

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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Abbott's Anti-Terrorism Hysteria Paves Way to Neo-Liberal "Strong State"!



ABBOTT ATTACKS ON BUILDING WORKERS; NSW RAILWAY NEWS; STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH; VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS; ELECTION CONSULTING; ITALY; BRITAIN TODAY; IRELAND TODAY; POLISH LABOUR NEWS; NEW ZEALAND ELECTION RAMIFICATIONS; UKRAINE NEWS; INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' NEWS; BOOK REVIEW CORNER; MAURIZIO GARINO 1892-1977; URUGUAN ANARCHISM; NEWS & NOTES;

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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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New Abbott Attack on Building Workers

Tony Abbott's Construction Code is a full scale attack on Construction workers wages, condition and their unions (this is a short version)

By Simon Millar 14/8/14

The Liberal & National Party dominated senate will vote on a raft of amendments to the Fair Work Act in July 2015 that includes the Building and Construction (Fair and Lawful Building Sites) Code. The Code will be voted in as a piece of retrospective legislation. This means it will be back dated to come into practice on April 24th 2014. This is so that the code will apply to all new contracting Enterprise Bargaining Agreement's (EBA's) due to be negotiated all construction union with employers.

Any employer who does not have a code compliant EBA will not be able to tender or supply labour on government jobs. Employers are already drawing up code compliant EBA's which will apply to both government and non- government work. If this code is successfully implemented it will apply to over 1,025,600 construction workers.

What will the code do?

The code will make all clauses that restrict the use of contractor's non code compliant. So the current clause that requires that any contractor brought onsite be paid the same wages and conditions will be breaking the code. It is also non code compliant for the unions to request payslips from employers to check wages and entitlements.

In practice a contractor can get a legal EBA voted up with only a handful of loyal in house employees. This EBA is then binding on all future employees and under the future rules of the code can be marched onto any building site.

How bad can this EBA be? It only has to pass the Better Off Overall Test known as BOOTS test introduced by the Australian Labour Party (ALP) in 2009. This test applied by the Fair Work Commission compares the proposed EBA not with the previous EBA but with the Award. In a worst case scenario using an Electricians wages an employer could set wages at \$25 an hour and still pass BOOTS with flying colours as the highest hourly wages provided for by the 2010 Electrical Award is \$23.49.

The flexibility clause introduced again by the ALP which must be included in every EBA gives the employer the right to approach individuals and get them to sign an agreement that varies anything from penalty rates to working hours. This clause can achieve what John Howard wanted to achieve with individual contracts. Combined with code it becomes dynamite.

The code makes it non code compliant to have EBA clauses that proscribe lump sum

payments. Lump sum payments effectively turn a worker into a salaried employee. The pressure on individual workers who are approached by their employer to accept loses in wages and conditions or face the dole queue will be enormous.

The code also does away with current EBA restrictions on the use of part time and casual labour.

Non-compliant clauses include a whole raft of provisions in the current EBA that cover, overtime, RDO's, working shifts. If



this code is allowed to govern construction workers lives, employers will have the right to makes us work when they want for as long as long.

Gone are lock down weekends, the ability to say no to working an RDO, the ability to say no to a shift change and the ability the limit the amount of overtime beyond what is outline in the Award.

The code removes any EBA clauses that stipulate quotas of mature age workers, women or apprentice ratio's. All are deemed unacceptable under the catch all phrase 'that this restricts the employer's ability to manage its business'.

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A.S.N. APPEAL

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

Please make out Cheques to Black Cat Media and forward to P.O.Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

Setting the Scene for Another RTBU Election

The time has come once again to choose our Rail Tram and Bus Union representatives and leaders. The pattern is a familiar and well trodden path. There is always an Enterprise Agreement which delivers a small pay increase just before, or during the vote, which possibly ensures that the incumbents fall across the line. A sweetener in the form of a back-dated payment is almost always the enticing icing on the cake during the election. It's all so predictable.

One could be branded a cynic for questioning the changed expiry date of future enterprise agreements. The next EBA expires on September 30 2017 rather than the usual April. An expiry date of September would coincide with the union election cycle around November. Office terms are also now set at 4 years duration.

As we approach the 2014 R.T.B.U. election day we find that public transport in N.S.W., is going through an unprecedented reform process..

Speaking at the conclusion of negotiations over the 2014 Rail Enterprise Agreement, Mark Morey, an assistant secretary of Unions NSW, says "It's not a perfect deal by any means because people are being asked to give up conditions."

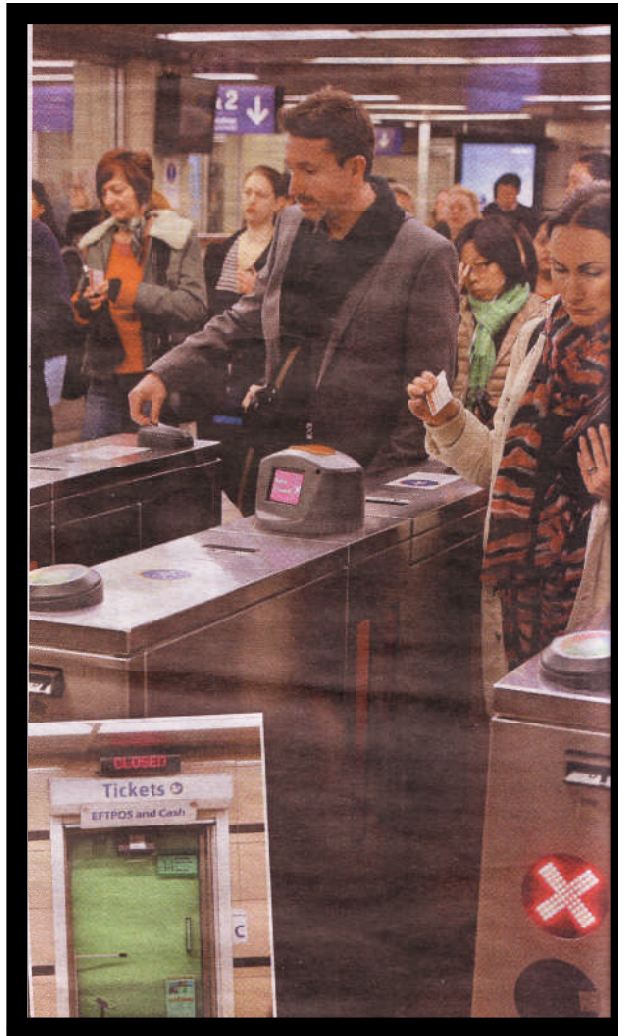
"But having said that, in the context of where we are industrially.....and the pay rise and concessions we have been able to get out of the rail entities, we just felt we got to a stage where members should have a vote on whether to accept it."

Some rail workers also wondered what those "concessions" might be, since they were more like holding ground till 2017 on most issues. We actually won bugger all as far as concessions go. After the most concerted campaign by management for a vote in favour, there was eventually a vote in the affirmative for the agreement however.

According to Jacob Saulwick, transport reporter, for the Sydney Morning Herald, this was a vote where rail workers were "set to decide between better pay and job

security". It seems rail workers struggling with mortgages and rising costs have decided to go for the money. The issue of a pay rise though is not relevant if you do not have a job 12 months down the track.

The vote came after a concerted campaign by the union leadership to subtly try and convince members that this was the best deal possible. This is the first time in living memory that the NSW Secretary of the un-



ion sent out a recorded phone message on a weekend during the voting urging people to vote, hopefully from his point of view, for the Agreement.

"We came to a belief, at this point, this is the best deal on the table that the state government has put to us." –Mark Morey, NSW Unions.

The operative word being 'we', when, "We" were not consulted about the path that negotiations were to take, when to

stop negotiating or much else.. However negotiators see nothing wrong with this undemocratic and non-consultative bargaining, NSW Unions style

The happiest person implementing the new Enterprise Agreement was Liberal Transport Minister, Berejiklian, who in a press release skites about "\$20 million annual savings and the end of bad work practices in rail" she says the "the deal can now scrap a number of historically outdated work practices, including a "no forced redundancy" clause, that meant a "jobs for life" culture."

It depends where you work in the Rail Entities as to whether the agreement was good for you or not. In the long term though I don't think that it is not good for anybody except the transport ministry which is trying to reduce costs, privatise whatever it can and cut jobs. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, "The vote is a major industrial victory for Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian"

Those that are going through the reform process or are facing the prospect of being "excess to requirements" will feel the full brunt of the removal of conditions within the EBA. For many part-time workers, especially students looking further afield and who are not looking at a full time career in the railways, it will make minimal difference, so they should welcome the extra money.

Perhaps the best summation of the Agreement, as viewed from the standpoint of those in power, comes from the Melbourne Age newspaper.

"The multiple unions that represent rail workers did not formally endorse the EBA, but they might as well have. The unions thought this was the best deal they were going to get, and did not believe in a public fight with the government was worth the cost of trying to get more. - Melbourne Age.

They then went on to congratulate the Libs in N.S.W. for cracking workers heads and calling for greater reforms. She can now no longer blame the Unions, as the Minister has struck her deal for the changes that were so desperately needed to gut the workforce. It remains to be seen whether this will bear fruit for her and the Liberal Party.

I don't agree with that newspaper article, but there is no doubting that a lot of union members believe that their union leadership is gutless. There was an expectation during the agreement that they might be called out for some form of industrial ac-

tion. Members were ready for it. Normally if the employer is getting it all their own way, the best way of forcing a realistic bargaining position, getting some real concessions and god forbid, some items from your own log of claims, is to use the real force that lies with the membership. That means taking some sort of action that makes the stand of the employer untenable.

During our R.T.B.U. Election campaign we do not aim not make any grand promises that will dash your expectations. We do, however, aim to build a fighting union that puts all members at the forefront of everything we do. The changes we wish to make will be difficult, but they are very necessary to democratising our union.



The world is changing. Working people are standing up to bureaucratic hierarchies that are inefficient and self serving. People more and more want the chance to be involved in the movements and organisations which affect their lives. That means also being involved in their trade unions.

If our Members Voice candidates are elected we will work towards giving you a voice in the union and on the job. We hope that you take up that offer, if and when the chance arises. Nothing will change though unless you support our candidates.

STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

RW: What have you heard regarding the Baird Government's plans to extend the tramway system in Sydney?

Waverley Busie: There is definitely a sting in the tail of the tramway. As part of the extensions in the Eastern suburbs, the Govt. is intending to cut down a huge swathe of trees along Alison Street Randwick to the top end of the race course, all the way to the square near the Royal Hotel and east of the Prince of Wales Hospital. Sections of Anzac Parade could also be affected. The car park near South Sydney Juniors in Kingsford, which also provides for a local market, will be used as a tram shed for the line. Local people are extremely angry over the move. As part of their protest they have tied coloured ribbons to the trees targeted for culling. A lady, who is a resident in the area, I was speaking to recently, mentioned that associated with the tramway extension are plans to construct blocks of home units along the line. So the tramway extensions are not really about improving public transport, but are a pretext for the Liberals to help out their real estate developer business mates.

Recently, some drivers have suggested that the extensions could be used as a pretext for the Govt. to close Randwick depot. It currently operates 100's of runs a day to Central, the Quay and NSW Uni. Certainly the tramway will cut the demand for these bus services. With the closure of the depot, the Govt. could sell off the land which is extremely valuable. It could be worth a considerable sum given Sydney's notoriously expensive real estate market.

Recently there has been the announcement of the construction of the tram line down George Street. Where is the traffic management plan which needs to be provided to all the depots? Will all the buses have to go down Elizabeth Street? I don't think the tramway is a good idea. It's now been 50 years since we last had them and times have changed. It will be horrible! It will be too demanding for the city. Where will all the buses end up? Where will the bus services terminate? The trams will just greatly contribute to the congestion already caused by thousands of vehicles of all types going through the city. However, the demand for bus drivers is likely to be reduced.

RW: What are your impressions of the Baird Govt?

WB: I have noticed over the last 3 months ever more revelations of corrupt activity involving high up Liberal figures. The new ICAC commissioner appears to be taking his job much more seriously, than his predecessor. Lately this spider's web of corruption has involved Sutherland Council and the mining millionaire Tinkler. With the Govt's likely move to flog off Randwick Depot, ICAC needs to look into every aspect of it. Anything goes. No one knows how much corruption there is in NSW. Lately I have even noticed in my suburb, 2-3 old houses, possibly heritage listed, being bulldozed to gain access to the land for development. One of them had originally been a sanatorium, and subsequently became a hostel. Whilst I have noticed in my area, a large council car park has been subdivided into 3 parcels of land and flogged off. Could this also involve the web of Liberal corruption? For the Liberals, money talks!

RW: What's the latest with the Opal Card system?

WB: The Opal definitely has a sting in its tail. Particularly hard hit are those who only casually use public transport and make less than 8 trips a week. These commuters will find the Opal very expensive. Also what happens when a commuter gets sick and has already paid for a \$46 top up on the Opal for the week? It really needs to be low cost to encourage more public transport usage. Another issue with the Opal system is that it's based on a GPS system and works differently on buses in comparison to the railways. We have noticed that it doesn't work on certain parts of routes and bus stops. Consequently, when commuters tap off when alighting the bus, at certain stops, the Opal doesn't work, resulting in wrong fares. We are being relied on to press the right button, to tap off the commuter's Opal. In the case of a commuter failing to tap off, they face a massive hike in their fare. With the system not working in certain areas, no fares are charged.

Consequently, drivers at the depot have been saying the Government and its business mates must be losing quite a lot on the Opal. The STA needs to be respectful to drivers in regard to the Opal Card. It's a new system, but the bosses have provided us with no follow up. We were given a brief introduction and a small booklet. With the bosses' mania for corner cutting to allegedly save money, they have cut out most inspectors who could provide follow up with the Opal. Again we see the STA's contradictions. We are told by the Radio Room not worry about the Opal malfunctioning, but due to our interactions with commuters, we are under extra pressure to do more of the dirty work.

Another problem is that there is a high rate of faulty cards being issued, which won't allow registering to the Opal system in-

volving 2 out of 10 cards. In future, there will be ever more frustration and dissatisfaction with the system amongst both commuters and drivers.

RW: How are things with the uniform?

WB: The STA has allocated \$3 million for provision of the uniform. However only \$100,000 has been spent so far. It seems the bosses don't want to spend the money. As there are constant delays in providing pieces of the uniforms. Some drivers at the depot have even been waiting 5-6 months to get parts of it. This weird miserly approach of the bosses' in regard to issuing items of the uniform, flies in the face of their stipulation that we must wear the uniform! We see again the contradictions in the STA. It seems that this stalling is all a game.

RW: What are the latest developments with the bosses speed up drive?

WB: One new weird prong has been the move to relocate bus stops, which creates greater distances between bus stops. I have particularly noticed it on the 422 route. Associated with this relocation, the bosses hope to get faster buses on routes. On a recent ABC program on the issue, a lady interviewed advised that she indeed had noticed that buses had become faster. However, commuters are being screwed as they now have to walk further to bus stops and may be discouraged from using public transport. This whole weird initiative seems all about the bosses getting more bickies, rather than making a serious effort to improve services and introduce more realistic bus running times and timetables.

RW: How are you finding the depot Admin. Staff?

WB: Lately I have noticed that they have an over enthusiasm when a driver has some foul up on the job, which is out of their control. They seem to be having difficulties in acquiring relevant information from the computer system and cameras about these incidents. Whilst there appears to be a lack of coordination between them.

RW: What's the latest with the EBA?

WB: It was recently put up to vote on and 90.34% voted in favour. It provides an alleged pay rise of 2 1/2% per year for 3 years. However, inflation is running at approx. 3% pa. So in fact we are facing another pay cut. With our job becoming much worse as a result of Optimisation and the lateness crackdown we deserve a much greater pay rise above inflation. I have not noticed any obvious nasties. Although there could be in the fine print. Certainly, we need an analysis of the document by an industrial lawyer to understand its aspects and ramifications. We can't just rely on what union reps, the union hierarchy or management

say about it. The importance of such an analysis was highlighted to me recently when I spoke to some rail workers. One of them was extremely upset about their recent EBA. He said that in exchange for the \$600 or so pa provided by the EBA, rail staff got shafted. It removed important entitlements. Particularly, he focused on the removal of salary maintenance in the case of jobs being abolished and doors opened to mass sackings by the EBA.



LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the latest with the Opal system implementation?

Leichhardt Busie: At the depot there has been an Opal fiasco. In early September only half of the fleet has been adapted for the Opals. However, throughout the Inner West, bus stops had the Opal ready sticker. As a result, more work was being put on us. As we had to cope with angry commuters, who expected they could use the Opal on all buses. Latest news is that by early Oct., all of the fleet has had the new system installed. We were experiencing some teething problems with both the Green Machines and Opal system not working on occasions. Lately these problems seem resolved.

RW: What have been the ramifications of the privatisation/outourcing of the mechanical section?

LB: It has created quite a bit of havoc with bus services. Associated with privatisation, the number of mechanics has been reduced, affecting the efficiency of workshop operations. On one morning some weeks ago, there was 7 of us waiting for buses to start our runs. Whilst many buses are breaking down during runs.

RW: How is the bosses' lateness crack down progressing?

LB: If we are late at the end of a run, we have to ring the radio room and explain the situation. However, ironically in doing this we become ever more late in our work, as we may have to wait on say 20 minutes, to make contact. Whilst the radio room often asks stupid and irrelevant questions, like where on the run we were late. Despite it being peak hour with massive traffic congestion in the city.

Running times continue to be totally unrealistic. Nothing is being done by management or the union hierarchy regarding the resulting savage speed up in our jobs.

RW: What are the latest developments with the boss's part time push?

LB: All on the AM shift have been pushed onto part time work. Many on the AM's can't change to other shifts, as they have kids and have to travel long distances to the depot. However, I have noticed many part timers are leaving the job, as they can't cope with the low wages. As a result, they have been effectively sacked, which the union hierarchy with its legalistic approach to the issue has been totally ineffective. I have also noticed many trainees are leaving the job. They can't cope with the harshness of the job, unlike us "hardy" people. Consequently, lately there is an astronomical number of DOC's at the depot. It seems to me that the bosses would like us all to be pushed into part time casual employment. However, this strategy isn't working and its likely they will have to put on full time permanent drivers.

On another associated front, the union hierarchy is trumpeting the success of another court case, which allegedly will ensure that we keep our RDO's and our overtime can't be farmed out to the casuals, and that we keep our existing conditions for the next 3 years.

RW: How are you finding the bosses?

LB: Lately, they have been keeping themselves busy with a ludicrous "security push". They have been splurging a large sum on new alarms and putting up signage. However, anyone can get on a bus when we are doing our runs.

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

RW: How is the situation with the part timers developing?

Burwood Driver: This is the major issue at the depot at the moment. It appears the STA is keen to get as many part timers on the job as possible. Only amongst those on

these shifts is there permanency in regard to lines of work. In the case of other drivers, they are being put on the relief and losing portions of their lines of work. Whilst others are being sent to other depots. We have heard nothing from the union so far about the case, they are pursuing in the industrial court on the issue.

RW: How is the new Opal system working out?

BD: As in the case of other depots such as Waverley, we are experiencing considerable problems. The green machine tickets operate on the G3 system. Whilst the Opal operates on the GPS system. These two systems are not properly integrated. Consequently in certain areas they won't work. This has been noticed along Parramatta Road in regard to the Opal. Whilst, the green machine has been noticed not operating at Victoria Park. At our depot there are also buses which have had the Opal installed, but it has never worked. Other news is that the Baird Government is still wanting to impose \$80 fees on us, as they say we are involved in childcare. The union says they are fighting the issue. Latest news from the union is that some higher organisation than the union is taking up the issue, as it doesn't just affect bus drivers.

Letter to the Editor

"The Kindergarten Cops or Baptism of Fire"

Dear RW,

Since the new EBA (Enterprise Bargain Agreement) has commenced, I have noticed a tightening up in the STA. With different schedules, less auxiliary staff and less proper inspectors. Whilst you have to pay, for to and from work insurance, and the bosses can be unwilling to pay if you have an accident. There has also been a new nefarious push of the STA bosses. Behind this move are unseen transport bureaucrats, who are dictating to the bosses. Putting pressure on them to "perform". When they "perform", they do some silly things! They can be very cunning. Whilst, their attitude seems, "if it goes wrong, it goes wrong". Anything can happen. They are lacking in responsibility. They are putting a lot more pressure on the older drivers. These drivers are finding this unwelcome attention to be very emotionally draining. They are being put on the firing line, with their jobs very closely scrutinized and suddenly running the gauntlet. This approach is totally unwarranted. Certainly, the older drivers could benefit

say every 2 to 3 years with a couple of hours of training to modify old habits, which get in the way of coping with new initiatives like the Opal system. However, this new attitude of the bosses appears to be about setting them up for the sack. So they can be replaced with trainees, casuals and part timers. It seems the bosses have run out of ways to "up front" save dollars, so they have adopted this new "back door" strategy.

With their new "master plan", they are causing the older drivers a lot of anguish and to scratch their heads. Asking what have I done wrong? In cases where drivers have been submitted to this intense scrutiny and they have been unable to establish grounds for the sack, they are facing suspensions, pay cuts and demotions or just a bit of intimidation. It seems, we are going back to the days of the Greiner Regime, notorious for fining drivers of between \$10 to \$100 over petty matters. Its Greiner's "punishment code", but on "steroids!" These drivers are in urgent need of our industrial solidarity, via a union meeting, to get "the Kindergarten Cops" off their backs!

Concerned Driver

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of RW, we will report on the dismissal of a long serving conductor for defending himself from an attack by a gang of youths. In this issue Drivers, Station Staff and Staff from Head Office will discuss the issue. As in previous issues, names have been changed.

RW: How long was this conductor employed by the railways?

Sheona: Forty years.

Clarence: May we introduce you to two employees, who work at V/Line, who have come forward to discuss the sacking of this conductor.

Dexter and Dimity: We will not say where we work in V/Line, but we are devastated over this long term conductor being terminated.

RW: So not say what your positions are, as we don't want Human Resources tracking you down.

Sheona: Human Resources hates Sparks, because it reports on issues affecting V/Line. They want you to believe that V/Line is UTOPIA.

Dexter: The Conductor was stood down for standing up for his rights. He was being assaulted on the train and he had to obtain

the assistance of Police at Bollan to remove a gang of youths. The youths would not buy tickets and were uttering racist remarks to Asian passengers.

Dimity: Police awaited the train at Bollan and while the conductor was walking up the front of the train, he was assaulted by one of the youths. He defended himself and another conductor assisting on the train, assisted him and he too was assaulted. Police arrested the youth, after using capsicum spray.

Rastus: This happens all the time and managers know what conductors put up with. Some of our drivers have also been assaulted. V/Line expects that staff to be a discontented passenger's punching bag.

Dexter: The conductor submitted an Incident Report. Three weeks later he was called into the office of the Conductor Manager and was told by both him and Human Resources, that they did not believe his story.

Clarence: The next day, the conductor reported for his rostered shift and was told by the staff clerk to report to the Conductor Manager and was told, he was suspended from duty, pending an enquiry and was told not to discuss the matter with other employees.

Rastus and Roscoe: When the drivers found out he was being stood down, they told fellow employees. As for the Conductor Manager, we, drivers have had

issues with this person. We dislike him and we think he hasn't the guts to stand up to Human Resources.

Dexter: One of the conductors was discussing the conductor's suspension

and was called into the office of a Conductor Service Manager. Where he was informed that if he spoke to conductors over the suspension, he would front Human Resources.

Rastus and Roscoe: You know what the drivers, think of C.S.M's. They are supposed to help conductors in difficulty. In fact some of them, are known to pass snide comments about conductors.

Clarence: The way C.S.M's were selected is still a sour point amongst V/Line Staff.

RW: If you want to read about C.S.M's refer to Sparks issues 130, 132 and 134.

Rastus and Roscoe: Related to this, office walls have ears, as a number of drivers at a training course heard a loud argument. We don't know what the issue was over, but we know a person from Human Resources stormed out.

Clarence: Some staff signing on heard the stoush. We understand if it was the issue of the stood down conductor, perhaps the matter will be discussed in a future issue of RW.

Rastus: Also a number of drivers discovered a conductor laying in other conductors to the manager. These drivers were disgusted that some of the conductors would lay in their work mates.

Sheona: This is the type of culture these days at V/Line.

Dexter: It took V/Line four weeks to notify the conductor of the charges he was facing, but he received a letter outlining the charges he was facing. Yes four weeks. During this time V/Line did not contact the Police, nor the driver of the train. The conductor was not allowed to watch the CCTV of the incident.

Roscoe: You could see it was a set up. They wanted to hang the conductor.

Clarence: The conductor was defended by an organiser from the Union and whilst the conductor was waiting by the office for the organiser to show, some CSMU walked by and ignored the conductor.

Dexter: This is disgraceful, as we thought the C.S.M's would offer the conductor support.

Sheona: They had a hearing that day and said a decision would be made within the next week. It seems funny, but V/Line management says they want to save money, but whilst this conductor was stood down, look at their overtime budget. It seems they don't worry how much they spend, but they want a result of their liking.

Dimity: The decision was handed down and the conductor was told he was dismissed. He was devastated. He had done nothing wrong and was never given a final warning during his forty years of service.

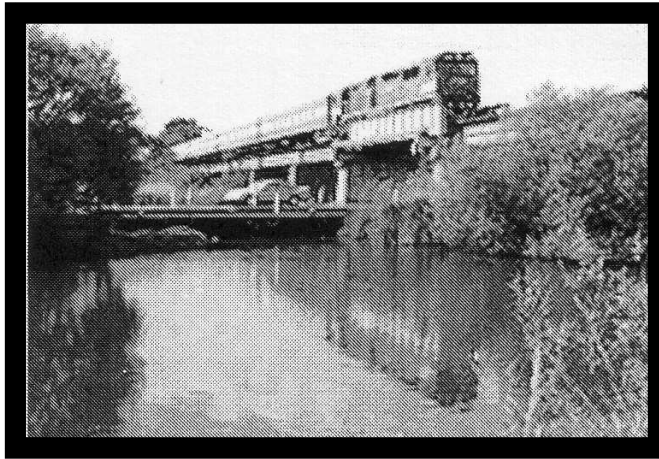
RW: Why was he sacked?

Dexter: To show Human Resources were running the show. You see the conductor has put in for a number of salaried positions and was not successful. He wrote to the previous Chief Executive and said the selection policy was corrupt.

Sparks: From that day, Human Resources had it in for him.

Sheona: The other reason is they have what is called a talent pool of applicants for conductor's positions, so sack a conductor and replace him with a person from the talent pool. It seems a coincidence that long term conductors have had to face Human Resources on minor issues.

Clarence: The next day the conductor was



informed that they expected him to hand in his uniform at the end of the week.

Rastus and Roscoe: They were out to humiliate the conductor. Think of the stress on the conductor's family.

Dexter: The union on behalf of the conductor lodged a claim of unfair dismissal with Fair Work Australia.

Dimity: The same time, a petition was taken up by V/line workers in support of the conductor. Guess what? A number of workers would not sign the petition. Also a number of conductors and station staff spread rumours that the conductor had hit the youth.

Rastus and Roscoe: You would expect this from some of the crawlers who work at V/Line.

Dimity: The union went to the Chief Executive to ask him to reconsider the conductor's dismissal.

Dexter: The Chief Executive replied that the dismissal will stand. Forty eight hours later the union delayed a Geelong train for forty minutes in protest at the conductor's dismissal.

Rastus and Roscoe: Due to other lines being shut down to Regional Express networks, buses were replacing trains. So buses could not be obtained to replace the delayed train.

Sheona: As a result of the Geelong train's delay, the media was alerted and the day's Age ran a story about the sacked conductor.

Rastus: The same time, the union was going around Spence Street talking to railway workers. You could see the tension around the place. Managers not knowing what would happen next. A rally in support of the conductor was to be held on the steps of Spencer Street.

Dimity: On the Monday before the proposed rally, the V/Line chief executive met with the union and a confidential settlement was negotiated. As a result of the settlement, the sacked conductor was given another position within V/Line. One of the terms of the settlement is he is not allowed to comment on the dispute. As a result, the proposed rally was called off.

Rastus: The conductor maybe gagged, but we are not.

RW: This dispute was caused by Human Resources, so as to frighten other employees. They did not estimate the support this conductor received around the rail industry, plus the media. In future V/Line will not be game to sack another long serving employee. Finally, we thank you Dexter and Dimity for coming forward.

Rastus and Roscoe: In concluding, this long term conductor was treated terribly. As for the conductor manager and conductor service manager, you know what the drivers think of you. As for the conductors who crawled to the manager to try and undermine support, you are just scum. Finally, as for Human Resources, you are as we said in Sparks issue 134 BLUDGERS and PARASITES.

Continued From Page 2 The code of course attacks union representation. In fact the code cannot even bring itself to mention unions by name; instead it uses the term building association. They code further restricts the right of union access to members. Union representatives can no longer have any role in onsite inductions or hold

onsite meetings which encourage workers to join the union. A delegate can no longer carry out compliance checks to ensure all members are being correctly paid their wages and entitlements. Anything onsite such as union posters, leaflets, RDO calendars, stickers, flags etc that encourage workers to join a union are against the code.

On top of all this Tony Abbott has created a revamped Building Industry watchdog headed up by anti-union ideologue Nigel Hadgkiss. This watchdog will have more money and powers than ever before to ensure compliance with the code. There can be no doubt that the long term aim of this watchdog is to remove unions from work-sites altogether.

What can we do?

These are just the broad outlines. Seventy six clauses in the Victorian ETU contracting EBA are non-code compliant. Tony Abbott and the employer organisations who have feed him these polices have been clear in what they want this code and associated amendments to the Fair Work Act to achieve. Big cuts to wages and conditions, the end of penalty rates and union strength reduced to next to nothing. In fact they would prefer unions disappeared altogether.

This upcoming attack by Tony Abbott and Liberal has the ability to destroy 50 years of hard won conditions in a matter of years. He is banking on our weakness and that the fresh new layers of construction workers will not stick together and fight. That we will allow ourselves to be robbed and walked over by those who have more than they could ever hope to spend. If we want see our and the rest of Australia wages driven downwards in a race to the bottom all we have to do is nothing.

But I believe there are more than enough working men and women of character in this country and amongst construction workers in particular that we can not only fight and win, we can use this battle to get back on the front foot. Now is the time to prepare, to discuss strategies and tactics and be ready to do whatever it takes to defend our own livelihoods and our fellow worker's future.

Here are some suggested actions of mine:

Step one: The construction unions need to do a mass mail-out to all members informing them of the code and calling them to mass meetings. Most members do not even know about the code.

Step two: Conduct a protracted nation industrial campaign that throws the construction industry into chaos. We should be fighting right now to stop this code even getting on the table. Revolving overtime bans, health and safety audits, mass sick days, rallies, go slows. It time to hit the construction bosses in the only place they care about, their bank accounts.

I am well aware we have union leaderships that bar a few exception will not carry out any strategy except the one guaranteed to lose. Do nothing and elect the ALP. These officials only care about saving their own jobs. The rank & file construction worker cannot sit back and allow this to happen.

Dare to struggle dare to win if you don't fight you lose.

If you would like to read a far more detailed account of the code, its history and its impact please contact me on sa_miller@optusnet.com.au and I will send you a copy of the full version.

more if you are on facebook see:

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/simon-millar/analysis-of-tony-abbotts-code-and-their-plan-to-break-the-construction-unions/939306482751255>

Election Consulting P/L: Is your vote being manipulated?

Voting is undergoing a technology transition that opens up some very big questions as to just how fair the voting of the future will be. Naturally your vote is fairly worthless anyway, but most people expect that elections are at least not rigged.

Electronic voting is something governments have been after for some time (mainly to cut costs). To this end the NSW government put the idea to tender for the 2011 election. Electronic voting was used in remote locations in 2011 with plans to expand the system called eLect in the 2015 NSW election. The company responsible "Everyone Counts Pty Ltd", through its NSW subsidiary "Election Consulting" at Edgecliff is now also conducting voting electronically for Enterprise Bargaining Agreements.

Indeed it seems the Labor Party is something of a friend of EC, they were used during a glittering 2012 party function surrounding the US election to carry out an unofficial ballot before the actual result was announced (Obama was re-elected). Everyone Counts Pty Ltd is a US company based in San Diego (with offices in Canada and the UK) which boasts as its Chief of Products and Partnerships Aaron Contorer a former executive of Microsoft. Everyone Counts other clients include the United States Department of Defence and the United Kingdom's Ministry of Justice.

In Australia the company operates out of a post office box at Carlton North in Victoria. Election Consulting lists this same PO Box as its Victorian office.

In 2012 the Everyone Counts electronic system was selected for electronic voting in the Oscars. It was developed in Partnership with Price Waterhouse. You would think therefore that it would be pretty much beyond reproach. However in 2013 there were serious concerns raised about the system as people couldn't log in and it was felt that the technology would significantly decrease voting as older voters would be detracted from using it. There were also considerable concerns about hackers compromising the system.

Prior to use in the 2007 NSW election the eLect system was audited by BMM Australia, an audit that some commentators at

the time criticized as containing broad factual errors and oversights. It was claimed that an electronic system would be vulnerable to constant security threats and flaws.

These examples pretty much demonstrate that there is little point in hiring one corporation with vested interests to check another. History has shown that the auditing of corporations by other corporations produces flawed results,

therefore for electronic voting to even begin to become viable it must be subjected to vigorous transparent public scrutiny. Without it we are looking at a brave new world where the rich and powerful in our societies simply decide who holds office, or whether working people accept or reject Enterprise Bargaining Agreements.

There is also the risk that individuals at the IT company hosting the system (not audited in anyway) use administrative passwords to simply alter data. Election Consulting uses an offshore owned

hosting company ozfrontiers which is owned by webvisions from Singapore.

Election Consulting makes it sound like common sense: internet cloud-based voting for efficiency, but this all begs another question - what if this large corporation (or any other performing the same duties) simply decided to skewer the results based



on an agenda put forward by their various shady clients? There are very real concerns that a corporation with its various divested interests is placed in a position to influence the outcome of elections.

Electronic voting does nothing to benefit the working class, its use only makes life easy for the ruling classes and the bosses

who really don't want us to have any say at all - there is a very real risk that the influence of corporations in elections may become much more direct because of it.

Sean

Italy: Toward the Social General Strike

Unity in the struggle, unity in opposition, unity in the social reconstruction of freedoms and rights.

Predictably assurances spread and propagated by the handful of politicians, businessmen, financiers and Confindustria (Employers Organisation) of the chance to recover from what was called the crisis proved to be a colossal lie.

With a cumbersome task, the corporate media has been pushing the propaganda that in the name of "we need to reduce the public debt" or "we need to break down the Fees", "Europe asks us", "we must respect the constraints imposed on the deficit", we must proceed with the total cancellation of most workers' rights. Sacrificed on the altar of profit of the few and mortgaged any future, what we expect will be a misery becoming increasingly common in the coming decades; you can never go back to the previous living standards of living. The restructuring of capital has meant the sale of workers labour to the lowest bidder, close to slavery, based on the blackmail of the most violent competition among the poor.

The Jobs Act is nothing more than an attempt to break those final pockets of workers resistance that still practice solidarity in the struggle against employers, break the horizontal links between workers and put them in a position of not being able to negotiate collectively their social conditions, jeopardizing the role of the union bureaucracy as an accomplice of the choices of capital.

Today, the streets are filled with workers who have never abdicated! This is confirmed by the demonstrations and national strikes in schools and against the Jobs Act (17 September 10 October 24 October and 25 October, November 14, ...), logistics (16 October), the bars (metal workers in Turin October 17, Bologna, October 16 ...).

With the difficulties that the attack creates for the main trade union organization, therefore, we respond with our ability to mobilize, knowing that building a

balance of power favourable to our class goes through a long and meticulous, grass roots struggles to reconnect and experiences, get to work the intelligence and the will of all in order to reconstruct the participation of employees broken down into too many sectors.

But we know that will not be the government to solve the problems of the workers. Those who are now sitting on the benches



of parliament cannot be the solution to social problems that have contributed to the outbreak; the European political class, poor and arraffona, is an expression of big business, in the process of restructuring and aware that the levels of accumulation are guaranteed only by force against the workers.

Millions of unemployed, underemployed, are blackmailed, the poor are the picture of a Europe overwhelmed by the violence of the capitalist crisis, there is no sign of saviours on the horizon.

Once again it's up to the men and women who suffer from this crisis to build the political and trade union power to defend the working class. The arrogance of power can of the class of politicians and businessmen is now laid bare.

Today, after the tragedy resulting from the law of the Fornero Monti's government which provides a labour sentence to life for employees and for life, the exclusion from the labour force of millions of young people (the law passed by the same politi-

cal class that now sits on the benches of the Golden parliament), which the bureaucratic unions have refused to fight. Yet the workers, the youth, the unemployed, the lower classes who take to the road in the streets and squares all over Europe to create conflict and give hope in a response of solidarity and egalitarian, democratic and libertarian. As always, is the commitment of all to change the existing state of

things. And certainly not to a bureaucratic and political class discredited and useless to today's challenges to European workers.

The Jobs Act, the Stability Pact, the "good school of Renzi" and social policies of this government cannot be changed; you cannot create illusions and sell for good social mediations unacceptable.

The revival of the class struggle also involves the struggle against the governments of the financial oligarchy, and therefore also against the government of Renzi. In the workplace and in the territories, welding the different subjectivities and generations in a global mobilization, valuing diversity in trade unionism accumulating the ability to fight and plan from below, to build the libertarian alternative.

Towards the general strike and social world of work, in the territories, in the squares.

Unity in the struggle, unity in opposition, unity in the social reconstruction of the freedoms and rights.

Federation of Anarchist Communists

October 21, 2014

Related Link: <http://www.fdca.it>

BRITAIN TODAY

21/10/14

Demonstrators shut down workfare contractor Learndirect, as the company cancelled its session for jobseekers forced onto the government's compulsory work for your benefits programmes.

Learndirect's office in Conference House, Morrison Street was besieged by around 60 protesters denouncing the slave labour schemes. Learndirect are owned by giant private equity firm LDC, in turn part of Lloyds Banking Group, and are providers for both the Community Work Placements and Mandatory Work Activity schemes.

Blockading workfare exploiter Learndirect

Employees from Zion Security were brought in especially to guard the building and police attended. The large Regus business centre housing Learndirect saw normal comings and goings virtually grind to a halt. When demonstrators discovered a few visitors were sneaking in the back entrance, we set up a picket there too, and two cars were blockaded.

Demo organisers Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty and supporters from the capital were joined by contingents from Dundee Against Welfare Sanctions, Glasgow Anarchist Collective and Scottish Unemployed Workers' Network. Speakers explained that the workfare schemes not only exploit the jobseekers and disabled claimants forced to labour for nothing, they also attacked the wages and conditions of all workers.

The speakers were upbeat: "We are winning the battle against workfare." Over 400 charities have declared they wish to "keep volunteering voluntary" and are boycotting all workfare schemes - including the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Edinburgh Volunteer Centre, Shelter and Christian Aid. A member of Voluntary Action Scotland picked up campaign material to take back to a nearby conference of charities and NGO's. Cancer Research UK, after being approached by ECAP, recently told Learndirect they no longer wanted any of their workfare placements.

NEVER FACE THEM ALONE

The demo lasted over two hours and the Rhythms of Resistance samba band raised enthusiasm between speeches. A member of ECAP urged claimants facing harass-

profits. We call on everyone, in or out of employment, to take a stand against policies which are robbing the poor to make the rich even richer."

Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty distributed around 500 copies of a leaflet SLAVEDIRECT, which, as this extract shows, condemned not only workfare but also wage slavery: "Work makes you free" declared the Nazis, a view echoed by most politicians today. Let's nail this lie. Employment - working for a boss - equals exploitation. If workplaces were run by their workers, in a society geared to human



ment and sanctions at the Jobcentre or being subjected to disability benefits examinations to take along a friend or adviser for support. "This is your right, never face them alone." Dundee Against Welfare Sanctions revealed the harsh choice facing many claimants they meet - pay for heating or pay for eating.

Speakers were clear that workfare was an intrinsic part of the government's wider austerity programme. "While handing out tax cuts to the better-off, the government are waging war on the poor," said ECAP spokeswoman Esther MacDonald. "Workfare, sanctions, attacks on the disabled and benefits cuts are all part of the state campaign to drive down the cost of labour so companies can make more

need, then work could be an expression of creativity. Instead today the bosses are using the crisis of the capitalist profit system to intensify exploitation, inside and outside the workplace."

The Edinburgh action was part of a Britain-wide week of action against workfare, with demonstrations and on-line actions - on the same day in London the Haringey Solidarity Group and Boycott Workfare occupied workfare provider Urban Futures.

Ireland Today

There is massive opposition across the country to the government's attempt to impose water charges on us. Not least because we already pay for water through our taxes. This is simply yet another austerity tax. We have put up with years of austerity, cutbacks and extra taxes – all imposed on us to pay off the gambling debts of bankers and financial speculators. Hundreds of thousands of people are now saying 'No More!'.

People also realise that this is an attempt to prepare our water service for privatisation, which will ultimately end in multinational companies owning it, charging us exorbitant prices and making super profits.

But we don't have to accept this new charge. We CAN defeat it. To achieve that, there are a few things which we will all have to do:

Refuse to Pay

Hundreds of thousands of households have refused to register with Irish Water. Whether you have chosen to return the form unopened, ignore it, tear it up or even if you have filled it in and returned it, when the bill arrives in January, do not pay. If enough of us refuse to pay, the government will have no alternative but to scrap their plans.

Remember:

- They cannot disconnect your water. They are threatening that they will reduce the flow to a trickle, but to do this they have to fit a device to your stopcock. It is very easy to either prevent them from doing this or to remove the device. An organised campaign can make it impossible for them to carry out this threat.

- They cannot deduct the charge from your social welfare or from your wages as they did with the property tax. Because the primary reason for imposing the water charge is to privatise the service, they are very unlikely to change the law to allow Revenue to deduct this charge. That would make it impossible for them to sell the service.

- They may take non-payers to court to try to get a judgement for payment. But they cannot take hundreds of thousands of people to court, especially due to the fact that the Irish court system is overloaded and has difficulty, even now, handling civil cases. And if they do take anyone to court, we must all be ready to protest in our thousands outside any court hearings.

-There is no point in waiting until after the next election in the hope that whatever government is elected will abolish the charge. If we pay now, the charge will be established by the time of the next election. Before the last election, both Fine Gael and Labour said they were opposed to the introduction of both the property tax and the water charge. We all know what happened when they got elected. If enough of us refuse to pay, whatever party or parties are in government will have no option but to abolish the charge.



Protest

The key to defeating the government is non-payment. To give everyone the confidence to join in the refusal to pay, and to let the government know that we are serious and determined, large public protests are very important. There are several campaign groups protesting against the charge. Take part in national and local protests called against the

charge. Use those protests to make contact with other people opposing the charge in your area. Talk to people and try to convince them that refusal to pay the charge is the way to win.

Organise

The water charge will not be defeated by political parties or organisations, by

trade unions or by community groups – although all have important parts to play – it will be defeated by ordinary people, people just like you. And every single individual has a part to play. We did not manage to defeat the property tax because not enough of us stuck with non-payment, and not enough of us got out and protested so the government was able to change the law to give Revenue the power to deduct it from our incomes.

Let's not let that happen again. We should each consider ourselves an 'organiser' of the fight against this charge. If we are refusing to pay, it is in our interest to convince our neighbours, workmates and family members that they too should refuse to pay. It is also in our interest to convince others to join the protests against the charge.

In many communities, people have organised against and resisted the installation of water meters. If they haven't been installed in your area yet, this may be something you and your neighbours could do. Find out what campaign groups are organised in your area. If there isn't one, maybe you and your neighbours could call a meeting and set one up.

If we don't oppose it, we can't defeat it

There are, of course, no guarantees. Of course, the possibility exists that the government will attempt to take people to court over non-payment. Of course, the possibility exists that water pressure will be reduced and that the law could be changed to allow water cut offs. Of course, the

possibility exists that we could lose and ultimately end up having to pay the bills anyway.

But all those 'possibilities' presume that we lose, that we fail to get enough people together to effectively resist these charges. Each of us now has a choice – do nothing and the charge is introduced and the water system is eventually privatised OR refuse to pay and join your neighbours in building a campaign of opposition capable of defeating the charge and dealing a blow to the government.

Polish Labour News

Belchatow Hospital Workers' Strike

Cleaners and kitchen staff from Belchatow Hospital will start an indefinite strike on Monday, November 3. The action was called due to the fact that several people on sick leave lost their jobs. The workers have disabilities and were part of the ZSP (Polish Syndicalist Union) in the hospital.

The company servicing the hospital, which employs these workers and about 100 other people in the hospital continued to cut staff and in all, 30 people lost their jobs. The rest of the workers decided to join the strike and on Monday, 140 people will walk off the job. The Director may have to evacuate the hospital.

The members of the ZSP won their jobs back after the last service provider did not accept their transfer. They spent three months unemployed, occupying the hospital and protesting.

Finally, a new public tender was held for the services and the workers were rehired. However this company also is trying to cut the staff and force the rest of the workers to take on their tasks. The average working time in the hospital is 200 hours per month. Workers with disabilities are entitled to a 35-hour work week.

Various problems occurred when some people took sick leave or wanted to take leave for rehabilitation. (All of the workers in the ZSP union have some sort of disability.) Although it is illegal to fire people on sick leave and people with disabilities must not be forced to do a lot of extra work and must be given time for rehabilitation, the price for doing so could be their job.

The workers are demanding:

- * rehiring the fired workers
- * reduction of working hours
- * proper compensation for work in eve-



ning hours

- * proper documentation of working time
- * the right to take leave they are entitled to for rehabilitation
- * safety clothes

They are also demanding to be hired directly by the hospital. They had previously been so and some had worked for the hospital for 30-40 years.

You can support the hospital by:

- * picketing at a Polish embassy (and demanding the government stop the policies of outsourcing)
- * sending a solidarity message or photo to the workers (is@zsp.net.pl)
- * spreading information about the struggle
- * sending an email (in any language) through the online form here: http://www.szpital-belchatow.pl/component/option,com_contact/Itemid,3/
- * sending a protest through this form: <http://soli.zsp.net.pl/protest-letter/emailpage/>
- * supporting the struggle financially

Donations can be sent to:

Jakub Gawlikowski

(PL) 05 1140 2004 0000 3702 4238 2269

BRE Bank S.A. Retail Banking, al. Mickiewicza 10, 90-050 ?ód?

BIC/SWIFT: BREXPLPWMUL

SORT CODE: 11402004

Write: BEL

STOP PRESS: Workers who recently lost their jobs may be back to work soon as boss promises to re-establish pre-cut employment levels. (See Page

New Zealand General Election

The General Election in New Zealand/Aotearoa took place at the end of September and so its all over and done with.

More accurately, the ritual of deciding who will politically rule over us has ended. The election of our bosses in the workplace never happened. The end result in both cases is the same. We are faced with a ruling class that feels emboldened to attack workers when it senses opportunities to do so. The latest piece of ammuni-

tion the government is preparing to lob our way comes in the form of a bland sounding piece of legislation, the Employment Relations Amendment Bill. This law was delayed prior to the election, due to the resignation of the now ex-MP criminal John Banks, but will be enacted within the next 100 days. What is the bill about?

The first thing to be aware of is that the bill does not represent an innovative departure from the various anti-worker laws that

have been enacted over the past 30 years by both Labour and their rivals in the traditionally more right-wing National Party. That doesn't make it benign. It is a refining of existing legislation that operates alongside other recent laws such as that allowing workers to be fired without explanation within 90 days of being hired, with no right of redress. It is an attack that seeks to take away the few nominal collective protections that exist.

At present there is a requirement for workers to be included in a collective agreement within their first 30 days of employment but this will be stripped. In addition, union

representatives will need the employer's consent to enter the workplace. It doesn't take much imagination to see how this allows bosses to get away with all sorts of mischief and mayhem. Unions will be unable to directly confirm the conditions under which workers do their jobs.

The provision that has drawn the most notice has been the increase in 'flexibility' over rest and meal breaks. It may be true that some employers will choose not to invoke this provision as it may not suit them. However, it also enables them to use this as a petty means of victimising any workers who won't play along with their various plans. Again, the buzz word of 'flexibility' applies in relation to the bosses being able to change workplace ar-

through face-to-face discussions, public meetings, leafleting, using internet resources such as Facebook or the alternative media.

Knowledge alone is not enough to make change happen. It requires organisation and that is a trickier area to sort out. Some workers are still organised in hierarchical unions with well-paid full time organisers whose task is to negotiate the rate of exploitation of those they claim to represent. The mentality of many, is to put faith in the same political class that has collectively created the web of laws over recent decades. For example, prior to the election the President of the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) Helen Kelly was putting faith in the idea that "In 100 days if Labour and

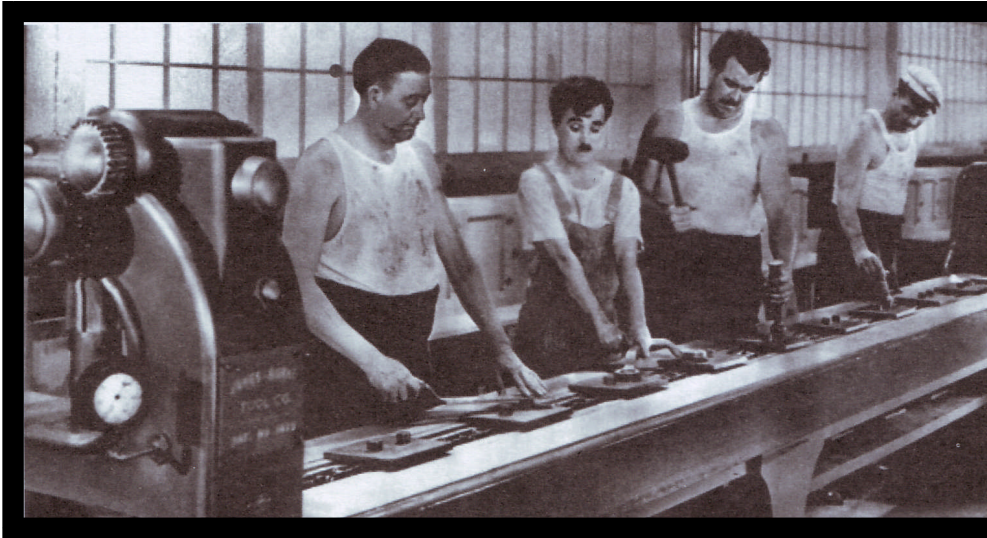
when National introduced the Employment Contracts Act in 1991. Labour spent 9 years in power during the first decade of this century. In that period they introduced the Employment Relations Act of 2000 which barely modified the 1991 legislation. Throughout their time in power Labour happily took donations from businesses, including billionaires such as Owen Glenn. With a decades-long track record like that, why should anyone put their faith in them as protectors of working people?!

The Labour Party in its very early days made a rhetorical commitment to doing away with the current economic system through reforming it. This had appeal to many workers at the time when it was a fresh, untested idea. However anarchists have always known where that approach would end. Now nearly a hundred years later, Labour is a collection of squabbling factions comprising professional politicians who simply want to manage the system. Being temporarily a little less aggressive than National in one small aspect is hardly a brilliant reason to support them. If anything, it exposes the tweedledumb/tweedledumber nature of how things work and the need to search for ways to break out of that false choice.

Unions as they are now, have weaknesses. Not just in the sense that they currently have limited social power but also in the way that they are inherently structured in favour of the status quo.

They are bureaucratic, top-down organisations with leaders who use union positions as jumping off points for seats in parliament or even into the managing of businesses. In short, while current unions may do some good deeds, they are not fighting organisations but designed to work within the economic system. While they can't really be vehicles for the longer term change that's required, we have to deal with the contemporary reality that for some workers the current unions are all that exist as a means to deal with the bosses onslaughts.

For those of us in traditional unions the challenge is to combat attempts to channel hopes into voting for political parties and donating time and money to them. We may have to sign the occasional petition, join a mildly irritating demo outside parliament or participate in a one hour stop work meeting but let's not fool ourselves that this is sufficient. We need to look for opportunities to put forward alternatives that rely on workers ourselves having control over whatever forms of struggle we can develop. We can't afford to 'play by the rules' when the rules the government are using, so heavily favour the bosses. When we can, we should look for chances to build broad alliances with other workers



rangements as often as they choose. Although strikes are incredibly rare in today's environment, this bill also seeks to undermine the effect of withdrawing labour, by requiring notification of strikes ahead of time and allows bosses to decrease worker's pay during partial strikes. There are other onerous aspects of the bill, but the features mentioned are sufficient to get the idea of what we can expect and who will gain from these changes. In short, it isn't those of us who rely solely on the jobs we do to eat every day (something we can't easily be flexible about) and pay our household bills (try arguing for 'flexibility' with a debt collection agency!). The real question is...how do we fight the changes?

We don't have all the answers. We also have to be realistic and acknowledge that many workers are currently demoralised, uninformed and to some extent dis-organised or unorganised. The first part of any fight back has to therefore be a straight forward educational one of telling each other about the new law and what it means for us. This can be done directly

Greens are elected all this negative employment law will be reversed". This came in a press release labelled 'Worker's Despair at National's Lack of Fairness'. This terminology highlights how she sees her role, namely to get whoever rules over us to please be a little nicer if they wouldn't mind.

Labour and the Greens took a pounding at the polls. Even if they had found themselves in the dominant position National is now in, it is highly unlikely given their history, that they would have had the backbone or willingness to literally overturn all the negative labour laws that exist.

The third Labour Government in the 1970's brought in an Industrial Relations Bill that retained many of the anti-strike provisions earlier National initiated legislation had established. This allowed them to de-register unions and curtail union militancy, which they did. Then the fourth Labour Government brought in the Labour Relations Act in 1987 and the State Sector Act in 1988, the latter in particular being introduced without warning or negotiation and was designed to erode conditions for public employees.

Anti-worker measures and attacks on collective bargaining were toughened further

at the grass roots level. This could be within existing unions, inside new radical ones or non-union community based organisations of our own creation.

Related Link: <http://www.awsm.nz>

* Aotearoa (N.Z.), Workers Solidarity Movement

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

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

Rise of Bolshevism within CNT

“In terms of ideas” the “immediate priority was halting the drift towards the bolshevization of the CNT”. The Leninist Coup was also a global propaganda coup and the communists “enjoyed widespread enthusiasm and support before 1921 when Lenin instructed the international communist parties to participate in parliamentary election. Before 1921 many anarchists, syndicalists and socialists saw the soviet Russia in terms of a classless society run by democratic workers and peasants councils or soviets...” The final break with Moscow came in July 1921 when the mandate of the CNT delegation to the Moscow conference was rejected by the communist dictatorship. “The delegates’ mandate was to ‘support the principle of dictatorship of the proletariat’—but a dictatorship exercised by the unions, not by a party...” (3: p. 119-21 & 151-155).

I’m not at all sure that I like the idea of a dictatorship by any societal sector, political or economic organization. I believe that anarchism gains its legitimacy and revolutionary power only when the community, industry and ecological/cultural regions self-organize together in a spirit of harmony and equality.

The emergence of pro-Moscow Marxist-syndicalism was an unwelcome and poisonous distraction for the CNT and split the syndicalist movement at a time when it was faced an unprecedented growth in membership as well as



state-capitalist terror and repression.

Epilogue: Pistoleros France 1976-7

For reasons only known to the author and publisher Chronicles ends in a cryptic, puzzling and slightly perverse way. A pity because this very long work is for the most part exceptionally well written and presented. It is certainly the most readable and important work on Spanish anarcho-syndicalism to appear in the English language for many years.

McHarg decided to write his Chronicles in 1976 following the murder of his life-long friend on a Paris street in that year.

What McHarg did between 1925 and 1976 isn’t clear though a few pages provide interesting details of his commendable role in World War II (1939-45).

The most revelatory but also the most unsatisfactory parts of this long work are his accounts of the events of 1976-77 which are somewhat randomly interspersed throughout all three books. Undoubtedly, these passages should have been brought together as one at the end to form a coherent epilogue with a satisfactory conclusion.

The subject matter is however of considerable interest to anarcho-syndicalists. It opens up a can of worms regarding the mysterious disappearance of considerable funds held by the CNT following its retreat into French exile after the Victory of Fascism with the end of the Civil War in 1939. These pages also provide details of how the post 1939 resistance to Franco was funded and assisted from France by McHarg’s murdered friend by forging currency, documents and other activities.

The main problem with McHarg’s approach is that I can’t separate nor judge the degree of fact and fiction in this book which is neither a conventional (objective) history nor entirely an (subjective) autobiography.

Strategy and Struggle: Debate within the Solidarity Federation: Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 21st Century Published by the Solidarity Federation

This pamphlet consists of a presentation by the Brighton Local of the UK Solidarity Federation, which attempts to clarify what anarcho-syndicalism means in practical terms in a 21st Century context in the UK with replies by several members of SF.

It sketches out the basic ideas of anarcho-syndicalism and leftist tendencies critique of syndicalism: the Friends of Durruti Group, the Platformist, the Councilist and the Ultra Left.

The first tendency, which was a group of rank and file CNT (Spanish anarcho-syndicalist union) members which criticised the CNT during the Civil

War and Revolution 1936-39, for failing to adopt and carry out a revolutionary programme at this time, the Platformists favoured forming a sort of anarchist “party” to help establish syndicalist structures in existing bureaucratic unions and exert influence, the third, sees mass revolutionary workers organisations emerging “spontaneously” in the context of “mass strikes”. The final tendency considers all unions inherently bureaucratic and collaborationist with the capitalist setup and completely new ultra democratic organisations need to be established in periods of revolutionary upheaval such as workers councils.

The authors go on to differentiate between non permanent organisations which exist between periods of high levels of class struggle and non-permanent mass and minority organisations which exist at these times. They proceed to discuss various examples of these different types. They appear to favour the “councilist” tendency which supports the above “non-permanent” mass organisations as most appropriate to the revolutionary project and overthrow of the capitalist setup.

The rest of the pamphlet comprises, a presentation of the SF industrial strategy and replies/contributions by three other SF members: Tony from Manchester SF, Tom from Brighton SF and Neil from North London SF.

Spontaneity or Organisation?

The most interesting aspects of the pamphlet stem from Tony and Neil’s contributions on the issue of “spontaneity” in regard to the class struggle, the general role of syndicalist unions, formation and workplace activity.

The worship of “spontaneity” is a characteristic of many leftist sects. Such groups are incapable of any serious long range work to assist workers in strategically important industrial sectors, and prefer to focus on any trendy issue to “recruit” uni students to “build the sect” or any workers’ struggle going or act as activoid super heroes/cum social workers in helping out tiny groups of workers in peripheral sectors with grievances. Whilst “waiting for something big to happen” in the way of workers struggles and social upheavals.

Tony in his reply, emphasises the importance of organisation to workers resistance to the bosses based on his own workplace experience at a railway depot in the UK and that we can’t just rely on “spontaneity” involving workers taking direct action and to self organise. He examines the history of the British labour

movement and points out the rareness of major “spontaneous” workers self organising and direct action. He goes on to show how in his workplace, important achievements in the class struggle were won due to a history of militant organisation. Whilst in other depots in the railways lacking this tradition and organisation, workers were in a much worse situation.

He proceeds to outline how syndicalist unions are not monolithic organisations that



seek to organise every aspect of human activity. Whilst the role of syndicalist unions in revolutionary upheavals is to provide a sort of infrastructure to assist working class organising and furthering the revolutionary project such as assisting the spread and effectiveness of the Social General Strike.

Another interesting aspect of Tony’s contribution is his sketch of the role of negotiations in syndicalist union workplace activity – as means to determine the im-

pact of direct action on bosses and psychological warfare against the bosses. Effectively rebutting the notion held by the authors of the pamphlet in regard to their critique of “permanent” mass workers organisations. That participation in negotiations leads to unions accommodation with capitalism.

In Neil’s discussion of groupings such as the SF which claim to be initiatives to establish syndicalist unions and contemporary anarchist “parties” he is oblivious to the social base of these groups in the contemporary UK and other parts of the Anglo World. In particular, large slices being workers with high levels of autonomy in their jobs often connected to the university milieu, the leftist fringe, long term unemployed and students.

As a result of this social base, such groups can be more pseudo churches focusing on massaging their very precious micro bureaucracies and navel gazing and involved in all manner of issues under the sun and dabbling in bourgeois “identity politics” and bizarre left subcultural rituals.

He presents a rather simplistic notion of how syndicalist unions would form. Involving the SF being the nucleus of such a syndicalist union movement. Oblivious to wider issues of the class struggle and the need for long range strategic organising, within the existing TUC (Trade Union Council) bureaucratic unions and the establishing of a favourable terrain for grass roots activity and initiative within them to facilitate the emergence of mass syndicalist unionism..

In conclusion, the pamphlet provides a useful overview of various criticisms of syndicalism. It throws some valuable light on aspects of syndicalist union industrial activity and general role. However, it fails to provide an adequate “realistic” discussion of how a syndicalist union movement would emerge in the contemporary UK.

Mark McGuire

UKRAINE NEWS

The protesters in eastern Ukraine have faced violent repression and threats from the separatist governments whose policies they are challenging.

On 4 October, local people in Sverdlovsk (in Luhansk region, in separatist-controlled territory) protested at the headquarters of the security service of Ukraine (SBU) about the shortage of wage payments and of food, the collapse of the

banking system, and against plunder and robberies by the paramilitaries. That night, protesters’ houses were attacked with hand grenades.

On 5 October, the protesters went out again, demanding the payment of wages and the restoration of the city infrastructure. Armed men shot at the demonstrators. Three people went to hospital with gunshot wounds.

These events were reported on informator.lg.ua, a site set up in May by journalists from Luhansk, who left the re-

gion after some of their colleagues were kidnapped and tortured. The site reports news received from the occupied area, as “an answer to the pro-Russian extremists’ attempts to silence independent media and journalists”. (Details here in Russian.)

Meanwhile, the government of the “Donetsk People’s Republic” has adopted a new taxation system, which – just as in Russia itself – is anti-social. For example, the income tax and the tax on enterprises in the republic will not be progressive: the tax rate will be fixed (re-

See Page 18

MAURIZIO GARINO 1892-1977

A short biography of Maurizio Garino, one of the leading anarchist animators of the Italian factory council movement of 1919-20.

Maurizio Garino was born in November 1892, the son of Michele and Nicoletta Chiglioni in Ploaghe, Sardinia.

In 1895 the family moved to Turin and in 1900 to Cassine. After elementary school and a short stay in a religious school Maurizio became an apprentice carpenter and then a pattern-maker mechanic.

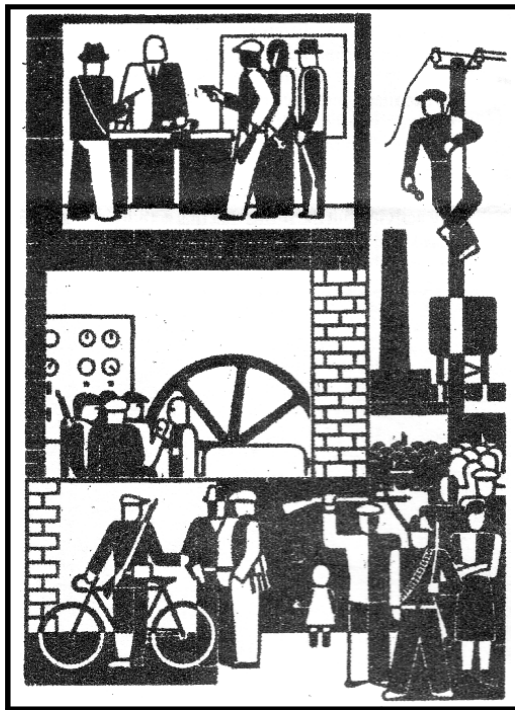
He returned to Turin in 1906, and in 1908 joined the Turinese Socialist Youth. Adopting an abstentionist position, he moved towards anarchism with the agitation around the case of the Spanish libertarian teacher Francisco Ferrer in autumn 1909. In 1910 he was with Pietro Ferrero one of the founders of the Modern School, modelled on Ferrer's ideas, which was a cultural circle for the political and cultural education of the Turinese working class.

He was involved in the agitation against the war in Tripoli. He took part in the strike in 1912 against the withdrawal of privileges and union derecognition in exchange for the "English Saturday".

He joined the new union SUM (United Metalworkers Union) created by revolutionary syndicalists. The strike led to a serious defeat after two months. The negative experience of the defeat led him and Ferrero to argue for staying in the FIOM union, after the founding of the anarcho-syndicalist USI in November 1912. The great strike in the car industry in spring 1913 led to a victory for the FIOM and the eclipse of the SUM, with a Turinese section of the USI, under the leadership of Ilario Margarita, going over to the FIOM.

In June 1914 Maurizio had a major role in the strikes during the Red Week. Arrested for violence, threats and carrying of arms, he managed to be released. During the war he defended anti-interventionist positions. These anti-war positions meant a constant changing of jobs. He avoided the draft because of his classification as a skilled worker in a key industry.

Between one lay-off and another, he was in the front line of the agitation in the workplaces and took part in the movements in the factories in August 1917.



Within the Turinese section of the FIOM, he and Ferrero organised a Libertarian Group. The main fear of the reformist socialists was an alliance between the Libertarian Group and the Maximalist current within the Socialist party. In fact, at the beginning of 1919, that started to happen.

Maurizio took a leading part in the factory council movement. As a member of the

Turinese group, he attended the founding conference of the Unione Comunisti Anarchici Italiana (UCAI) at Florence in 1919 along with Errico Malatesta. The UCAI later became the Unione Anarchici Italiana (UAI).

In December of the same year he participated in the extraordinary congress of the CDL union at Turin putting forward a motion in favour of the factory councils. In May 1920 at the national convention of the FIOM in Genoa, he condemned the lack of solidarity with the Turinese metalworkers.

The following June together with Ferrero he took part in the Conference of the Piedmontese anarchist movement. In July he attended the Bologna Congress of the UAI where he formulated anarchist positions on the factory councils.

In 1921 he started work in a cooperative. This was later turned into a joint-stock company in order to avoid fascistisation. During the fascist period, he was constantly arrested and persecuted.

His close comrade Ferrero was murdered during the fascist attack on Turin on 18 December 1922. After 18 September 1943 he started re-organising the Turinese anarchist movement and set up the Circle of Social Studies. He took part in the fighting against the Nazi-Fascists. Arrested in October 1944, he was released thanks to an exchange of prisoners.

After the liberation he continued to take part in the activities of the Piedmontese anarchist movement, and restarted the Modern School, and was also involved in intense cultural activity with the organisation of various conferences on many topics. However, these various cultural activities had far less effect on the Turinese working class than they had in the past.

He died in Turin in 1977.

Cont. From Page 12

Although we should wait until the con-

tracts are actually signed to celebrate, workers won significant demands after refusing to work on Monday. 130 cleaners and meal servers gathered in the hospital lobby at 7AM, delivering their demands to the hospital director and demanding that the boss of the cleaning service company come to the hospital to negotiate.

After hours of negotiations, the boss promised to increase employment and some workers should get their jobs back. There were various problems at the workplace, but the action was caused by the fact that about 30 people lost their jobs and the other workers were expected to cover this work. As it is, many workers have a lot of overtime, some of it unpaid and some not paid at the correct rate.

The quick resolution of the situation was surprising to most. Some are cautious to celebrate until everything is implemented as promised. The boss was reluctant to sign anything and only did so after the workers refused to work until everything was put in writing. However the cleaning companies have changed 3 times in the past year, so the situation is still precarious as nobody knows how long the work with this firm will last.

Anarchism in Uruguay

Unlike other countries in South America, Uruguay was known as a stronghold of bourgeois democracy and social reform. Under its President Battle y Ordenez, a whole raft of legislation was introduced in the mid 1910s.

He separated Church from State, banned crucifixes in hospitals, removed references to God and the Bible from public oaths, gave widespread rights to unions and political parties and organisations, brought in the eight hour day and universal suffrage, introduced unemployment benefits, legalised divorce, created more high schools, promised and practised no residency laws against exiled anarchists and other radicals, opened universities to women, and led a campaign to take away the control of industry and land from foreign capitalists (the British capitalists had huge influence in Uruguay) and nationalised private monopolies. This disoriented some elements within the fairly strong anarchist movement in Uruguay.

Between 1948 and 1954 the working class in Uruguay was comparatively well off, with good conditions and pay, in a country presided over by a ruling class with a liberal outlook. This all changed between 1955 and 1959 with an increasing cost of living. Inflation began to rise sharply and strike waves broke out. A wage freeze was introduced, The Army broke strikes and emergency laws were introduced. The excuse for this was the supposed threat from the leftist guerrillas of the Tupamaros, but in reality to repress the agitation in the workplaces.

Bordaberry came to power in 1971 and gave increasing powers to the Army in the fight against the Tupamaros. In 1973 political parties were banned, congress was closed down, public meetings were banned and constitutional rights were suspended. The employers dropped their liberal outlook and banned the National Workers' Convention (CNT) which federated many unions, when it called a general strike. Wages were driven down by 35% and inflation rose by 80%. The FAU was set up in 1956. Militants within it like Juan Carlos Mechoso began to agitate for the creation of a specific anarchist organization as opposed to the anarcho-syndicalists who thought that work in the unions was enough to bring out radical social change. At first the FAU (Uruguan Anarchist Federation) had been an alliance of different anarchist currents, from the anarcho-syndicalists on one hand, through those who believed in set-

ting up anarchist communities in the here and now, traditional anarchist communists on to the group around Mechoso, Gerardo Gatti and Leon Duarte.

Controversy had already arisen in the international movement over the increasingly reformist ideas of Rudolf Rocker. One of the pioneers of anarcho-syndicalism, he had taken a principled stand against the First World War and was interned in England as a result. However by 1945, after his support for the Allies in WW2, Rocker began to reject class-based notions of anarchism, moving in an increasingly liberal direction. In this



he had the support of other German anarchists like Augustin Souchy, and elements within the Spanish CNT in exile like Abad de Santillan. Nevertheless, it was people like Souchy who adopted a critical approach to the Cuban Revolution, along with the Cuban anarchists themselves, who directly experienced repression from the Castro regime. Within the FAU itself there was intense debate over the Castro regime between 1961 and 1965 with Mechoso, Gatti and co. supporting the Cuban regime. This led to a split in the FAU in late 1963 with the Gatti/Duarte/Mechoso faction retaining the FAU name and symbols, affirming the class struggle nature of anarchism, but also giving critical support to Cuba. The FAU now began to incorporate elements from different currents of Marxism, calling for a synthesis between Marxism and anarchism, whilst referring to Poulantzas and Althusser, and later Gramsci. It increasingly broke with the

anarcho-syndicalists by moving from the need for a specific anarchist organization to talk of a Party. It set up the Student-Worker Resistance (ROE), which was meant to be a broad class struggle front, and began to seek out alliances with the Tupamaros and other leftists. As a result many students influenced by 'revolutionary Marxism' began to join the ROE, accelerating the move away from anarchism. The writings of Che Guevara became popular and influential within this broad movement. The FAU established its own armed wing, OPR-33, in the late 1960s.

There was an increasing spiral of repression and counter-attack by the FAU/OPR-33, and many militants lost their lives in gun battles. By 1974 the US security forces launched Operation Con-

dor in collaboration with the dictatorships now reigning in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay. Uruguayan and Argentinian security forces worked in tandem to kidnap FAU militants and many were imprisoned in a torture camp, where after many months of terrible agonies, they were murdered Gatti, Duarte and Alberto Mechoso (Juan Carlos's brother) were among those murdered.

OPR-33 was seen as to be firmly under the control of the FAU and was meant to relate its actions to the workers movement in Uruguay itself. However, in the final analysis its actions had the same effect as those armed groups influenced by Castroism. FAU/OPR-33 lost a large number of militants. At the same time Gatti had pioneered the setting up of the People's Victory Party (PVP) whilst in exile in Buenos Aires in 1975, along with Ruben Prieto, Pablo Anzalone

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Brief Notes on the End of the World

This is the first time in human history where we have progressed to such a degree where our very existence is threatened and largely unviable. We live in an epoch where it's impossible for capitalism to safely carry on. It's obvious that capitalist economics and its competitive gamble is generally unsustainable.

The earth is finite and its resources have been exploited and plundered to its limit. Pollution, global warming, the decline of the rain forests, the amount of floating garbage in the oceans, industries exploitation of fossil fuels which is now jeopardising its own capacity to exploit and burn fossil fuels, all this heralds no future for all of us. It has us all by the throat. The alienating productive forces of this society are taking us all into a rapid degradation of the very conditions needed for survival in both general and the most trivial senses of the term.

The degradation of the natural and human environment has ceased to present itself in terms of loss of quality, but has now become a more fundamental one of whether this world can preserve its material existence. Capitalism has at last demonstrated that it can no longer sustain its own forces of production.

This is causing the world to come to a grinding halt, its gridlocked geopolitics full of resource wars, a fight to stay alive that is becoming more and more medieval. Those in power will hang on with

grim determination to their power base, as the weather itself is making the world unliveable. The great bourgeois experiment is over. Let's face it; it ultimately failed to live up to its own spectacular expectations. Capitalism has no future, just a dying present, held together with the fray-



ing bandages of neo-liberal market economics, taking from social services to then reinforce the corporations and desperate rich in their defunct way of life. When these pitiful masters of society, whose wretched destiny is now discernible, are obliged to admit that our environment has become a social issue, their specialised politics has become utterly bankrupt.

Now the predominant mode of governing is precisely the management of crises, most are historically no longer manageable. Classical politics with its dried up rituals, its thinking without thought, is a closed world. Crisis situations are now so many opportunities for the restructuring of domination. It becomes a means of governing in a world that seems to hold together only through the infinite management of its own collapse. We are now looking at the end of the world, as we know it.

This changes everything. Revolution or death, seems more relevant now than ever. Spectacular society has lost its gleam. The poverty of capitalism to solve its own problems and contradictions is obvious to all. No amount of renovation of its infrastructure is going to save this planet.

The most advanced industrialised economies of the world merely show us where we are all heading, unless the system is overthrown. Today fear and

paranoia are everywhere and we shall escape it only through our ability to destroy every existing kind of alienation, that separates from ourselves. A human rebellion against an inhuman life.

J.D.

Continued From Page 15 regardless of the level of income) at 13%, and the enterprise tax fixed at 20%, the semi-official Russian news agency Itar-Tass reported. The bourgeoisie has been exempted from the payment of tax debts for recent months. In the "Luhansk People's Republic", the adoption of the same system is scheduled for 15 October.

On 22 September, the people of Antratsit (Luhansk region) went out to the city central square, to protest in front of the City Executive Committee building, according to a report in Novyi Region newspaper. This "revolt for cash" demanded wages, pensions and welfare benefits, which were promised but which people did not receive for a couple of months.

The local separatist military commanders reacted with direct threats against the pro-

testers, saying: "If you demonstrate here again, we will shoot you all. Forget what a miner's wage is, and what a pension is, not to mention welfare benefits". Nevertheless, some aid – namely, a can of meat and a package of cereal for each person – was immediately distributed.

Before the demonstration, the Komsomolskaya mine at Antratsit was shut down. The government of the self-proclaimed "Luhansk People's Republic" announced that the miners will from now on receive a wage of 1200 hryna (around \$100) – far less than they had earned previously. In protest, the miners all absented themselves from work the next day.

On 27 September, around 200 citizens went out to protest in Rovenky (Luhansk region). The majority of the protesters were the retired people, but there were also young people in the crowd, the Liga.net

news site reported. There was indignation that the "Luhansk People's Republic" government does not keep its promises to pay pensions and wages.

The demonstrators accused the government of plundering humanitarian aid, so it does not reach the people, including old people living on their own who are starving and have no-one to help them. There is neither running water nor heating in the town.

The protesters, who do not receive the payments they are entitled to from the new local authorities, collected signatures on a petition to the Ukrainian government in Kyiv, demanding that it pays them.

by Denis, Autonomous Workers Union, Kyiv

NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important news in NSW on the industrial front was the recent Sydney Trains and NSW Trains Enterprise Agreement. It opens the door to mass sackings and restructuring of key components of the rail work force on the basis of casualisation and individual contracts. The ASN has been assisting militants in an energetic campaign to oppose the EA. The highlight was a mass union meeting of train crews at Central Station in late Sept., where the officials received a very hostile reception from the workers, over their handling of the EA. Currently the ASN is assisting militants in a titanic struggle to defeat ALP control of public transport unionism in NSW. (See article page 3.)

Rather than using the AEC (Australian Electoral Commission) to handle the ballot for the Rail EA, the bosses with the okay of the union hierarchy resorted to a secretive private company, "Election Consulting Group" to conduct an internet ballot. (See article page 8.)

An important dimension of the Liberal Party Government in NSW is its close relationship with real estate developers. It's been particularly highlighted with tramway extensions in the Eastern Suburbs. Its being used as a pretext for adjacent massive high rise unit developments. Contributing to the destruction of a large swathe of trees. (See article page 4.)

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Grassland Infoshop

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3011 Vic.

Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

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Address.....
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PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

If undeliverable, return to
PO Box 92 Broadway NSW 2007

Continued From Page 17 and others.
The PVP was a a heterodox mixture of anarchism and Castroism/Guevarism.

The deaths of Gatti and co accelerated the move of the PVP away from anarchism. It participated in the creation of the Broad Front-Frente Amplio- a coalition of over a dozen political groupings as well as unions and community groups and in 1980 began to take part in its electoral activities and today is just another leftist parliamentary party.

What was left of the FAU re-established its structures in 1986 after the fall of the dictatorship. It remains active in work in the unions and the neighbourhoods. As one French observer noted: "The FAU, like a number of other organisations, fell headlong into the political cracks opened up by the Cuban revolution and backed it for years, even if it had become plain that that revolution was turning into a bureaucratic dictatorship and even after Cuban anarchists had been rounded up and executed...The FAU eventually distanced itself from that betrayed revolution and

withdrew its support from it, though it does not appear to mean that it is prepared to risk blunt criticism of the current Cuban regime". This observer notes a sympathy from the leftist FARC guerrillas in Colombia and the Guevarist MRTA in Peru, putting the anti-imperialism of the FAU down as underpinning this sympathy "which is very probably bound up with a lack of critical information about such authoritarian movements". *Edited*

Thanks to Organise No.80 2013

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' NEWS

INDIA – MASS STRIKE AGAINST RAIL PRIVATISATION

The new Modi government in India is intent on privatising state assets and using public-private partnerships to develop future infrastructure (listen to radio interview here). On 19 September an estimated half a million workers stopped work to protest the government's plans to privatise the railways. The International Transport Federation has committed to fight transport privatisation around the world. Korean workers are also fighting against the privatisation of their railway system.

Thanks to Australian Asia Worker Links

GERMAN TRANSPORT STRIKES

BERLIN (Reuters) – 7/10/14 Strikes by train drivers' and pilots' unions over pay and conditions in Germany are expected to disrupt travellers and freight inside and outside the country from Tuesday evening.

Train drivers' union GDL has called for a nine-hour nationwide strike starting on

Tuesday evening. Pilots' union Vereinigung Cockpit has announced a two-day strike at Lufthansa's freight arm starting at 0100 GMT on Wednesday.

The strike by drivers, which runs from 1900 GMT Tuesday until 0400 GMT on Wednesday, follows two three-hour strikes in recent weeks. It will predominantly affect morning commuters plus freight transported at night in almost 5,000 trains.

"Strikes in rail freight can affect production after just a couple of days, because goods transported by rail often cannot be swiftly shifted to road or sea," Achim Dercks, the deputy head of Germany's Chambers of Commerce, told Reuters on Tuesday.

GDL is seeking a 5 percent pay rise and a two-hour shorter working week of 37 hours from employer Deutsche Bahn, the state-owned rail operator.

The union is also seeking a mandate to negotiate for train guards and other personnel. Deutsche Bahn has rejected this.

Deutsche Bahn had proposed halting the pay dispute until the government had

passed a law on standardised wages, which would see the wage deal for the union with the most members in a company apply. GDL has refused to wait.

Deutsche Bahn criticised the decision to widen the strikes and said it may take until Wednesday midday before trains return to normal. It said it was prepared to negotiate at any time.

CARGO STRIKE

The train drivers' walkout will overlap with the two-day strike by pilots at Lufthansa Cargo.

That strike will be the sixth this year by pilots' union Vereinigung Cockpit, which is pushing management to retain a scheme that allows them to retire early at 55 and still receive a portion of their wages.

Lufthansa has estimated the strikes have cost it around 70 million euros so far. The walkout will not affect passengers.

Lufthansa Cargo, which normally carries out 21 freighter flights during the strike period, said the walkout would have little impact and that it expected to carry out all flights. Two flights will depart outside of the strike period, it said.

Several pilots had volunteered to fly, a spokesman said.

The pilots union said an end to the row was not in sight and more strikes could come.