come under intense and sustained monitoring to judge whether it is succeeding or

failing, i.e. whether the department is meeting a series of quantifiable targets to be measured against some aspects of its work deemed to be important. Such a process is contentious; most public sector departments' work involve a variety of activities, and in order to quantify in such a manner an assessment has to be made as to the relative importance of these activities and the parameters within which these are defined which usually downplays or excludes aspects of the job. Furthermore, it leads to a concentration of all efforts on the areas of work being measured, investing all efforts into making the numbers look good and all but ignoring anything not on the sheet of targets.

As a result as part of the review a vast amount of time and energy can be spent on creating monitorable targets and on collating quantifiable data so that judgements can be made based on these. For example as part of the outsourcing review of my service we were obliged to spend many hours inputting information on our work into unintuitive programmes so that statistics and graphs on our work rate could be produced for the monthly report.

Unfortunately a consequence of building these sets of numbers, in theory to make the case for not outsourcing, is that it creates exactly the kinds of measurable outcomes which are necessary for outsourcing companies to seek to undercut and outbid. Outsourcing has most commonly taken place in areas where there are clear rates of output, clear targets which provide a template basic service which the company can then seek to provide as cheaply as possible. Where the work of the department is more complex, where a department carries out a variety of activities that it is harder to catalogue and measure it makes it difficult to frame their work in terms of a baseline service that an outsourcing company can look to provide as cheaply as possible. Thus outsourcing becomes harder for private companies to make a profit from and more difficult to tender, reducing its attractiveness.

There is therefore a paradox in that the creation of data and targets on service provision, one of the tasks that workers often spend many hours on as part of the outsourcing review and their attempts to keep departments in house is also key to making outsourcing a feasible option.

The threat of outsourcing as the 'new normal'

Even where the decision eventually goes against outsourcing this decision is never final. Deciding not to outsource at this time, to this specific provider leaves the door open that at a later point, when a better bid is offered or when managers are

once again dissatisfied the issue of outsourcing will be raised again, something that employers are often only too happy to point out. In my own case it was made clear that, whilst the decision had been made not to outsource this time it would definitely be reconsidered should the desired improvements in the numbers not be shown. Indeed, a team we work closely with whose own outsourcing review had only ended a few months prior were told the week after we were cleared that they were once again up for review.

This means that the disciplinary effects of an outsourcing review, which many workers and indeed the main unions are often willing to accept as a one off process, becomes an ongoing force creating ever present job insecurity. Demands for higher pay, better conditions and particularly every day demands for a less intensive and more pleasurable working life come up against the danger of outsourcing, the implicit threat by management that if you don't play ball they can sell off the department to someone who will. Thus outsourcing either as an actual process or as a threat becomes a key part of undermining public sector work security and disciplining public sector workers.

Resisting outsourcing

The question therefore arises of how best to resist these forces. In my own personal case I do not feel I was particularly successful in this regard; in my department there was some open unrest, demands to see managers, etc but by and large we went along with the process. That we were not outsourced was in my case down more to luck than through our active resistance. Nevertheless I did see potential for resistance. For example such a collective threat acts to engender a sense of solidarity and collective interests, whilst direct managers who are also facing the threat of outsourcing cannot always be relied on by the hierarchy to effectively dampen workplace dissent.

One source that sadly cannot be relied upon for resistance is the mainstream unions. In line with their labour side representation role, the national policy of the big unions towards outsourcing is generally one of token opposition alongside activity around ensuring the outsourcing is properly carried out, i.e. that all the boxes are ticked before the outsourcing finally takes place. A common experience is for unions to come up with a series of excuses for not taking action - union density isn't high enough, the moment isn't right, we need to act professionally to prevent outsourcing, etc - before eventually stating that it's too late and there's little they can do. For example, during the recent

campaign against outsourcing at Sussex University the UNISON branch offered token opposition to outsourcing whilst fighting tooth and nail against attempts at active resistance by workers (such as the pop up union set up for the purpose of taking strike action) before eventually announcing that the university had consulted with them to their satisfaction and they were no longer opposing the outsourcing. Thus whilst there are undoubtedly many good militants resisting outsourcing within unions their approach on a national scale is generally at best ineffective and at worst openly hostile to resisting outsourcing.

In terms of active resistance something worth considering is the ways in which workers are required to create the tools through which their work can be monitored and measured and how we could look to prevent the creation of the statistics and quantifiable units that outsourcing relies upon. Collective attempts to subvert, sabotage and neglect the collation of data necessary for outsourcing, to insist on doing the job rather than creating numbers regarding it and undermine attempts to package departments as something outsourced companies can run at a profit could be an important way to make outsourcing unviable.

There is room to play on the fact that, although a growing force, outsourcing remains highly unpopular. Whilst some outsourcing evangelists may close ranks in the face of vocalised hostility (for example the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex stating that he would outsource even if everyone on campus opposed him) many public bodies considering outsourcing are highly sensitive to negative responses and would like to do it as quietly as possible. In these situations publicity and a vocal campaign against outsourcing can be effective in convincing managers that it is not worth the hassle it creates.

More generally there is a need to recognise outsourcing as an ongoing issue people in the public sector are going to face and thus that we cannot simply kowtow to managers in the hope that it will go away. Building collective relations and resistance both by those in the public sector and, importantly, by those who have been outsourced is important if we want to counter the use of outsourcing as a tool of labour discipline and the class offensive it represents.

By mcm_cmc

May 1 2014

Argentina: Amnesty for Imprisoned Oil Workers

The Regional Workers' Federation of Argentina (FORA) is committed to the cause of the workers of Las Heras and we have been taking different solidarity actions. It called on the Sections of the IWA(International Workers Association) to mobilize and make protests at government offices of Argentina (Embassies, Consulates) on March 24, (a day which in our country commemorates another year of the last military dictatorship), with the aim of freeing the oil workers of Las Heras.

THE CAUSES

2006: The oil workers, some of them outsourced, protest against a tax on their earnings, for entrance to the plant and to enter into the collective agreement of the Oil Workers Unions (which would mean a raise in salary). After 20 days of strike, in an act of provocation by the Governor of the province of Santa Cruz, the spokes-person of the workers was detained while speaking on the radio. During the actions in his defence, a police officer, Jorge Sayago died.

2007-2008: A hunt follows, looking for the guilty party. People are arrested and tortured. Curfews and the militarization of the town by the Gendarmes. With the statements of those detained in their homes, beaten and pressured: the uncle of Sayago, declares that those sitting on the bench, facing charges, are just scapegoats. One of the defence lawyers, Claudia Ferrero, admitted that "there is no concrete evidence, and those

that were, based by the Investigative Brigade of Santa Cruz on torture, terrorizing the whole population and getting false testimony through threats and persecution.

2009: Militarization and persecution continues in the town of Las Heras. The workers have already been detained for 3 years, in conditions of physical and psychological torture.

2013: The request for life imprisonment of 6 of the accused and 18 years for the rest. The Prosecutor Candia, admits the torture and the illegal mistreatment. At the same time he declares "PUTTING A BAG

workers to 5 years in prison. This is one of the greatest attacks against workers who were fighting for their rights, almost without precedence in constitutional governments, with the goal of punishing the workers' struggle.

2013-2014: Various sectors of the workers' movement mobilize demanding the amnesty of the condemned oil workers of Las Heras. With every month, more and more solidarity actions take place. In turn, the national government orders the repression and breaking of all the pickets and demonstrations and there are many injured and arrested. The workers of the Regional Workers' Federation of Argentina are committed to the cause of the workers of Las Heras, and because of this have been making different solidarity actions. We ask the IWA to make actions as well, not only to join forces for the amnesty of the oil workers, but because a conviction of this magnitude in Argentina is a dangerous precedent for workers' organization.



STATEMENT OF FORA-AIT

On December 12, 2013, the Santa Cruz Judiciary sentences four oil workers - Ramón Cortéz, José Rosales, Franco Padilla y Hugo González - to life imprisonment and another 6 to 5 years in prison for the alleged aggravated coercion, injury and murder of a police officer.

The only thing that was proven in the court was the torture which those sentenced suffered, in order to extort incriminating statements, acts which were justified by the Prosecutor who downplayed the harmfulness of the torture.

Thanks to IWA External Bulletin

OVER THE WITNESS'S HEAD AND SLAPPING HIM IS NOT THE SAME AS TELLING HIM WHAT TO SAY". The court turns a deaf ear to the information about torture and leaves the defendants to "reflect and reconsider".

December 2013: Four oil workers are convicted for life, CORTEZ, ROSALES, PADILLA Y GONZALES and another 6

SPAIN - CNT VICTORY

The Mercadona company has to pay around a half million euros in compensation to 12 dismissed workers from the CNT(National Confederation of Labour - syndicalist union) who worked in Xativa and Alzira (Valencia).

In December 2013, CNT-Valencia and CNT- Vall d'Albaida started a campaign against Mercadona over the disciplinary

dismissal of various workers in different areas near Valencia who had joined the CNT. These dismissals were based on totally surreal accusations, such as taking an expired cake out of the trash.

The CNT started an informational campaign publicly denouncing the dismissals which - in the majority of occasions - affected workers with more than 20 years'

seniority. They made disciplinary dismissals in order to avoid paying any type of compensation while they were introducing new and more precarious contracts in these same shops.

Through months of mobilizations in different parts of the Valencia province and a national day of action in different cities, Mercadona was obliged to negotiate over the dismissed as the trial date approached. The Human Resources Department negotiated with the workers and finally offered compensation very close to the one for an unfair dismissal (40 days per year). The

CNT did not find it necessary to wait for the courts to solve the situation since their goals were obtained through mobilization and direct action.

The payment of approximately half million euros on the part of Mercadona has demonstrated once again that the disciplinary dismissals of people who had worked for half their lives in the company were totally unjustified. It also served to demonstrate that the syndicalism that the CNT practices is more valid than ever and continues to be an effective tool for workers, including in companies as powerful as Mercadona.



The CNT would like to remind the owner, Juan Roig that the conflict is not finished since there is one more member (Encarni) who has not received compensation. The union will continue its mobilizations in different neighbourhoods and locations in Valencia until the company takes measures to end the conflict.

The anarchosindicalist union warns that the mobilizations against Mercadona serve to increase members and a presence in different supermarkets in the city, as well as to make the population aware of the abusive practices of the company and to encourage a boycott.

CNT Valencia

CNT Vall d'Albaida

Polish Labour News

BELCHATOW HOSPITAL STRUGGLE

A group of workers have been sitting in at the Belchatow Hospital and are demanding to go back to work.

On May 24 the ZSP (Polish Syndicalist Group) protested in front of their workplace. 60 women have found themselves suddenly without any income after the contractor was changed at the hospital and they were not transferred to the new company.

The women are cleaners and meal servers at the hospital and most have worked there many years. Such workers used to be directly employed by the hospital, but out-sourcing has become very popular in the last ten years in Poland. When outsourced, their jobs become much more precarious and on worse working conditions. Although there are laws related to the transfer of employees, companies often ignore them, as was in this case.

The workers were employed through a firm called Naprzod from Krakow which is supposed to be a "cooperative" for people with disabilities. All of the women working at the hospital have some form of disability, usually minor, that does not interfere with their work at all. Employers get some tax incentives for employing people in this category.

New actions are planned against the entities which are involved in the situation.

In the meanwhile, the workers keep showing up at the hospital but fear the management will soon use force to block them.

Those who would like to show solidarity can send protest emails through the form at soli.zsp.net.pl



IMPUS WORK AGENCY

In past issues of the IWA Bulletin we told about the situation of workers from Impuls work agency who organized in ZSP and fought to get unpaid wages. Through direct action, we have been

able to get payments for a lot of workers already, well over 14,000 euros and still counting. But the company still exists and owe workers money. So we are still fighting.

Part of the fight in also to provide legal help to workers who would like to claim a working relationship with the agency. This is because without this, the workers were being paid a sub-minimum wage of about 80 eurocents per hour. And even this they were not receiving. Court decisions about the working relationship would mean that workers could claim the minimum wage for the period they worked, paid vacation, etc.

We also have widened the struggle to one against the sub-minimum wage in general and against the contracting practices of publically funded entities which used the firm. We are trying to put pressure on them to hire directly and, if any short-term work has to be done by a contractor, that one of the tender criteria by adherence to the labour law and guaranteed minimum wage.

We found that in the case of a recent public tender, Impuls won because it gave an extremely low bid, with price being the main criteria. The bid was so low that it was less than the price of the next lowest. So it should have been perfectly clear that the workers could not be paid even a small fraction of the minimum wage with that bid. In fact, the workers were paid exactly nothing. We have been drawing public attention to these practices and putting pressure on the public sector not to use companies like this.

After our successful campaign, the company lost about 75% of its contracts. But it is finding new ones by the methods described above. It also uses different companies to sign new contracts.

Another Boss Tries to Repress

BRW furniture fired our comrade (member of the ZSP) last year for exposing violations of workers' rights and we responded with some pickets, articles, etc.

DINO SUPERMARKETS

Dino supermarkets now have to be very careful to evidence working time correctly and pay workers all the overtime due to them. This is one of the things which has been gained through the campaign at the chain. Since January 2014, ZSP has been fighting against dismissals, unpaid overtime, health and safety violations and other problems at Dino supermarkets around Poland.

Problems at Dino started late last year when workers tried to unionize to improve problems in their workplace. Dino then dismissed a dozen members of the union, either for bogus disciplinary reasons or by not extending their contracts. Some workers were fired for liking the union FB page or writing critical comments on the working conditions on the internet.

It should be said that this first union was not ours, but Solidarity. But when the union refused to fight for the reinstatement of some workers and tried to convince them not to protest and stay quiet, people joined us instead. Now we are meeting more and more workers in towns around Poland who want to join in the campaign and do something about violations in their shops, or fight against dismissals or unpaid overtime. So far a couple of dozens of protests have taken place at various shops around the country, including in Wroclaw, Kutno, Ornontowice, Pabianice, Lask, Inowroclaw, Ostrow Wielkopolski, Dopiewo and Skarbimierz. In a number of these cities, workers who were unfairly dismissed called the protests and in some cities new violations

They paid satisfactory compensation rather quickly. Since that time, they have been trying to find some way to repress us. They tried getting the "economic crimes" division of the Prosecutor's office after us, but nothing came out of this. Now there are some new complaints against us. But we have good evidence about all we have

came to light. ZSP has been inviting workers to join and offers help in evidencing working time and claiming for unpaid overtime. Currently there are also court cases for unfair dismissal, discrimination against unions, and violation of the working rights of the handicapped.



As all bosses who do things like this, Dino denies that there are any problems, so we have been collecting evidence and asked the State Labour Inspectorate to investigate and verify the claims. Many shops were inspected and the Inspectorate confirmed dozens of violations.

In this way, Dino was also forced to stop their practices related to unpaid overtime. However, many workers are still owed money from the past.

A typical problem for workers in such situations is how to prove this. Awareness of the issue and knowing that there are others fighting for the overtime can help. Now

ever said about the company. So if they want to try us, we'd be glad to remind the public of what went on in their furniture factory. Plus we can add information about the working conditions of people employed through temporary work agencies in their shops.

zsp.net.pl

some former managers and assistant managers are ready to help the workers. Quite interestingly, after our action in Dopiewo, the manager there quit and wrote an expose for us about how she was instructed to act towards the workers.

In one court case, a former assistant manager testified about how Dino denied workers with disabilities their overtime payments. According to Polish law, such workers cannot be forced to work overtime or at night (after 22:00), so a higher-up at Dino instructed the management to record the working time as 8 hours each time, regardless of when the work

actually ended. And they usually had to work some time extra on most days.

The campaign is continuing, as are the cases against the market. Unfortunately one case for reinstatement did not go well in court, with a union-hating judge who would not consider the possibility that ending a contract was equal to a dismissal, despite the fact this is a common way of getting rid of union members. We see this as a major issue in union discrimination, as a huge percent of workers have fixed-term and civil contracts and, although there is not supposed to be discrimination between these categories of workers, the judges usually act as if workers on fixed-term contracts have no rights. For this reason, we are going to push this issue. In the meanwhile, we are picketing shops, going in them and investigating, talking to workers and we won't stop until the situation in the market improves and the company stops making reprisals against workers.

The biggest taxi associations in the Spanish capital asked their drivers to observe a 24-hour stoppage until 06:00 on Thursday. More than 15,000 licensed vehicles operate in Madrid, Spanish media say.

No taxis were visible at Barajas airport or Atocha station, reports said, despite Uber not yet being available in the capital. At one point, a car suspected of being a private taxi came under attack from demonstrators.

The strike was also observed in Barcelona, where the mobile app is in operation.

EURO TRANSPORT STRIKE WAVE

Transport in major European cities has been disrupted by strikes affecting taxis and rail services.

11/6/14

Taxi drivers blocked roads in Paris, Madrid, London, Milan, Berlin and other cities in protest against the rise of services booked using smartphone apps.

They say there has been a lack of regulation concerning rival mobile service Uber.

Travellers in France were also hit by a rail strike that stopped two-thirds of trains in some areas.

Trafalgar Square Drivers of London's famous black cabs demonstrated in Trafalgar Square, arguing that the Uber mobile app, which originated in the US, was tantamount to a taxi meter, which only black cabs are legally entitled to use in London.

"We're governed by a set of rules and they don't seem to apply to Uber," said Glenn Chapman, a driver parked in a long line of cabs outside Downing Street.

Uber argues it is complying with local regulations.

Transport for London estimated that about 4,000 drivers had taken part and roads were gridlocked around Parliament Square, Whitehall and Trafalgar Square.

In Milan, in northern Italy, a protest took place throughout Wednesday, although disruption was not on the same scale as elsewhere, with boycotts of key sites such as railway stations and squares. Cab drivers also staged demonstrations in Rome and Naples.

Protests also took place in several German cities, including Berlin and Hamburg.



But the worst of the disruption was in Paris, where train services were also badly affected by strike action.

Hundreds of drivers blocked the French capital's airports and staged a "go-slow" during the morning rush hour.

Only one in three trains was running in the Paris region, although Eurostar services were unaffected.

Unions are objecting to plans to merge the rail network operator with the train company SNCF. The company said some 28% of railway staff had walked out.

The strike is due to continue until Thursday evening, unless union representatives and the transport minister reach an agreement in talks late on Wednesday.

Kiev: Workers against Austerity

In Kiev, protests began against the regime of "austerity" imposed by the Government, which came to power during the "Maidan" coup. These antisocial measures were introduced, in particular, at the request of the EU and the IMF, with which the Ukrainian authorities have established close partnerships.

An action in June 28 in the Ukrainian capital, near the metro station "Arsenal" attracted about 200 demonstrators who demanded the abolition of the increase in housing utility tariffs in Kiev, to provide social protection for low-income residents, and to improve the quality of public services. The demands included also the revision of all tariffs in order to reduce the costs of home utilities (http://www.dialog.ua/news/7401_1403964512). The participants demanded that first European salaries must be introduced, and only then it would be possible to talk about the European level of tariffs.

It is important to remember that the tariffs in Ukraine were increased from 1 July: for water supply by an average of 84%, for wastewater (sewage) by 105%, for water consumption (water and sewage) - by 9 3 % . ([http://korrespondent.net/event/eventsbusiness/3386481-aktyvysty-vyidut-n ...](http://korrespondent.net/event/eventsbusiness/3386481-aktyvysty-vyidut-n...)).

Curiously, that protest action started on June 28 is organized by vertical trade union "Labor Solidarity", which first supported the coup of Maidan and even now, lifting the state flag, called the new campaign of protests "Tariff Maidan". However, the manifestation was a reflection of



dissatisfaction with the policies of the authorities in the working population of Ukraine.

That's how it is interpreted by the ultra-nationalists which play a first fiddle on the Maidan. They attacked the protesters violently. On June 30 the trade union "Solidarity Labor" circulated the following information:

"Today, at two o'clock the "Maidan Self-Defence" about 30 people attacked the "Tariff Maidan" located by Arsenalnaya metro station. During the attack, the "Maidan Self-Defence" militia kidnapped an activist of the trade union "Labor solidarity", who was taken to the bank of the Dnieper and at gunpoint was forced to confess that he is a separatist. Following this incident, the "Self-Defence" tortured a trade union activist, a former Afghan war veteran, in the "Ukrainian house", to confess that he is paid by Medvedchuk (a politician considered as Pro-Russian, — transl.). Noticing that the police knew the whereabouts of the kidnapped activist, the "Self-defence" let him out of the "Ukrainian House" where he was being tortured ([http://112.ua/kiev/vozle-stolichnogo-metro-arsenalnaya-samooborona-napal ...](http://112.ua/kiev/vozle-stolichnogo-metro-arsenalnaya-samooborona-napal...)). The attackers destroyed also the tent of protesters. However, the protesters intend to continue the action. July 2 at 9:30 am they went to the rally in front of the Cabinet.

The responsibility for the attack was later claimed by the grouping "Self-Defence of Pechersk". According to their spokesman Dmitry Tivetsky, the protest against the tariff increase is inappropriate. "The tents were full of loud slogans and fomented discontent of the people in a very difficult period for our country" - he said ([http://www.socportal.info/news/otvetstv-ennost-za-napadenie-na-tarifnyi- ...](http://www.socportal.info/news/otvetstv-ennost-za-napadenie-na-tarifnyi-...)).

In other words, in the opinion of ultra-rightists, a social protest is "harmful"

exactly by the fact that it undermines the “national unity” between capitalists and workers, so important for the power holders in the situation of civil war in country. Not coincidentally, in late June in Kiev the nationalists held a noisy gathering and made threats, demanding the authorities resume punitive operations in the east of Ukraine, which, ultimately, was done.

It should be noted that this is not the first attack of the Maidan ultra-rightists against union and social activists. On June 25 militants of the “Right sector” attacked the Kiev hotel “Tourist”, which hosted the congress of the Federation of Trade Unions. The entrance was guarded by the former veterans of the Afghan war, some of

them had the stripes of the territorial defence units of the Inner Ministry. They blocked the entry of members of the “Self Defence” and of “Right sector,” who demanded that the participants of Congress exclude members of the “Party of Regions” from the union. The representatives of the “Self-Defence” tried to persuade the guard at the entrance of the hotel, not to cause a hassle and not “to create a show for Putin”. But security guards consisting of Afghan war veterans agreed to allow the entry of only four people. A little later about 15 militants of the “Right sector” and about 20 other nationalists with yellow bands on their hands arrived. After standing under the building of the hotel,

they decided to break into – they broke down the door. In the skirmish, pepper gas was used. Several dozen police officers wearing bullet-proof vests tried to stop them. The Nationalists got inside the building, and ruined furniture on the ground floor. They tried to barricade the glass door of the sushi bar on the floor of the hotel, through which allegedly the delegates to the Congress of Trade Unions Federation had to leave. Then the door was broken. A fire emerged in the building, but it was localized thanks to the use of fire extinguishers. Two fire trucks drove to the hotel.

Thanks to Libcom

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Pistoleros, Volume 3: 1920-24 Christie Books, UK, 2012. Review by Graham Purchase

The third volume of McHarg’s memoirs, chronicles the history of this gang warfare in which he played a significant and active role. This last and much longer book is much less racy than the first two. It feels closer to a popular history than autobiography.

I don’t like spaghetti westerns and Latino gangster movies/books. But a lot of people do. To me the history of the pistoleros period is just an endless stream of petty and cruel dictators, assassinations, shoot-outs and armed robberies. I can never remember the details. I struggled to get through this last volume mostly because the history of gang warfare simply doesn’t engage me. I lent my copy to a friend who likes this kind of stuff and he thought “it was very good” (but found it “a little strange reading it without having read the first vols.”). The history of Spanish Anarchism is a very large subject area about which I know comparatively little. I’ve previously read Paz’s book on Durruti and a number of historical summaries covering this period (e.g. The introductory chapters of The Spanish Cockpit). But, none of it had stuck in my mind. McHarg’s Chronicles have given me a much clearer understanding of the evolution, functioning, personalities and early history of the state-capitalist repression of anarcho-syndicalism in Catalonia and the organized working class resistance to the rise of Fascism.

McHarg’s Chronicles ends with the imposition of Fascist dictatorship in Spain in September 1923. The Rulers of Spain were tremendously influenced by Mussolini’s seizure of Power in 1922 and many

Italian anarchists were fleeing to Spain. The birth of Spanish

Fascism was almost synonymous with that of Italy. Primo de Rivera declared himself the dictator of Spain in 1923. In an interview given at the time of his fascist coup Primo de Rivera stated that, his: “greatest desire was for Spain to follow in the footsteps of Italian fascism and for Spanish fascism to liberate the country from harmful elements.” “Together with Mussolini—I will lead the universal campaign against revolution and anarchy to achieve order” (2: p. 114, 3: p. 141, 263, 266-7).

The Tactics of State-Capitalist Repression and Armed Resistance:

Organized and militant industrial working class was one threat and Catalan separatism another to the rulers of Spain. When state-capitalism is threatened rather than upholding law it tramples upon it in the name of order using base methods. Catalonia during the 1920’s witnessed an escalation and concentration of state-capitalist directed terror tactics aimed at the organized working classes which at that time threatened capitalism and the Spanish state. Terror unleashed by the official agencies of the state was combined with a number of other tactics.

Split the labor movement with fake, criminal or fascist unions—a tactic historically also used in anti-unionism and class war in USA. The Catalan rulers were successful in splitting the labor movement and provoking an “inter-union war that was to continue for years” and involving such incidents such as the murder of the Libres Union president and members of their newspapers editorial board. (3: p. 30, 36-7, 43)

Agent Provocateurs—Using idiots to plant bombs and blaming it on anarchists. (3: p. 44)

Targeting and killing CNT Lawyers—Most importantly the murder of Francesc Layret by Libres Gunmen. CNT Lawyers in Madrid were also murdered by the “Sweeny Todd of Lawyers”, Pistolero headman Pedro Homs.

(3: p. 51, 59, 125)

Private or Unofficial armies, Intelligence agencies and Death Squads—also a feature of America’s working class battle history—Bravo Portillo modeled his ‘Detective Agency’ on the Pinkertons. The funding of covert armies by the CIA in support of repressive Sth. American states over many decades is an example of the same sort of thing on a much vaster scale. CNT defence groups responded to Pistolero Terror and the Fugitive Laws by assassinating Pistoleros Godfathers, employers, assassins and politicians regarded as responsible in one way or another for the death of comrades—these acts of revenge included the assassination of the Spanish president who had been responsible a disastrous law legalizing a shoot to kill policy towards ‘fugitives’.

Confiscation of union funds

The CNT relied almost entirely upon the Collection of Union Dues in order to fund its organization and activities. Agents turned up on pay-days outside the factory gates to arrest CNT workers and confiscate union monies. CNT defence groups responded by conducting armed pay-roll snatches and bank-robberies upon a regular basis. (3: p. 157, 224, 256). Nowadays governments just tell Pay-Pal, Credit Card Companies and Banks not to process donations to outlawed organizations as occurred with the web based Wikileaks whistleblower outfit.

Criminalization of Syndicalism—e.g. Compulsory Requirement of Registration of Union Committee Members with State—thereby illegalizing CNT.

This is the familiar dilemma of fighting syndicalist type unions using direct action or facing repression whose activists obviously cannot reveal their personal information to the state or their employers.

Legal, Extra-legal and Criminal Tactics comparable to those used in Catalonia to thwart industrial syndicalism during McHarg's time continue to be employed today against human-rights lawyers, whistleblowers, investigative or social justice journalists and, more recently, environmental or social activists within or supporting marginalized or indigenous communities.

Right wing, state-or capitalist funded/directed death-squads targeting prominent environmentalists in Brazil, journalists and human rights lawyers in Russia and Unionists in these and many other countries are the familiar stuff of contemporary news reports. The bombing of the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior* in New Zealand by French State agents was perhaps the first and best known incident of anti-environmentalist terrorism.

Political and Criminal Violence

Throughout his life McHarg confronted the matrix of criminality, violence, political realism/necessity and the cause of anarchism. The one theme that binds all three volumes of McHarg's *Chronicles* is his examination and mature reflection upon the issues, contradictions and consequences of resorting to violence and crime in defence of social justice and progress.

Political Realism, Anarchism and the War:

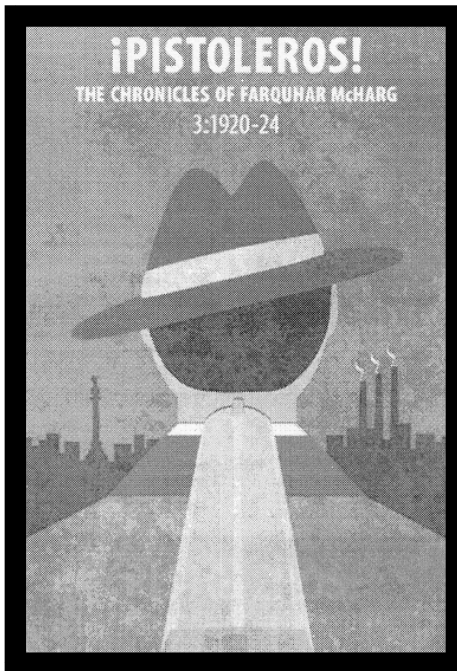
McHarg became a lifelong advocate of Kropotkin's theory of evolution and revolution after reading his book *Mutual Aid* in his childhood (1: p. 14, 130).

Following Kropotkin, McHarg came to reject anti-militarism because of the necessity of defeating the German military menace.

"I believed—emotionally and intellectually—that the war was an internal power struggle between competing capitalist interests—essentially a folly of capitalism and statism. But, I increasingly found myself taking the anti-German side. A lot of this was due to the loss of my friends and shipmates on the *Covenant* [sunk by U boat]. For anarchists it has never been simply a war between classes, the war is between freedom and servitude. There is no other enemy. Many anarchists, Kropotkin, Malatesta as well as Spanish, French and Italian anarcho-syndicalists supported the Entente against German-Austro-Hungarian imperialism and militarism...the arrogant, sabre-rattling enemies of social progress who bore the main responsibility for the war. Bakunin,

long dead, was another anarchist who hated what Germany represented, especially after its role in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1." (1: p. 190).

Anarchism and the self-organized and unionized industrial working-class engaged in necessary defense against state-capitalist sponsored criminal gangs: A shoot to kill policy came into effect in Barcelona in March 1919. The Fugitive Law "legitimized the summary execution of activists" whom the authorities deemed dangerous (2: p. 119). As before, the rulers



of Catalonia supplemented legal-terror with illegal-terror by employing, funding or tolerating right wing criminals and dangerous parasitic low-lives of all kinds to infiltrate, intimidate, slander, torture and murder syndicalists and their sympathizers.

Like Ethnic and religious conflicts, in Class War the supposed universality of state or divine law becomes partial or suspended. What would usually be considered criminal is transformed into glory by the defenders of king, god, sect, class or country.

In war non-violence and natural morality surface haphazardly in a social or cultural situation where universally accepted norms of non-aggression and civility aren't general or impartially upheld because they no longer apply with regard to the enemy class or race.

States and corporations can become no more than a large and highly organized gang of rich, influential and power hungry people. Resistance by working class gangs to covertly state-capitalist sponsored criminal gangs, although different from today's fight-outs for control of drugs and prostitution (e.g. Mexico) are, nonetheless an example of gang warfare. Class gang

warfare although provoked by criminal corporations and/or states is inherently very unpleasant with many inevitably bad consequences.

McHarg was involved with many assassinations and armed money-snatches and he reflects upon the long-term consequences for anarcho-syndicalism resulting from the appalling state of affairs that had developed in Catalonia:

"The activists [of Defence Groups] did not think of their actions as being a substitute for mass collective action and protest which was illegal and brutally and violently repressed. However, as most of us also knew intuitively—and Pestana and Segui [who were the most prominent CNT speakers of the time] never tired of repeating—another likely consequence of violent action was the legitimization and escalation of repression, the polarizing of public opinion and a small and ever diminishing core of militants for whom violence and clandestinity would become the only form of politics." (1: p. 175).

Segui, then CNT national secretary, along with other prominent leaders and speakers called for a stop to the violence and came to oppose the Defence Groups. But Segui along with other notable moderates was murdered:

"With even the most orthodox and passive of union members outraged and powerless in the face of Segui's murder, it was pointless for anyone to argue the case for peaceful negotiation with bosses who employed vigilantes and mercenaries to murder such outspoken opponents of violence and champions of compromise." (3: p. 152, 181, 219-23).

The Defence Group's frequently employed tactic of using armed robbery for funding the CNT's campaign against the state and employer offensive also corrupted anarchists and anarchism. After legally outlawing industrial syndicalism, Governments and Corporations employed criminals and criminal means to repress it, thereby forcing working class activists seeking revenge into criminals. Many activists became criminals because whilst resisting the rising tide of fascism they fell prey to the lure of easy money and the adrenalin-rush of the gangster lifestyle to which they had become accustomed. The unfortunate result of this unfortunate turn of events was that anarchism became associated with criminality:

"Confusing ends and means was a serious danger...Our motives were 'altruistic' inasmuch as none of us stole for personal financial gain. We did it in a just cause...It was demoralizing then for me when I saw the ease with which some of the apparently highest minded comrades took to crime." (3: p.160). "There's no escaping the cancerous consequences of collaborating with

low-lives...your integrity breaks down, then your values and self-respect. It is not only power that corrupts—gold and the prospect of gold corrupts just as much. As with politicians and state agencies anarchists cannot associate with organized crime and criminals and expect not to see their ideas polluted, traditions corrupted and, their aspirations and relations with the outside world manipulated out of all recognizable shape.” (2: p. 70-1). “On the other hand, my perception was that there were other comrades who became deeply involved in ‘criminality’ or ‘illegality’, such as, Durruti and Ascaso who, to me, retained an absolute ethical and moral integrity throughout their lives. This problem isn’t one that is unique to anarchism...No one blames capitalism or bourgeois morality when a crooked investment banker, lawyer, civil servant, accountant or businessman runs off with a client’s money or public funds” (3: p.161). “Those who disagreed with our illegal actions argued—rightly I now believe—that no matter how noble the intention, the process itself was ultimately corrupting and counter-productive. The means often became the end in itself, with innocent people and companeros alike being killed, injured, imprisoned or forced into exile. It also debased the ideals of anarchism and

allowed us to be more easily vilified and demonized by capitalist newspapers, the clergy and the politicians whose lifeblood is smear and fear.” (3: p. 169)

Contemporary Glorification of Criminal Gangs in Popular Media:

The lurid fascination with gangsterism is to my mind a very disturbing aspect of social life and concern.

Popular interest in criminal gangs seems unquenchable. Witness the attention given to the UK Cray Brothers or Great Train Robber, Ronnie Biggs. Or Ned Kelly and Chopper in Australia. In the USA the mass following for TV soaps such as *The Sopranos* or *Breaking Bad* reveal similar tastes. I don’t find any of it very interesting or entertaining.

The eternal attraction of the gang to young men and women as seen in music categories like 1960’s Mods and Rockers and contemporary Gangsta Rap. Famous criminals like pop-singers, royals, models etc., are one sort of identity contained in the inane pantheon of celebrity cultural idols. There is clearly a ready-audience if McHarg’s *Chronicles* were suitably altered and adapted into a more conven-

tional story, book or movie. But, as the author clearly admits, to associate anarchism with gangsterism is a very grave and unfortunate state of affairs.

Commune, School, Syndicate and City-Region:

Despite all the attention given to the rise and history of gangsterism and syndicalism McHarg’s autobiography also provides a picture or idea of the constructive side of anarcho-syndicalist and working class self-organization in the wider community context. Syndicates never existed independently but were enmeshed in communal, educational and other forms of social and anarchist organization. “The barrio communities were akin in many ways to small self-managed, self contained neighbourhood republics” whose citizens “organized mutual aid welfare systems.” (1: p. 47) The Syndicates in addition to their union activities also established education halls with libraries in many working class neighborhoods.

Catalonian anarchism was a fusion or manifestation of the working class urban-communal self-organization combined with industrial union membership and activism within the context of the city-region.

To Be Continued Next Edition

Fighting For Ourselves: Anarcho-Syndicalism and the Class Struggle Published by Solidarity Federation, 2012 U.K.

The back drop to the publishing of this pamphlet was the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 to 2009 and the subsequent austerity drive by the government in the UK and resistance by the student and bureaucratic union movement.

After an initial wave of massive student protest demonstrations and one day strikes sponsored by the union hierarchy, this upsurge subsided. Particularly involving the union hierarchy caving into the onslaught with the signing of agreements with the bosses to implement austerity measures. In this context, the Solidarity Federation has sought to sketch out the development and character of bureaucratic unionism and the anarcho-syndicalist (favouring ultra democratic processes, direct action on the job in its various forms, industrial unionism, workers’ control of industry, etc) alternative. Unfortunately more confusion is spread about anarcho-syndicalism in the pamphlet, particularly with its presentation as a sect building recipe with tacky union building pretensions. Expressing it seems, the *Solfed*’s acclimatisation with its own extreme marginality.

The International Resurgence of Anarcho-Syndicalism

The problems with the pamphlet must be seen in the context of the international resurgence of anarcho-syndicalism since the mid 1970’s.

It was particularly associated with the re-launching of the Spanish CNT (National Confederation of Labour) following the death of Franco in 1975. The CNT’s initial massive growth attaining a membership of some 100,000’s in the late 1970’s inspired the emergence of a few unions and mostly small groupings which identify with anarcho-syndicalism, particularly in a variety of mainly European countries. These groups affiliated with the IWA (International Workers Association) and contributed to its resurgence, but with some exceptions in France, Italy and Spain has become more of a networking of sectlets and some cults. Such groupings in the context of the current raging torrents of the employer offensive, have characteristics of tiny pseudo churches often aping other leftist groups focusing on their own precious internal life, general aimless activism, positions on every issue under the sun, to “recruit” university students and

mesmerised by “microscopic victories” involving tiny numbers of workers in often small work places in peripheral industrial sectors and tail ending any workers struggles. The social base of such groupings in the Anglo world are often amongst workers with high levels of autonomy in their jobs, uni students, denizens of the leftist fringe, etc, lacking much experience of the hard edge of the class struggle or demoralised workers seeking a “church” to join. Definitely any orientation toward long range work in strategic industrial sectors, which could help slow the tempo of the employer offensive, turn the tide and establish the genuine basis of mass syndicalist unionism is absent.

Consequently, the contemporary IWA has become more of a “macro bureaucracy” for the denizens of these “micro bureaucracies” to massage and “bask” in the dubious glamour of its membership. What actual international organising it does is often hardly different from the embassy protests of the 1970’,80’s by leftist groups, where a few flyers are distroed and half hearted small pickets occur. Largely publicity stunts for IWA groups. In sharp contrast to the IWA’s formation in 1922 when it consisted generally of mass syndicalist union confederations with a claimed global membership of several million workers. The contemporary IWA in its activity, radically differs from the role it

should play as a means of coordinating workers direct action on the job in various industries on the international scale and means of spreading mass syndicalist unionism. Certainly, with the proliferation of multinational companies and the role of international capitalist agencies in facilitating their strategies and operations, this role is ever more critical.

The pamphlet does a good job providing a sketch of the history of unionism in the UK and how its association of workers orientation has been overtaken by a representation orientation. Involving its role in negotiations with management and state agencies becoming an end in itself and the associated emergence of a bureaucracy of full time union officials, entangled particularly with the Labour Party. Resulting in these bodies collaboration with the state and the bosses undermining various workers struggles and currently aiding the increasing tempo of the employer offensive.

It provides a useful sketch of the role played by bureaucratic unions since WWII in the UK. Showing how the Cold War encouraged the emergence of the welfare state and bureaucratic unions role in achieving incremental improvements in workers situation. Whilst with the growing crisis of profitability of capitalism since the mid 1970's and the associated Oil Crisis, has seen the emergence of neo liberalism and bureaucratic unions assisting the rollback of workers conditions and the welfare state. The pamphlet sketches how Thatcherism and the British State's defeat of strategic sectors such as mining and auto industries which were major bases of grass roots militancy and independent action were defeated with the assistance of sections of the union bureaucracy, facilitating neo liberalism.

Anarcho-Syndicalism or Anarchist Workers Association?

In the pamphlet's discussion of the nature of anarcho-syndicalism, it makes bogus and hair splitting differences between syndicalism and anarcho-syndicalism. According to Wikipedia, "The term 'anarcho-syndicalist' only came into wide use in 1921-1922 when it was applied polemically as a pejorative term by communists to any syndicalists...who opposed increased control of syndicalism by the communist parties". A more realistic difference however can be argued exists between anarchist workers associations and syndicalist/anarcho-syndicalist unionism. The former would include the Argentine FORA (Argentine Regional Workers Federation) and the Spanish CNT, following its takeover by the Barcelona based FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) in the early

1930's. The latter would include the CNT from its formation in 1910 until its takeover by the FAI and the FAUD (German Free Workers Union). The anarchist workers association orientation was associated with a revolution around the corner perspective and the irresponsible calling of insurrectionary general strikes and adoption of "Anarchist or Libertarian Communism" as the objective of the organisation,



which encouraged a rightward shift in the ruling classes of Argentina and Spain the 1920's and 1930's leading to military coups.(1)

The pamphlet's analysis of the early days of syndicalism is also very shoddy. Its discussion of the French CGT (General Confederation of Labour), which influenced the emergence of syndicalist union movements in many countries in the early 20th Century is very inadequate. It fails to take account of the confederation consisting of an alliance of unions of different currents. The tendency which was closest to syndicalism in favouring direct action and such forms as sabotage and the general strike known as the "revolutionaries", were a minority of the membership and characterised particularly the more numerous smaller unions. However, due to a quirk of the CGT constitution, where each affiliate had one vote. These syndicalist unions were able to out vote the rival "reformist" tendency (which discouraged direct action) at congresses and elect syndicalists to key positions, committees and influence the CGT's trajectory in a syndicalist direction. (2)

The "Minority Union" Blind Alley

In support of the megalomaniac aspirations of the Solfed to be the nucleus of a syndicalist union movement, the pamphlet presents a rather clunky criticism of existing bureaucratic unionism in regard to the notion that these bodies are not "mass unions". It's certainly true that few are involved in the functioning of these unions

apart from full time officials and shop stewards. Whilst union meetings on the job are often poorly attended. However, these unions do have "mass influence" in the shape of keeping workers demobilised, encouraging apathy and generally facilitating the employer offensive. Setting up "minority unions" which can meet in largeish phone booths as union halls, unfortunately won't remedy the problem! Even if such tiny unions were formed in peripheral sectors, it's likely in their practice to be micro democratic versions of the bureaucratic unions, severely limited in their capacity for militancy. Entailing the squandering of the very limited resources and personnel of such groups as Solfed in a strategically senseless side show.

The pamphlet talks about "minority unions" engaging in "low key" activity on the job such as communication boycotts with the boss. More realistic for the building of syndicalist unionism, is a base in sectors which can wage large scale direct action and see off threats by employers and the state to use repressive legislation, and inspire workers in other sectors in a syndicalist direction. Associated with such a scenario would be building an expanding syndicalist union movement involving aggressive organising drives in various industries to wipe out the bases of bureaucratic unionism. All this would require very serious precision, long range organising efforts by syndicalists.(3)

Amongst the dross of grossly simplistic and wildly pretentious notions of syndicalist union building in the pamphlet, there are gleams of gold. In Chapter 5, where the authors discuss possible "realistic" ways mass syndicalist unions could emerge in the UK, one way proposed is some radical break away from existing bureaucratic unions. As a likely pathway, this does look to be on the right track. However, there is no discussion of what context such breakaways would occur and how Solfed and other anarcho-syndicalists in the UK would facilitate such developments. An obvious way would be assisting the emergence of rank and file movements in these unions and encouraging a syndicalist orientation. Such support could short circuit the disorganising effects of the employer offensive, increased surveillance, etc, which make on the job organisation very difficult these days and assisting militants to slow the impetus of the employer offensive. Long range and consistent assistance to militants in the launching and regular publishing of workplace papers, would be critical in all this process. However, there is no discussion in the pamphlet of such important work.

Another problem with the pamphlet, is how the

See Page 20

NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important news “behind the scenes” lately is a new menacing spearhead of the employer offensive. It involves the NSW Railways Enterprise Agreement 2014. It will have far reaching consequences for workers across industry.

Opening the door to the mass sacking of wide sectors of the workforce, cutbacks to penalty rates and generalised part time and casual employment, inspiring other public and private sector employers to follow suit with similar efficiency drives. The ALP union hierarchy are heavily implicated in facilitating this onslaught. The ASN is assisting militants to fight back and organise direct action resistance. (See articles Page 3 to 5.)

Associated with this pincer of the employer blitz kreig are subtle moves the Baird Government is making behind the scenes, targeting Newcastle Buses for privatisation. (See article Page 6.)

Whilst, in Sydney Buses management is pursuing a brutal speed up in the jobs of bus drivers. OH&S considerations are being brazenly thrown out the window by management and the ALP union hierarchy. (See article Page 6.)

There is growing interest in the magazine “Sparks” amongst the grass roots in the Victorian Railways. Whilst the hard hitting stories in the paper are striking hard blows at the bosses.

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

Your assistance on the financial plane is also welcome.

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WEB SITE:**

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A.S.N. DIRECTORY

ASN Sydney Local

PO Box 92
Broadway 2007 NSW

ASN Melbourne:

J.Dixon
jeremytrewindixon@yahoo.com.au

Newcastle ASN

PO Box 106
Kotara 2289 NSW

Anarchist Media Institute

PO Box 20
Parkville Vic. 3052

SPARKS

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

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DIRECT ACTION
FIRE FIGHTERS' PAPER
Sparx@firehouse.com

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Grassland Infoshop

207B Nicholson St.
Footscray
3011 Vic.

Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name

Address

General Secretary

PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

If undeliverable, return to
PO Box 92, Broadway NSW 2007

Continued From Page 18

authors of
the pamphlet see

key aspects of syndicalism through the prism of the left subculture, no doubt reflecting the social base of the Solfed. Rather than as it actually is according to classic syndicalist texts, is its discussion of syndicalist union locals. According to the pamphlet such locals seem to have the characteristics of left subcultural hothouses, oozing with the oppression mongering and guilt tripping of the middle class/student leftist activoid milieu and no doubt all manner of “political correctness” displays and much “salivating” and “navel gazing” over “safe spaces policies” informed unconsciously by the Stalinist legacy. Certain to alienate militant workers outside the tiny leftist fringe. There is also no discussion of the role of syndicalist union locals as centres of workers self education, encouraging a climate favouring rational and scientific processes of discussion and stimulus to research. Such functions apart from on the job experience would also be important in regard to preparing for workers control of industry. As no doubt most workers are expected to steer clear of these hothouses and their exotic leftist sect and cult denizens!

A yawning chasm in the pamphlet is the absence of consideration of the steps to-

ward building a mass syndicalist media associated with the emergence of mass syndicalist unionism to counter the corporate media.

In conclusion, the pamphlet certainly fails to come to grips with the complex issues facing militants in establishing the mass syndicalist unionism in the contemporary UK. Particularly it lacks discussion of

opment of bureaucratic unionism in the UK and the move from the welfare state to neo liberalism by various UK Governments is quite adequate. Whilst, its discussion of anarcho-syndicalism as an ideology and movement is fairly shoddy spreading more confusion, showing inadequate research.

Notes:

(1) See “*The Agony of Modernisation*” by Benjamin Martin and “*From Anarchism to Peronism*” Ed. R.Munck, R. Falcon and B.Galitelli.”

(2) See “*French Syndicalism: An Experiment in Practical Anarchism* by Barbara Mitchell” page 30, in *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective*” Ed. Marcel Van Der Linden and Wayne Thorpe.

(3) See “*Anarcho-Syndicalist Strategy for Australia, Today*” in the Archive Section of www.rebelworker.org For a discussion of some long range serious work in Australia which has helped slow the tempo of the employer offensive and assisted the emergence of a grass roots workers organisation with a syndicalist orientation. As part of a strategy to establish the transitional steps toward mass syndicalist unionism.

Mark McGuire



such critical issues of how syndicalist militants would assist militant workers to slow the tempo of the employer offensive and defy repressive IR legislation, and create an expanding syndicalist union movement. It generally presents a grossly simplistic approach to syndicalist union building influenced by the middle class/student leftist subculture. However, it does have occasional flashes of realism in this discussion. Its sketch of the devel-

Striking Indian steel workers hold strong against police repression

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Workers from 23 steel factories in the Wazirpul industrial zone near Delhi are still fighting for employers to honour the agreement reached after a 3-week strike in June. Now local police are col-



luding with employers to try and force workers back to work. Workers responded by rallying outside the labour department, which issued a notice against employers for not implementing the agreement.

Thanks to AAWL