

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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FRENCH WORKERS SHOW THE WAY FORWARD WITH THE GENERAL STRIKE!



RUDD & THE RECESSION; TERRORISM HYSTERIA; N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS; STATION REFORM MADNESS; SLEEP & SHIFT WORKERS; STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH; SYDNEY MARITIME NEWS; VIC. RAIL NEWS; MELB. AIRPORT WILDCAT; BRITAIN TODAY; N.Z.; FRENCH GENERAL STRIKE; VENEZUELA; DEBATE ON SPANISH ANARCHISM; BOOK REVIEW CORNER "BAKUNIN - A BIOGRAPHY"; NEWS & NOTES; PLUS MORE!

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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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The 42 billion dollar taxpayer funded bail-out of capitalism, an economic system based on the creation of ever increasing profits, is a little bit like rendering over the cracks in a wall without finding out why the cracks appeared in the first place. The rending of the cracks in the economy by the Rudd government may initially give Australians the impression that everything will work out, but in the end the reasons why the current economic crisis occurred needs to be tackled to prevent the same problems from occurring over and over again.

Nothing in the 42 billion dollar package goes even part of the way towards addressing the problems caused by an economic system that is based on competition and the creation of ever increasing profits irrespective of the human, social and environmental costs.

THOUGHT CRIMES

The arrest, trial and imprisonment of twelve men who spent over three years on remand under the new "anti-terrorist" laws, is a classical example of convicting people for thought crimes. Four men were acquitted, the jury was unable to reach a verdict in one case and seven men from the same group were found guilty as a result of

statements they made over a two year period, in conversations among themselves in front of a covert police operative.

The prominent role the police operative played in the discussions the men had, has never been examined publicly. The undercover policeman, under the instructions of his handlers, provided and detonated the only explosives that were mentioned in the case. The direction the discussions took in the group would have also been influenced by the undercover operative.

It seems once all the evidence is examined, the crime of those convicted is holding and privately articulating extremist religious and political views. The danger of convicting people for thought crimes is people who are publicly treated as outlaws for their views will conduct their activities outside public scrutiny.

The other more important danger facing citizens is that the definition of what is and isn't a thought crime will be changed through legislation to suit the prevailing political circumstances. It is ironic

successive Federal and state governments have, through legislation to tackle terrorism, removed fundamental rights and liberties Australians (who have faced much more serious threats in the past) have enjoyed for generations to protect our rights and liberties from terrorism.

Thanks to the Anarchist Age

NATIONAL NEWS

RUDD & THE RECESSION

Listening to Mr. Rudd describe how he would move 'heaven and earth' to protect Australians from the effects of the worst global recession since the Great Depression. I expected a little bit more than a 42 billion dollar government injection into the economy. Going through the basket of goodies it seemed the Rudd government was just moving the tattered economic carpet from one end of the room to the other.

You don't move heaven and earth by pandering to the whims of the modern day robber barons who have created the current economic crisis. You don't move heaven and earth by supporting the same institutions that have brought us to the brink of the economic abyss: You don't move heaven and earth by allowing that small section of society that owns the means of production, distribution and exchange to continue to pocket massive profits at the expense of the community.

NEW A.S.N. DISCUSSION SERIES

SPANISH ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM - CNT: (NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR) IN MYTH & REALITY : CLASS FRACTURING AND POLITICAL STRUGGLE 1931 TO 1936. A TALK BY MICHAEL MATTESON 7PM TUES. 24TH MARCH

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST PERSPECTIVES FOR COUNTERING THE INTENSIFIED EMPLOYER/NEO-LIBERAL OFFENSIVE ASSOCIATED WITH THE LOOMING DEPRESSION & FINANCIAL CRISIS. A TALK BY MARK MCGUIRE 7PM TUES. 28TH APRIL

AT JURA BOOKS 440 PARRAMATTA RD PETERSHAM NEAR CNR CRYSTAL STREET JUST DOWN FROM NORTON STREET. PH. 02 95509931 - ENTRY FREE ORGANISED BY ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST NETWORK WEB PAGE: www.rebelworker.org

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

Rebel Worker: How is staffing at Central lately?

Station Assistant: The bosses are continuing on their push in regard to ensuring short staffing of the lower grade positions. However they continue to ensure safety related positions are still covered such as the flag jobs on the platforms. They are of course ensuring that all management positions are well covered. At Central they have even created a new management position which just leeches off the other management jobs.

RW: What's happening with the NSW Govt and the bosses' plans for railway reforms?

SA: Wheels are turning behind the scenes for a massive assault on jobs in the railways in NSW associated with its restructuring for privatisation. In line with these plans, there is much shuffling of low level management personnel throughout the network particularly involving the sudden appearance of young station managers at many stations. In typical neo-liberal style, particularly targeted for elimination in this onslaught, will be the low level jobs. Small teams of workers will take over these jobs working multiple rosters on different locations. Whilst private contractors on low wages and poor conditions will also be employed.

As part of this agenda, train crew jobs will be eliminated in a phased process. I recently spoke with a cleaner who mentioned that he saw an important component of this plan. He saw new train carriages with cameras located at all the doorways. So the plan will be to eliminate the guard job and operate the train via DOO (Driver Only Operation) involving these cameras. Further down the track, train drivers' jobs will be eliminated as the trains will be operated by super control signal boxes which have already been constructed in various locations.

RW: What has been the reaction of the union hierarchy to this looming Blitz Kreig?

SA: They have employed financial consultants to make an assessment of the railways to show that the bosses' planned massive job cuts are not cost effective. A similar approach was taken by the union hierarchy toward Freight Corp prior to its privatisation. The union employed some university economists who wrote a report which effectively rubber stamped Freight Corp for privatisation and also intimidated workers from taking industrial action to resist it. The whole privatisation move has

in the staffs of Federal ALP back benchers. Unlike the staffs of front benchers, they are unlikely to lose their jobs in the event that the Liberals regain power at the next elections.

RW: What's the latest with the Transit Officers?

SA: The latest news is that they are being issued with a change of uniform. They being given new shirts so as to make them appear more passenger friendly. Whilst



turned out to be a big scam with Corrigan, the CEO of Pacific National which gobbled up Freight Corp, retiring with an \$8 million bonus, whilst over 5 years the company has only made \$1 million in profits. The big question is, should the Rees Govt. reject the union consultants' report, what will be the union hierarchy's fallback position? If Rees holds off from the big onslaught, will the union wait until the Liberals achieve power in NSW and proceed with the Blitz Kreig? At that time workers will be obliged to take industrial action and lose wages to save their jobs. As of March of this year, we will receive the final 2nd 4% pa EBA wage rise. What will be the union's approach be to the next EBA?

RW: What have been the outcomes of the election of the Rudd ALP Govt?

SA: One aspect is that those who played a key role in assisting Rudd's electoral campaign have been rewarded with positions

recruitment for the jobs has ceased. If this is because of the Xmas and New Year period, I'm unsure. In the railways, the Transit Officers give the impression of being a law unto themselves. Whilst even Station Managers have little control over them. They are also not focusing adequately on their role of providing safety on trains. This fact became apparent recently, when a kid was killed on a train and there was no intervention by Transit Officers. It would be better for passenger safety that the security guards were returned with regular patrols of trains.

RailCorp Bosses Still “Mad” for Station Reform

By Crimson Coconut

Kevin Rudd’s bleated to the State Premiers that they should do everything in their power to preserve jobs during this acute stage of the ongoing capitalist crisis. RailCorp management however have ignored reality and are pushing ahead with their rationalist agenda for rail stations.

Their proposal has been knocked on the head many times in the past 10 years when it has been presented in its various guises. Some guises that immediately come to mind are “Customer Service Management Proposal”, “Station Reform” and “Multi Station Control”. RailCorp are still flogging the same dead horse called Station Reform that has been rejected as a solution by station staff and is very unpopular with RailCorp customers. The chances of the latest reform attempt succeeding seems hopeless due to presentation during the latest financial crisis.

While no redundancy provisions have been promised out of the proposal, 50 full time rosters are to be replaced by 50 extra part-time positions. This is a worrying trend to part time work that needs to be resisted whenever it occurs.

CSA1’s will be replaced with cleaners from Presentation Services who are paid at a much reduced rate. It is envisaged that there will be 100 “surplus” (their words) CSA1’s, some of whom will be offered positions as CSA2’s or continue in their current roles until they are reduced by natural attrition. This seems a short sighted proposal as it ignores the multi-skilled nature of the CSA1’s who can be utilised in many more areas than cleaning. They already perform such duties as crowd control, train dispatching duties (safeworking), customer service, ticketing gate array duties, customer information and any other duties deemed necessary by their superiors. Presentation Services staff on the other hand have had minimal training and will be expected to primarily carry out cleaning duties.

Under the proposals an extra 20 stations would operate unattended creating an increase of 58 additional stations operated as “multi control”, while others will have reduced hours and/or no staff on weekends. The number of station managers would be reduced from 203 down to 145. Ticket selling Salespersons will only be retained if they are able to demonstrate that they can sell 120-180 tickets per hour. Commuters who now line up in peak hour at their local station ticket window are already frustrated by the wait. If the reforms come to fruition they will find that they

creates their stress levels due to the proposed reduction of other station staff who usually provide customer service and information.

At a time when there has been the biggest jump in passenger numbers in NSW rail - at a time when safety and security will become more important due to the financial crisis - when keeping people in work will help ameliorate the worst aspects of the downturn - when ticket prices have increased at least twice as much as the wage rise granted to rail workers for their efforts each year - when no pay rise is to be



will be further delayed at the ticket vending machines which take much longer to serve them. It is doubtful whether the vending machines would have a throughput of more than 120 tickets per hour anyway, which makes the criteria for cutting jobs all the more ludicrous. Beside this, Salespersons do far more than just sell tickets. They provide more customer service than most of the other positions on stations, this includes giving passenger directions and detailed train running information, something a vending machine would find impossible to do.

Because staff at ticket barriers are being reduced from 2 to 1 person it places the person on the ticket gate array at greater risk of assault from passengers and in-

granted as compensation for the extra work value of the reforms - when corruption and waste consumes RailCorp from the boardroom down to those at the coalface - at a time when climate change will necessitate irrevocable change in the way we live and travel - at a time when NSW Labor is on the nose because working people reject their neo-liberal agenda - it is just madness for RailCorp to continue down the reform road for unproven and unsound ideological reasons.

Although the reforms are unlikely to succeed in the current climate we cannot rest on our laurels and must be prepared to defend our conditions. It is policies like these

that have placed us in the current economic, social and ecological mess.. However we have a better chance than usual to have the proposal reversed.

Start a campaign at your station to discuss with customers and your work colleagues

Sleep Research – New Dangers for Shift Workers

by *Crimson Coconut*

I've pushed the shift-work barrow before, citing our miserly penalty rates for working shift-work and the devastating effects of sleep deprivation on our health. But the evidence is now rolling in to support the claims that shift work and the inevitable sleep deprivation resulting has many catastrophic effects on our body and mind.

The American Cancer Society has done research into sleep and the effects of sleep debt. According to them the 1984 the median level of sleep of a sample group of people was 8 hours. Life has sped up so much since then that today the sample group is getting a median sleep of just 6.7 hours, a decrease of 15%. According to researchers this is a perilous situation that leads to premature death and poor health.

Researchers working with rats on an experiment in sleep deprivation found that after just 5 days without sleep all of the rats that were kept awake died. They concluded that sleep is just as important as food for the body's well being.

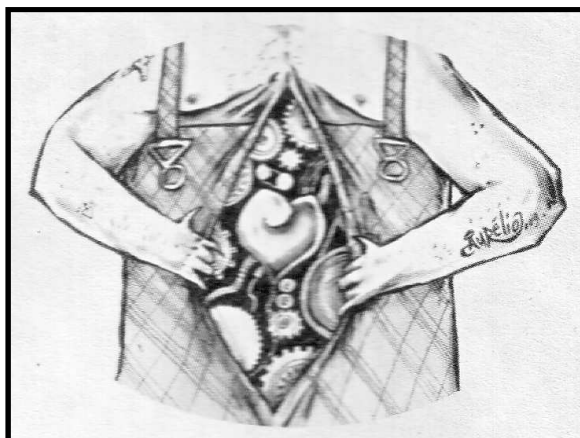
Partial sleep debt is also not to be dismissed too lightly. Its effects are cumulative, each additional day of sleep deprivation adds an additional impediment to well being. Just 4 hours of missed sleep can be measured to cause significant deterioration in cognition and memory as well as physiological changes to the body's metabolism.

Missing 1 night of sleep worsens the ability to memorise as much as 40% of information. Sleep is not just for rest of the body but plays an important role in keeping us fit and well. More research is going on in this area of evolutionary adaptation and why sleep is so necessary. One finding was that our memory will return or improve after a good nights sleep. It is more beneficial to have an early night before an exam rather than staying up cramming your studies into the wee small hours. Lack of sleep severely effects our cognitive performance.

the impact of the proposed reforms. Help distribute educational leaflets to customers and staff to prepare them for a battle against the station reforms.

Union elections are presently taking place. Union members and others should get some guarantees from candidates that the

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute in the US point out the dangers of driving when drowsy because of sleep debt. While we may feel OK to drive, the dangers are all too real. After wiring up several volunteers they were able to detect that they all experienced some form of micro sleep while at the wheel. Micro sleeps were a major contributor to road accidents and to road deaths. A 2 second micro sleep, which can go undetected was enough to put a driver into the next lane on the freeway.



After 4 seconds of micro sleep they would be off the road.

Major accidents that could be attributed to sleep deficit include the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Chernobyl nuclear meltdown, Three Mile Island nuclear accident and the Staten Island Ferry disaster.

We simply believe that it OK to go without sleep, in the modern world its a "badge of honor" not to sleep. Research now proves that this is a foolish belief.

The University of Chicago School of Medicine has researched the effects of sleep deprivation on the human body. Using many healthy volunteers who were deprived of sleep for 4 hours each day over a total of 6 days they found that this was enough to put the volunteers into a pre-diabetic state because they had a decreased ability to metabolise sugar. They also had increased appetites and had gained some weight. This occurred after just 4 nights into the sleep deprivation exercise. Sleep debt is now a risk factor for type 2 diabetes as well as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and cancer.

They found that there was a decrease in the hormone Leptin in the brain of volunteers

reforms be rejected in total by them before you give them your vote. Better still, stand and elect representatives in your local work area that are opposed to, and will work toward getting rid of the reforms, forever.

who were deprived of sleep. Leptin suppresses appetite in normal healthy people. Its absence meant that sleep debt causes a ravenous appetite that goes unfulfilled.

Brain scans of people deprived of sleep show a pattern that can be best described as a "hyperactive brain response". This is similar in pattern to the emotional responses observed in people with severe psychiatric disorders. There is a disconnect between the brains amygdala, located in the brain stem and the frontal lobe of the brain (the center of reasoning) when you are sleep deprived. This explains the mood swings and temper tantrums.

Some of the effects that we now attribute to old age could also be a result of severe sleep deprivation which ages the body and mind to a significant degree. Sexual performance is also impaired as libido is diminished by missing essential sleep. This has also been studied.

Along with diet and exercise, sleep can now be added as an essential element in keeping and maintaining a healthy body and mind.

Considering the terrible health effects of shift work and sleep deprivation, which goes hand in hand, the approximate 10% shift allowance seems such a paltry compensation for the suffering and sacrifice of our bodies and our lives. Shift penalties need to be lifted to a reasonable amount (maybe 50% of our hourly rate) due to our shortened health expectations and quality of life. They also need to be extended to all hours that are worked outside of normal hours, including weekends. Rostering principles need to be improved by taking into consideration new research into the deleterious health effects of missing sleep.

In all future agreement negotiations we need to put forward claims that take the issue of sleep deprivation seriously. Adequate compensation in the form of greatly increased shift penalties is one way of doing that, but not a total solution. It will however make managers sit up and take notice because their budgets will be targeted.

It seems ludicrous that a worker can be lectured by the employer about looking after his/her health or stood down when he/she is not physically fit. That same worker works to a program designed and enforced by the employer according to "business needs". The worker works to a manage-

ment program which makes that worker ill

because he/she needs to put food on the table. The employer on the other hand accepts none of the blame for the employee's illness.

State Transit Newsflash

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

Rebel Worker : What's happening with the bus cameras?

Waverley Busie: The bus cameras have become a sizzling issue at Waverley, Randwick and other depots lately. Recently a driver from Randwick was sacked apparently following a passenger making a complaint that he had gone through a red light and the incident being caught on bus camera footage. As a result, at the time, a move was made to carry out a big wildcat strike due to drivers anger over the sacking. However this move was narrowly foiled. We are particularly angry in regard to how the STA and the bosses with the sleazy compliance of the union executive have brazenly defied a guarantee that we were given, when the bus cameras were initially introduced, that the cameras were not be used in disciplinary actions against us.

In regard to the role of the cameras in helping to curb trouble makers and fare evaders on buses, there is quite a break down in regard to coordination between the STA and the police. I was recently speaking to an ex-Waverley bus driver who is now a police officer who is an acquaintance of mine. He mentioned that despite there being camera footage of such incidents, the police often are unable to take any action. Particularly contributing to this situation is STA policy that we are not supposed to wait for the police after an incident and are to proceed along the route. Consequently, when the police are called they lack witnesses and the incident is too long ago and blurred in witness's minds to get accurate information to lay charges and pursue a case in court. The STA certainly doesn't regard the trouble we have with problem passengers as a big issue. Do we have to have a serious incident before decisive action is taken on the issue? Clear guidelines need to be developed by the STA on how problem passengers, outside elements such as gangs of kids who are un-

der 17 years of age and so are often let off the hook by the legal system and associated incidents of harassment and violence are treated.

RW: What's happening with the union?

WB: Recently there was quite a brazen move by the bosses to undermine the union presence at the depot. Without any explanation or warning, they suddenly removed the existing union notice board from its very central location and trans-



ferred it to a quite obscure location, which few know about, on the southern end of the Waverley Depot admin offices. This notice board is open to everyone to put up notices or flyers on issues of concern to them. In the place where it was previously located, a management notice board was been established, associated with the driver supervisors who are part of the new management restructure and is in line with the ever more pervasive proliferation of management circulars and propaganda which we are constantly being issued. With this latest move, it appears the bosses are also trying to psyche us up to rely on these driver supervisors to pursue workplace issues rather than via our union rep.

RW: What's the latest with the STA management restructure?

SOURCES

Dr Peter Wybrow
Neuropsychiatrist
Pop!Tech Internet Broadcast

WB: In place of the inspectors, the bosses have established a new larger structure consisting of these driver supervisors. Those drivers who were on the bosses' wavelength and had put up their hands for the positions were often successful in securing the jobs. They are sort of "Tin Pot" inspectors and lack some of the powers wielded by inspectors such as being able to issue fines. Perhaps the bosses consider, that drivers are more likely to approach them on issues, given their lack of the big stick to wave. Will these "Tin Pot" DI's be able to take the "Tea" from drivers?

RW: What's the latest with the cabbies?

WB: I was recently speaking to a cabbie, a fellow transport worker, about their wages. I was shocked to learn that on average their per annum pay was a meagre \$22,000 in the hand after deductions for fuel, superannuation, GST and income tax and the owners' pay-ins. He explained that a range of factors contribute to this appalling situation such as competition from too many taxis on the road, fines and traffic congestion in the city.

RW: What are your thoughts in regard to the numbers of cars on the road?

WB: The city is becoming ever more choked with cars. Whilst the Harbour Bridge and Tunnel are struggling to cope. A way of tackling this problem would be for the Govt. to tax motorists for driving their cars in the city. A recent "Background Briefing" Program on ABC Radio threw some important light on the reasons for this traffic gridlock in the city. It particularly focused on the role of the Carr ALP State Govt. in neglecting public transport infrastructure and associated welshing on election promises made to improve public transport services and infrastructure. One such promised project which has not proceeded is a Bus and Train hub at the race track at Origin Park. The Liberals have also been guilty on this front. When Greiner was in power, I wrote a letter to the then Minister of Transport Bruce Baird criticising the construction of the M2 for funnelling more cars and traffic into the city and offered cheap alternatives such as the construction of an O-Bahn to improve bus services. However not all rightwing politicians are pro-car. In California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has been playing an important role in reducing car usage. Recently in the media ex-STA boss Len Harper made some good points regarding the run down state of the NSW railways.

He said that even if trains services were to be increased to one every 3 minutes that we do not have railway tracks in Sydney for the increased services. Whilst likely train break downs on lines will compound the inadequate train service problem. Harper also admitted that for the last 25 years the transport system had been run down. He appeared to be expressing an honest opinion and not hiding a political agenda.

RW: What is happening in other states regarding public transport?

WB: I was recently in the Barossa Valley in South Australia where I come from and learnt that the entire rail line which extends for 40 Kms in the valley was sold to an American multinational company as part of a privatisation drive by the previous Liberal State Govt. As a result, passenger train services are now denied for the towns along the line. Whilst the bus services in the area are very poor. I recall in my younger days that these stations were once quite bustling with well tended lawns and gardens and different trains on the line. Now stations are unused and decaying, with grass growing through the pavement. They have become ghost stations and station shells. Over the years groups have formed in the local communities to campaign for the Govt. to re-introduce passenger train services on the line. However, they have continually run up against various legal and bureaucratic barriers. Associated with this resistance by the politicians is their acceptance of the neo-liberal notion of "small government" where the government and its departments are completely under the control of big business and have to go along with their agendas. We in NSW are also likely to face this massive cut back in Government services if we don't take a stand against the privatisation push and halt it.

RW: What are your thoughts on drivers communication with passengers?

WB: Many drivers will tell you that they have no problems in communicating with passengers. However, in fact many do, but they are just unaware of the barriers which exist. I've seen some drivers find it difficult just to be of service to passengers and are unable to open up to passengers and so develop a rapport with them. We have to get on with them and appreciate them as fellow human beings. This continuing problem was recently highlighted to me when I saw a bus driven by a very experienced driver with passengers sitting with their backs to the front window, indicating an inability of the driver to get passengers on side and have them move down from this hazardous area. Just the other day I noticed another related incident. While on a quiet run, an elderly woman passenger asked the driver to take the bus closer to the curb at the stop and the driver refused

to oblige and be of service. Passengers know when a driver is withdrawn and hiding behind barriers. Certainly driver instructors shouldn't just focus on weaknesses in driving but also in regard to communication problems with passengers. Once this problem is tackled, other problems can be more easily resolved.

RW: What's the latest with bendy buses?

WB: I was recently speaking to a mechanic who mentioned to me that these buses consume 180 litres of fuel per 100 kilometres. An important contribution to this excessive fuel usage is the idling of these buses at terminuses. With the STA issuing an instruction that the engine on these buses should be turned off at these locations, a significant step would be taken in reducing the STA's contributions to green house gas emissions.

RW: What's the latest at Waverley?

Waverley Driver: There has been some good news lately in regard to the depot fleet. It appears the bosses have been listening to our complaints about the poor standard of buses at the depot. As a result from mid December we are being issued with 30 new Mercedes gas buses.

RW: What are your thoughts on the recent management restructure in the STA?

WD: It involves the creation of new layers of management similar to the supervisors and duty managers which were introduced in State Rail now RailCorp under David Hill during the period 1980 to 88. It made State Rail quite top heavy with management positions. When subsequently Greiner and the Liberals came into power, they moved to abolish many of these positions. In my view, it's likely when either a Liberal Govt. comes into power or a change in Govt. policy occurs, we see many of these positions being abolished.

RW: How are things with bus security?

WD: There is a growing security crisis on late night bus services operated by Waverley, particularly late on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights when the real trouble starts. Drastic action needs to be urgently taken. Particularly RailCorp Transit Officers need to be deployed on regular patrols on buses at these times to remedy this serious problem.

LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's been happening at the depot lately?

Leichhardt Busie: In late November, the depot was crazy due to the depot renovations construction work. The yard was made a lot narrower due to the installing of

temporary fencing, giving us little room to manoeuvre and making turning tighter. Consequently there had been a spate of minor accidents.

RW: What's been happening with management?

LB: There has been a major restructuring of management with the introduction of the DOSR system. It has involved the replacement of the previous system of depot inspectors with a layer of Driver Supervisors. Consequently 40 or so old timers who had DI positions have lost their jobs. At Leichhardt, the DI who had been doing the job for 40 years had to reapply for his position. Despite all of his years of experience. He failed to get the job.

Those who won the Driver Supervisor positions appear to lack any experience in the job and could give the impression that they don't know what they are doing. Whilst the bosses can splurge money on these new management jobs, they are unable to pay us a decent wage rise. The meagre 4% pa EBA pay rise hardly meets inflation. The latest new manager who was replacing Danielle while she was on maternity leave, despite being on the job for 2-3 weeks he hadn't bothered to come around to introduce himself to us. With the return of Danielle to her position in recent weeks, the situation with depot management has improved. Following the establishment of the new management structure, a BBQ was held for us to meet up with those who won the Driver Supervisor position at the depot. Typically none of them could be bothered to attend. They appear to have been too busy patting themselves on the back in their offices.

How the bosses view us was dramatically highlighted in a recent edition of Transit Times. There was a diagram of the STA organisation. At the bottom of the structure were drivers, even below the cleaners. However without our work, there would be no jobs for the higher grades.

On a positive note the bosses have dropped their crackdown on accidents. Whereby you had to go for retraining after 3 accidents whether you were at fault or not. On the negative side the bosses are continuing cut back on the length of the broken shifts.

RW: What's happening with the routes?

LB: Two new bus services associated with the new Metro Buses which operate along Parramatta Rd have been introduced. It's unclear as yet concerning their overall impact. Although they appear to be taking the pressure of the other Parramatta Rd services.

SYDNEY MARITIME NEWS

Rebel Worker: The last time we spoke to you, the DP World workforce at Port Botany was in the midst of enterprise bargaining. What has happened since then?

Port Botany Wharfie: The last thing I reported to you was the September 16 yard meeting and the MUA branch secretary Warren Smith's response to a comment from the floor. Smith said that if the workforce was willing to run an industrial campaign – the MUA Branch would back us 100%.

A few of the casuals took him at his word and decided to run a bit of a campaign. As casuals can make themselves unavailable ("scratch") a certain number of shifts every calendar month, the idea was to exercise this right collectively and encourage all casuals to scratch for all shifts on Friday September 26. This scratching en masse was organised without the knowledge of the local union site committee or local MUA officials.

RW: So how did this action go, and how was it received by the Maritime Union officialdom?

Port Botany Wharfie: Well, members of the local site committee were certainly not happy – once they found out about it, they did their best to put down the "rebellion". Some of the committee members would get up one, two or even three times a shift to try and talk people out of scratching for the Friday.

They really tried to put the scare into people. We were told that the company would see this mass scratching as industrial action that could jeopardise the whole EBA and lead to the company putting on more casuals. Anyone who had scratched was encouraged to talk to the allocators in order to make themselves re-available – no questions asked.

Sheets with a list of all the mobile numbers of the committee members suddenly appeared – the first time this had happened since the new committee was elected over a year ago.

These new found efforts to be proactive and contactable were in stark contrast to the months of minimal report backs and lack of rank and file involvement in the EBA process. The only input the ranks got was a suggestion box. It is fair to say that, until this point, the approach of at least some on the committee had been a case of "this is what we have decided for you".

Local MUA officials were just as unhappy about the proposed mass scratching as members of the local site committee, but they handled the situation a bit differently. While some on the site committee seemed

began to back pedal a bit. While they were still adamant that the action should not go ahead, they began to at least understand the depth of feeling among the ranks and agreed that some of the criticisms about the EBA process were valid.



to take the whole thing extremely personally, the officials (after sensing the mood among the workforce) were a bit more balanced.

That is not to say that they didn't put just as much effort to stop it – they did. There was at least one official on site every day in the lead up to September 26 trying to stop the action from happening.

A big part of their gripe was the fact that this unofficial action was not done the "right way" by going through the structures of the union – the site committee and the MUA Branch.

The officials initially came out with all guns blazing. They issued a special MUA newsletter with the title "Not in the union's name" which tried to stop this action in its tracks. There were some choice turns of phrase in this leaflet. It described the planned action as "anarchist activity" which was "politically destructive", "gutless", "cowardly" and organised by "half baked pseudo revolutionaries".

But once the officials addressed the labour and copped a bit of flak from members who don't usually speak in meetings, they

As for the day itself, given the pressure that the union applied, things went quite well. There are just under 500 people working on the operations side. About 260 of these are casuals – these are the people that can scratch.

Despite all the pressure between 50 and 80 people – depending on who you talk to – still took the day off. Word is that DP World had to shut down a crane of two for each shift.

It has to be said that this pressure worked in different ways on different people. While some were no doubt scared into not taking the day off, others took a "no one tells me what to do" attitude and scratched anyway. The fact that it had been an extremely busy period at work and the rugby league semi-finals were on did help though.

RW: So what happened when it came to voting for the new EBA?

Port Botany Wharfie: Unfortunately, between the September 26 action and the EBA vote on November 3, there was the economic meltdown.

If you had asked me in late September if the EBA would get voted up, I would have told you no. But in the six weeks between the mass scratching and the EBA vote there was the stock market crash of early October, the \$700 billion US bank bailout, bank collapses in Europe and reports of serious trouble in the US car industry.

Given the uncertainty in the world economy, you can't blame people for thinking that copping a five percent a year pay rise for the loss of a few jobs is such a bad thing.

In the end the vote for the new EBA was overwhelming in favour, close to 90% in fact. Some of those who were directly affected by the few job losses and lengthening of roster hours, such as maintenance workers, first aiders and rail co-ordinators, obviously voted against it. Besides them a small core of oppositionists also voted no.

The other thing to note was that the meeting itself was quite civil, orderly and well chaired. This was a credit to the site committee.

This was in contrast to the last EBA vote three years ago which was disgraceful. We

had committee members yelling over the top of and swearing at speakers from the floor and a vote on a contentious EBA (the move to only one 45 minute break) where the yes vote was simply declared carried without a count or a show of hands from the "no" voters.

[Shane Bentley – the "Port Botany Wharfie" – produces "Vigilance", a socialist bulletin for MUA members in Sydney. See www.vigilancebulletin.org].

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of RW, we interview a person who applied for a position of Conductor in V/Line Passenger. Unfortunately this person was terminated after two weeks in training. He has agreed to talk to Sparks so as to expose the termination and his corrupt training.

RW: How did you find out about the position?

Trainee: I saw an advertisement in the Melbourne Sun Herald from V/Line advertising for an exciting job at V/Line as Train Conductor.

RW: What was the interview process?

Trainee: I had to apply for the position via an employment agency. First I was contacted by phone call from the agency. If I had answered the phone in a polite manner then I was asked to do an aptitude test. I sat for the aptitude test with about forty other persons. A couple of weeks after I was interviewed by the consulting firm. I passed this interview and I was referred to V/Line.

RW: What happened?

Trainee: I was interviewed by the Manager of their train service, a person from Human Resources and the Manager of Spencer Street.

RW: Go on this is interesting.

Trainee: I was accepted and given a letter to start training at Bendigo for four weeks. I arrived in Bendigo and was introduced to the other persons in the class. The course was conducted by two persons. The female trainer was very good, but the On Train Manager was a pig.

RW: Why was he a pig?

Trainee: The way he spoke to the class and he said we all had to be professional.

RW: What a joke.

Trainee: We immediately went into learning train timetables. The course was intensive. I challenged the On Train Manager about an aspect of the course regarding tickets. I said one of the answers he gave about a ticket was incorrect. Because I had the temerity to stand up to this jerk he

several years ago, a person had been failed in ticket checking and was terminated and refused to return the uniforms as he was fighting the dismissal.

RW: How did you go in the test?

Trainee: The pass mark was 80% and I obtained 75%. I had to sit for the whole exam again.

RW: Why? I thought they just went over the questions you build in or they gave you an overall test.

Trainee: I set for the test again with a few other persons in the class. I obtained 79%. I was called before that pig of an on train



took an instant dislike to myself.

RW: Why was ticket checking done first?

Trainee: Originally the test was done at the end of the course, but it was changed to the beginning because I was informed

manager and was told I was to be terminated right away. I was not given a compensatory pass or an oral test. I had to hand all the class books back to Melbourne on the train. I was not given a chance to say good bye to other persons in the class.

RW: What was their reaction?

Trainee: They were devastated. They helped myself in trying to pass the test –

and the union would not help as I was a trainee in class. I have since moved on and obtained employment in another train operating company.

RW: Since we interviewed this trainee I have been informed that there has been another management reshuffle in V/Line and this on train manager has been shunted sideways and in future ticket tests if a person fails the trainee goes over the questions the trainee fails in.

In previous issues of RW, we have interviewed employees about working for V/Line Passengers. In both of these interviews there have been allegations of corruption in both Human Resources area and in management. In this issue we interview two more people who have applied for a career change. Once again names of these two persons have been changed to protect these people.

RW: What made you come forward?

Clarence: I have come forward to let your workers know that I applied for a number of positions in V/Line over the years and each time I have observed that Human Resources and Management are just corrupt. I introduce you to Jethro. Jethro has been around for years and has applied for various positions in V/Line. Jethro, a couple of years ago was seconded to a Clerical Position and was shafted.

RW: Over to you Jethro and tell us of your experience.

Jethro: I was seconded to the position of STAFF CLERK at Spencer Street Station for 6 months whilst the STAFF CLERK

was on long service leave. I got along well with all of the staff and was told by management that my work was very good. Unfortunately I did not get on well with one of the clerks and he kept to management saying I was useless and hopeless in the position.

RW: In other words this jerk did not want you in the position so tell us what happened.

Jethro: Toward the end of my secondment, a permanent position was advertised. I applied for the position but I was not successful so at the end of the secondment I returned to my job on the station.

RW: You were not successful. Could you tell Sparks about the person who obtained the position.

Jethro: The person who obtained the position had a relation who was in a prominent position in the Locomotive Division and he leaned on management at Spencer Street to get the person trained in the position and had been coached in the questions to be asked at the interview, thus he was successful in the position. This person had an unfair advantage over other persons who applied for the position.

RW: This is corrupt.

Clarence: Of course this is corrupt. I will tell you what happened to myself. A couple of years ago I applied for an On Train Supervisor Position on a 6 months secondment and I was not successful. I later found out that the person who obtained the position was coached on how to apply for

the job and he followed the train supervisors and had other on the job training around even on his day off to learn the position.

RW: What a crawler.

Clarence: You can say the person who obtained the job is a crawler but that is what V/Line wants. They want Yes Men. As regards to the Staff Clerks position, one week due to illness, they were short of one of the staff clerks and one of the station staff suggested that Jethro fill in the position for the day. The reply was management did not want him. As regards the Conductor Supervisor position, the person who was kept in the position after the secondment was completed, eventually became an on Train Supervisor.

RW: It is apparent the place is corrupt and human resources only want Yes Men in the jobs and they will coach people who they want to obtain these positions.

Clarence and Jethro: Yes you are correct. People who have devoted a large number of years on the job are passed over and are not wanted. No wonder morale is low in the organisation.

RW: I thank you Clarence and Jethro for having the guts to come forward and expose this corruption. Finally I appeal to other V/Line employees in other areas to come and tell RW their experiences.

MELB. AIRPORT WILDCAT STRIKE

Baggage handlers take wildcat action at Melbourne Airport

by Ed Feb 15 2009

Thousands of travellers faced delays at Melbourne Airport yesterday (14th February) after 45 Qantas baggage handlers went on strike mid-morning.

All of the airline's flights into and out of Tullamarine were affected by the six-hour walkout, which began at 10.30am, in a dispute centring on the length of workers' lunch breaks.

However, after a federal sitting of the Industrial Relations Commission, all the staff were ordered back to work about 4.30pm. A Qantas spokesman said the strike was illegal.

"This was a wildcat strike. We had no warning about it and so the Industrial Relations Commission ordered them back to work," the spokesman said.

He said all the staff returned to baggage handling peacefully.

Although a plan had been put in place to help passengers get their luggage and minimise the disruption of the workers' action, some aircraft were delayed by up

to three hours by the action, which affected domestic and international services.

Thanks to Libcom



BRITAIN TODAY

Staythorpe builders walk out over jobs

by Ed Feb 13 2009

Unofficial refinery walkouts 'over foreign workers'

by Joseph Kay
Jan 30 2009

An assessment of the spread of the refinery wildcat strikes - purportedly over the hiring of foreign workers - and the media coverage of them.

The wave of unofficial walkouts following the use of the Italian construction contractor, IREM with its own workforce at Total's Lindsey oil refinery have received a great deal of media coverage.

The motive force seems to be the precarious status of skilled work in Britain.

The limited amount available and increased competition for skilled contracts has led to increasing insecurity amongst the workforce. The use of foreign companies with their own workforces to do the work more cheaply has compounded this. This is a result of the workings of the economy and not a conflict between nationalities, something that isn't lost on at least some of those protesting.

The Guardian quoted a picket from the protest in Cardiff, John Cummins, 44, as saying: "I was laid off as a stevedore two weeks ago. I've worked in Cardiff and Barry Docks for 11 years and I've come here today hoping that we can shake the government up. I think the whole country should go on strike as we're losing all British industry. But I've got nothing against foreign workers. I can't blame them for going where the work is."

It appears that this increasing insecurity for skilled workers is behind the protest, not racism. We should be wary of the way in which the media reports such disputes. When workers at a nuclear power station in Plymouth walked out on a wildcat strike last year after a round of layoffs, the media immediately reported that they were walking out over "foreign workers", and that it was a protest against jobs going to cheaper Poles. This contradicted statements from strikers, and the fact that Polish workers were amongst those who walked out in solidarity. In that case it was again the unions which were spinning the "British jobs for British workers" line.

Django, a libcom user and member of the Anarchist Federation stated:

"The media will always go for the nationalist reasoning.

The strategy that Unite are following is to quote Gordon Brown's words from the 2007 Labour Party Conference back at him - that he would defend "British jobs for British workers". They are arguing in defence of the national interest, and the



placards you see at the protests saying this are union ones. It's clearly part of the strategy for publicising the dispute, an effective one as it chimes with the nationalist sentiments you'll find in the media. It's one we are likely to see more of in similar kinds of disputes.

The economy is proving unable to provide the work we need to get by to increasing numbers of skilled workers, and so individual workers are faced with increasing insecurity. The managers at Lindsay put out the project to tender and took the most cost effective option as a way to protect their profits. This is what they care about, not providing means of subsistence to working class people. But nationalism is how this is being rationalised, nationalism of a vaguely left-wing sort - the working class should have work provided for them by the government, they have an obligation to protect us, etc. This is added to the xenophobia of the media, who otherwise ignore or criticise any strike action.

The Italian and Portuguese workers at the site face unemployment at home as British workers face it here, this the problem is at root an economic one to which nationalism offers no solution, only scapegoats."

Building workers on a new power station downed tools on unofficial strike early today, as wildcat action and protests over unemployment in the building trades and the lack of allocation of jobs to local workers spread south from the Lindsey refinery at Immingham.

The men joined hundreds of pickets waving flags and placards who blocked the main entrance to the Staythorpe plant near Newark in Nottinghamshire before dawn.

They stopped work after being threatened with disciplinary action if they joined the protest, reported as targeting the Spanish sub-contractors of the power station's main builders, the French firm Alstom. Unions are demanding a share of 850 turbine-building and pipeline jobs at the site, most currently held by Spanish workers, for skilled local men who are out of work.

Some 300 unemployed men were joined outside the plant by 200 supporters including veterans of last week's wildcat action at the French firm Total's oil refinery in Immingham. Chanting "fair shares" and waving banners quoting the Prime Minister Gordon Brown's call for "British jobs for British workers," they called for a deal similar to the one done at Total last week,



where over 100 jobs were created in response to the unofficial action and sympathy strikes.

"We built the other power stations round here - we've got the skills, we know what to do," said Saville Wells, 65, one of the pickets whose contract agency Shaw's was outbid for the Staythorpe jobs. "We've no objection to foreign lads coming to work here but we should have been given a fair chance. Instead, they brought

in their own people as a package. It was a done deal. It's threatening the system that's worked well for everybody for the 47 years I've been in the trade. That's what this is all about."

The regional officer of the Unite union Steve Syson told the protesters that all they needed was a level playing field. Although Alstom has denied any discrimination in job contracts, he said: "There is clearly no intention of employing anyone here. They've issued contracts out to non-UK overseas employees but we believe local labour is available."

"We also want some transparency to see what wages are being paid."

Scores of police and private security officers sealed off the sprawling site during the demonstration, which later moved into Newark, a couple of miles away.

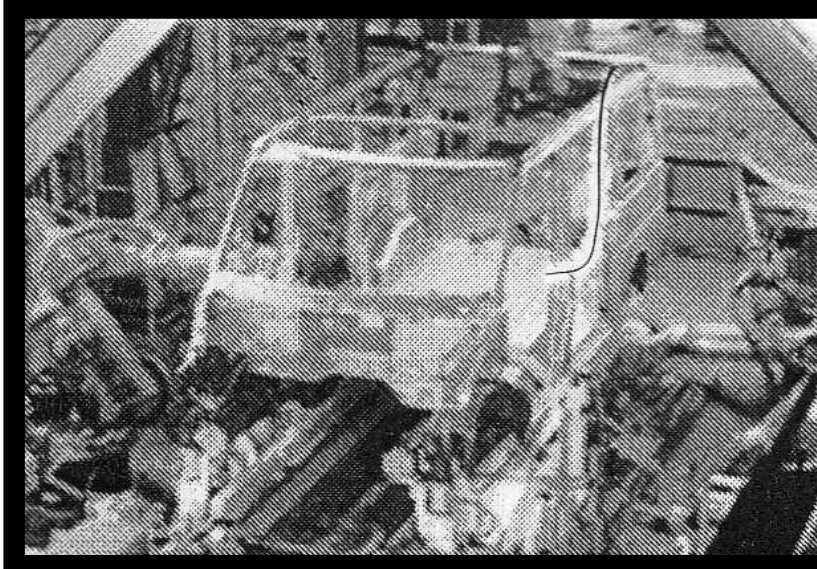
A long file of protesters marched across the Trent bridge and held a further meeting outside the local Jobcentre.

Car industry: more attacks on jobs and pay

by Django Feb 6 2009

A new wave of redundancies and pay cuts hits car manufacturing in the UK, as companies aim to take back the cost of the recession from the workforce.

Ford are looking to axe 7% of its UK workforce, with nearly half of the staff at its Southampton Transit plant lined up to go. The company is also seeking to renege on the pay deal of 5.2% agreed with the unions, as it seeks to fund the redundancy packages from the pay of the workers. Other sites hit will include plants in



Basildon, the facility at Brentwood and Dunton, in Essex, Daventry in Northamptonshire, Halewood on Merseyside and Bridgend in South Wales.

The company is claiming that the earlier agreements were untenable as the recession hits the purchase of new cars.

The cutting of pay to fund redundancies could lead to a strike ballot, with the Unite union's general secretary Tony Woodley telling the press: 'Ford are asking the workers to take a cut in pay to preserve jobs, but workers are asking themselves if

their pay is being cut to pay for friends and colleagues to be thrown onto the dole.' A worker interviewed at the plant told the BBC 'They said the redundancies will be voluntary but they will not get that many.' A mass meeting on the situation was held at the plant yesterday.

The same plant put staff on a four day week last year, and saw a wildcat walkout by 100 workers against cuts in October.

The Nissan factory in Sunderland- its most productive facility in Europe - also axed 1,200 jobs last year and cut back shifts.

Meanwhile, workers at the International Automotive Components plant in Liverpool launched wildcat strikes for two days over redundancies, pay and conditions. The factory supplies the neighbouring Jaguar plant with dashboard components,

and the production lines at the Jaguar site were said to be 20 minutes from closure following the action. The action follows a wave of industrial action by energy workers against exclusion from contracts awarded on new building contracts, resulting in the creation of over 100 unfilled jobs at the Lindsay Oil Refinery in North Lincolnshire.

Thanks to Libcom

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

Say NO to the 90 Day Hire

15 February, 2009

The 90 Day Hire & Fire Act was brought in by the New Zealand Government in late 2008. The legislation allows for workers in workplaces with under 20 employees to be fired for any reason (or no reason) within 90 days.

Workers in small businesses across the country are soon to be subject to new attacks on their rights at work. The National Party's 90 Day Hire And Fire Act which comes into effect in late March 2009 means that any worker

at a business that employs under 20 workers (over 90% of worksites, over 30% of employed workers) can be fired without reason during the first 90 days of employment. The Council of Trade Unions estimates that approximately 100,000 people fall into this category at any one time.

While workers at larger worksites are currently not affected, the National Party has shown that it will likely seek to extend this law to all workers at some point and there is no doubt that the powerful business lobbies will be heavily pushing for this over the coming years.

Recent years have seen an increase in casualised labour, temp agencies and the

like. The 90 Day Act simply takes these moves one step further in reducing job security. The message from the Government and employers is clear - we should be grateful for the jobs we have, and accept attacks without question or we will be fired.

In reality however, the capitalist system - the very system that organises the economy at the moment - is based on us workers selling our labour to the employers who make huge profits from our time and effort. And now, in times of economic crisis with diminishing profits, it is supposed to be the workers who pay for the bosses' stuff-up!

We can resist attacks by taking collective action with our fellow workers.

By linking together (in unions and in other groups) we can better focus our power and fight for better wages and conditions.

The only way to stop the 90 Day Act (and any future extensions of it) is by taking direct action, standing up with our work-mates and supporting any and all victims of this new law.

Employers that attempt to use this legislation must be targeted with pickets, slow-

downs, work-to-rule and other forms of collective action in order to teach them a lesson - that it is workers who hold the power and when we act together we can and will win!

The General Strike Hits France

by Ex-temp Jan 29 2009

As the recession begins to bite in France, transport, education and other services are brought to a halt by a national strike demanding action on unemployment and the rising cost of living.

Bloomberg business news reported that France's rail network, airports and public schools were disrupted today as the country's eight biggest labor unions called for a one-day general strike.

In what is turning into the largest such action since President Nicolas Sarkozy was elected in May 2007, the unions are demanding that the government do more to counter rising unemployment and falling purchasing power as France enters its first recession in 16 years. The eight unions represent the bulk of France's 1.9 million-strong unionized workforce. Unions only represent a small proportion of the workforce in France, but strikes are always observed by many more workers.

The government needs to change its methods, Jean- Claude Mailly, general secretary of the Force Ouvriere union, said today in an interview on Canal Plus television. There are real worries about purchasing power. All unions are united on the need to take action. Roads around Paris were packed with cars in the early hours of the morning as commuters sought to get an early start to avoid traffic jams. Fewer train lines were in service and as many as 30 percent of flights in and out of the French capital were cancelled. Unions plan 200 demonstrations and protest marches in cities across the country later today.

Employees of companies including Electricite de France SA and French units of International Business Machines Corp. and Hewlett-Packard Co. are among those participating in the strike. Public schools are expecting as many as 70 percent of their employees to strike, with unions for

teachers, doctors and other civil servants asking for urgent measures for employment and wages and a further boost to the economy.

Popular Backing

Unions say measures announced by the government so far are inadequate. Sarkozy unveiled a 26 billion-euro (\$34.4 billion) economic-stimulus package in December. About 69 percent of the French people back the strike, according to a poll by CSA-Opinion for newspaper Le Parisien on Jan. 25.

Forty-six percent support the strike, while 23 percent sympathize, with the union call, Le Parisien said. Of those interviewed, 12 percent were opposed or hostile to the strike. "It's the first time in Sarkozy's presidency that a social movement has had such public approval," Stephane Rozes, head of CSA-Opinion told the daily.

The French economy, the euro area's second largest, may contract 1.8 percent this year, the worst performance since World War II, the European Union projected on Jan. 19. Companies are cutting jobs as the credit crunch derails purchases of homes, cars and factory machinery. The EU sees France's unemployment rate at 9.8 percent this year and 10.6 percent next year. The number of jobseekers in France has risen for seven months, recording the biggest jump on record in November.

Train Traffic

Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer Francais, or SNCF, France's national railway, where workers began the strike last night at 8 p.m., said about 60 percent of the regional TER train services and 40 percent of high-speed TGV lines will be disrupted.

Eurostar and Thalys services to London and Brussels are running normally, SNCF

said. All overnight domestic and international trains have been canceled except for a Berlin- Paris train arriving in the French capital on Jan. 30. Up to 50 percent of domestic high-speed services from and to Paris and 70 percent of the Corail domestic trains were canceled, the railroad said.

RATP, the Paris transport authority, said the city's subway service was normal on about half its 14 lines. On the remaining lines, service ranged from 50 percent to 75 percent. One out of five RER A regional trains was running, with no service on RER B. Three out four buses were running.



Calls for Concessions DGAC, the French aviation authority, recommended that airlines flying into and out of the Paris-Orly airport pare flights by 30 percent, while those going through Paris-Charles de Gaulle by 10 percent. Air France-KLM Group said last night that it plans to maintain all long-haul flights, while canceling 30 percent and 10 percent, respectively, of its short- and medium-haul flights from Orly and Charles de Gaulle. Power and gas supplies may be hit after EDF and GDF Suez SA employees said they are participating in the work stoppage. Previous strikes have led to lower electricity output at power producer EDF. French Prime Minister Francois Fillon earlier this week dismissed calls for concessions to appease the strikers. "It's not the government's role to make gestures," Fillon said on France 2 television. "It's the government's role to keep reforms on track."

Complexities & outright lies

Rafael Uzcategui, a member of the editorial collective of El Libertario, prepared this article for the sixth edition of the Costa Rican journal La Libertad (September 2007; revistalibertad.blogspot.com) in response to an effort to establish impossible affinities between Chavism and anarchism.

1) One of the successes of the inter-bourgeois confrontation that has been happening in Venezuela for almost a decade is the moving of the media polarization into an international space. This biased and infantilized point of view could well confuse some less-awakened libertarian spirits. This indeed seems to be the case with the opinions voiced by compañero Rogelio Cedenó in his text *Venezuela today: Realities and half truths*, published in *La Libertad* #5. Cedenó asks for the social situation in Costa Rica precisely what he denies for that of Venezuela: a non-problematic and non-Manichean point of view. While, on the one hand, the Costa Rican movement opposed to the Free Trade Agreement is “a wholly plural movement that breaks with the simplistic schema based upon the existence of a presumed polarization between left and right,” on the other hand, in Venezuela, the forces that are not aligned with the government represent “the brutal violence and cynicism of the forces of reaction” that desperately yearn for a return to the days of the *adeco*-*copeyan* democracy. A strange business this... barely a paragraph earlier Cedenó had affirmed that “visions in black and white are of little use to those of us who keep on thinking and struggling for a better world.” This very same horizon is shared by a constellation of revolutionary left-wing groups who, despite being made invisible by the propaganda of both the private sector and the state, reject the past as much as they do the present and continue, against the current, to struggle for a better future.

2) Cedenó reproduces the logic and history manufactured by the government in Caracas. Repeating the mythologizing excesses of Chavism, he locates the genesis of “the political and social dynamics of the end of the century” and the “emergence of a revolutionary situation,” in Venezuela, in the attempts at a military coup led by Chavez himself in 1992. A simple glance at Venezuelan history would, as many diverse studies ratify, place the foundational stone of the current situation in the mid ‘80s when, as a consequence of the economic crisis, a series of social movements catalyzed the discontent of the average citizen which in turn led to a brutal explosion during the occurrences of the ‘*Caracazo*.’ During that February of 1989, a wave of popular protest reacted to the imposition of a package of neoliberal reforms. This social fabric expanded through various different dynamics, formally founding the first human rights organizations, networks of ecologists and women, student and neighbourhood associations, through employment conflicts and counter-cultural niches. This subjectivity and will for change is what Chavez capitalized on for his electoral victory. Venezuela thus confirms the words of Cornelius Castoriadis: Popular revolts in the Third World are always channelled and recuperated by a new bureaucracy.

3) Venezuelan anarchists reject the coup d’état that occurred in April 2002, as we also repudiate those that happened ten years earlier. Similarly we have denounced the distortion and manipulation of the facts. This is a long and complex history, but here we will only refute the elements repeated by Cedenó. If it is indeed true that the president counted on a certain mobilization in his favour on the 11th April 2002, then quantitatively the demonstration against him was considerably larger. On the other hand, those that

died belonged to both sides, not exclusively to the Chavez side as has been suggested — and the formation of a ‘Truth commission,’ which would have examined the events in an impartial manner, was boycotted with the same impetus by members of the government and by the opposition. If the demonstrations of the 13th April and the morning of the 14th really were significant, they in no way “stopped fascism,” nor “contained the forces of reaction.” The coup against Chavez and his later return was negotiated across desktops by military officials, without a single shot being fired between soldiers. The evidence is considerable, but due to lack of space we will present just one piece: no soldier was tried for their participation in the events.

4) The author examines the reasons why large sections of the popular classes profess support for the president. Some answers to this question can be found in the cultural nuances of the continent, which has catalyzed the appearance of various populists and strong men with widespread social support, such as Perón in Argentina and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. The history of Venezuela is itself, a long succession of civil and military strongmen that counted on, in their time, the staunch support of the popular sectors of society: Juan Vicente Gómez, Marcos Pérez Jiménez, Romulo Betancourt and Carlos Andrés Pérez. However, Cedenó, expanding the mystification of the state, prefers linear explanations of a metaphysical nature. A population that has been impoverished for decades projects its demands in a mass that is personified by the figure of Hugo Chavez, transforming him into the means by which the government can “respond to a series of demands and requirements.”

Let us concentrate on this issue, for the propaganda that surrounds social politics in Venezuela confuses local people much less than it does foreigners. Our country is experiencing one of its most significant economic booms of the last thirty years as a result of high oil prices. However, considering the wealth of resources available, the social policies that have been implemented, almost exclusively through the ‘missions,’ are superficial and ineffective. It is not just we, the anarchists, who are pointing this out; this has been affirmed by NGO’s that monitor the human rights situation in the country. While we at the bottom receive the scraps from the feast of black gold, a new bureaucracy — nicknamed the “*boliburguesía*” (contraction of Bolivarian bourgeoisie) — has appeared, reinforcing the role that economic globalization has assigned to us: that of providing energy in a ‘secure and trustworthy way’ to the international marketplace. Leaving aside questions about the social and environmental consequences of this type of development, the president recently summed up in a phrase the project of the red elite in power: *petro-socialism*.

5) Independent of the restructuring of the State; the return of governability and the ‘democratic’ opening in Venezuela — all seriously damaged during the rioting of the *Caracazo* of 1989, and a bad example for other countries in the region — is it possible to suggest that the Chavez phenomenon strengthens democratic and self-determining organizational processes? The National Executive has repeatedly imposed from above different and successive organizational models that have mortgaged the autonomy of the Chavista bases, eclipsing local leadership structures, electoralizing agendas and dynamics and imposing militarizing logic and a single party ‘Participation’ is possible as long as it’s innocuous. There are interesting initiatives that exist in the grass roots structures of the

DEBATE ON SPANISH ANARCHISM

I'm from Barcelona, and I've been active in the anarchist movement. for 12 years. I'd like to draw a picture about the present movement, as I see it. If there are other Spanish around you can complete or criticize my view, because, as I say, it's totally subjective and personal, though I'll try it to be accurate and realistic. I'll use for this article some mails I sent a comrade about a couple of months ago...

First of all, as some may know, Spain is a complex country. You cannot take it as if the whole country is the same. There're differences (some bigger than others) in every area. The best thing to do is to take a map of Spain and follow my explanations. You may be shocked by the fact that spanish leftists don't say just Spain but 'Spanish State'.

The origin of this is the recognition that Spain is not a proper nation, but a set of nations and regions. During the dictatorship, Franco tried hard to homogenize Spaniards, by imposing everyone some standards: especially catholicism and Castilian/Spanish language. As spaniards conquistadores had done with american indian languages, the dictatorship imposed the language and the traditions to all the people no matter the language they spoke before (in Spain there are a few languages)

http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idiomas_de_Espa

As you know Spain used to have a big anarchist movement. That strength went to almost zero in the 80s. with the only exception of the punk scene (specially strong in the Basque country), and some other cultural scenes which were influenced by anarchists. Other movements were the ecologist and in some degree (very little) the syndicalism (Puerto Real strikes and others).

In 90's the situation began to change. By this time the decline of unions began to reverse and some other anti-authoritarian movements began to appear, like the squatters movement. in Madrid, Valencia, Basque country and Barcelona. At first the squatters used to be a carbon copy of Berlin squatters (mixing up left communist ideas with primary anarchism, punk, antifascism, and left nationalist radicalism). However in the end of the decade they began to be more explicitly anarchist (autonomous anarchist or anti-authoritarian).

In Spain after the political and psychological depression that followed the so-called

transition (from the Franco Regime), the only revolutionary political organisation that survived was the Basque left nationalism. They were mainly Basque nationalist with some marxist ideas. Some of their groups were more Stalinist than others, some were just chauvinist leftist and so on. The point is that in the 80's this movement began to attract sympathies from the young people. And also sympathies from people from other regions that began to copy the Basque movement and tried to adapt it to each region. So, nowadays we have these weird movements in almost all areas in Spain. They want the independence for their own area and a kind of socialist republic, depending on the degree of their marxism (ranging from stalinism to socialdemocracy). They're strong in Galicia, Catalonia and the basque country. Probably their marxism and socialism attracted the young people that in other conditions (in the 80s the political left was crushed by state repression; demoralization was really wide spread and the youth suffered a harsh epidemic with drugs), would have been communists (Marxist-Leninist) or even anarchist. The point is that these groups have been the most active ones for the last 20 years.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism_in_Spain

On the other hand, anarcho-syndicalism was not seen as attractive due to the struggles between CNT (National Confederation of Labour - opposes elections and participation in State sponsored enterprise committees which handle workplace disputes and adheres to a more orthodox anarcho-syndicalism favouring direct action and ultra democratic processes) and CGT (General Confederation of Labour which favours participation in the enterprise committees) for years (or decades). This happens in families, when at Christmas dinner two or more persons begin to argue, normally the rest of the people get away and leave them alone with their shit... In 90's anarchism began to be influential (up to a point; we began from almost from zero) in the anti-militarist movement, and among squatters (through the punk subculture), and to some degree in antifascism. However the biggest growth came in the antiglobalisation movement.

Another interesting point is that during the 90's there was an important split inside

the anarchist movement around the issue of insurrectionalism. During that decade there were a few collectives of FIJL (libertarian youth; juventudes libertarias) closely connected to CNT unions. With the time, they felt the CNT as a too bureaucratized union, and too authoritarian, and they felt nullified by the older people. After a few splits (especially a hard one in Madrid) FIJL groups were expelled from CNT and others left it. After a few months, their political evolution was towards insurrectionalism (some of them were already insurrectionalists before going away CNT). In a few years they disbanded FIJL because of their own move to a "informalist" organisation and a repressive coup (5 arrested in Barcelona). They left an important imprint on the movement, and part of the present youth movement is still influenced by this informal style.



In sectors, we could take anarchists -if possible- as anarcho-syndicalists, insurrectionalists, squatters, subcultural styles, and vegan & animal liberation styles (yes, Spain also copies other countries scenes). Nowadays the fight between unions is more attenuated by the turning of CNT towards union action, and that insurrectionalists are mixed up with other currents like squatters or vegans.

http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comunidad_e
Quote:

So, you'd probably ask yourself, how many anarchists are in Spain? We could draw a rough scheme, from north to south, more or less like this:

Galicia: CNT is 300-400. CGT around 1000. CNT is growing quite fast, due to their turning to syndicalism rather than being an anarcho-syndicalist propaganda group. There's a growing scene of (rented or squatted) social centers. In Galicia S.C.

are managed by left nationalist, but also some by anarchists and anti-authoritarians (even probably people who has come to anarchism through galician nationalism). There're around 20 social centres. Anarchist has been minoritarian (inside the left) until nowadays, that is catching up with marxist nationalists (in Galicia they are quite stalinists). The other communist (CP-E) are nonexistent, probably because they form part of the galician left nationalist movement..

In Galicia there's one of the few pure anarchist collectives, called Unión Libertaria in Ferrol. These people could be interested in anarchist-communism. Some of their members are in the CNT. There're also

Cantabria: This is a tiny region with a healthy leftist movement. However it is a quite right-wing area. Anarchist are organised around CNT (200) and CGT (300) and a bookshop/infoshop that moves around 20 people. There is another social center in a little village, and a healthy punk rock scene in the valleys. (They are called agro-punk; rural punk kids). However, the anarchist scene could be of around 50 militants.

Basque Country: This place is dominated by left nationalism which attracts around 250.000 people (out of 2.5 million). The main political party is a right-wing catholic basque nationalist party, that has had around 500.000 votes.



other groups, more insurrectionist in the biggest towns (Coruña, Vigo, Compostela, Ferrol). How many anarchists are organised in affinity groups? Not many, probably less than 50. Though in a series of demos a few years ago anarchists managed to organise blocks of 800 (in an anti-glob. demo) or even 2000 (as a block of a huge demo because of the sinking of the oiler Prestige). There could be around 100 anarchists.

Asturias: This used to be a 'red' region, but now all mining and industry is gone, and people and social movements seems to be down. However there must be around 200 members in CNT and other 300 or more in CGT. However, the most active radical union is CSI, in which you can find anarchists and communists (a lot of them). Nationalists are few groups, but commies are a lot here. This used to be a stronghold for the CP-E (Spanish Communist Party). Commies control the antifascist movt. Organised anarchists are around 20-30, though there must be hundreds (mostly punks and skins, and also old CNT members). There's a squatted social center in Gijón, and a self-managed village in Escanda and of course, bookshops and some squatted houses (for living). Let's say there are 50 conscious anarchists.

There're social centers (called Gaztetxe -literally 'youth houses'; usually squatted) in almost every town and village (I mean, there must be more than 100). Of course, these social movements are quite controlled by left nationalists with one exception, the struggle against the High speed train, in which anarchists and other anti-authoritarian (ecologists and 'autonomos') have been really active. The squatter movement is also strong, with lots of houses (but not social centers). There must be a few hundred squatters. Some belong to left nationalist organisations, the rest are more or less anti-authoritarian.

There're only 4-5 explicitly anarchist places in the area (and 2 groups in the universities), attracting around 50-60 people at their acts, but they could be 100 anarchists. However, there's one thing called the "autonomos" which are anti-authoritarian people that also wants the independence for the Basque country. They want the independence for their country but also a kind of libertarian socialism, rejecting to create a new State. It's difficult to count these people, but they must be hundreds or even 1000 (or maybe more). CNT should be around 300, and CGT more than 1000 (I forgot to mention,

that CGT in the north is more 'libertarian'). Punk/hc festivals are quite frequent here and attracts thousands of people, and you can find plenty of distros and DIY stuff.

Castile (north): This land used to be the most reactionary in Spain. This is still true up to a point, as there're lots of people who have lived in other places and come back to their towns and villages with different points of view. Also, music and counter-culture has done a lot to introduce different ideas in the area.

The present anarchist movement is quite similar to other places. There are social centres in the big towns (around 6 s.c.) and CNT (250-300) and CGT (1000 ?). Anarchism seems to be spreading into smaller towns, with a few groups active around distros and punk bands. From Salamanca has spread the new youth federation (the FIJA).

Aragón (+ La Rioja): Here there're some social centres (3-4 in Zaragoza) that attracts plenty of people (more than communist!). Zaragoza has a powerful hardcore scene, but also it was one of the centers of the anti-militarist movement. CGT is strong (1000-2000?) and CNT is growing (200 ?). In Aragón there're around 15 small villages that are squatted by around 150 people escaping from the city (Barcelona, Madrid, Zaragoza...). CGT owns a village as well (Ruesta). There are free radios... Anarchism seems to be moving into smaller towns... We could count 100 (?) anarchists or more.

Catalonia: Barcelona is the epicenter of the spanish anarchist movement. To begin with, there're around 250 squatted houses in BCN, which means around 1500-2000 people living in them. Of course, not all of them are anarchist people (there're communists, left catalan leftists, and hippies, punks...). The social center scene is huge, of around 50-60 libertarian social centers in Catalonia, moving around 500 people. However, the anarchist demos move only around 300 people. But this is because the old people don't go to many demonstrations, and anarchist-syndicalists don't mix up much with 'purist' anarchists (mostly insurrectionist). There are two CNT's, the official one (500) and the Joaquin Costa scission (200 ?). Joaquin Costa CNT is more linked with the rest of the catalan anarchist movement, while the CNT-AIT dedicates itself to labour issues. CGT is a bureaucratic union of around 15,000 members (maybe less) with some sections radicalized in struggles (transport, gardeners...) and an anarchist minority competing with all kinds of entryist trots and catalanists.

The Catalan left is still bigger than the anarchists. There's a socialdemocratic party with around 300.000 votes, while its radi-

cal versions (marxist) has around 20.000 with 2000 militants. Nowadays, some of them are turning to more libertarian ideas (not many, but some people don't like parliamentarism).

Apart from that, in Catalonia there are around 20 anarchists groups with different ideas. the anarchist Student federation (FEL) has 4 sections in the universities. There're 4-5 free radios, papers, magazines, bookshops, coops... The point is to forget about internal fights and appeal directly towards working class people. How many anarchist are there in Catalonia? It's really difficult to say. My bet is 500 more militants (participate in assemblies, demos, anarchist infrastructure, etc.), and 2000 of sporadic anarchists (they use the infrastructure, they go to our locals, they may go to some assembly from time to time, some demo sometimes...). Of course, that this land is potentially nearer to anarchist ideas and I'm sure that there must be thousands of sympathisers.

Valencia: This area is now dominated by right-wing governments. The Anarchist scene has suffered from repression, though it's recovering. 5 social centers in Valencia, 5 (squats) in Alcoy, 1 in castellon, alicante, etc, Distros all around... CNT has internal disputes and it's weak (100), CGT is quite reformist (5000-10000) with lots of people from political parties. Anarchists are outside unions, and are active in communitarian movements (ecological and neighbourhood movements)... 100 anarchists as much in Valencia city and 100 in the rest. This area also has a lot of infrastructure (I mean for that free radios, locals, social centers, bookshops, coops, etc.)

Balearic Isl.: There are not many anarchists, though they're active around CNT (100) and the local Ateneo Libetario (20?)

Madrid: At this moment, Madrid has a strong movement. It is focused in two areas: squatting (15 squats/social centers) and antifascism (the last biggest demo of 10,000 people and groups all around the city). After a decade of hard fights between insurrectionalists and CNT waters stay calm. Everyone turning to different paths. This insurrectionist current is big, so it attracts around 3 groups (its difficult to say, let's say 50 people) and quite active in antifascism, and squatting, and creating literature, distros, the anarchist bookfair... In Madrid there are also 2-3 groups of young people around CNT. These groups are close to the FIJA (the youth federation). The students federation also has 4 sections (its called FEL). There are 2 ateneos linked to CNT, and another one to CGT. There must be around 5 more rented social centers. 200 anarchists, with hundreds (or thousands) of sympathisers.

CNT has the biggest local union in here, with around 500-600 people. There also exists the Solidaridad Obrera, strong in transport, (400-500 members). CGT is also bureaucratic, but big (5000). In Madrid there are lots of communists. They're strong here, dominating some squatted social centers, and strong in the antifascist movement. Just before Carlos death (nov. 07) the antifascist movement was about to crash in disputes between anarchists and communists. However the unfortunate death of this guy, provoked a generalised sensation of responsibility and unity against nazis.

Castille (south): This area is the poorest according to the number of anarchists. CGT has some presence (300-500) and CNT is beginning to have something to say (100?). There are some social centers in some towns, but not many. Antifascism is also strong here, as there're many fascists and neo nazis.

Extremadura: The most famous group here is the Paideia Free School. This school has been around for almost 30 years. There are some countercultural anarchists, punks, hippies, and of course, unions: CNT (100) and CGT (200?). I don't know much about this area.

Murcia: Once again, this area is dominated by right-wing governments... but recently anarchism is beginning to wake up. There're some distros, CNT has around 100, and CGT quite more (not sure).

Andalusia: CNT seems to be catching up, with an amazing growth in the last years. In Seville there must be 400-500, and in the province up to 700. In Cadiz they are p new unions setting up in small towns, spreading revolutionary unionism to plenty of places... In the rest of Andalusia, CNT shouldn't be far from 1000. CGT is also a bureaucratic union, but big as well (10000). There're lots of ateneos in little towns linked to CNT, and some autonomous scene in the big cities (especially in Granada). There's some anarchist infrastructure in Seville and Granada, but the area is too big to calculate.

SOC is the other interesting union, coming from a nationalist (Andalusian nationalism) and marxist view. It claims to have another 10,000 or more members. It has recently created SAT with other groups.

Canary islands: Here there are also anarchists. In the university town of La Laguna, and Tenerife. CNT has a group, and CGT has some unions, but not many. I couldn't give numbers.

So the main numbers could be:

CNT: according to my numbers, around 4,000 paying members; possibly much more (up to 6,000)

CGT: 40,000 members. again, possibly more (up to 60,000).

anarchists in general: 1500-2000 (active militants); but some thousands of sympathisers and fellow-travellers

FEL (students federation): 8-12 groups, around 100 members

Other groups: FIJA, CNA, etc.

5 bookfairs: Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Valencia and Salamanca

Lucio

REPLY:

Lucio's analysis is an unrealistic analysis, based in the good will of those who believe that all of us are in the same boat and this isn't so. Besides it doesn't analyze the fundamental militant reality.

Within social anarchism beside the anarcho-syndicalists and the revolutionary syndicalists and what Lucio doesn't mention- I suppose because he doesn't know the fundamental militant reality and the reality of the labor and social conflicts- there exist other anarchist militants that work in worker organizations, as residents and as environmentalists. At times they call themselves "autónomos" ["autonomists"], many others simply call themselves anarchists or prefer not to define themselves because they don't see any sense in it. They can be found in some unions (not too many), and different social struggles and base organizations (social centers, neighbourhood assemblies, anti-repressive organizations). Zaragoza, Barcelona and Madrid would be the sites where these people are.

The rest of the anarchist movement (insurrectionists, animal rights activists, countercultural types, squatters, intellectuals...etc) that are the most visible, are declaredly anti-syndicalist and anti-worker and are not interested in the social struggle nor in the construction of a popular movement. Others call themselves social anarchists, but in practice are anti-worker and antisyndicalist and prefer to stay around the [self-proclaimed anarchist] "ghettos". Also looking at CNT Catalunya, "Joaquín Costa" are anti syndicalists and anti worker organizations.

The class [struggle] anarchists, more and more relate less to these people, when they see that nothing fruitful can come from working with these people. In my opinion, the two "trotskyists", the bus drivers that Lucio mentions, are more our comrades, in solidarity with other struggles, than the majority of self-proclaimed anarchists.

Internationalist Greetings!

Juan a Spanish Worker

Thanks to Black Cat Anarchist

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

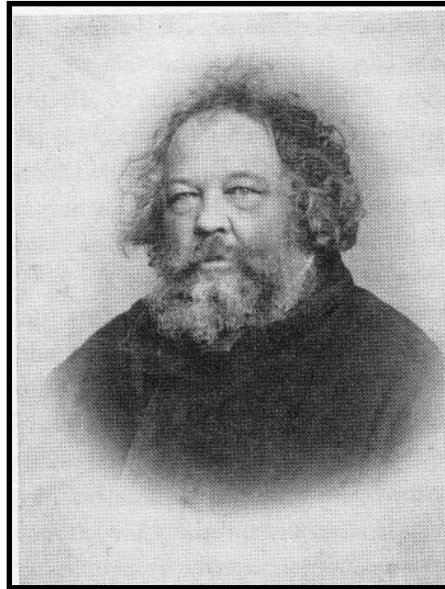
Bakunin: A Biography by Mark Leier New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2006

Leier's new study of Bakunin may justly be recommended as a "valuable addition to any library or bookshelf".

When I first began researching anarchism I was dismayed I couldn't find a satisfactory scholarly introduction to Bakunin's life and ideas. Fifty years after the 1960's revival of Bakuninism—yet—until now, no comprehensive unproblematic contemporary study of the man existed in print in English. Leier's calm, considered non-doctrinaire work of modern political scholarship ably succeeds in bridging this gap by revealing Bakunin as a humane personality expressing original and coherent ideas that remain fresh and relevant.

In the past it has often been said that anarchist's should carefully record their history lest their opponents write it for them. Thankfully, during the last decade a number of first-rate political biographies have been published in English. The most important of these are the recent unabridged translation of A. Paz's Durruti and, A. Skirda's new scholarly study of Makhno (see my review in R. Worker). Leier's

Bakunin like Skirda's Makhno provides a sympathetic and convincing account of



the Anarchist's life and times as well as a detailed objective analysis of his political and social theories, beliefs and aspirations. Unlike Kropotkin who is generally represented as a saintly but hopelessly utopian anarchist thinker,

Marxist, Soviet and Bourgeois commentators have consistently falsely caricatured both Bakunin and Makhno as alcoholic, misogynist, immoral, sexually deviant, racist-nationalist double-agents proffering an incoherent and dangerous celebration of chaos, terrorist violence and banditry. Leier and Skirda do not dwell upon these aspersions and having conclusively shown that they are entirely without foundation present us with wide-ranging biographies that completely contradict bourgeois, Marxist and nationalist lies and historical falsehoods.

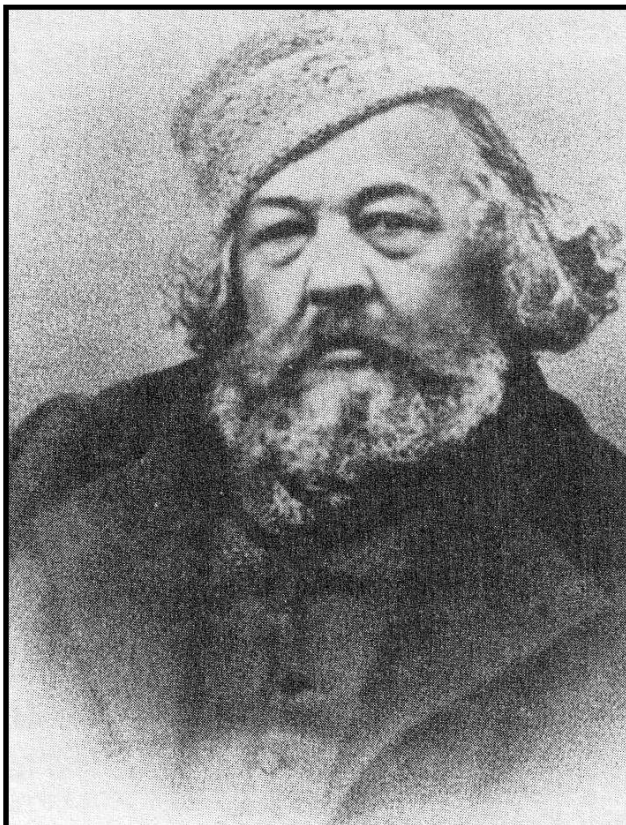
Beyond its biographical significance Bakunin is a very valuable contribution to contemporary academic scholarship and analysis of

anarchist political philosophy. Bakunin's personal relationship and political differences with Marx, Engels, Nechayev, Herzen etc are examined in a thorough, intelligent, informative and fair-minded way. Bakunin's less publicized views upon integral education, women's equality and the role of the social environment in shaping and predicting human morality and behaviour are particularly welcome and well researched and presented.

Unlike many contemporary academics Leier, perfectly understands the historical standpoints, ideology or concept of Anarchism. Bakunin's ideas on class, capitalism, state, violence, revolution, life, liberty and happiness are truthfully, thoughtfully, forcibly and precisely examined and analyzed by the author. Bakunin is a useful antidote and mercifully happy exception to the recent spate of torturous academic post-modernist revisionist studies that attempt to redefine anarchism by talking the working class out of existence (see my Anarchy in the UK review series).

In addition to Bakunin's life story much of Leier's book consists of descriptions of backward Russia and other relevant contextual or background historical material. None of this is very original and based upon previously published research by other authors with which I am largely familiar. But these general historical portions of the book are refreshingly unsanctimonious and engagingly written in an informal non-intimidating style making Leier's book an enjoyable and informative read for serious history lovers of all kinds. Shorn of its biographical and purely historical components Leier's book is an accurate and useful introduction to anarchism and I advise him to write a more general historical study of anarchist theory and practice with respect to the Labour movement and the revolutionary lessons, implications and possibilities for worker's liberation in the 21st Century.

Dr. Graham Purchase



NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important news "behind the scenes" is a renewed move orchestrated by the NSW Rees ALP Govt to dramatically accelerate the employer offensive. It particularly involves a renewed push to restructure the NSW Railways for privatisation and the associated massive decimation of jobs and new waves of speed ups in that sector. (See articles Page 3 & 4)

This privatisation push and associated attacks on workers will have wide ramifications throughout the public and private sectors. An important historical precedent is the move by the Ruling Class during the early 30's to cut workers' wages by 10% associated with the onset of the depression. The initial focus of this attack was also the NSW Railways. Once this wage cut was introduced in this sector, it was generalised throughout all other industries on a nationwide basis. The union hierarchy in the early 30's completely caved in before the savage onslaught.

The ASN is assisting militant rail workers to counter this renewed neo-liberal push in the NSW Railways.

Coming up from March onwards is a new ASN Discussion Series. The first presentation is on Tues. 24th March 7pm at Jura Books. Entry is Free. A Talk by Michael Matteson, Spanish History Expert, on Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalism during its heyday in the 1930's. Mike will be countering in his talk many myths which have grown up about the most important Spanish anarcho-syndicalist organisation - the CNT - National Confederation of Labour. See advert on Page 2.

Rebel Worker has an internet web site. Its address is www.rebelworker.org

Many articles from back issues of Rebel Worker are available in the archive section on the site.

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

Your assistance on the financial plane is also very welcome.

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Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

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

Continued from Page 14 Chavez project, but their exceptionality confirms the rule: In any given field, any initiatives are the exclusive property of the head of state. Examples abound, like the constitutional reform that is currently being discussed in absolute secrecy [and went down to electoral defeat after this was written], or extraordinary powers such as the Ley Habilitante, which gives the president the ability to pass laws by decree. We shall refer to one of the lesser-known examples. As a result of a mandate from above, Conarepol, a plural commission was charged with designing a new policing model for the country. To that end they conducted 70,000 consultations with different actors over the length and breadth of the country, including those communities affected by uniformed violence. The entire Conarepol projected was basketed over a single phrase, "it's a right-wing project," and now a centralisation of the police forces has been decided through the Ley Habilitante.

In this part of the Caribbean we don't suffer *deja vu* for the CNT-FAI of 1936 nor do we allow ourselves to be confused by demagoguery. Last year 402 prisoners, coming from the popular classes, died violently in the prisons of the "Bolivarian Revolution."

More than 60 leaders of trade union and neighbourhood groups were in court because of their participation in strikes, blockades and demonstrations to demand their rights. As Bakunin said the people will not feel better to see that the club with which they're beaten with bears their own name.

We, the libertarian creoles, have assumed the attitudes of any consistent anarchist: to confront power and stand side by side with the oppressed, gathering together means and ends, constructing free spaces and refusing to be either victim or tyrant. We leave the 'tactical alliances' and 'critical support,' the smokescreens and mirrors, to the politicians, of whom there are so many in Venezuela today, fattening their egos and bank accounts, hallucinating a 21st Century socialism that is both military and imperialist by nature, with its epicenter in Caracas.

Thanks to ASR

Thanks to ASR

Dublin Bus Workers News

Monday February 09, 2009

Gavin

Dublin Bus is slated to see huge cuts in both staff and services. As many as 290 workers and 100 buses will be cut. This means fewer routes and less frequent service. If the Dublin Bus workers go on strike, it will mean an inconvenience for a few days. However, if they take action and force the company to back down, it will in the long run save us all time and money and will help the environment. It will also serve as a message to the politicians. If they want cuts, they can start by tightening the belts at the top, not the bottom. The politicians are giving bailouts to bankers while they hand out cuts to workers and commuters. It's clear where the money to support public services should come from. It should come from the people who created the crisis!

We need to stop bus cuts because:

1) It hurts the workers, students and the elderly.

The working class will pay disproportionately for the cuts. Those who don't use the bus will find more people driving and consequently more traffic. Children and the elderly often use the bus during off-peak hours, the times which are likely to suffer the greatest cuts to service.

2) It's bad for the environment.

It is bad environmental policy to be increasing car traffic. Fewer buses means more CO₂, which leads to global warming. It also means more carbon monoxide and other toxic chemicals in our air.

3) It's bad for the economy.

Decreasing routes means increases in traffic. This will hurt the already ailing economy. Dublin Bus has estimated that losses due to traffic congestion are in the tens of millions of euro a year in Dublin. The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport just 6 months ago recommended 320 additional busses to aid congestion. In addition it will increase the need to import oil.

4) We need to stop them from cutting all of our services.

This will not be the last public service to come under attack. We all rely on public services, and if they get away with cuts to the bus, you can bet they'll be emboldened to get away with cuts elsewhere. We'll be able to look forward to cuts in health, education, pensions, the dole and anywhere else they feel they can pinch a penny off of us.

5) The money is there.

It just isn't in the public coffers. The bankers who have made billions from the Celtic tiger should be paying for the problem they've caused. If we are going to tighten belts, let's start at the top. We need to raise taxes on the ultra-rich and corporations like shell who have made record profits and cap incomes for the bankers.

Industrial action is the only way for the workers to show the government and the management that they are serious about protecting services and jobs. Talks about so-called 'social partnership' merely give the government the cover for attacks on our living standards. Tell people you know why industrial action is needed! Support the Dublin Bus workers in industrial action!

Thanks to indymedia.ie