

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Sydney, Australia

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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

Only Direct Action Will Twist Rudd's Arms To Dump Howard's IR Tyranny!



ESSELTE WAREHOUSE WORKERS STRIKE AGAINST IMPOSITION OF AWA's

APEC&THESTRONGSTATE;THEFIGHTAGAINSTWORKCHOICES;NSW
RAILWAYNEWS;STATETRANSITNEWSFLASH;POLISHBUSDRIVERSFIGHT
PRIVATISATION;INTERVIEWWITHPOLISHUNIONOFSYNDICALISTS;
GERMANY:BIKEWORKERS'OCCUPATION;BOOKREVIEWCORNER;
NEWS&NOTES

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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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APEC-Step Toward The "Strong State"

The APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Summit protest demonstration held in Sydney on Saturday 8th September was attended by between 8,000 to 15,000. It was the latest manifestation of the largely student and middle class based "anti-globalist movement". Apart from the APEC gathering of Asia Pacific leaders being about the greater coordination of the pursuit of the neo-liberal agenda of privatisation, lowering of tariffs etc, the gathering provided the backdrop for the development of a "strong state" in Australia to suppress resistance to this agenda.

The State preparations for the holding of APEC and its "strong state" display, featured various new laws to restrict civil liberties, massive state repressive forces deployment and the construction of the "Great Wall" of Sydney to deny access to so called "restricted areas" in the city. The mainstream media worked with the state agencies to demonise segments of the protestors as "violent".

The centrepiece of the "strong state" push was a likely massive violent attack by po-

lice on the protestors and the subsequent conducting of mass arrests. Using new laws the police could then update their files on various possible dissidents via DNA samples and photos to be used for attacks later down the track. Whilst an entire wing of Long Bay Gaol which had been closed was reopened during APEC to cater for the mass arrests. Unfortunately for various state agencies, and the Lemma and Howard Governments, the police lacked appropriate experience for the nefarious task and the chance to wage massive state terrorism was lost.

Various aspects of police operations during the protest point to the likelihood of a major police onslaught. When the protestors reached Hyde Park North, they were encircled by a massive tight line of police, with only a tiny space, over a metre high wall for people to escape. A similar encirclement had been planned by police at the beginning of the protest at St. Andrews Square, where the initial rally had been held, but the sudden appearance of the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) and FBEU (Fire Brigade Employees Union) contingents coming to the protest foiled the manoeuvre. To assist the encirclement at Hyde Park, the police engaged in various ploys to delay for a considerable period, the transfer of the PA system from St. Andrews Square to Hyde Park North. By this measure they sought to dissipate the crowd of protestors at the Hyde Park Rally to manageable proportions to assist their attack. Also close by the sites of the protest rally and march were the ex-State Transit buses which the police were using to blockade streets but also to be used as mobile prisons for the planned mass arrests.



The state "master plan" came unstuck when members of the public who had been watching the police lines from Hyde Park South infiltrated and crossed the police lines and in particular one elderly woman whom the police found it undiplomatic to attack. Subsequently due to the quick action of some protestors, a corridor was forced through the police lines for the protestors to escape.

Toward the end of the Hyde Park Rally, the police made some small swoops involving the violent attack and arrest of a small leftwing group and the illegal confiscation of the FBEU banners and flags,

during which police tried to provoke several firemen who were army reservists into a fight. Latest news is that the police have still refused to return the materials to the FBEU.

The development of these "strong state" measures are likely aimed at repressing resistance to a major wave of privatisations which the Lemma Govt. is preparing, commencing in such sectors as the electricity industry, rail maintenance, and the ferries. According to a well informed source,



APEC was to be initially used by the Lemma Govt. to divert attention away from its announcement to privatise the electricity industry. The announcement is now likely to occur after the Federal Election.

Whilst the state's "grand slam" to intimidate any further mass protests was foiled, the police since APEC have taken a much more aggressive stance against workers' militant action. On Wednesday 26/9/07, riot police, together with the dog squad and undercover police attacked and arrested workers who had been employed at McArthur Express Depot in the Sydney suburb of Seven Hills and were picketing the depot following the collapse of the company.

Such protests as the march and rally to oppose the APEC Summit and the US Occupation of Iraq are purely symbolic and "spectacular". Unable to counter the increasing coordination of elements of global capital such as various multinational companies, assisted by such gatherings as APEC and various governments and the increasing imperialist adventures of the US Govt and its allies. Only the self organisation and internationally coordinated direct action of workers can achieve this goal and overthrow the capitalist set up and establish "workers control". It can only be achieved by "unspectacular" long range sustained activity to assist workers self organisation in strategic industries, in particular the critical transport industries. The "spectacular" actions of the anti-globalist protests are likely to be taken advantage by agencies of international capital to fashion strong states to assist their nefarious neo liberal agendas, as occurred during the recent APEC protest. By Our Special Correspondent.

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

Rebel Worker: What's been happening in City Rail lately?

Station Assistant: Lately there has been a blitz at stations by Transit Officers. As passengers have been leaving the barriers at stations during peak hour, they have been met by a wall of grey shirts. Its been conducted in a very unprofessional manner by the bosses. No notices have been put up and there has been no public relations work on the issue. There has been a certain amount of discrimination by the Transit Officers in their booking of fare evaders. With school students who are found without their passes, being let go Scot free and only receiving a warning. Associated with this blitz has been the bosses' decision to deploy the Transit Officers particularly at stations rather than just patrolling trains.

It seems to me that the police training that the Transit Officers receive when they first come on the job, and the existence of a layer of ex-cops amongst them, contradicts the public service role which railway workers have traditionally adopted.

RW: What's the latest with the staffing situation in the City Rail station network?

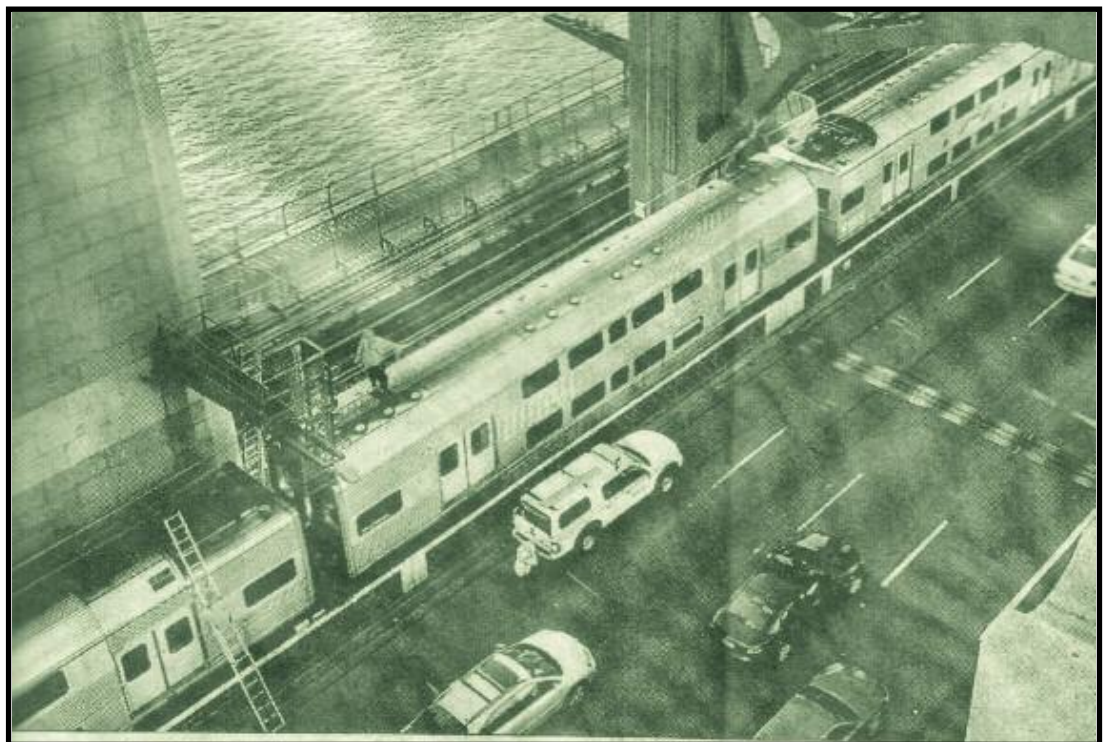
SA: The staffing situation at Central and other stations remains tight with many station jobs and rosters not being covered. Contributing to this situation has been secondment of station staff on temporary duties to sections of the Rail Corp Administration. Whilst a certain layer of station staff have gone to guards' school to be employed in train crews. Those workers that have been transferred to stations such as Central to assist with the depletion of staff, have come from areas that have closed down due to out sourcing and the creation of the 5 rail corridors. They particularly entail workers who are in their 50's, and as they lacked the skills to find jobs outside the railways, didn't take up redundancy packages.

Concern has been expressed by staff at Central regarding some team leaders at the station, sudden secondment to duty manager positions. The selection procedure seems to have been conducted behind closed doors without regard for Equal Employment Opportunity requirements.

RW: What are your views on the widespread deployment of contractors in the railways?

SA: We have various concerns about the contractors. There is a security concern as they are not issued with any uniform or home and duty pass or family pass, but have been issued with ID cards. As a result, its not clear to many on various occasions, whether they are in fact railway employees. They have also not been provided with emergency procedures and safe working training. Consequently they

many people were not inclined to go into the city. Consequently we didn't face the increased level of harassment from commuters due to their difficulties, which some expected. Police acted in a quite aggressive manner on stations, demanding commuters show their ID, and particularly interrogated and harassed school students. Whilst Transit Officers followed suit, instead of initially issuing warnings to offenders, they proceeded to arrest them. They also appear to have forgot their revenue protection role and avoided issuing commuters with fines during APEC.



would be unable to cope in the event of an emergency situation.

RW: What's the latest with APEC?

SA: Police are demanding the payment of \$87 per day during the APEC period as danger money. We also need to be adequately compensated for increased hazards we faced during the period. During APEC there was a much higher security alert than occurred during the Olympics and we had to be much more security conscious. There was much chaos on the railways during APEC with various stations being closed and many services being cancelled due to the special APEC timetable. The bosses did not put sufficient effort into informing commuters regarding these changes. However, due to the existence of the barricades around the "Restricted APEC Area" and the long weekend provided by the Friday APEC Public Holiday,

RW: How are things with the Public Transport Smart Card?

SA: Due to constant glitches with the Smart Card operation, the proposed trial at Central has been shelved. However there is talk of a further trials amongst university students.

RW: How are things on the industrial front at Central?

SA: The petition which has been circulating at Central which calls on a likely Rudd Federal ALP Govt. to repeal Howard's Work Choices Legislation to safeguard our conditions has received a very enthusiastic response. Thousands of workers at the station have signed the petition. Formal discussions have commenced between the union and RailCorp Management in regard to our upcoming Enterprise Agreement. These discussions are being considered as "amiable" at the

moment. However, certain letters have been issued by the RailCorp IR section to stampede workers into pressuring the union on various issues so as to push it into a corner. An important demand for our EBA is to allow untaken sick leave entitlements to be cashed in at retirement and so become a bonus. Currently, there is no such provision in our EBA.

RW: I understand a new train is to be introduced in City Rail?

SA: It's different from the Oscar train and currently 100 carriages are being built for it. Currently the bosses are hand picking people to be employed in operations areas associated with the new train. Particularly

those who are "on side with them" and lack train crew experience. The union is currently raising questions about the recruitment procedure for these positions.

RAIL WORKERS DISCUSS RAILCORP ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT ISSUES

Last week the combined rail unions through the Labor Council circulated a despicable leaflet with a set of leading questions. In a primer for the next "Enterprise Bargaining Agreement" this union leaflet could be classed as a probe of workers opinions while planting the seeds of uncertainty within the minds of rail employees. It includes such questions as "Would you be prepared to trade of working conditions for a wage rise?" and "What would you be prepared to trade off?"

Rather than putting forward my own views I thought it would be good to ask some of my work colleagues what they thought, even if I don't agree 100% with what they had to say. It gives us a better idea about what they think on the subject of the next EBA and the unions approach to the upcoming negotiations.

We already know that management has sent a strong signal by means of a letter to the unions arguing that they will not accept a rejection of the proposed EBA by the ranks. In the letter they threaten to use "Work Choices", Howard's draconian industrial legislation, to ram the agreement through and ride roughshod over rail workers.

It is with this doubt of the future that the interview with two rail workers at my location took place. After talking with them I now realise why some people vote for the same old untrustworthy union reps each time and why they don't have the confidence to trust in their own collective power.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

What do you think of the questionnaire recently circulated by the combined rail unions (NSW Labor Council) in which they ask such questions as "Would you be prepared to trade working conditions for a wage rise"? Do you think it is proper for a union that represents you to ask such questions?

CSA No1

I think that it's wrong. The union should be supporting us the labourers. We feel that they are not working with us. Even when we vote we find that Labor and Liberal are the same, we get confused because we don't know who to vote for. Even if we vote for Labor at the next Federal Election we might even get worse than we have now - we are confused.

The cost of living is going up on everything. Prices are rising on everything, wa-

seven days a week just to survive. We push ourselves to work seven days a week and its still not enough money. This is the Third World in Sydney right now.

CSA No2

The union should not bargain any of our condition that have been won over the last 50 yrs We want to improve our existing conditions and the conditions of all working people in Australia. Pay rises should be unconditional, a pay rise is a pay rise. Our productivity is very high even though we do all of the dirty jobs for RailCorp.



ter electricity, telephone, everything. Labor blames the Liberals - Liberal blames Labor for the price rises. They even blame the price rises on the drought.

In the last seven or eight years we have only had a pay rise of 3% or 4% a year. We now have a GST on everything we buy as well as interest rates that are rising by the month. in the last eight years a leg of lamb has gone from \$4 or \$5 to over \$20, that's a 400% rise, and still we are only getting a paltry 4% rise in wages. We need a minimum of a 20% pay rise which would still leave us behind rising prices.

We have families, we want to live like human beings. Politicians get big money they don't have to work like us six or

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

How should the union go about getting a decent pay rise for its members? In the past the union hasn't consulted with us much, they haven't asked for our opinion. How should they go about a wage campaign?

CSA No1

They don't need to ask us. They should know how we are struggling as the they are supposed to represent us. They know how we live. I've been in the railways 25 yrs and I still get less than \$42,000 a year. In that time we have had to put our heads down and say "yes sir", "no sir" and its still a rare good day when we are not abused by customers. We have to put up with train disruptions which are beyond our control yet nobody cares about us.

Take the example of Mr Costa who was supposed to be a union man yet he is now offering only a 2.5% wage rise. He should be ashamed. He should be kicked out. How can we trust Labor when they now work for the rich people.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

What do you think is the unions purpose in putting out this questionnaire asking these ridiculous questions that no union should ask? What is the reason behind it?

CSA No1

To cover themselves only. To make some drama, to make some rumour, to make some story, to make us except a lower rate of pay. They are all together, they are not with us. They just talk like "we feel sorry for what happens to you"

CSA No2

The union should not have sent out this circular at all. Their job is to ensure better conditions for us all.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

What do you think is the solution to the long term impasse where workers no longer feel that they are being represented by their union? What is the solution? How can we fix it?

CSA No1

We have to stick together and we have to work with the union. We have to find the support within the union. At the present time we don't trust the union.

CSA No2

The union does not represent working people any more. The union is not a democratic movement any more. They are simply bureaucrats sitting on their office chairs worrying about their own pay rises. They should be day to day working with us on the job, asking questions, attempting to improve our conditions instead of sitting in their office unconcerned about democracy. They are working more for management than for the worker. There should be more decision making by the workers and the union should accept our decisions. The workers should make the decisions. An alternative union movement should be built on the basis of workers rights, representation, democracy and collectivism.

The unions at present are voted in by a minority of workers. About only 20% of people bother to vote because they are disillusioned with a union who doesn't represent them. It is time to look to alternative representation for workers, we should look at new forms of struggle to achieve what we want. In the last 20 years that I have been a member of the union they have misled workers.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

There is talk of RailCorp being prepared to use Work Choices to push the next EBA through even if we don't agree. What do you think our response should be? How should we fight that?

CSA No1

We have to stop all of the bullshitting against us. Rudd has said that if elected he would remove Work Choices but how can we trust him? We pay our money to the union every fortnight, we pay them to help us, not to be against us. The unions should have stopped Work Choices. Everything is against us at the moment whether it be Labor, Liberal or management.

CSA No2

This bid by management to use Work Choices exposes the Labor Party for what



it is. They do not represent workers any more and are more like the Liberal Party representing the rich. Next election we should not vote for the Labor Party, they are against the labour movement. We should vote for parties that represent workers, such as the Greens and other progressive parties. They are in a minority at the moment but we must make them the majority parties. For us its a matter of working all of our lives just to survive, this must change.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

If you were putting out a log of claims for the next EBA and you created a list of things that we need to lift our standard of living, what would you put on that list? In light of the talk of trading off conditions what are the things that we should never be prepared to trade?

CSA No1

Principally we want fairness. We need a 20% pay rise, we need a big pay rise just to try and catch up. The agreement should be over 4 years.

CSA No2

We need a good pay rise for everyone. We should be setting an example for other workers in Australia. I believe if we stuck together we could get a better pay rise than the one that we get through the union. We

have to work overtime to survive, we are one of the lowest paid in the public service. With decent pay we wouldn't work overtime and we could spend more time with our families and see life.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

The government is now talking about privatising electricity and water. If that comes about what effect is that going to on wages?

CSA No1

When the government talks like this it shows that it is not thinking of the next generation. The next generation will not be able to afford anything.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

How long will it be before you retire? What will the future be once you retire?

CSA No1

I am 55 now so I need another 9 years of work. Every day governments are changing the rules for retirees, we don't know what will happen to our super in the future. If the shares go down before we retire our super will be finished. We don't know which companies they've invested our money in. Do you know where you super is? Some of this money is invested out of the country and now some of these companies are broke. We don't even know if they invest our

money on horses, we know nothing.

I rang the super company some months ago and asked them where our money was invested. They couldn't answer my question.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

How do you think we can get our message out to the union about the next EBA when they are simply not listening to us? We the ordinary workers on trains, in signal boxes, on stations etc - how can we say loudly to the unions and management that we are not prepared to trade off anything for a wage rise?

CSA No1

We should write letters to everyone, the unions, the premier, Mr Costa and management telling them how we feel about our future.

Interviewer Crimson Coconut

What would you say in the letter? Would you threaten not to vote for them?

CSA No1

No we wouldn't say that. We would ask them to sit down and work with us. They need to ask us before they do anything and they also need to listen to us.

We will try.

N.S.W.-STATE TRANSIT NEWS FLASH

PORT BOTANY DEPOT REPORT

Rebel Worker: What's the latest at the depot?

Port Botany Driver: The most significant news has been the sacking of our union rep, Chris, by the bosses on the basis of their allegation that he is "incapable" of being a bus driver, even though they would not put in writing what he did wrong exactly. Just as his 2 year trainee period was coming to an end.

RW: What's the latest with his fight to gain reinstatement in his job?

PBD: STA have finally laid out their case against Chris. As expected they have dredged the depths of their files to find anything they can to throw against him to try to justify their decision not to offer him permanent employment. The matter did not settle at the initial conciliation conference between the parties, which has taken place up until now, and so the matter will now proceed to Court, scheduled for early 2008. Chris's solicitors will now begin the process of subpoenaing documents from STA and preparing his case.

RW: Have the union officials assisted Chris to win reinstatement?

PBD: There is some quite disturbing news here. The Union do not seem to have offered any concrete support to Chris at present, or to even have contacted him during the legal case. He is a Union Member and even more importantly, an elected Delegate who put his neck on the line to stand up for our rights, so he needs and should have the Union's support behind him. Heck - why isn't the Union taking his case on themselves anyway??? He shouldn't have to pay for his own legal case! Isn't that what we pay Union dues for, in case this sort of thing happens? If our elected Delegates aren't safe then what about the rest of us? Chris was forced to lodge his own Unfair Dismissal claim, and because the Union would not give him the legal advice he needed before the 21 day deadline to lodge claims expired, he was also forced to take on his own solicitors, at his own expense. He's taken it this far on his own and there's obviously a case to answer because the IRC has accepted it. Perhaps now that it's come this far and STA have finally been forced to lay out their case against him, the time has come for the Union to finally step in and do something to help him. I think the question all RTBU

Members need to be asking of their Delegates and Officials at Union meetings is: Why isn't the Union taking on our sacked Delegate's legal case?.

RW: How has Chris's campaign at the Depot been progressing?

PBD: Some 6 weeks ago as part of his campaign to win reinstatement, he ran a vigil outside the depot (with the support from sacked Botany Cranes delegate Barry Hemsworth) and gave us an opportunity to sign up to his campaign for re-instatement. Chris is very happy to say he got overwhelming support from the drivers and had an enormous number of drivers sign up who have pledged to provide a range of documentation that his solicitors may require to support his case, or to testify in court in his defence.

RW: What has been the fallout of Chris's sacking?

PBD: Things have gone downhill with union activity at the depot. There has developed a lack of interest in the union amongst a significant layer of drivers. Stemming from the attack on Chris, who was doing good work to assist the grassroots. They see it as a waste of time and know that the union officials have basically seized control and are doing whatever they want regardless of what the Members think. Some drivers think the officials have basically got it stitched up with management and are just going through the motions.

RW: What's happening with the EBA (Enterprise Bargain Agreement) at the depot?

PBD: There was a union meeting held by the union officials at the depot in recent weeks, where a straw poll was held on the STA EBA offer. It involved the offer of 3.5% pay rise but with efficiencies like accepting an inadequate and meagre uniform allowance instead of having our uniforms supplied for free!!! It was pretty outrageous and we all voted against it.

RW: What are your thoughts on the issue of STA Traineeships?

PBD: STA are claiming they can hide behind the Traineeships whenever they want to get rid of anybody for whatever reason they care to concoct. At our depot, Chris stood up to defend workplace rights and we have seen how easily they have removed him.

If they get away with this, it will mean that effectively Trainees have no rights at work, that they have no choice but to sit for two years and take whatever unfair practices STA can dish out and if they raise a

voice in protest or to support the Union, STA can have them removed over the smallest of issues, and maybe even without cause at all. Even an anonymous phone complaint on the most trivial of matters, will be used against the driver to create evidence for STA to remove him or her. STA say on their current driver recruitment advertising campaign that they offer job security. This is a joke if Trainees cannot even dare to raise their voices to defend their rights at work for fear of being sacked because they are not covered by Unfair Dismissal laws as trainees for the first two years. It seems that STA are abusing the intent of the traineeship (to provide professional training for drivers) to further their own agenda of silencing workers from standing up for their rights at work. This is not only an abuse of government training funds, but an abuse of the Union's trust in STA to use the Traineeships for the purpose for which they were originally intended and approved by the Union and its Members. If this is how STA are now going to abuse the Traineeships maybe we need to add Removal of Traineeship Program to the current EBA demands?

BURWOOD DEPOT REPORT

RW: What's news at Burwood?

Burwood Driver: The latest news which is extremely worrying, is the introduction at the depot of buses equipped with the new digital cameras along with MDSVR's and GPS monitoring equipment supplied by March Corporation. So far 8 of these buses have been supplied to the depot fleet. The buses have 5 cameras together with the GPS equipment, which is interfaced with the bus computer. With this equipment, the exact location of buses via GPS monitoring providing longitude and latitude, and the speed of the bus on routes when the picture is displayed, over a series of frames can be calculated and recorded. Through checking the data over a series of frames, it can be determined whether you are putting the brake on, or accelerating too harshly. All this can be done in "real time". This "Big Brother" aspect of the equipment is likely to have wide ramifications for us in the event of accidents.

With this extensive and precise information, which the bosses will have due to this high tech equipment, when an accident occurs which causes an injury to a passenger or pedestrian or motorist, and the bosses determine who is at fault. Will they pro-

vide us with legal support when the case goes to Court? Or will the bosses refuse to accept liability and oblige us to get our own legal support to defend ourselves? In the case of negligent driving by a driver, which causes an accident to another vehicle or people, which this technology can report, will the driver be held responsible for damages to the vehicles and people involved? Will we face the prospect of not just the loss of our jobs, but also our homes? Does existing NSW surveillance legislation allow for this massively increased workplace monitoring?

The union and bosses have not been forthcoming with detailed information about the cameras and their "Big Brother" ramifications for our jobs and its legal ramifications. No notices have been issued or training courses held to explain these aspects to drivers. Has the union agreed to this equipment and if so, why has there not been a general discussion on the subject?

RW: What are your thoughts on the new redundancy policies affecting public sector workers in NSW?

ing a crook deal by means of a "smoke and mirrors" performance, we have seized the initiative. At Waverley, we have embarked on a "Work to Rule" style campaign to put pressure on the STA bosses to win a decent pay rise and other conditions improvements. It particularly focuses on Occupational Health and Safety issues and involves us adhering to a range of measures which include: ensuring only 15 standing in the bus, booking off faulty buses, checking the radios for faults, making sure the police are cooperating with us, etc.

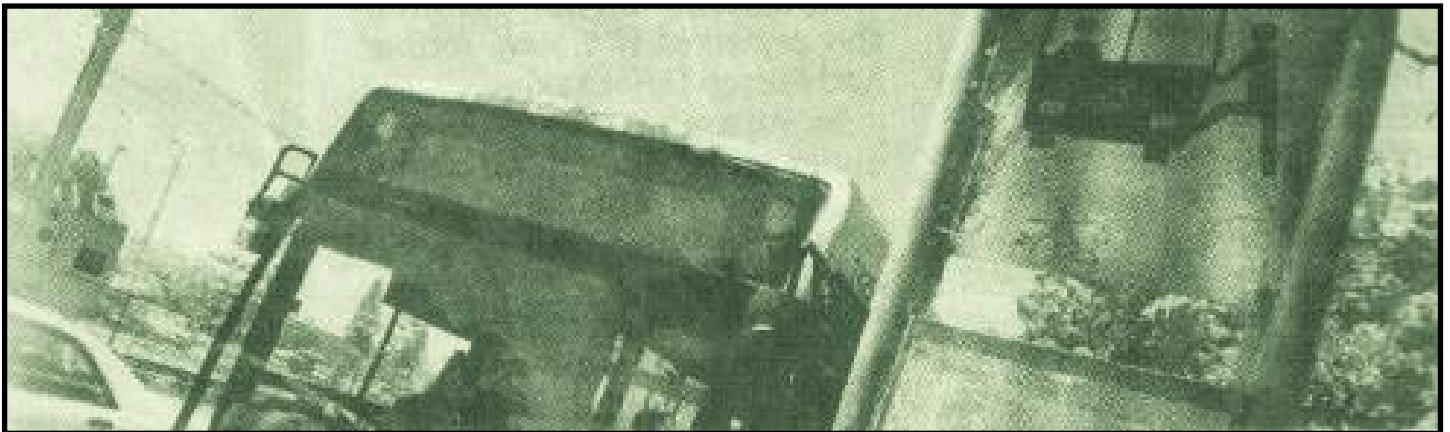
To make the campaign effective, as after a union meeting decisions for action are often forgotten or not implemented, we need to break up into groups of 6 to 7 drivers who in turn would elect group leaders. Each week a half hour conference via phones could be held for all shifts, not just, AM's and PM's. You would dial up a code at the appropriate time and so get on. To get on this conference facility, you need to purchase a \$10 phone card, which provides free international calls. It would be

ous threat to their nefarious plans. Is this a democracy or a tyranny? The boss who was behind this low down action should be sacked.

I recently heard that in an unamicable manner, the union officials have refused to help Chris, MIND YOU, WHO IS A UNION REPRESENTATIVE with legal support to pursue a case in the Industrial Relations Commission to get reinstated. Consequently he has had to get his own legal team together to pursue the case. When he is re-instated in his job, he should be paid back pay and also be put back as union rep at the depot. As his sacking can only be viewed as a despicable ploy of the bosses.

RW: What are your thoughts on the recent STA bus driver recruiting campaign?

WB: Despite this campaign, it seems to me that currently more drivers are leaving the job, than being employed. The campaign involved a certain amount of hype with the bosses' talk of offering \$21 per hour as the pay for drivers and good condi-



BD: It was recently signed off by Morris Iemma, the NSW Premier. It provides a maximum of 52 weeks pay as the redundancy package. To get the maximum amount, you have to take up the package within 2 weeks of the redundancy offer being made. It appears to be particularly in line with the Govt. and its business mates' privatisation master plan for State Transit. It seems to be mainly aimed at taking an axe to head office and the middle management of STA.

WAVERLEYDEPOT REPORT

RW: What's been happening on the Enterprise Bargain Agreement Front?

Waverley Busie: Due to the union hierarchy's failure to organise a serious campaign of industrial action to ensure we get a decent pay rise and improved conditions and resort to such feeble measures as stickers and badges and their likelihood of sell-

completely voluntary. By means of such "on call conferences", we can get all of us drivers to get to relate to each other and discuss amongst ourselves what's working and not working in the campaign and collectively hatch some great ideas.

RW: What's the latest news regarding Chris Mansergh, an ex-Waverley Driver who was elected as union rep at Port Botany?

WB: In recent weeks, the STA bosses in an outrageous display of thugishness sacked him just as his two year traineeship was coming to its end. From my knowledge of Chris's work at Waverley, he was very confident in driving and dealing with commuters. Whilst, in this job its normally fairly difficult to get the sack. As union rep, he was very active in assisting grass roots activity and fighting the bosses, in sharp contrast to previous you reps at Port Botany. So it seems to me that this cold blooded action of the STA bosses, stemmed from their viewing him as a seri-

ous threat to their nefarious plans. When in fact most drivers are on \$19.20 per hour. It's not much money. To earn a decent wage you are obliged to work constant overtime. If you also take account of the stressful nature of the job caused by the bosses' tight running times, and the grossly excessive probation period of two years, the job has been made very unattractive for new recruits. When I came onto the job over twenty years ago, the probation period was only 6 months, whilst you were entrusted to drive a bus. An important demand of our Enterprise Agreement campaign should be the erasing from our award of this new extended probation period where you are very much under the bosses' thumb and lack job security.

BrookvaleDepotNews,Opinion&OtherSideofStory.

RW - How are the EBA negotiations going for your pay rise and conditions?

Amigo - As I expected its obvious to me that there is stalling going. I think the delay is by design. Our pay increase is long overdue. Inflation has gone up heaps. They have raised the price of fares up numerous times since our last pay increase, yet they don't want to give us a pay rise to even partially offset inflation!

RW - What do you think their agenda is?

Amigo - I've seen how they operate for about 20 years now. My forecast is as follows:

a) They will delay so that Drivers become somewhat desperate in need of money.
b) they will delay so that a little bit of back pay will accumulate so when they say to Drivers here is, say, \$600 lump sum back pay and 3% pay increase, many Drivers will want to accept this out of frustration and in need of money.

c) of course the lump sum and the 3% is not the main issue, but a DIVERSION, to the real issue.

RW - What do you think is the main issue then?

Amigo - THE MAIN ISSUE IS TO STOP STA FROM CUTTING ROSTERS AND CUTTING SPREAD TIMES OF BROKEN SHIFTS! The main issue is that to get the lump sum and the miserable 3% Drivers would have to vote yes to an EBA/AWARD which states therein that STA has the right to vary shift lengths (lots of shifts are already down to 7 hours). ALSO STA CAN VARY SPREAD TIMES OF BROKEN SHIFTS. If for example, they reduce a 12 hours spread to a 10 hour spread they are chopping off the double time paid at the end of the shift. This would be worth thousands of dollars to them (out of your pocket?) and could be worth much, much more than any 3% pay rise! In this way, unless Drivers 'lock in' shift lengths and spread times in the EBA/AWARD a 3% or 4% pay rise could in fact end up being a pay cut of up to 7% or up to 10% or more by the time STA exercise their right in the EBA/AWARD to butcher/cut the rosters and spread times.

RW - Yes we have heard about this problem before. Apparently what happened in the last EBA STA sneaked in a clause which gave them rights to reduce shifts, etc, but Drivers probably were not informed about this, and not taking the time to read the EBA carefully, voted yes but later were bitterly complaining about their lost wages?

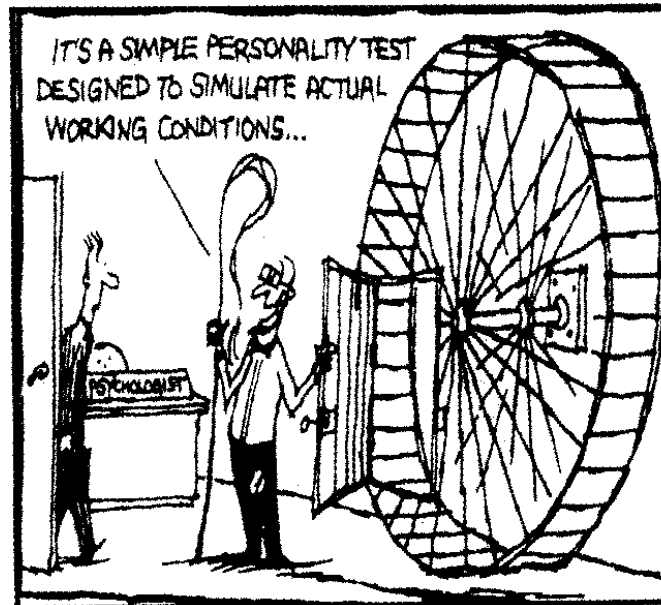
Amigo - Yes, something like that. Really, why would anyone agree to accept 4%

when at the same time STA are given the right in the EBA and/or AWARD to shorten shifts and more importantly to shorten spread times?

RW - We heard that a Driver asked a top ranking union official the question "why don't we remove these clauses in the EBA and AWARD which give STA the right to cut our salaries by reducing shifts and spread times?" The union official's answer was something like this we heard 'We cant do that!'

RW - Why do you think the Union Official said that the clauses in the EBA/AWARD which give STA the right to cut salaries, cannot be altered (or something to that effect)?

Amigo - I think its possible they are working for the other side because all they have to say to STA is: Look we are not just go-



ing to stand by and allow those clauses in the EBA/AWARD which give ST the right to cut shifts and cut spread times thus reducing Drivers' salaries, we are simply not working to those conditions because obviously under those conditions a 4% pay rise could easily end up being up to a 10% pay cut or more by the time STA finished shortening shift lengths and shortening spread times!

RW - But Drivers have the power to vote "NO" to any EBA which gives STA the right to shorten shifts and to also shorten spread times, so what's the problem?

Amigo - The problem, I think is as before, that is not many Drivers will take the time to read carefully the draft EBA and I'll bet the EBA draft will not be accompanied by an explanation booklet explaining the meaning and significance of each and every clause.

RW - As we understand it, the main complaint from the last EBA was that shifts were being cut and thus salaries were being cut. How can the same be avoided in the new EBA?

Amigo - I think the smartest thing to do BEFORE VOTING YES is to read the draft EBA carefully, ask lots of questions to make sure that STA cannot change shifts and spread times etc so as to cut salaries.

RW - Should Sunday be Voluntary or part of the Roster?

Amigo - Well, when I started on the job it was part of the roster eg we worked five days but one of those five days could be a Sunday, thus giving us a day off (or DOC) during the week.

RW - It's surprising that Drivers turn up for work on Sunday as volunteers because obviously compared to the old system they could be losing a DOC out of it. Obviously now before you can work a Sunday, you have to work another 5 days during the week, but before, you could work a Sunday and only 4 days during the week, thus giving u the opportunity to do another day as DOC whereas now you are covering the DOC at normal rates!

Amigo - Yes, I think that was a classic con when they changed the rosters like that and I am surprised they got away with it. Of course, many new Drivers would not really understand the real difference between the old 7 day roster and the now 6 day roster.

RW - Presumably Drivers may fear having to work on Sundays?

Amigo - I don't think so, u see under the old 7 day rosters if u did not want to work your Sunday it was very easy to swap it for another day because Sunday is paid at double time. So if you swapped, to do a Sunday, that would mean that you have a day off during the week for a possible DOC or a day with your friends and/or family.

RW - What are Drivers doing to avoid the stalling in their pay increase?

Amigo - Well, I see lots of Drivers wearing this badge which says something like 'your rights at work worth fighting for etc' but in practice, we are not really fighting to promote our pay rise, whilst the other side continues to 'stall'.

POLAND : Bus drivers' strike in Kielce - workers' self-management as a victory?

After 17 days the bus drivers in the South Polish city of Kielce have surprisingly won their strike. The sale of the communal bus company MPK planned by the city's mayor is stopped and MPK is given to the workers instead. The strike had been preceded by months of confrontation.

One day before the end of the strike, one of MPK's operation yards had been brutally evicted by private security guards and then recaptured by the striking bus drivers on the next morning. MPK employs 630 people, 380 of them are drivers. The 160 buses are old and keep breaking down. For years, the company has been incurring losses, according to the workers not least because some years ago the city has divided up the company into the actual bus company (MPK) and a traffic planning authority (ZTM). ZTM is supposed to manage the public traffic "market" by organising tender procedures, issuing requirements and writing timetables. Defacto it only controls the MPK and pushes it into debt with unfavourable conditions.

A collective agreement conflict has been going on for two years. The last wage increase was six years ago. Five years ago, Solidarnosc and the two smaller unions in the company agreed to lower wages by relinquishing bonuses and extra pay in order to "save the company". After 30 years of service, drivers earn about 1,600 Zl net, newly employed drivers earn less than 900 Zl net. Most workers are between 40 and 50 years old. According to drivers, few young people apply. Over the last few years, many have resigned and gone to England or Ireland or have become truck drivers. Now Solidarnosc is asking 500 Zl more for everyone. Apart from wages, workers also demand improved working conditions: According to the drivers, ZTM's timetables are unrealistic which means that on the one hand busses never are on time and on the other hand drivers have practically no breaks between tours. Drivers also complain that the bus which took drivers home after the last tour has been cancelled which means that some of those who can't afford a private car have to make long walks home at night.

Last year the issue of privatisation has been added to the agenda. Before his re-election last year with 72 per cent of

votes, Kielce's autocratic mayor Lubawski had promised not to sell MPK, but after the election he put all his weight behind selling it to the French Veolia corporation (which also operates train and bus lines in Germany under the name of Connex). The unions were not against privatisation as such but demanded a "social package" with five years of job protection, high compensation for layoffs and wage increases. Veolia wanted to guarantee only job protection, and only for employees with unlimited contracts.

The conflict escalates when the mayor announces that the Veolia deal will go ahead.



Chronology

4 June: 480 employees participate in a strike ballot organised by Solidarnosc (without the other unions). 450 vote for strike.

19 June: The city signs a preliminary contract with Veolia. At the same time it tries to increase the pressure: ZTM organises a new call for tenders for the next ten years. Veolia says its will only sign the final contract if MPK wins the tender. The tender is tailor-made for the Veolia deal because it calls for high investments. In press interviews, the mayor says that MPK does not stand a chance against its many competitors. His bluff is called when MPK finally wins the tender in early August: There had been no other competitors at all.

21 June: MPK workers demonstrate in front of city hall and then enter the building and molest city counsellors.

22 June: Warning strike from 4 to 8 a.m. Only 6 out of 160 buses go out into the streets. MPK management and mayor call the strike illegal because warning strikes may only last 2 hours. ZTM imposes a 300,000 Zl fine on MPK and threatens to

cancel the carriage contract with MPK in case of further strikes. MPK management charge the 300,000 Zl to the account of MPK's Solidarnosc leader. The mayor threatens to immediately liquidate MPK and contract out the bus traffic to another carrier in case of further strikes.

28 June: Another 4 hour warning strike - but from 0 to 4 a.m., ie. outside traffic hours. No reaction from management and mayor.

Late June to mid July: Several rounds of negotiations of the social package between unions and Veolia. No result.

2 August: MPK drivers collectively donate blood which means they may take the rest of the day off.

10 August: Solidarnosc announces an unlimited strike starting on August 14. The mayor threatens to liquidate MPK immediately.

14 August: Not a single bus goes out into the streets. 200 drivers stand in front of the operation yard and refuse to let managers enter. The workers' assembly votes for an unlimited strike and elects a strike committee. The mayor refuses to talk to the strike committee because he deems the strike illegal.

15 August: A catholic Mass on the premises of the operation yard. It has been difficult to find a priest because the bishop - the mayor's brother-in-law - has prohibited his priests from saying Mass in MPK.

18 August: The city and Veolia have hired 80 replacement buses with drivers from other cities. The busses are supposed to park in the Pakosz operation yard, the smaller one of MPK's two operation yards but cannot enter because 150 workers block the gate. In the end, the strike-breaker busses park on a lawn outside town.

19 August: Veolia's strike-breaker busses service the city's most important bus lines.

22 August: 17 members of the strike committee are terminated without notice. Unknown persons throw bricks at a strike-breaker bus.

23 August: City police write tickets because strikers have set up a small table for collecting signatures in the city centre without permission. The mayor and the Solidarnosc leader meet without a result. MPK's president complains that workers have settled down in front of his office with bricks and cement.

25 August: Another strike-breaker bus is pelted with bricks.

28 August: Loud and angry MPK workers' protest in front of ZTM's downtown offices. ZTM claims that four new companies have assumed Kielce's bus traffic starting on 1 September. ZTM trium-

POLISH LABOUR NEWS

INTERVIEW WITH AN ACTIVIST FROM (ZWIĄZEK SYNDYKALISTOW POLSKI) POLISH UNION OF SYNDICALISTS

ABB: A few weeks ago there was the founding congress of the Polish Union of Syndicalists. What were your reasons for starting the organisation?

Xavier: There were some discussions going on for many months between different people in the country and we came to the common conclusion that we need to found a new organisation. ZSP was born from the need to unite different people, social anarchists, working in different organisations, in unions or outside of unions, who had more or less the same vision about how unions or other workers' organisations should look – that is non-hierarchical, anti-bureaucratic and anti-capitalist. Unfortunately there is a lot of confusion as far as ideas and tactics are concerned, but we hope to work to improve this.

ABB: Please tell us briefly about the structure and goals of ZSP?

X: ZSP is based in the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-communism and other types of social anarchism. Power structures and labour relations are always changing so we need to be able to create new ideas and tactics around these basics. We are definitely international in character, the name translates like "Polish" but it actually refers not to any national organisation but only to the administrative division which signifies the terrain we operate on. The structure of ZSP is decentralised: there are local groups and there will be regional and nation-wide. Each year there is a congress which will set out the course of action for the organisation. At present, we are not big enough that the structure influences how we work but we understand that as organisations get bigger, there is a chance that some "spontaneous hierarchies" may occur if the organisational principles are not clear; this is often a problem in anarchist organisations. That's why we decided to prepare ourselves and to establish a clear and transparent way of functioning.

ABB: What is ZSP's relation to the structures, goals and actions of today's classical anarcho-syndicalist unions? How far is the idea of a union of syndicalists from an anarcho-syndicalist union – if you see any difference?

X: There is an ongoing discussion on the role of unions. We all agree that non-hierarchical unions can be a good tool in the social revolution and in the complete rebuilding of social relations. However, in contrast with some anarcho-syndicalists, we do not fetish unions and don't treat them as an aim in and of themselves. We think that any form of workers' organisation, be it an informal support group or various different sorts of rank and file organisation, are a step in the right direction. Especially in Poland where a lot of unions sold out to the state and to capital, you can see that a lot of people who don't want to organise in unions in unions for whatever reason or who simply can't do so, that they should organise themselves in some different way. What is most important for us is a non-hierarchical way of functioning and having radical goals, not whether or not people are in a formal trade union or not.

We are also critical of unions which focus solely on the mass without caring about the consciousness of its members. An anarcho-syndicalist union doesn't limit itself to fighting for workers' rights but its an instrument for putting pressure on the state and capital with the goal of reorganising society. Only conscious members of a union can begin to achieve the goals of a free society organised from below.

ABB: Let's look at today's workers' struggles in Poland. Have you noticed any changes in Poland in recent years in the way of struggling against exploitation?

X: Let's be frank. The situation of workers self organisation is rather bad. Struggles are rather isolated and are easily put under control. Although some moderate suc-

cesses from time to time, such as the miners' protest in front of the parliament two years ago. That was a good example of how you can achieve something using radical actions. Two years ago, the Committee to Aid and Defend Repressed Workers (KPiORP) was formed. In theory it was supposed to serve as an organisation made up of different groups which would coordinate different struggles. In practice it became the instrument of achieving the organisational and ideological hegemony of the extremely hierarchical union August 80 (Sierpień'80) which is tightly linked to the social democratic union Polish Party of Labour (PPP) (for example, in order to change the union leadership, the last chairman had to die in a car crash). At the beginning, part of the anarcho-syndicalist activists thought that there was no sense in acting in this committee and this would only serve to draw some activists from different organisations to August '80 or the Labour Party (PPP) and to build a positive image for the PPP. Others unfortunately thought this was a good idea for the development of Polish anarcho-syndicalism since it had financial and organisation capabilities and they still cooperate very closely with them despite the fact that various organisations already have left the committee due to centralism and a cult of personality around the leader of PPP and August '80. (This is the same person.) So forming this coalition with the social democrats ended up, predictably, as a disaster and we don't see any possibilities of working in this field.

As we mentioned, from time to time some social protests break out. Recently there was a postal workers' strike and now doctors are preparing to strike. There are some protests at Cegielski in Poznan and maybe there will be a strike at the Opel factory in Gliwice. In Puck, a town with only 15000 people, 200 residents staged a protest against the privatisation of the local hospital. However, these are isolated protests and there is a lack of solidarity and consciousness which is the result of a lack of

information between workers and a lack of belief that things can be changed. In the situation where there is a high level of unemployment, any form of workers' self organisation is met with the capitalists' favourite means of repression – firings. Many people were fired recently because they tried to form a union. The situation is slowly changing and the unemployment rate is slowly changing and the unemployment rate is slowly dropping, mostly due to mass emigration. In this case, better conditions can be found in a few sectors of the economy and some workers have less fear that they will be fired and are more emboldened to fight for their rights.

ABB: Which strategies for organising and struggle do you promote?

X: We already said a little about this. The most important thing is building a sense of solidarity between workers so that it is not limited to sectors or workplaces and is not broken up. Capitalism's centralised character has an influence on this. We think that you have to be flexible when it comes to organisation. Big centralised unions are not in line not only with the idea of workers' self-management, or the goals we wish to achieve but they are ineffective in fighting today's form of capitalism. It's important to promote non-hierarchical forms of organisation and to criticise the union leaders who betray the workers sooner or later. We think that this idea of grassroots, anti-authoritarian, rank and file unions and workers organisations is not only correct but that we are only now approaching the best time in history to form them. Everything depends on whether anarcho-syndicalists are not attempted by simple plans of action and social democracy, which unfortunately we can see happening. In our opinion, the strength of anarcho-syndicalism doesn't only depend on the size of the movement (because then we'd have to say that the centralised unions are the best because they have the most members). Nor does it depend on copying the hierarchical forms of social democratic unions. If we act like the social democrats, then we'll lose since anyway there are fewer of us. Social democrats and sell-out unions have a lot of members but 90% of them are passive; if the criteria for judging the strength of a union was not its size but the activity of its members, then it turns out that anarcho-syndicalist unions are better than the big centralised unions. In the centralised unions, sometimes even activity is not the result of some authentic engagement but the fact that it's a job and the union bureaucrats must go to the picket because that's how they earn their money.

We know of some demonstrations in Poland organised by the bureaucrats which look as if people had to go to them just like they'd have to go to any other job.

ABB: Do you see any chance for the radicalisation of attitudes of workers in Poland in the near future? What changes would have to happen in order for these people to take the offensive? Is it the deconstruction of current unions? It a change in consciousness? A change in the forms of struggle? Or maybe you think that its enough to have a few con-



frontations like in Ozarow* and people will start to solidarise and organise?

X: Short-lived tensions like in Ozarow had rather little effect. You need to have systematic work nation-wide and throughout the world in order to build an information network and a network of workers' solidarity. Only when such a network exists and there is a higher level of awareness amongst workers, then such a struggle like in Ozarow can cause a large reaction on a wider scale because workers are stronger when they are in solidarity. The main rule of the authorities is to divide and conquer so we need to make a counter-offensive. Unfortunately in Poland and in most of the world, there's a lot to be done. For example, currently practically the whole service sector is unorganised. Millions of people totally isolated from each other face the system alone, whereas they can only effectively fight it by mutually supporting each other in groups and networks, for example by forming some sorts of federations.

ABB: What does ZSP want to do in the near future?

X: Most of all now we are concentrating on information campaigns and trying to influence how people think. We publish a paper called "Zaplata" (Payback) and we'll have a portal and forum working soon. The main instrument of the capitalists is isolation but we intend to change that. When the information network is established, then it'll be time to act. If

enough people want to form a union, we'll do it or help, if others prefer to act as a solidarity group, we'll help and if somebody works in some other existing union (maybe there's only that one at work) in order to influence people and promote certain ideas and tactics, then we'll also support this. In general, we want to be flexible and react to people's needs and not to form an artificial organisation only for the sake of forming an organisation.

In general, we don't believe that you can really change the sell-out unions from inside but people in our organisation are not forbidden from joining even unions like Solidarity, if there is no other choice at the workplace – as long as they don't take up paid bureaucratic functions. On the rank and file level, you can have some influence perhaps on other individuals. Already we see that for some people this is bringing good results, better than we expected and we have got signals from many that people are just waiting for alternatives to the yellow unions, Solidarity and OPZZ. A lot of people didn't think that you could organise yourself differently. So we are full of optimism but let's wait to

see what our actions say about us. Surely we'll keep readers of ABB informed as our activities spread. Right now we've existed too short a time to assess the effects of our strategies and activities.

The information networks of ZSP are in their infant stage but you can check out some webpages:

- www.zsp.bzz.net (ZSP page)
- www.pracownik.net.pl (workers' portal)
- www.zlyszef.bzz.net (bad boss forum for trashing employers)

*.Ozarow – small town next to Warsaw where radical resistance in the Cable Factory took place in 2001/2002. Workers of the factory supported workers from other plants and by anarchists from all over the country resisted for a few months using all possible means of resistance. The struggle was finally lost but it directly initiated a series of common meetings, conferences and initiatives by workers and anarchists in Poland.

Thanks to Abolishing Borders.

Continued From Page 9
 phantly claims that Veolia already has 40 applications from drivers, Polski Ekspres even has 60, but these figures smell of bluff again.

29 August 1.19 a.m.: There are about 30 workers in the Pakosz operation yard. Most of them sleep in busses or private cars.

Suddenly two busses arrive in front of the gate. About 70 security guards in riot gear jump out. The run onto the operation yard, pull sleeping workers out of busses and cars and chase them off the premises - hitting some of them with truncheons. Workers compare this action with police actions during 1980s martial law. The mayor says he ordered the action in order to prevent flammable fluids from catching fire. According to the workers, there are no fuel tanks on the premises. The security guards tell the press they were supposed to prevent a "terrorist arson attack on a bus". More likely, the operation yard and the buses which are parked there were to be handed to the strike-breakers.

8 a.m.: In a co-ordinated action, over a hundred workers storm the operation yard through the main gate and through two other entrances (a side gate and a hole in the fence on the back of the premises). The security guards are completely taken by surprise and flee to the office shack after brief and futile resistance. Meanwhile large numbers of police have been brought in but they only watch and tell the workers to use "no violence". Afterwards, the president of the security company hired for the attack complains to the press that nothing like his has ever happened to him before: to have the police stand aside without supporting him. Nationwide public opinion turns against Kielce's mayor: unions and left-wing groups issue protests, even politicians and media criticise him. National newspapers which have hardly paid any attention to the strike so far turn it into their lead story for the next day. Broadcasting vans with satellite dishes pull up in front of the Pakosz operation yard.

10 a.m.: The voivod holds a press conference and attacks the mayor from behind: "There is still a chance that all MPK workers can keep their jobs."

3p.m.: The security guards leave the office shack under police protection and the workers' whistles. They enter their buses and leave.

Afternoon: Talks between the mayor and the strike committee. Afterwards, MPK's Solidarnoc leader smiles to the workers: "Everything is going in the right direction." According to him, the mayor has promised that last night's event will not be repeated - with two bishops as witnesses.

30 August, 1.19 a.m.: On the operation yard in Pakosz, there are about 70 workers and some left-wing supporters who have come from other cities and have received a friendly welcome after short hesitation (this hadn't been entirely clear considering the cultural gap between 45 year-old catholic moustache wearers and 25 year old antifa dreadlock wearers). Some sleep in buses and cars but most are awake and stand around in groups on the premises, some wielding iron rods.

10 a.m.: Continued talks between mayor and strike committee.

12 a.m.: MPK's Solidarnoc leader has successfully ended talks with the mayor. He jumps out of the car and beams at his workers: "Everything is going in a very good direction." A press conference is being prepared on the outside while the workers meet to discuss and vote in one of the bus hangars. The result seems to be certain in advance.

2 p.m.: The mayor's, voivod's, bishop's and regional Solidarnosc leader's limousines pull up. MPK's president is missing because he has already resigned. Then the result is announced: The strike is over. MPK will not be sold to Veolia but transformed into a "workers' company". According to Polish privatisation law this means that 15 per cent of shares are given to the workers for free and that more shares up to a total of 60 or 70 per cent but at least 51 per cent are sold to them. There is no mention of the price or other details.

The mayor takes back the sacking of the strike committee members and the liquidation of the MPK and exclusively contracts the city's bus traffic out to MPK. The workers shout their thanks after the end of the press conference.

A victory for the workers?

It still remains to be seen what this result will mean for them. When I asked a member of the strike committee after the press conference about the wage increases the

answer was: "We'll see about that later." The fear of layoffs due to the Veolia deal is no longer an issue. However, the construction between ZTM and MPK is still an issue. So is the MPK's debt, the need for investment in new buses and general necessities which the self-managed company will now pass on to the workers. There are already some signs of the future atmosphere: MPK's Solidarnoc leader who sees himself in a responsible position now has proposed to treat half of the strike days as unpaid holidays.

Still, this result is a victory. The workers have fought, stuck together and forced the adversary to accept a result which he did not want. If everything had ended with the security guards' attack in the night of 29 August the workers would have had the entire nation's sympathy but they would not have prevailed. By recapturing the operation yard they won back the initiative. Now the mayor (the MPK's acting capitalist) would have had to evict the workers again, and they would have been prepared. He did not have the guts to do that.

One of the reasons was the fact that big politics had already attacked him from behind and withdrawn police protection from him. Poland is facing elections and the ruling PiS party is making a last-minute attempt at looking "social" compared to the neoliberal opposition. On 29 August, prime minister Kaczyski met Solidarnoc and signed a social agreement.

Without even informing the other unions or the employers, the minimum wage was raised by 200 Zl to 1,126, and public sector wages will also be raised. The agreement was explicitly designed to evoke the famous August 1980 agreement between Solidarnoc and the state! This would have been spoiled by a rough police attack on Solidarnoc activists. Instead Kaczyski chose to rain on the mayor's parade. In the end, the workers will have to pay the bill anyway.

GERMANY - BICYCLE FACTORY OCCUPATION

Hamburg/Nordhausen, 19th of September in 2007:

Workers of the occupied bicycle factory in Thuringian Nordhausen take up production under self-management again.

The 135 workers of the bicycle factory Bike, Systems GmbH in Thuringian Nordhausen, who kept the factory occupied since 10th of July 2007, decided to resume production of bicycles under self-management. For this aim, 1,800 binding orders on bicycles must be re-

ceived till 2nd of October. So the comrades are working together with the anarcho-syndicalist union FAU (Freie Arbeiterinnen- und Arbeiter-Union - Free Workers-Union), which formed for this campaign the internetpage www.strike-bike.de.

Since for more than two months, the staff kept the factory in the south of Harz MountCains on three shifts occupied. They want to pre-

See Page 20

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Uncharted Waters: Social Responsibility in Australian Trades Unions By G. Mallory, with Foreword by J. Munday, Brisbane 2005.

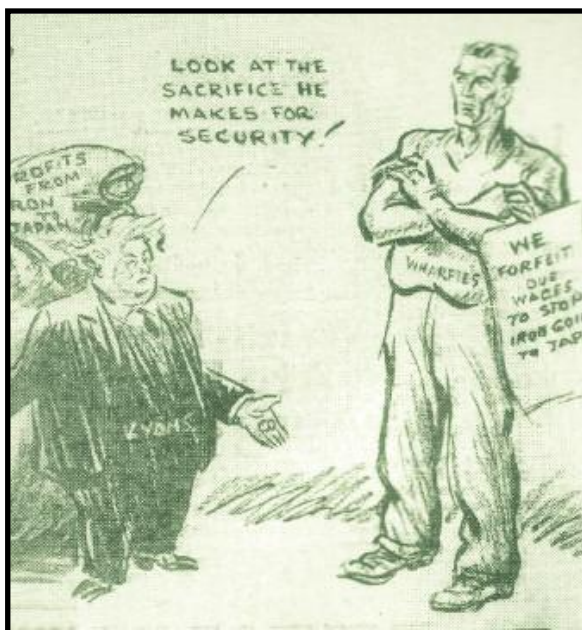
Uncharted Waters is intelligently structured and informative without baffling the reader with too many 'ologies' and 'isms'. Labour histories are often quite dry or dull so it is a welcome exception to find an enjoyable, readable and authoritative book documenting and analyzing important, fondly remembered or infamous past events in the life and times of NSW Builders Labourers Fed. and The Australian Waterside Workers Fed.

Mallory analyses the major underlying political ideologies, influences, movements and industrial practices informing these two unions with respect to momentous events and changes in the 20th century. Specifically he examines their role and methods in fighting fascism and questioning centralized communist party control of union policy & politics. Mallory examines and documents in some detail the BLF's support for new left agendas (black, gay, womens movements) in addition to their industrial and political response through green bans to rising global green consciousness and public unease in urban Australia with environmental changes challenging their 'standard of living'. Mallory focuses upon the Builders labourers and Waterfront workers in order to illustrate his central interest: The evolution of "socially responsible" thinking. Mallory concludes that, these new ideas, concerns and demands expressed by the workers resulted from syndicalist-like traditions that encouraged self-directed autonomous discussion and local industrial direct action:

"The Pig Iron Dispute of 1938 and the Green Bans of the 1970s were situations in which sections of the trade union movement became involved in struggles that were not solely concerned with wages and conditions...The trade union movement had a responsibility to act when they recognized a perceived injustice. For wharfies in 1938, it meant that they should have a right to refuse to load materials that might be used by an aggressor nation. For builders labourers in the 1970s, it meant that they should have the right to refuse to demolish historic buildings or to destroy the homes of inner-city residents and re-

place these with high-rise office buildings. Both unions were concerned with the effects of the product of their labour on society" (p.xvi).

"Leninist doctrine led to the formation of communist parties throughout the capitalist world and these parties largely adopted an approach that believed in the supremacy of the party over the union" (p.14). By contrast Mallory concludes: "The social responsibility function should have as its fundamental orientation the trade union rather than the working class party [and] is ultimately concerned with democratic and local decision-making" (p.xx). "It would



appear that the aims of syndicalism and anarcho-syndicalism contain an industrial and a political component, and look towards a social responsibility function with the incorporation of concepts such as grass-roots democracy and decentralized decision-making (p. 18)."

When Australia's pro-capitalist puppy-dog political parties and national governments were pursuing immoral agendas like supplying arms to fascists or destroying the nations historic cityscapes, workers through syndicalist-like processes and methods directed their industrial muscles to achieve important victories for common sense, social responsibility and decency. The halting of shipments to Japan immediately prior to World

War II and the preservation of local architectural treasures such as the historic Sydney Rocks Area are now viewed as great public political triumphs and as national monuments swarming with tourists every day of the year.

The NSW BLF and Syndicalist Theory and Practice:

I am delighted to recommend a book that doesn't assume prior knowledge of unions in general and isn't ideologically biased with tiresome lessons on either Syndicalism or Marxism. But, which DOES reveal that: Social progress and change in the 20th as much as that of the 19th Centuries has almost always been won by grass roots struggle by democratically organized working people using direct action of various sorts powered by local self-coordinated initiatives. Syndicalism

fighters for the revolutionary empowerment of working people and their families through industrial unionism. The syndicalist theory of organization and revolution is simply a compilation and reflection upon the proven methods and processes for successful industrial action (including refinements like limited tenure for union officials and, insistence upon the primacy of local mass workers meeting in decision making processes). This allows Mallory (and other recent prominent commentators like Burgmann) to legitimately claim that the BLF were syndicalist-like without having been a conscious syndicalist movement among these workers at this period. Mallory is correct in his observation that syndicalist ideas reemerged in

Sydney with anti-Vietnam War conscription dodgers rediscovering and becoming inspired by Australia's forgotten syndicalist history. These ideas were fused with anarchist inspired new left agendas of students and radical intellectuals that influenced the broad social preoccupations of the BLF in the early 1970s. Rebel worker appeared a number of years after the events covered by Mallory. Rebel Worker began as an IWW affiliated paper but within a few issues had changed its allegiance to the IWA in order to emphasize the broader anarchist inspiration behind Rebel Workers syndicalism. This lack of conscious syndicalism among the workers and their leadership led the BLF into some waters that are uncharted because the

rocks are clearly there for all to see. The mass works meeting works when all who participate are the local workers or are paid-up members of the relevant union. The outcomes of unstructured, ad hoc or hastily organized mass 'anyone welcome' meetings of residents or students are easily manipulated by the attendance of government, company, Trotskyist, fascist, etc spooks or usurped by other vocal but organizationally useless or madly destructive elements leading to a situation that is neither directly democratic or a viable method for ensuring victory. Resident's picnics and other 'community' or student events are great places for fundraising, garnering opinion, exchanging ideas, distributing information and consciousness raising, but should not generally be used or considered as a basis for industrial or union decision making whose locus must be meetings held by the union rank and file at the local level. 'Community organizing and events' are indispensable tools of any major successful industrial struggle by workers, as shown by the outreach meetings and discussions organized by various informal committees at the outbreak of 1954 wharfie's recruitment strike. But outreach and other support events/groups organized within the community should not be confused with the core industrial focus of workers direct democracy and organization. The primacy of this theoretical distinction and revolutionary tactic or principle bothers syndicalists but is passed over by Mallory's broad, non-partisan, new-leftist position adopted throughout the book and clouding his treatment of this particular issue.

Uncharted Waters does not aim to be a theoretical guide to direct action and its conclusions are too general, simplistic and uncontroversial to warrant detailed or serious criticism. But, for the purposes of debate rather than criticism I would like to further consider two major areas or issues dealt with by Mallory: The usefulness of his social responsibility concept and the issue of closed shops and workers control.

Closed Shops and Workers Control:

Recruitment and retention practices upon the waterside and at building sites had traditionally been inhumane. They were often designed to pit workmate against workmate upon a daily basis in a desperate scramble for single days work. In 1954 when threatened with losing union control over recruitment (wrested from the waterfront bosses during the labor shortages of the War years) these privileges were successfully defended by wharfies through industrial warfare waged with military like foresight and precision. Mallory not unreasonably argues that "the WWF was maintaining a form of workers con-

trol—control by workers over the decisions of the employers and their managers by controlling the recruitment of labor" (p.49).

Historically the notoriously barbaric recruitment practices of the world's waterfronts (and on the high seas generally e.g. press gangs) make the 1954 strike something of a special case. More generally



however, the idea of inheriting a specific trade within a specific geographic community with the confident expectation of a job for life is generally a left over from trades- rather than industrial-unionism. Control over recruitment is an important but only one part of successfully managing an industry. A little control like a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing and for technological as well as inherent structural weakness the closed shop approach to obtaining worker control and a socialized economy must in my opinion be seriously challenged.

Technological change in every industry has accelerated at such a pace since the 1950's that the health of any enterprise in modern industry begins with recruiting the most talented workers willing and able to utilize the most innovative methods to create better products more efficiently in the most socially responsible way. Under closed shop arrangements conceived among tight knit w/class communities of the past the jobs of miners, printers and longshoremen were generally reserved for their sons and daughters. By doing this they were simply following the old trade arrangements that were implicitly de-

signed to protect and provide employment for local communities of traditional tradespeople engaged in the same or similar work over generations. Nepotism, communal (often cultural and geographic) isolation and complete lack of recruitment from elsewhere led to complacency, blindness and the eventual loss of hard won privileges. Traditional worker communities of British miners or printers and the Australian wharfies failed to innovate and react adaptively to globalization of the energy industry, computerization of publishing and containerization of commercial shipping. Any enterprise, capitalist or syndicalist will only prosper if it takes a socially and collectively responsible approach to recruitment—by seeking out and attracting and researching the best and most innovate personnel and methods of production. The closed shop approach whatever virtues it may have held in the past does in the present era of ever more rapid technological change and innovation seem inappropriate as a method of achieving workers self management and control of industry.

The Social Responsibility Concept:

I'm not sure that this was the case when Mallory conceived his study but the concept of social responsibility has become something of a meaningless buzz-word (like so many others hideously perverted by bureaucratic, capitalist-commercial elites) in Corporate Human Resource/Public Relations and United Nations circles. A recent survey of MBA students from 11 leading American and European business schools reveals that 94% of candidates would be willing to accept a lower salary to work for a socially responsible firm (on average 14% lower). In 2007 the *Global Compact on Corporate Social Responsibility*—(a gab-fest conceived by the former UN Secretary Annan)—was held in Geneva and attended by a 1000 executives from major global capitalist corporations. Goldman Sachs and Coca-cola were the lead organizers in partnership with the United Nations. The executives between power naps and interacting with their Blackberrys found time to discuss the basic human right of their workers, corporate corruption and climate change. Their joint declaration states that: "It is unprecedented in history to have the objectives of the international community and the global business community so aligned...Underlying this new spirit of collaboration is the belief that globalization, if rooted in universal principles, has the power to improve our world fundamentally."

The world would be such a wonderful place if only some tiny fraction of one percent of the good intentions emanating

from UN committees and corporate PR departments were ever realized. It seems to me that all public organizations have duties to act in a socially responsible way and that in the present era the views of Jack Munday, Coca-cola executives and business school undergraduates can all agree on this noble and universal principle of social-environmental life. But, Mallory importantly reminds us that these ideas came from the workers themselves and were not initiated by the Ethical Committees of University Vice Chancelleries and corporate Human Resource departments. Mallory also reminds us that ethical and socially responsible behaviour by our national and corporate leaders has at impor-

tant junctures in the 20th century had to be enforced by grass roots industrial direct action by the organized and unionized working class. It is foolish to ignore this important historical lesson in the 21st Century. We have empirical evidence suggesting that we should be skeptical when corporate elites claim ethical enlightenment and promise in the future to provide employees with environmentally benign palaces where work will become pleasure and our rights, conditions and standard of living will be fully respected and forever protected through strict adherence to best business practice and international human rights law. Syndicalism in contrast to the empty promises of philanthropic, re-

formed, green or ethical capitalism or mainstream unionism (labourism) believes that, social and environmental responsibility can only be achieved in industry and society by progress towards social and local workers self-management and control of the economy in the wider context of an anarchist social revolution. This in essence is the central and commendable historical conclusion and unifying theme of *Uncharted Waters*.

Graham Purchase,
VijayaNagara September 2007

Dawkins' Delusions: An Anarchist Analysis A Review Article by Graham Purchase of *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins

Dawkin's rationalist-atheist polemic against religion is readily available from all mainstream bookstores.

[1] Introduction:

Dawkin's popular and provocative study is of considerable interest to anarchists for a wide range of very important historical, situational, and theoretical reasons:

There are extremely strong historical, ideological and activist links in terms of organization and membership between the anarchist, atheist and rationalist movements. Although this is less apparent in the Anglosphere militant atheism was a fundamental aspect of anarchism in France, Spain, etc.

The prominent anarchist and political philosopher M. Bakunin thought the theory of an omnipotent, centralized and controlling God so abhorrent that, even if he did exist humanity would be duty bound to rebel and destroy his authority.

The anarchist rejects both God and State because religious ideas and institutions have always served as a major, perhaps even an overriding force in the establishment and support for communalist bloodshed and authoritarian, irrational or militaristic political states. And this situation is never more apparent than at the present day. Rising fundamentalism is the greatest catastrophe of the early 21st Century. Talibanistic calls for authoritarian theocracies based upon medieval or puritanical laws, Dawkins continually and usefully reminds us are, as common among America's Christians as they are in the valleys of Afghanistan. Any book from whatever quarter confronting this madness can only be welcomed, but not unconditionally so.

Dawkins achieved intellectual fame with his stupendously successful and contro-

versial popular work of science fiction *The Selfish Gene*. Dawkin's unfortunately believes in his own science fantasies and an unrelentingly dogmatic and all-subsuming social/neo Darwinism is unceasingly apparent on every page of *The God Delusion*. I believe in the power of natural selection as much as Dawkins, but not his version of it or his bypassing or ridiculing of factors



or processes that can't be straight-jacketed by his narrow interpretation of evolutionary processes.

The Russian anarchist philosopher P. Kropotkin, an unswerving lifelong atheist and rationalist also wrote upon evolutionary biology and experimental embryology (the old term for genetics). *Mutual Aid* famously provided an alternative and

equally exaggerated evolutionary biostory in opposition Huxley's Social Darwinism. Kropotkin's *Evolution and Environment* much less successfully attempted to counter Weismann's Neo-Darwinism—a body of influential ideas generally referred to as the Centralist Dogma in genetics. Dawkins is a scientific-political zealot; the most famous and vociferous contemporary missionary of Huxley's and Weismann's selectively culled and ideologically myopic perversion of Darwin's broad, diverse and entangled evolutionary and ecological analysis. In this context I highly recommend Niles Eldredge's book *Reinventing Darwin* as a readable and comprehensible overview of Dawkin's "Ultra-Darwinism" by an equally gifted and respected professional mainstream contemporary academic scientist and evolutionary philosopher outlining why we should reject the specific theories, general type and practice of politicized academic sectarianism and biodogmatism that Dawkins represents within the scientific establishments and university departments that are actively engaged in the fields of palaeontological, biological and genetic research.

Those familiar with the publications of atheist and rationalist movements will find *The God Delusion* fairly typical of the genre except for its political tone which, contrasts strongly with the libertarian or socialist emphasis of B. Russel, Gora, Periyar, Bose and, the vast majority of other atheist agitators, activists and writers of the 20th Century. Dawkins is no friend of religion. Right leaning or biologically and politically naive atheists who enjoy reading anti-religious literature will find that there is much to recommend in his book. But Dawkin's very brief comments and presentation of biogenesis (origin of first cellular life), symbiosis, mutualism, group selection and structure is full of gaps, straightforwardly biased (by his own admission) and, in some places deliberately inaccurate or intellectually cowardly (in that I cant believe he is ignorant either of

some well established historical & scientific facts or the implications they have for his Huxley-like brand of populist-sensationalist scientifically sectarian capitalist bio-dogmatism).

[2] Symbiosis and the Symbiogenesis of Plants, Animals and Ecosystems:

Until fairly recently "Symbiotic concepts of the cell and organism remained on the fringe of biological thought". Although "cytologists of the late 19th century recognized that it was possible that many cytoplasmic structures were self-reproducing from one cell generation to the next, many insisted that they were the products of nuclear activity." Geddes who corresponded with Kropotkin also held this view. The symbiogenesis theory of the evolution of the cell was unknown, ignored or denied by most leading biological researchers for much of the 20th century.

The development molecular genetics in the late 20th century allowed for the application of nucleotide sequence analysis to cytoplasmic genomes and conclusively proved the symbiotic origins of nucleated cells. Nucleated cells evolved in the later Pre-Cambrian as a result of a series of mergers of prokaryotic or bacterial cells. This is well accepted in the case of two cytoplasmic organelles: plastids and mitochondria that evolved from cyanobacteria and proteobacteria respectively. These are the parts of the cell enabling plants to photosynthesise and animals to respire. Symbiotic associations with fungi allowed plants to colonize terrestrial habitats and symbiosis has been integral to the evolution and maintenance of some marine species and ecosystems (e.g. coral reefs) and virtually every terrestrial one. Recently there has been a revolution in the understanding of the importance of symbiogenesis and symbiosis within the scientific establishment.

The God Delusion misinforms us that, the "origin of life is not the only major gap in the evolutionary story that is bridged by sheer luck...My colleague Mark Ridley has suggested that the origin of the eucaryotic cell (our kind of cell, with a nucleus and various other complicated features such as mitochondria, which are not present in bacteria) was an even more momentous, difficult and statistically improbable step than the origin of life." (p.140, all references to Australian edition, Bantam Press 2006).

The evolution of modern animal and plant cells was not the result of "sheer luck", nor does it represent a "gap" in our understanding. The ideas Dawkins attributes to Ridley predate him by around a century. Bacteria don't have mitochondria, as Dawkins disingenuously states, because mitochondria are bacteria and, were once free-living oxygen respiring bacteria that

entered into the cytoplasm of pre-evolved cellular organisms where they developed a symbiotic relationship with their host. A relationship that led to a new organism and the development of what would over 100s of millions of years evolve into animal cells. Plant cells evolved through a free-living photosynthetic bacteria entering into complex cells such that parasite and host became obligate symbionts in the creation of a new class of plant organisms. These evolutionary steps were indeed momentous but they did not initially occur through the genetic mutation of nuclear DNA or by natural selection. The only mechanisms of evolution allowable according to Dawkin's scheme of things, such that, he believes it is best not to mention the Serial Endosymbiotic evolution of animal and plant cells.

The symbiotic evolution of animal and plant cells was first proposed as a theory by a very wide cross section of scientists in Russia, France, Japan, America and the UK from the early 1880's to the early 1900's and there are a number of superbly researched academic histories of these scientific pioneers (the most readily obtainable commentaries can be found in the brief historical essays contained in many of Lynn Margulis' numerous popular books on symbiosis). The idea that the precursors of plant and animal cells evolved by collaborationist, collectivist and amalgamationist processes, other than natural selection has been known to be absolutely true by virtue of nucleotide sequence analysis for a couple of decades.

[3] Kropotkin And Symbiosis:

Mutualism and symbiosis are often confused with each other. Generally it may be said that mutualism refers to co-operative behaviour between individuals of the same species whilst symbiosis refers to an intimate and long lasting physical relationships between individuals of different species.

Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* is exclusively about mutualism and does not mention symbiosis. Although Kropotkin didn't contribute directly to the symbiosis debate, Sapp in an authoritative history of symbiosis correctly claims that, *Mutual Aid* has been of enormous significance in keeping the idea of co-operative evolution a compelling issue for successive generations. Kropotkin maintained professional relationships and friendships with scientists who were conducting or supporting symbiosis research, including, Patrick Geddes, Marie Goldsmith and Yves Delage. Goldsmith and Delage thought very highly of Kropotkin and included a summary of his mutual aid theories in their then influential book, *Theories of Evolution*.

Kropotkin in a number of articles in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* (which was also at this very same time first serializing *Mutual Aid*) discussed and gave his considered opinion concerning the importance of symbiosis in evolution. When discussing the evolution and physiology of the cell Kropotkin argued that, the organelles are "independent" and "separate organisms", because, like the cell they "multiply only by subdivision". Kropotkin favoured Altman's 'co-operative colony' characterization of the cell according to which the evolution and continuous functioning of the nucleus and cytoplasm are conceived as resulting from the economic co-operation of once free-living microbes: "As to the cell, it is not, in Altmann's view, an elementary organism, but a colony of elementary organisms which group together according to certain rules of colonisation...These granules, he maintains, are identical with microbes; their shape, their chemical reactions, their movements, and their secretory functions are similar; but the granules of the protoplasm differ from bacteria in not being capable of a separate existence. They can only live in cells".

In an article upon the agricultural and ecological importance of symbiotic relationships Kropotkin discusses nitrogen fixing bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi. He also reported upon the discovery of sulphur and iron feeding bacteria in the Black Sea and speculates about their role within its ecosystems:

"At the present time, we know that no animal or plant, with the exception of the lowest unicellular beings, can be considered as one being—that each of them is a colony of multitude of micro-organisms." "All these are evidently but separate instances of a much more general fact, which only recently became known under the general name of 'symbiosis' and appears to have an immense signification in nature. Higher plants depend upon lower fungi and bacteria for the supply of that important part of their tissues, nitrogen. Lower fungi associate with unicellular algae to form that great division of the vegetable world, the lichens. More than a hundred different species of algae are already known to live in the tissues of other plants, and even in the tissues and the cells of animals, and to render each other mutual services. And so on. Associations of high and low organisms are discovered every day; and when their conditions of life are more closely examined, the whole cycle of life changes its aspect and acquires a much deeper signification."

[4] Mutualism:

Mutualism began as a political movement in France and its most important intellectual forerunner was the early anarchist thinker P. J. Proudhon. Kropotkin's *Mu-*

tual Aid is without question one of the pivotal or axiomatic works in the historical and philosophical study of biological mutualism; co-operation among groups of individuals of the same species. In Dawkin's conception of things the first single celled organisms would be ruthlessly engaged in ceaseless individualistic competition. How then did we get past the individual cell and evolve into multicellular human collective individuals composed of 75 trillion cells of several hundred different functional types? Complex multicellular animals and plants did not evolve by ruthlessly competing with one another but by collectively working together to create larger and more effective organisms. The only way that multicellularity could evolve and work according to Weismann's and Dawkin's programmatic and preformist model or

conception of genetics and development is, if the genes are tightly in control of developmental processes which would necessitate strong effective centralized genetically directed hierarchies in order to keep all the selfish DNA in all those selfish cells in order. But, as Dawkin's himself knows this simply isn't possible, as revealed in his facile remarks concerning how "embryology is completely distinct from genetics" (p.197). The epigenetic reconstruction of the collective memory matrix or phylotype (early pre-embryonic stage of development) occurs in related but autonomous space to that of the genes, such that, nuclear DNA cannot exercise centralized or hierarchical control over developmental processes. It is also the case that, genomes are not expressed and organisms do not develop hierarchically. For example, tiny snippets of RNA contained

in the juices surrounding male sperm can override or silence the 'instructions' of the nuclear DNA and, even replace information that the nuclear DNA has lost (a process known as paramutation). The whole centralist hierarchical dogma that dominated genetics for over a century and was concocted by a series of thinkers, most notably and relevantly, Weismann and Dawkins has, in recent years crumbled in the light of fascinating new evidence. There is a growing scientific realization that the static and prosaic DNA archive cannot control or achieve anything by itself and its "instructions" are autonomously manipulated by the interpretive, flexible, decentralized, indeterminate, mind-bogglingly complex activities of both nuclear and non-nuclear RNAs in partnership with the versatile and collaborating Proteins. To Be Continued.

Reds or Rackets: The Making of Radical & Conservative Unions on the Waterfront by Howard Kimeldorf, University of California Press, Paper Back Edition.

The resurgence of the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World) an anarcho-syndicalist style grouping in the USA and elsewhere since the 1960's has been largely characterised by its strategically senseless organising drives focusing upon marginal sectors. Launching organising drives on the basis of opportunity rather than strategic insight. Some of these strategically senseless ventures have included organising drives in regard to the Borders and Starbucks store chains, many worker owned coops and the welfare sector in the USA, "panhandlers" in Canada, "parliamentary workers" in Scotland and "Big Issue Sellers" in Melbourne.

Associated with this organising approach has been a very crude and simplistic concept of building revolutionary unions – organisations seeking to unite all workers in the same industry on the basis of ultra democratic processes and direct action on the job to achieve the overthrow of the capitalist mode of production. It has involved the notion that the tiny IWW affiliates will grow to become mass unions via minute increments involving organising ever more small shops. This approach lacks a grasp of the importance of long range sustained work to assist grass roots self organisation and direct action in strategic industries such as transport to counter the employer offensive and raise morale in the labour movement generally via winning major victories in the class struggle. In the context of such raised mo-

rale, windows would be open to syndicalist organising drives in a range of important industries, enabling the organising of un-organised shops and wiping out the bureaucratic unions in organised work places. The realisation of the critical importance of this "psychological dimension" of syndicalist industrial organising is certainly absent in post 1960's IWW activity. It was dramatically spotlighted during the transit workers strike in New York in 2005. This strike which had massive international publicity and wide impact on the international labour movement had no IWW involvement, whilst the major thrust of IWW industrial work in New York was precisely such strategically peripheral sectors as Starbucks cafés and small warehouses, which would in no way alter the situation in the American or international class struggle and labour movement.

The book under review, throws much light on a different IWW. An organisation which was not acclimatised to marginality within the American labour movement and was serious about building mass syndicalist unionism. Whilst discussing the struggle amongst longshore workers and the American labour movement generally between militant and revolutionary versus conservative and business union tendencies in the 20th Century. The author particularly focuses on a comparison between the different longshore unions on the West and East Coasts of the US and key phases and turning points in their different trajectories.

In looking at the origins of longshore unionism on both coasts, the author sketches the success of the early IWW in the early 20th Century on the West Coast via its Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union which formed locals composed of several hundred workers in West Coast ports from Seattle to San Pedro and influenced thousands via participation in strikes and stoppages and helped achieve temporary union control of longshore hiring in all major ports. Whilst it failed to make headway in such crucial ports as New York on the East Coast, which remained dominated by the conservative ILA (International Longshoremen's Association) affiliated to the AFL (American Federation of Labor). A port on the East Coast in which the IWW did make initial headway and became the predominant longshore workers' union during the period 1913 to 1926 was Philadelphia, which is not discussed in this volume. Although focused upon by the author in a subsequent book "Battling for American Labor". The author accounts for the different trajectories of unionism on the two coasts due to ethnic, religious, the concentration of shipping capital ownership and other factors.

On the West Coast the drift into maritime employment of wobbly (IWW members) loggers and the proximity of San Francisco which has traditionally had large radical communities, the author sees as significant factors contributing to IWW influence. Whilst the employment of Irish and Italian workers heavily under the influence of the Catholic Church which pursued many welfare outreach initiatives amongst longshore workers to counter radical influence is seen by the author as important factors explaining conservative influence on the East Coast.

However, for the author, of paramount importance is the differing levels of capital concentration on the different coasts. On the West Coast 3 major firms predominated. Whilst, there were a dozen medium sized American owned shipping firms based on the East Coast. The author shows that the greater centralised capital concentration on the West Coast led to the pursuit by ship owners of highly coordinated anti-union offensives, resulting in the smashing of IWW and the ILA influence on the West Coast by the mid 1920's. This employer attack which took advantage of the down turn in shipping in this period, led to an upsurge in company "Blue Book" unionism and the emergence of employer controlled hiring halls. Whilst on the East Coast, maritime employers were so divided on the issue of unionism that they were unable to pursue a similar massive crack down as occurred on the West Coast following WWI. However, they were quite hostile toward the IWW, but were willing to cooperate with the conservative ILA. In the author's book "Batling for American Labor", he shows how the ILA longshore local in Philadelphia adopted the policy of a "black only" local in 1919 so as to take advantage of the upswing in black identity politics particularly associated with the Marcus Garvey movement (which had its own short lived, shipping line "the Black Star Line, with all black crews and black middle class passengers) which bore fruit with a steady influx of black members in the early 20's, together with deals with the ship owners and the support of the Shipping Board, to eventually eradicate the IWW.

In discussing the critical mid 1930's, the author goes on to show that the highly coordinated wave of repression launched by maritime employers and the State on the West Coast to halt a renewed union organising resurgence, proved counter productive. In this episode, ILA rank and file activists, many of whom were ex-wobblies with strong connections to maverick Communist Party activists who disagreed with the current party line of supporting CP controlled "revolutionary unions", and assisted by the National Industrial Recovery Act which opened the door to collective bargaining by workers, played a critical role in eliminating the "Blue Book" company union, company

hiring halls and achieved employer recognition of the ILA. The wave of repression galvanised the outbreak of a 4 day general strike in San Francisco, facilitating militant rank and file activists in the ILA winning a resounding victory. Following this victory was the election of ex-Wobbly and CP associated rank and file activists to full time official positions in the West Coast ILA. Whilst the revamped ILA went



on to achieve many key demands of the IWW such as union control of hiring on the waterfront in 1934, control of loading and manning levels in 1935 and subsequently the formation of a coast wide federation of maritime crafts in 1937. The author also shows that the great maritime victory of 1934 had a major radiation impact amongst workers in the US, with such groups as loggers in the North West, warehouse workers in California, and Alaskan fishermen winning union recognition. This important radiation impact of such victories by workers in strategically important sectors and the importance of focusing syndicalist organising efforts in these sectors appears to be lost on many contemporary wobblies in the US.

On the East Coast, the author argues that a more discriminatory wave of repression involving criminal elements associated with the ILA hierarchy played a key role in defeating an insurgency inspired by the 1934 West Coast longshore workers' victory. It effectively smashed the rank and file movement which had won over sev-

eral ILA locals but had also been harmed by the more orthodox attitude toward union strategy by the New York CP hierarchy, which caused a delay in CP support for activism in the ILA.

The outbreak of WWII had a considerable impact on the trajectory of the US labour movement and in particular its maritime sector. The author shows that the "super patriotism" favouring close collaboration with employers to enhance the war effort of the CP hierarchy and the unions it controlled, led to a major backlash amongst the grass roots. At the end of WWII this legacy, together with the expulsion of CP influenced unions from the CIO (Council of Industrial Organisations) due to the impact of the Taft Hartley Act and McCarthy Era Hysteria, assisted rightwing takeovers of many of these unions. Whilst severely weakening the CIO leading to its later merger with the conservative AFL and collaboration with the Democratic Party, contributing to the current predominance of business unionism in the US. In the ILWU, the author shows that the CP union officials were restrained by militant grass roots activity from adopting extreme "super patriot" measures and had to act in a "flexible manner" and so did not severely alienate large swathes of their base on the job. As occurred in other CP unions such as the Auto Workers. Consequently a successful rightwing takeover, was precluded in the ILWU.

On the East Coast, the author looks at the influx of demobilised soldiers into the waterfront following the end of WWII and the shift during WWII from the "shape-up" employment system to regular employment based on "steady gangs" and its contribution to the emergence of a new rank and file insurgency against the mob connected ILA officials. Due to the "hard-line" super patriot position of the New York CP, there was no CP influence on this rank and file revolt, and it was taken advantage by a rival faction of the ILA hierarchy to pursue its quest for predominance. As a result, the author shows conservative control of the ILA and its underworld connections were not fundamentally challenged.

In conclusion, the author does a brilliant job examining the conflict between revolutionary and militant versus conservative and business union currents in the American labour movement and the economic and sociological factors which account for it. Particularly important is his portrayal of the IWW when it was a serious force for the building of mass revolutionary industrial unionism and the critical role of workers' struggles in maritime transport for the future direction of the US labour movement.

Mark McGuire

NEWS&NOTES

Some of the most significant and nefarious news lately was the recent APEC Summit held in Sydney in early Sept.

Certain groups have claimed the anti-APEC demonstration as a victory against capitalist globalisation and the US war drive. However, the massive police and military mobilisation and operations during the affair must be seen as a major step toward building a strong state to help push the neo-liberal agenda and repress resistance to the US war drive, whose next target looks to be Iran. (See article page 2.)

On the industrial front the ASN has been assisting militants in public transport in NSW to expose the slimy ploys of the bosses and the union hierarchy to sell upcoming enterprise agreements to the rank and file. These agreements are likely to result in major cuts to workers wages and conditions and facilitate privatisation moves.

The ASN has also been assisting militants in State Transit to expose the Big Brother nature of new surveillance equipment being deployed on buses which will have potentially dire consequences for drivers. (See article page 6.)

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

Many articles from back issues of RW are available on the site.

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

Your assistance on the financial plane is also very welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

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PP229155/00004

**POSTAGE
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Continued from Page 12
vent the definite dismantling and sale of the factory. The file for bankruptcy from 10th of August is against long odds: The factory is exploited and ran down, the hall was emptied except for the coating line. The staff receives unemployment compensation and hopes for a new concept and a new investor.

The "Strike Bike" - Solidarity-Bikes from Nordhausen

During the occupation and in the wake of discussions during the visits of solidary people, the workers of the factory developed the idea to initially take up produc-

tion under self-management for a short time. Because it's not the point to only prevent the evacuation of the last machines and to wait for a new investor, the idea of their own "Strike-Bike" met with more and more responses. Now the opportunity arises to show their ability to develop their own concept and to self-manage production and distribution.

If it goes well to collect, 1,800 advance orders for the bicycles produced in self-management, we spread solidary ideas and bolster colleagues in similar situations, not to let themselves easily being restructured to zero. By whomsoever!

The staff gets assistance by the solidary of members of anarcho-syndicalist union Freie Arbeiterinnen- und Arbeiter-Union (Free workers-union), which will become active in the whole of Germany to spread knowledge of the struggle of the bicycle-workers and to support the sale of the "Strike-Bike".

STOP PRESS

The "Strike Bike" campaign ended on 2/10/07 with 1800 bikes being sold. The campaign gained widespread coverage internationally in the media and the bike factory workers received many statements of solidarity internationally.

OUR RIGHTS AT WORK

The road ahead — Our rights at work will be defended by grassroots workers' struggle, or they won't be defended at all. And in that struggle, we will build the democracy and the solidarity that embody the values of a different kind of society. In deep electoral trouble on a number of fronts, the Howard government has made a few cosmetic changes to Work Choices. It hopes the new "Fairness Test" will calm people down enough to remove industrial relations as an election issue. It's also stopped calling its legislation Work Choices and changed the name of a couple of organisations. The truth is, however, that this is virtually meaningless and it would remain so even if full legal protection was restored to all the working conditions employers have been stripping away under the legislation. The core of Work Choices is the attempt to remove the right of workers to organise. It is about crushing the unions and establishing individual contracts as the norm in the workplace. This hasn't changed and it is this which must be resisted.

ALP Promises "Work Choices Light"

Anxious to be judged "acceptable" by big business, the ALP has adopted a policy which only tinkers around the edges of

Work Choices. AWAs will go, but common law individual contract will remain. The courts will still interfere with democratic union procedure and the right to strike will be confined to wages and conditions in one enterprise only after an agreement expires. That means (amongst other things) an end to industry-wide campaigns, no political protest action and an inability to respond to employer provocations. The anti-Work Choices rallies of 2005 and 2006 would be illegal under the ALP's proposed regime — unless, of course, the boss agrees to give you the day off.

Resistance is not yet Dead

Although the ACTU has turned its "Your Rights At Work" campaign into an exclusive "Vote Labor" one, not everybody has put all their eggs into the one holey basket. Victorian building industry unions are having a mass rally on 26 September, the Victorian CEPU have launched a "Right to Strike Coalition" and, most importantly, Union Solidarity is providing essential picket line support to the handful of grassroots struggles that exist. All of these are positive initiatives that should be taken up and built to the maximum extent possible. Nevertheless, the balance sheet is not looking good.

The rank & file have to take charge

The union bureaucracies aren't going to water just because they're stupid. It's because they are opposed to struggles which aren't initiated by them and they feel powerless against the Labor leadership, the media and big business. They capitulate to laws which undermine their own position because they have no faith in their own members.

To repair this terrible situation, rank and file unionists have to take The initiative. We can't afford to wait for the officials to propose effective action, because they're not going to. Call workplace meetings, where the members can discuss matters and instruct their delegates. Build rank and file networks which can act independently of the officials. And if the officials try to block what the rank & file want, build the support to ride over them.

Our rights at work will be defended by grassroots workers' struggle, or they won't be defended at all. And in that struggle, we will build the democracy and the solidarity that embody the values of a different kind of society. It will be a society of liberty, equality and solidarity, where one contributes according to one's ability and receives according to one's need. We will be building the new world within the shell of the old.

Thanks to the "Anvil"