

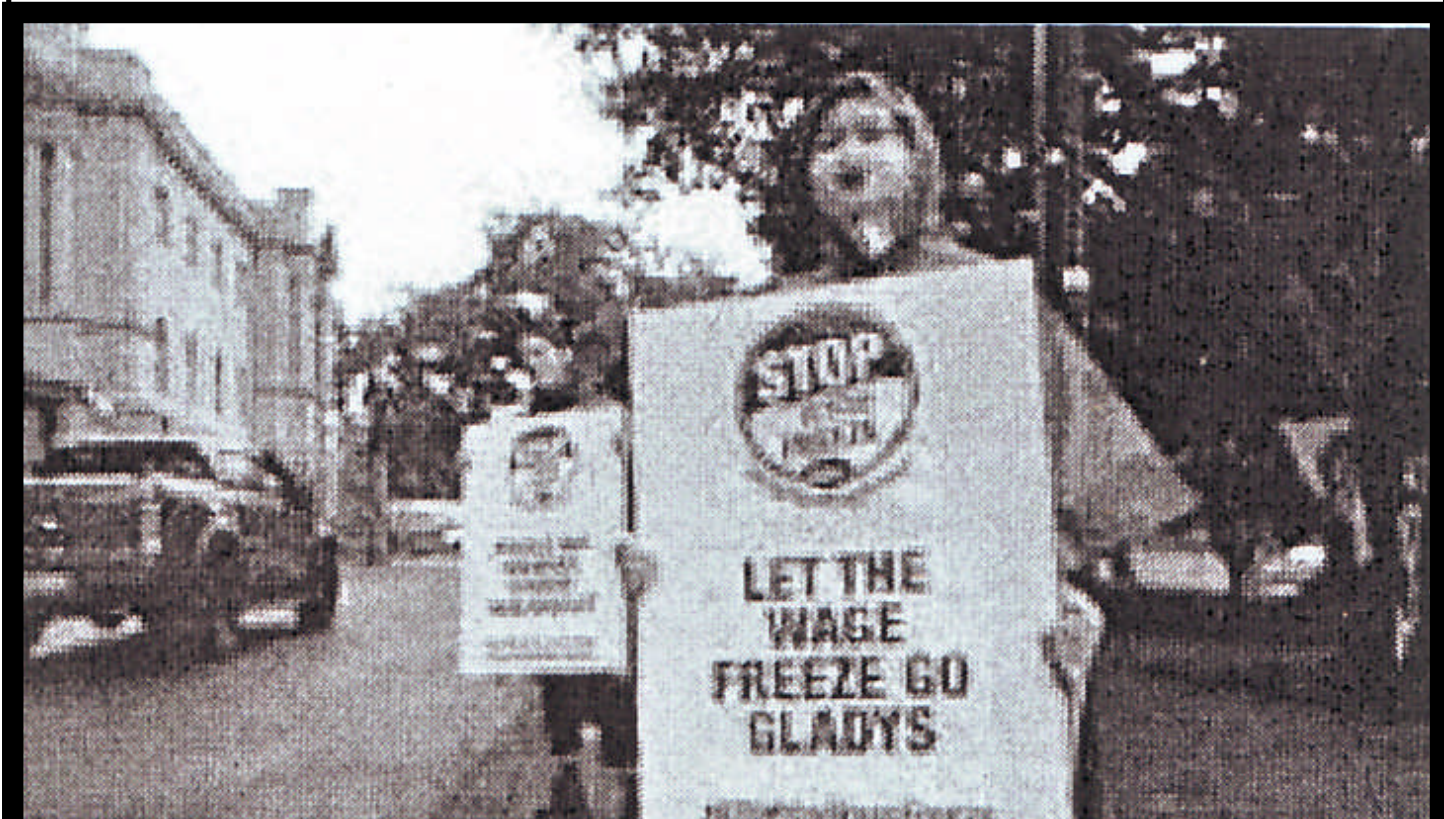
REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

NSW Public Sector Wage Freeze Push Shows the Bankruptcy of Enterprise Bargaining & The Urgency of Direct Action!



**OBITUARY: STUART CHRISTIE P2; NSW RAILWAY NEWS P3; SYDNEY BUSES NEWS P6;
VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS P8; BRITAIN TODAY P11; POLISH LABOUR NEWS P12; SPAIN TODAY P13;
BELARUS UPRISING P14; BOOK REVIEW CORNER: CLASS POWER ON ZERO-HOURS & THE FORGOTTEN
REVOLUTION: THE LIMERICK SOVIET 1919 P16; NEWS & NOTES P19**

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

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

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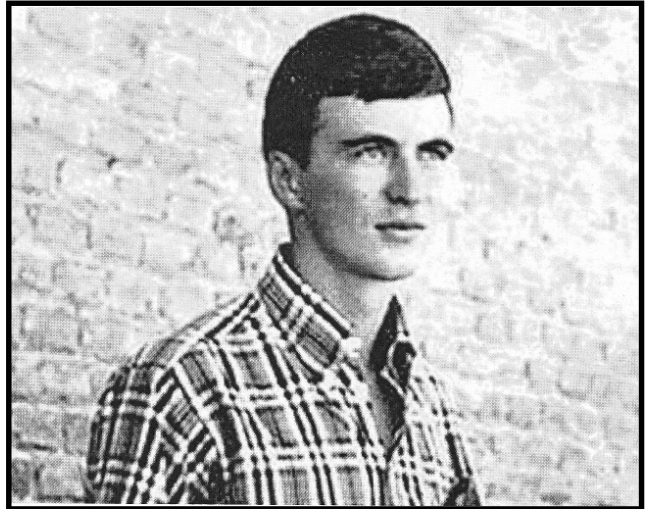
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tion attempt on Franco. To cover the fact that there was an informer inside the group, the police proclaimed they had agents operating in Britain - and (falsely) that Christie had drawn attention to himself by wearing a kilt.

The threat of the garotte and his twenty year sentence drew international attention to the resistance to the Franco regime. In prison Christie formed lasting friendships with anarchist militants of his and earlier generations. He returned from Spain in 1967, older and wiser, but equally determined to continue the struggle and use his notoriety to aid the comrades he left behind.

In London he met Brenda Earl who would become his political and emotional life partner. He also met Albert Meltzer, and the two would refound the Anarchist Black Cross to promote solidarity with anarchist prisoners in Spain, and the resistance more broadly. Their book, *The Floodgates of Anarchy* promoted a revolutionary anarchism at odds with the attitudes of some who had come into anarchism from the sixties peace movement. At the Carrara anarchist conference of 1968 Christie got in touch with a new generation of anarchist militants who shared his ideas and approach to action.

Christie's political commitment and international connections made him a target for the British Special Branch. He was acquitted of conspiracy to cause explosions in the "Stoke Newington Eight" trial of 1972, claiming the jury could understand why someone would want to blow up Franco,



and why that would make him a target for "conservative-minded policemen".

Free but apparently unemployable, Christie launched Cienfuegos Press which would produce a large number of anarchist books and the encyclopedic Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review. Briefly Orkney became a centre of anarchist publishing before lack of cashflow ended the project. Christie would continue publishing, and investigating new ways of doing so including ebooks and the internet.

His christiebooks.com site contains numerous films *See page 20*

Obituary: Stuart Christie 1946 - 2020

Stuart Christie, founder of the Anarchist Black Cross and Cienfuegos Press and co-author of *The floodgates of anarchy* has died peacefully after a battle with lung cancer.

Born in Glasgow and brought up in Blantyre, Christie credited his grandmother for shaping his political outlook, giving him a clear moral map and ethical code. His determination to follow his conscience led him to anarchism: "Without freedom there would be no equality and without equality no freedom, and without struggle there would be neither." It also led him from the campaign against nuclear weapons to joining the struggle against the Spanish fascist dictator Francisco Franco (1892-1975).

He moved to London and got in touch with the clandestine Spanish anarchist organisation *Defensa Interior* (Interior Defence). He was arrested in Madrid in 1964 carrying explosives to be used in an assassina-

ASN APPEAL

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

Please make out Cheques to Black Cat Media & Send to PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

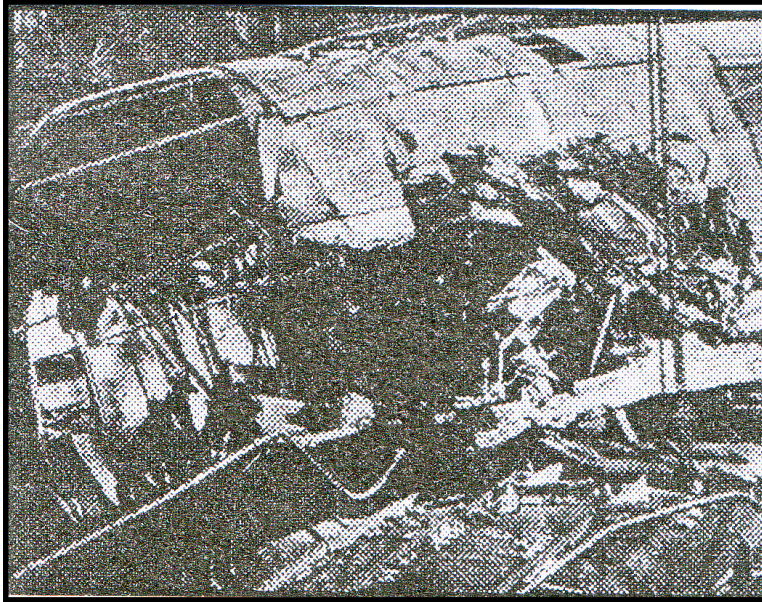
Coming New DOO Push

Some of the most explosive news in recent weeks was the discovery of a secret 'Memorandum of Understanding' from 2017 between the RTBU NSW Leadership and NSW Trains management okaying DOO (Driver Only Operation) on the new interurban trains.

(Check www.sparksworld.org for a copy. As the officials seem too frightened to put it up on the RTBU web site.) With the 'Facilitation' clause in NSW and Sydney Trains EBA's 2018, DOO will be facilitated to other train types.

RTBU NSW State Secretary Alex Claassens has been flourishing consultation meeting attendance sheets

about the MOU around, but no one recalls any meeting where the MOU was tabled, discussed and voted upon. Whilst the MOU is in breach of both Rail EBA's



Flashback to 1999 - Glenbrook Disaster: Driver Only Operation major factor in Disaster! Cover-up by Media and Carr ALP Govt. Inquiry with involvement of Union Bosses.

should be considered illegal and non binding. Whilst moves are afoot to sack Alex Claassens as RTBU NSW Secretary over this treachery. Its urgent a mass stop working meeting is held on this issue and the NSW Public Sector Wage Freeze move which is likely Claassens will okay to discuss a campaign of action. An 'Unofficial Campaign Co-ordinating Committee' is likely to be required to be established. With D-Day likely in mid Dec. 2020, a likely management/union hierarchy strategy would be to have any industrial 'blue' in the January 2021 holiday period to ineffectually let off steam.

The introduction of DOO on the new trains is based on the myth of its safety. However DOO has been a major likely factor in the Glenbrook Disaster on 2/12/99. The media reports, Govt Inquiry with the complicity of the union hierarchy, covered up the changed role of the guard on the stopped Indian Pacific to Customer Service, so detonators weren't put out potentially averting the collision. Claassens appears very quiet on the issue.

2018 clauses and RTBU rules. The MOU

New InterCity Fleet (NIF) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a memorandum of betrayal?

If it wasn't bad enough that the RTBU leadership has done nothing but lose members jobs, workplace rights pay and conditions over the last few EA negotiations. It has recently come to light that they even entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with management on the New InterCity Fleet (NIF), without the knowledge of most RTBU members.

Now that this memorandum of betrayal has come to light, through the efforts of Rank and File First members, the RTBU leadership is attempting to explain it all away as just a big misunderstanding, a lapse in members memories, a repressed memory. And to prove it, the RTBU leadership has put out various attendance sheets, they claim are evidence that members were shown the MOU and supported it. Only problem is, no one seems to remember seeing and/or supporting this MOU.

And what does this MOU seek to do?

Well, on the surface and at a casual glance, perhaps at a meeting somewhere, after a couple of beers, it might look like just another attempt to circumvent enterprise bargaining and eliminate jobs. No big deal right! Wrong!

When viewed in the cold light of day, the MOU is a memorandum of betrayal, a Trojan Horse designed to dismantle and weaken the Enterprise Agreement from within.

So even if the RTBU leadership did show it to members, as they claim, wouldn't that be promoting a document that seeks to work against the best interest of union members?

Wouldn't that be contrary to Objective 5 (a) of the rules of the union?

5 OBJECTS (a): "to uphold the rights of combination of labour, to maximise the amount of labour employed within the rail, tram and bus industry and to improve, protect and foster the best interests of its members"

And doesn't the MOU seek to violate the terms of the Agreement and enter into or attempt to enter into an agreement contrary to the provisions of an applicable Agreement?

If the union leadership did in fact meet with management, in early 2017, to agree to present the MOU to members at various meetings and solicit their support for the MOU, as they claim their signed attendance sheets prove, then they are in violation of union rule 15 (x)?

RULE 15 (x) "A member of the Union shall not: - violate or attempt to violate the terms of any applicable industrial Award or Agreement or enter into or attempt to enter into any agreement with any employer or an employee thereof contrary to the provisions of an applicable Award or Agreement;"

The answer to each question is of course YES!

Here are some obvious violations or attempts to the terms of the Enterprise Agreement:

First, it reinforces the concept of a “DEED”. That is exactly the method used to remove involuntary redundancy from the Enterprise Agreement and water it down under a separate deed.

Clause 2.1.3 states “improve the safety of staff”. How would staff safety be improved if guards are removed or given alternate roles?

The MOU outlines everyone’s rights under clause 3.6, then effectively takes it all away under clause 4.2.

Clause 5.2 totally removes the Union from any participation in decision making relating to DOO.

Clause 5.5 disguises the RTBU rights by implying it still has a say, but really only gives it the option to agree or support the changes. If it disagrees or does not support the changes, too bad, it doesn’t get a say.

Clause 6 also appears to take away bargaining power from the RTBU.

Clause 7 basically states that NSW Trains will, without consultation or agreement, make changes in regard to NIF and if the RTBU doesn’t like it, then they can raise a dispute through clause 8 of the EA.

Clause 7.5.4 isolates members and takes away collective bargaining power.

Clause 9 does not offer redundancy to guards where option 2 – Driver/Second Person is adopted, only if Option 3 – DOO is adopted.

10.1.2 appears to take the bargaining power away from rank and file members and leaves it in the hands of senior managers and senior Union Officials.

This reimagined idea of consultation is nothing more than simple advice of what management intend to do by dictation. This is a form of maladministration.

What is maladministration?

Here’s what the Fair Work Ombudsman has to say in quotation marks:

“While the word ‘maladministration’ is not used in the Ombudsman Act, it is a convenient word to describe the nature and scope of the general administrative review



jurisdiction of the Ombudsman in relation to the NSW public sector.”

“The word ‘maladministration’ is used and defined in the Protected Disclosures Act 1994, which provides that for the purposes of that Act, conduct is of a kind that amounts to maladministration if it involves an action or inaction of a serious nature that is:

- (a) contrary to law, or
- (b) unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory, or
- (c) based wholly or partly on improper motives.’ (s 11)”

The MOU is a blatant act of maladministration designed to circumvent and undermine the Enterprise Agreement and unfortunately, the actions and inactions of the union leadership and demonstrate that they are complicit in this memorandum of betrayal.

They are only putting up a façade of resistance, a smoke screen, just thick enough and long enough to keep the majority of members blissfully unaware of the harsh reality - privatisation and automation is baked into the cake and there’s likely more MOU’s. Both management and the union leadership have drunk from the same cup, it’s like two sides of the same coin.

So, when you hear your colleagues moan and complain, in the meal room (if you still have one) why isn’t the union doing anything about this? There can only be two possibilities. The union leadership are too stupid to see the writing on the wall and no one could be that stupid or they’re in on it, like useful idiots.

There’s no more time to indulge the useful idiots on either side, privatisation and automation is locked in!

The only way to stop it, the current union leadership must go and management needs to be brought to heel.

Rank and File First are running a campaign based on a petition which is circulating that calls for a vote of no confidence in RTBU NSW Secretary Alex Claassens. Digitally sign the petition here: ‘<https://forms.gle/6NydMdUzda7eoAuz9>’. See PDF form of the petition attached to this bulletin. Return completed petitions at ‘rankandfilefirst@outlook.com’.

Register for our emailing list and ask any questions by sending an email to ‘rankandfilefirst@outlook.com’. Open

organising meetings are to be conducted shortly. We aim to operate openly, democratically and transparently on our collective path forward to improve the lives of RTBU members.

Failure to Protect

by *Crimson Coconut*

Workers have been tragically let down during the COVID-19 Pandemic across the country. It’s a reflection of the way workers on the front line essential services are viewed. Really they are expendable in the view of some people.

Suitable protective equipment for workers and commuters on Public Transport has been slow in coming. This is despite World Health Organisation guidelines released some time ago pointing out that P.P.E. such as masks could reduce transmission of the virus.

“WHO advises that governments should encourage the general public to wear masks where there is widespread trans-

mission and physical distancing is difficult, such as on public transport, in shops or in other confined or crowded environments.”

They went on to say: “The use of a mask alone is insufficient to provide an adequate level of protection or source control, and other personal and community level measures should also be adopted to suppress transmission of respiratory viruses.”

Despite this widespread advice public transport workers are now only just being provided with face masks and other essential PPE. From what I can gather, in many States, including N.S.W., it is still a voluntary workplace practice where members of the workforce can acquire face masks if desired.

While the NSW Government has very little interest in protecting its workforce or commuters the Victorian Government has mandated the wearing of masks when out of your home. While the unions in Victoria were contemplating providing masks instead of pressuring employers, the Victorian Government finally mandated the requirement for all public transport workers to wear masks in the workplace and now has provided them. Commuters are also obliged to wear face masks on public transport.

Public Transport in Victoria is largely privatised and while we acknowledge that the Government there has a role in protecting its people, why is that the private operators of transport were not pressured into providing the P.P.E. and any other measures that protect the public and workers in the sector? Also why was there not a union

campaign involving members to help force these private companies to provide the resources and procedures to protect the public and essential workers?

It is the employers obligation to provide safe workplaces and protect their staff after all. Once again they have been let off the hook by unions that never organised an effective workplace campaign to protect their members. Public pleading by the unions for the protection of their members was also late into the pandemic. Public transport workers are lucky to have dodged the early infections. This surely was simply a matter of luck.

In the U.K. 27 London bus drivers died from Corona virus before measures, such as barriers and mid bus boarding were instituted to protect bus drivers and the public. At least 44 public transport workers have died as a result of the virus so far there.

In the U.S. public transport workers were dying like flies.

In New York alone 98 transit workers had died by May 1st this year. This figure may now be in the hundreds, if not thousands, as the virus has spread unchecked through communities. In some US States public transport was temporarily suspended, while in others the collection of fares was halted in an effort to curb the transmission of the virus. Other protective measures were employed such as boarding from the rear of buses and installing large plastic shields to protect bus drivers.

Public transport workers have been on the front lines of death around the world and have been sacrificed to the economic Gods to keep industry running and the profits flowing.

In N.S.W. mixed messages have been coming from the Government. In the beginning State employees were not supplied face masks or P.P.E. Although some were supplied in a haphazard way when employees insisted. Up until last week rail employees were told that if they wanted to wear face masks they would have to supply their own.

This week the situation has changed again with the Government supplying copious quantities of face masks and hand sanitiser to anyone that wants it. However there is no real policy in place and it's only an individual voluntary arrangement. This is un-

satisfactory as those not protecting themselves pose a huge risk to those that realise the risks and have taken steps to protect themselves.

Unlike Victoria, where commuters compulsorily risk a heavy fine for not wearing masks on public transport, commuters in NSW are only encouraged by the Government to wear masks on the transport system. However once again it is a purely voluntary act. Consequently in N.S.W. there are some who are blasé about the threat and refuse to cover their faces.

help curb the spread of infection. Low paid essential workers, such as those in public transport, who get sick or have to isolate for any reason will in all likelihood continue to work to put food on the table and continue to have a roof over their heads. The paid leave provisions are inadequate considering many people take months to overcome and recover from the virus. There should have been some discussion and campaigns in the public transport workplaces pressuring employers and the Government for a comprehensive paid

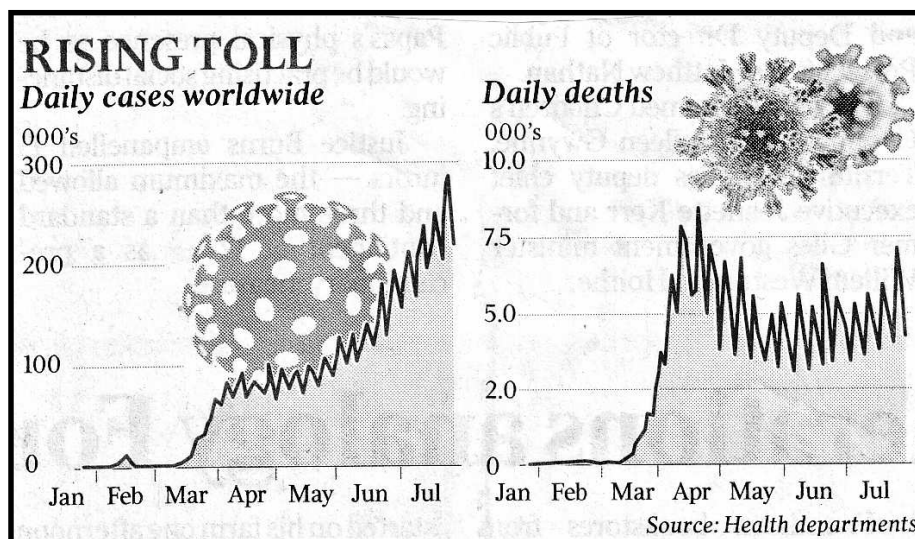
pandemic leave program. The MOU around pandemic leave as it stands is cumbersome, unclear and far from generous.

We have seen from the response of the Unions and the Government that essential workers in the public transport sector are substantially overlooked when it comes to workers rights and their safety. The A.C.T.U. while paying lip service to worker protection and the matter of leave has also done little to organise workers through the unions, preferring in-

stead to appear on national television or place a series of memes on social media to get their point across. Nothing is going to move for workers using these tactics.

In recent Enterprise Agreements precarious work such as casual and part-time work has become enshrined in public transport. Unions agreed to the move away from full time work, yet the peak union bodies such as the ACTU now warn about the consequences of insecure work. Insecure work is a reality now. Casual workers have no special paid leave beyond the allowances included in their hourly rate. Insecure work has become a threat to us all, it is a killer. Unions have such short memories and have pushed ahead with these "reforms" despite the protestations from many of their members.

Nothing is going to change in the short term. Only through democratic worker controlled structures in the workplace can we exert the pressure needed to provide dignity, safety and a voice. Unfortunately our elected officials have failed to organise an adequate response to the pandemic, to protect us or even listen to our concerns. What we need to do is make sure that our voices are heard loudly and forcefully by organising ourselves in a cohesive united force in our workplaces and our communities. Bigger challenges still lie ahead. We must face them together and overcome them as they arise.



On the 3rd August, David Shoebridge of the NSW Greens wrote a letter to the Transport Minister, Andrew Constance, urging the NSW Government to provide masks to Public Transport workers in a bid to protect them and to stop transmission of the virus. In the letter Shoebridge pointed out that the R.T.B.U. had made similar requests, but they seemed to be ignored. Maybe this is the reason the Government has now begun to supply its employees with masks and hand sanitisers.

The Union on the other hand did not take the issue of the safety of its members seriously enough to start a campaign in the workplace or to commence industrial action to protect them.

Similarly the resignation of NSW Unions Secretary, Mark Lennon, from the privatised Workers Compensation managing company, iCare, due to revelations of corruption and theft, shows where the union movement is at. As a Director of iCare and as a workers representative not a squeak came from Lennon into the public arena about the cronyism and nepotism within the organisation. It took investigations by journalists to expose this sordid scam ripping \$billions off injured workers in N.S.W..

There still remains the issue of "paid pandemic leave". Even the Victorian Premier, who is no friend of workers, has raised this issue, which is a Federal responsibility, to

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the latest at the depot?

Burwood Driver: The most significant development has been the impact of the COVID-19 Crisis. A handful of drivers over 70 at the depot have been persuaded by management to take leave and time off the job temporarily due to the virus. Whilst according to medical experts, those likely to be affected are also those with such pre-existing problems as heart and lung problems. However management is not taking any such action with them. At the depot, the bosses are now employing cleaners every day to disinfect buses. They mainly focus their cleaning during the period 10am to 2.30 pm when they can get to most buses. Initially we were obliged to take only 12 passengers on our buses due to Govt's social distancing requirements. Subsequently with the relaxing of restrictions, the number has been increased to 24. When we reached that number of passengers we were supposed to put up the 'set down only' sign. At important stops in the city such as at Railway Square, the Govt. has been employing monitors to check buses are meeting the social distancing requirements. The requirements have created new difficulties for us in our work.

In early June the bosses commenced installing screens near the driver's cabin to help shield us against the COVID-19 spread. However by the time all the buses at the depot have the screens the virus outbreak looks to be over.

RW: What is the latest with Transit Systems management?

BD: There has been some dramatic news. The TS bosses have announced that they will not negotiate a new enterprise agreement for ex-STA drivers at the depot. The union is approaching the Fair Work Australia Court to compel TS management to commence negotiations over a new enterprise agreement for these drivers.

WAVERLEY DEPOTS NEWS

RW: What are your thoughts on the Berejiklian Govt. push for a NSW public sector wage freeze?

Waverley Busie: With this push of the BeraBura Govt. its breaching the current enterprise agreement which is a type of contract. As part of the EBA we are supposed to get 2½% pa wage increase. Now the Govt. claims it needs to use this money to provide for \$ 3 Billion over 5 years for

infrastructure developments to provide employment to overcome the recession precipitated by the COVID-19 Crisis. As the Govt. claims to be broke, despite raking in ½ \$Trillion in revenue from stamp duty from construction/housing developments. Whilst as part of the Govt's privatisation agenda, it will sell off this infrastructure such as tollways and freeways e.g. the M6 and M7 to its Corporate mates and so recoup its expenditure. It has already sold off the Land Titles Office for \$2 Billion. Whilst the cost of the BeraBura 'white elephant' Light Rail extensions in the Eastern Suburbs have ballooned from \$1.4 Billion to now \$3.2 Billion. I've travelled on the Light Rail and noticed it's poorly patronised probably due to its slowness, with most commuters favouring buses which are much more rapid. A better approach to speed up the service could involve only one set of carriages rather than the current two sets. An extra 'white elephant' is the Light Rail extensions in Parramatta. I believe this expenditure will never be recovered. The reality is that the Govt. has an endless pipeline of money, more money than they can dream about, but they won't pay workers their pay rise which they are supposedly legally entitled. Showing how arrogant they are, the BeraBura Govt. has recently granted a \$17,000 pa pay rise to Damien Tudehope Minister for Finance and Small Business using the excuse of his promotion in the Govt. Whilst recently Mick Fuller NSW Police Commissioner was granted a \$87,000 pa pay rise. What an insult!

RW: What is the situation in the STA?

WB: The bosses are continuing to push off the job the long term drivers who have built up various entitlements such as long service leave, holiday pay and sick leave and replace them with the new drivers who lack these entitlements. This will encourage private operators to takeover. Under the Liberals the STA has been facing funding cutbacks like all other Govt. Departments over the last 8 to 9 years. This has led to the STA's unwillingness to spend adequate money on training new drivers. I have witnessed on a regular basis a good portion of new drivers are forcing their buses to keep track with the timetable. These drivers are pushing their luck blocking intersections, running red lights and ignoring Stop and Turn Right signs so as to stay on time. On Monday 27th July there was a major bus accident involving the collision of two buses at High Street near UNSW in Kensington. From TV coverage one of the buses looked like it could have run a red light causing the mayhem. It also

shows the new drivers have a poorer standard of training and their bad driving habits are not being picked up and corrected. I believe the fault lies in driver training. There is no proper follow up of drivers after training school. Meanwhile many older driver assessors have taken redundancy and left the job. So there is no adequate facility. In the past a driver who had a series of accidents would be sent to re-training to fix up their driving problems. Now drivers with a series of accidents often aren't around on the job long. It's easy for the STA to get new drivers and they don't need good drivers.

Latest news is that a snag has occurred with the BeraBura Govt. plans to flog off the Eastern Suburbs Depots including Waverley, Pt. Botany, Randwick and the Light Rail as a package early next year, under the facade of helping boost the NSW economy out of the COVID-19 outbreak initiated recession. We are in Limbo. The private operator who was eyeing us off has got cold feet due to considering the price demanded by the Govt. to be too high. This is despite the Govt. providing a subsidy for operating the services. The company is likely waiting until the price is reduced significantly before making their purchase. It seems other depots will be first off the mark for the carve-up. I heard in late June an add on 2KY by Unions NSW opposing STA privatisation focusing on the issue of drivers losing pay and conditions under the new private operators. A likely counter-tactic of any new operator will be to use the 'frog in hot water' technique. Where rather than placing the frog straight into boiling water, the frog is placed in water will be gradually heated up. With this approach wages and conditions are gradually reduced such as through the phased elimination of the bendi shift allowance from different shifts. However there is likely to be jobs for the boys with STA bosses gaining jobs with the new operator as consultants. As occurred with former CEO Peter Rowley and Jamie Sinclair in Transit Systems when it took over STA Region 6. Other news is that we now have a new CEO Daniela Fontana. Why change CEOs? Is somebody standing aside to reemerge like Rowley or Sinclair did in the 'private sector' after a brief interlude? Why do they bother? We all know they jump ship for bigger pay packets!

RW: What is the situation at the depot?

WB: COVID-19 has changed the workplace, with the damper put on remaining social activities such as sporting and athletics clubs. With many of our buses not going through the City since the tramway extensions, there is much less variety in our jobs. On Monday 27th July the bosses threw a party to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Waverley as a bus depot. It was

formerly a tram depot. Managers addressed a staff meeting and provided 2 cakes decorated with '60' and coffee. The celebration seemed quite melancholy and bizarre with the dark clouds of privatisation looming after this milestone of Govt. operation of buses. It's a poor outlook for drivers and commuters with privatisation. It will not work! Even though Madame Lash (former Depot Mistress) has departed the scene.

RW: What are your impressions of the police in NSW?

WB: On a recent ABC Radio program, there was mention that in the USA, when Clinton was President, the police were issued with excess military hardware. Here in Sydney under successive Administrations the police have become ever more militarised. However many of the police are not trained to use the arms. In NSW the Police Union has been heavily backing a push to militarise the NSW police. The riot squads are now dressed in black to look more scary to intimidate people, heavily armed and armoured. At the time of the initial clamp down over the COVID-19 outbreak, there was even a report of the police driving an armoured personnel carrier on Gardeners Road Kingsford in the Eastern Suburbs. Why is there a need for this weaponry when there has been a decline in the number of crimes? As with CCTV's and other sophisticated technologies it's much easier these days for police to track people down over illegal activity. Why is the BeraBura Govt. constantly building more prisons?

RW: What is other news?

WB: Some of the most explosive has been the massive rorts in NSW Workers Compensation Commission ICARE exposed in a 4 Corners TV program on Monday 27th July I watched. ICARE was created by the Lib. Govt. in 2015 as a so-called reform. However, the ICARE bosses have been caught ripping off those claiming workers comp on a massive scale to boost their huge salaries. Huge bonuses have also been throw-in for them. The top 7 executives get salaries of \$660,000 and another 45 executives get around \$300,000 pa. Interestingly President of the NSW ALP Mark Lennon was on the ICARE Board and recently resigned over the scandal. Many Workers Comp claimants have experienced delays in payment, paid less than their correct entitlements amounting to an \$80 million underpayment which has funded ICARE bosses huge salaries and bonuses according to a Herald report. Whilst many workers were forced back to work after 3 years whilst still unfit. They were put under considerable stress through coercion and harassment by Allianz to drop their claim. Insurance gi-

ants like Allianz acts on behalf of ICARE to gain financial incentives and meet targets. Members of the NSW Parliament Upper House from the Greens such as David Shoebridge and ALP who prior to becoming politicians were barristers have stated they noticed aspects of the scam in ICARE handling Workers Comp cases. This scandal follows others such as involving the Banks and Age Care facilities which have resulted in Royal Commissions. WARNING: If you consider you were underpaid or forced back to work whilst still unfit whilst on compo, don't hesitate to get legal advice. Now the Libs are saying ICARE is \$850 Mill. in the red. It goes to show how the Libs so called 'small government' reforms can cause



mayhem.

There was a report on the TV in early July that new double-decker trains made in China have been off-loaded from a ship in Sydney. Why not made in Australia? Whilst the main reason for the BeraBar Govt. backing down on moving all of the Power House museum from Ultimo, is that a green ban by building workers has been imposed on demolition of two statelty colonial era houses in Parramatta where it was to be relocated. It shows people and unionists are starting to unite and standing up against the BeraBar Govt. and slowly winning.

LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the latest at the depot?

Leichhardt Driver1: Some of the most important developments has been talk of the introduction of 40 of the new buses to the depot. As of late May, 4 only new buses have joined the depot fleet. With the COVID 19 crisis restrictions there was an associated decline in traffic and numbers of commuters on buses. As running times had not been changed there has been little late running on various runs. As a result I have noticed a lack of overtime. However the 504 remains the worst in regard to

running times despite few commuters catching it. I noticed in May-June a depletion of bendi shifts on the weekends. This development seems related to a lack of buses at the depot and the Govt's plans to cut such routes as the M50 to create more commuters for the Light Rail extensions in the Eastern Suburbs. These plans were suspended with the COVID 19 Crisis. In the depot building the roster clerks have now been moved to the duty officer's office causing a spreading out of staff.

RW: What are of other news?

LD1: The battle between the RTBU and TWU for our control is continuing. Latest development was the success of the TWU winning coverage in the Industrial Court. Now the RTBU is fighting back and appealing the decision. In the STA, the bosses are paying uncapped special leave for those stood down due to the COVID 19 crisis.

RW: What are latest developments with management?

Leichhardt Driver2: They are introducing 10 new regulations in early August which focus particularly on Drug and Alcohol issues. Whilst from 3/8/20 new restrictions associated with the COVID-19 outbreak are being introduced particularly affecting access to the depot from the parking lot. The bosses have been on the offensive on a range of issues which our RTBU rep has been assisting us to successfully resist.

In the case of drivers with empty buses one stop before the terminuses at Martin Place and Lilyfield, who were not going to stop at the terminus, were being called into the office over the issue. Following action by our union rep, the bosses have backed down. Another attack which greatly concerned many of us, is the bosses demanding that we take our recreational leave in 2 and 3 weeks allotments, rather than as the full 5 weeks block. Following union action, they backed down so we can take the full 5 weeks if we want. The union rep has also uncovered the underpayment of drivers in Region 3 who are TWU members. The bosses were only paying them \$4 a day allowance for bendi shifts when according to their EBA it should be at least \$11 a day. TWU officials did nothing on this issue for their members.

RW: What is other news?

D2: We are getting a number of new buses into the fleet, to replace the older buses. Whilst the RTBU union hierarchy doesn't seem to be getting anywhere regarding the bosses refusal to pay the extra pay for Easter Saturday which we are due to according to a clause in our EBA. It's gone to the Fair Work Court and taken 12 months now, still the bosses are refusing to pay this money we are due.

RW: How are you finding the job at the depot?

Leichhardt Driver3: Despite some new buses joining the depot, we are still being hard hit by the large number of old defective buses. I'm tired of having to go up hills at only 5 kph in these buses.

STOP PRESS

The RTBU Bus Division officials have called off the proposed 48 hour strike on 24th and 25th August involving Bus Regions 7,8 & 9 affecting Sydney's Eastern and Northern suburbs over allegedly COVID-19 safety issues. As the Berejiklian Government agreed to a worthless review of safety on buses. However at depot union meetings the officials inferred to workers the action would be mainly over privatisation of the STA! The real reasons for the strike threat by the officials was to divert grass roots attention away from taking serious indus-

trial action to fight privatisation and competition with the TWU (Transport Workers Union) over coverage of the privatised STA. The whole lame duck charade would have been okayed at those top secret weekly meetings between the RTBU leadership and Transport Minister Constance. In the letter from the RTBU threatening the strike, the officials lamely requested a delay in the STA privatisation until the COVID-19 crisis is over. They would have of course known that the prospective purchaser of the franchise in the Eastern Depots and Light Rail extensions had already developed cold feet. The ASN has been active for years in assisting militants to raise awareness of the deleterious ramifications of privatisation for bus workers jobs and conditions. The ASN has also constantly exposed the bankruptcy of the officials parliamentary focused so-called Anti-Privatisation

campaign and emphasised the importance of direct action. Additionally the ASN has assisted militants to raise COVID-19 on-the-job safety issues since the pandemic began. So overall the ASN has contributed significantly to the behind the scenes developments leading to the officials strike threat.

On Monday 24th Aug. Stop Work Staff Briefings were held for STA workers. Seems the union officials were too frightened to hold a stop work union mass meeting due to anger amongst drivers over the capitulation by the RTBU officials over the strike. So with the bosses running the meetings, workers would be intimidated from pushing for industrial action.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of RW we will discuss the Corona Virus as regards to V-Line plus other issues. Once again Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff will discuss these issues. As in previous issues, names have been changed.

RW: What is the current situation in Victoria regarding Public Transport?

Sheona: At the moment V/Line, Metro Trains and Bus Services, we are running normal services.

Rastus: Due to the Corona Virus restrictions trains are running almost empty. Victoria is in Stage Three lockdown.

RW: What is functioning?

Roscoe: Essential services, the construction industry and supermarkets are operating as normal.

Clarence: There is talk of reducing Tram, Train and Bus services on weekdays to a Saturday service but the problem is that trams and trains will operate from normal starting times but the majority of bus services commence two hours later on a Saturday. How would workers on connecting services in outer suburbs get to work? Less trains would mean less workers to operate the service.

Forsyth: V/line trains are operating with only a driver and a conductor. Due to distancing regulations no tickets are checked and Conductors are only to assist passengers. All catering services have been suspended until the restrictions are eased. Any passengers who are travelling on V/Line trains are required to keep a safe distance.

RW: What has happened to the catering staff?

Jethro: The Conductors and Catering Staff have been redeployed in Customer Service Duties observing the distance regulations.

Moose: Employees who are over 70 years old have been sent on Annual Leave for their safety. We have been informed that they have been given Special Leave. We are of the opinion that when this Special Leave runs out they should be allowed to use their Sick Leave.

Archie: Due to the restrictions V/Line connecting Bus Services running into South Australia have been suspended. During the emergency, the Bendigo-Adelaide Daylight service terminates at Lillimur. Warrnambool Mount Gambier service at Dartmoor, Ballarat Mount Gambier service at Casterton and the Albury-Adelaide Service at Murrayville.

RW: What's the situation with the Overland?

Ichabod: Great Southern Railways services were to cease running the Overland from March 31. At the last moment it was given a three month reprieve. Since 2001 the train has been operating on a Government Subsidy but since 2018 the Government of South Australia has not paid and only Victoria is subsidizing the train. On March 23rd it was announced the Overland as well as the Ghan and the Indian Pacific were suspended until the end of May. I doubt whether the Overland will return.

RW: Has there been stand downs amongst V/Line operations staff?

Sheona: No but some Head Office and Supervisory staff are working from home.

Rastus: What is distressing is despite the various Government assistance packages from both the Federal and State Governments employees in Hospitality and Small and Large Business have been stood down and forced onto job seeking allowances.

Roscoe: Drivers from both V/Line and Metro Trains have noticed various food outlets at stations around Melbourne have closed down. In fact when stage two lockdowns were introduced one big outlet who had the franchise just shut down. Some of the employees who worked for this outlet were students and they cannot claim assistance.

Sheona: Sadly some employers will use the Corona virus shutdown as an excuse to restructure their business and many employees will lose their jobs. This will happen in the Airline Industry.

Jethro: The sad part of these stand downs is the casualisation of the workforce. Listening to the radio some people have been working four casual jobs just to survive. Some these people have been stood down and cannot claim any assistance package.

Roscoe: The Corona virus has alerted the public to the casualisation of the workforce, the rundown of Australian industry.

Rastus: When things return to normal we can only hope this situation changes.

RW: What is happening with the V/Line EBA?

Moose: Nothing. Industrial action was to have taken place during March and April. The Government appointed a Mediator to try and work out a solution. He was a former official with the AMWU.

Forsyth: Due to Corona virus restrictions industrial action has been suspended. If no solution is reached it will resume once the emergency is over.

Rastus: The EBA with both Metro Trains and Yarra Trams has been settled.

Archie: You can see how threatening to stop work during the Grand Prix can force a resolution.

Roscoe: The situation at Metro Trains is that a postal ballot has been held and the result has been challenged due to only 51% voting to accept the EBA. Fair Work Australia may hold another ballot.

Rastus: V/Line industrial action as reported in the last issue has been on a line by line basis over a period of time. For example Traralgon stops work one day and Geelong the next.

Forsyth: V/Line replaces the trains on the corridor with buses on the day of the stoppage.

Midge: What makes us angry is that on one corridor during the 24 hour stoppage was the number of station staff who worked.

Archie: We have one word we call these people SCABS.

RW: How did this happen?

Forsyth: These people refused to join the union. The union delegates have left forms for them to fill out but nothing was returned.

Jethro: When EBA negotiations commence V/Line informs these individuals that the RTBU will be conducting negotiations and if they have any input contact V-Line.

Rastus: These people refuse to join the union. The main reason for not joining is that they think they will obtain promotion to a management position. It may happen to only a few, the others are being used. When negotiations are concluded they take the benefits.

Roscoe: V/Line management can get a cluster of non unionists to sign V/Line's EBA with reduced conditions. The V/Line can go to Fair Work, get the EBA passed and force it on to other employees or lead to a lockout when the employees refuse to accept the EBA.

Archie: This happened at CUB in 2014 with minimum conditions. The membership in the Eastern states would not accept the EBA and it resulted in a lockout of union employees which lasted for ten months.

Rastus: The dispute was settled with the help of other unions maintaining a strong picket line. CUB was also acquired by new owners who wanted the dispute settled. As a result the workers at CUB kept their existing conditions.

(RW Editorial Comment: VICTORY FOR THE BOSSES – UNFORTUNATELY According to some info on the return to work deal, there was an obvious victory for the bosses in this dispute. In regard to media reports and a joint AMWU-ETU statement as part of the return to work the union bosses agreed to measures which would mean the imposing of a new wave of speed ups in the workers' jobs to screw more productivity. What went on was another case of 'smoke and mirrors' by the union hierarchy in-

Fair Work have refused to reveal full details of the new EBA unless a FOI request is made. Indicating there have been cut backs to workers conditions which the union bosses and Fair Work want to hide. Otherwise, why all the secrecy?)

Sparks: Once again we have run out of space. Workers in the rail industry have been fortunate there have been no stand downs. Once this emergency has been lifted one can only hope that catering services are restored and management does not try to impose their own EBA.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say we regard these non unionists as parasites who take the benefits the unions have fought for over the years and contributed nothing. We have a final word for them, SCABS.



volving the proclaiming of a 'fake victory' and the imposing of real cuts to workers conditions and the bosses winning a real victory. The union bosses refused to hold mass meetings of all union members in the state and nationally to consider taking effective industrial solidarity action which would have had the potential to avoid the defeat and win a real victory for the CUB workers. However such action would have challenged the Industrial relations racket and the ALP. For the union officials to look like they were doing something, they held lame duck, symbolic, rally protests/pickets and appeals for a boycott. In regard to the so called picket lines, scabs were let through and only one stop work meeting by production workers on site over the issue occurred. The factory kept on operating. Whilst the bosses' media played along with the performance and fake militancy by the union bosses and so called mythic 'victory'. The union bosses and

In the last issue of RW brief mention was made about Victorian employees losing jobs on the XPT between Albury and Melbourne to State Rail. In this issue Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff will discuss these issues. As in previous issues of RW names have been changed.

Rastus and Roscoe: Before we discuss these issues we at RW in Victoria offer our condolences to the families of the Driver and Pilot man who lost their lives in the derailment of the XPT at Wallan.

RW: When did the issue of Corridor Management of Interstate Trains raise its head?

Archie: It was first years ago in October 1990 that rumours started being circulated that Victoria was to hand over Country Trains to Australian National Railways.

Rastus: We Drivers heard the same rumour but it was later found out that a new organisation was to be established to operate Interstate Freight Trains. This was to evolve into the National Rail organisation. Forsyth: The rumour of ANR absorbing V/Line Country services was later found to be incorrect.

Clarence: As the Interstate Trains were lost 26 years ago we will introduce you to an employee who will tell you what happened.

Benson: I worked at V/Line as a Conductor but I now work as a Driver for one of the Freight Companies.

Roscoe: In November 1990 the Victorian Government announced that they would purchase an XPT set and have the running of the service on the Sydney Melbourne rail corridor.

Benson: V/Line staff thought they would operate the train between Albury and Melbourne but sadly the Inter-capital Daylight was terminated in August 1991 with a loss of jobs in both Melbourne and Wodonga and Catering staff no longer worked to Junee. Albury became the changeover Station.

Archie: In 1990 a new business unit of State Rail called Country Link was established. It was this organisation who terminated the Daylight as NSW controlled two thirds of the Corridor.

Benson: In 1991 a number of presentation sessions were held and in September 1992, State Rail dropped a bombshell. They informed the V/Line delegates that the train was to be operated from Sydney with staff working to Melbourne from Sydney. On having this information the Union was notified and a meeting of both Operations Staff and Catering Staff was held.

Clarence: It was at this meeting members were informed that the Victorian Government had told V/Line management that V/Line was to withdraw from the operation of Interstate Trains.

Benson: The meeting was informed that ANR was to assume control of the Indian Pacific from Perth to Sydney with Adelaide being the Crew base. The Overland was to be operated by ANR from Adelaide to Melbourne with the crew being based at Adelaide and State Rail was to operate the Sydney-Melbourne Corridor.

Rastus: At this stage the Locomotive Division was not affected.

Benson: The Victorian Branch of the ARU (Australian Railways Union later to merge with other 'unions' to form the PTU and then RTBU) informed the meeting that the first they heard of Corridor Management was when Union Delegates

from Wodonga and Melbourne told them of State Rail plans. The NSW Branch of the ARU did not inform the Victorian Branch.

Forsyth: It would not have happened at the worst time. A State Election was held with the Liberals winning the election in October 1992. The loss of the Interstate Trains was confirmed in a Transport Report Document issued in January 1993.

RW: When were the changes to be implemented?

Clarence: State Rail was to take over operation of the XPT in November 1993 when the XPT came online. ANR was to take over the operation of the Overland once the Adelaide to Melbourne line was converted to Standard Gauge.

Benson: In July 1993 a stop work meeting was held before the Sydney Express departed over the future of the employees who worked the train. The train departed an hour late. A second stop work meeting was to be held but management found out. Buses were substituted and the train was despatched to Sydney as empty cars. Media outlets were notified that V/Line no longer operated the train.

RW: What happened?

Rastus: The train was shunted into a siding at Wodonga and would not move until negotiations were held.

Benson: As a result of action by the Signalling grades V/Line still operated.

Roscoe: In November 1993 the XPT commenced operation. V/Line drivers operated the train to Junee with State Rail drivers sharing the operation. V/Line operated one third of the roster.

Benson: Because no agreement had been signed over State Rail operating the Corridor Staff, V/Line had to have a crew to operate the XPT from Albury to Melbourne. The V/Line staff were trained on the Sydney to Grafton portion of the Brisbane XPT.

Archie: In March 1994 multi-skilling was introduced into V/Line. Conductors were trained in Catering Duties and Catering Staff were trained as Conductors.

Benson: From July 1 State Rail decided to take control of the Sydney Melbourne Corridor with V/Line still staffing the train from Albury to Melbourne.

RW: When did State Rail Staff take over operation of the XPT.

Benson: The Arbitration Commission became involved and recommended that Albury remained open as a Depot. Staff displaced at Wodonga who worked the XPT transferred to CountryLink with service seniority from the day they commenced employment with the Victorian Railways. Employees from Melbourne

who were displaced could transfer on the same conditions but had to transfer to Sydney. State Rail operated the train from October 1994.

RW: What happened with the Overland?

Benson: The Arbitration Commission wanted the matter settled. As a result of negotiations ANR assumed control of the Corridor in December 1994.

RW: What happened to the Employees who worked these trains?

Jethro: Thirty two positions were lost as a result of these changes. The transfers to the other operators only applied to staff who worked these trains. A number of employees moved to ANR. Only one employee based in Melbourne transferred to CountryLink. The other employees were offered Re-Deployment in other sections of the then RTC. Sadly a large number of employees decided to take redundancy packages. Some employees were absorbed into V/Line.

Archie: At this time there were also cuts in other parts of the Rail Industry in Victoria. A large number of employees have not forgotten what happened during the Kennett years.

Benson: I transferred to ANR and was made redundant when ANR was privatised in 1998. I eventually obtained employment with a Freight Operator where I now drive interstate Freight Trains.

RW: When were drivers removed from the XPT and the Overland?

Rastus: V/Line drivers were removed from the Overland in November 1997 when ANR was privatised as National Rail assumed control.

Roscoe: In 2012 or 2013, the Victorian Government sold the XPT to State Rail. We have heard rumours it was sold for a token price. As a result of this sale V/Line drivers no longer work the train.

Archie: The trains have been lost for twenty six years. For years there was ill feeling between V/Line staff and CountryLink staff. This has now melted. The V/Line staff who transferred to CountryLink at Albury have now retired. The staff transferred to ANR have lost contact. One of the staff members after ANR was privatised did return to V/Line years later as a Conductor.

RW: In concluding the then NSW Branch of the ARU has a lot to answer for not informing the National Branch what was happening in 1991 and 1992. As for the Union Delegate at CountryLink, he should have informed the Victorian Branch what was going on. The NSW Branch should hang their heads in shame.

BRITAIN TODAY

Posties Wildcat in Bridgwater

One hundred postal workers at Bridgwater Delivery Office walked out on unofficial strike on Thursday June 4th.

It was sparked by the return of a manager regarded as particularly aggressive. His behaviour has involved use of disciplinary action, harassment of militants and removal of bikes used by postal workers. He had already been removed twice from the Bridgwater Delivery Office because of previous disputes.

Workers then voted to stay out on strike on Friday after the manager continued with his aggressive behaviour.

Despite the ousting of Royal Mail boss, Rico Back, and his replacement by Keith Williams, managers are still pursuing an aggressive attitude and are attempting to attack local deals between management and workers. This would mean workers working longer and later.

Bicycles are still used by postal workers for mail delivery at Bridgwater whilst they have been scrapped elsewhere. This retention of bicycles is due to strong local organisation.

Management have also attempted to bully workers by alleging "wilful delay of the mail" when workers refuse to work beyond their contracted hours. This is a serious charge that can lead to instant dismissal and demonstrates the belligerence of management.

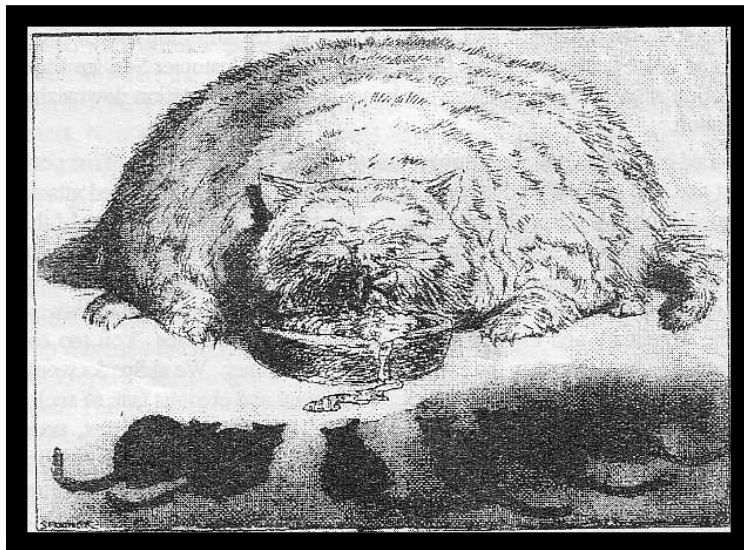
It is unlikely that this is a one-off incident by "rogue" managers. It is more likely that this was a move by management to test resistance by workers. Rico Back has gone but the new head honcho Williams has talked about implementing "an accelerated pace of change across the business". The delivery of mail is an essential service. Royal Mail should not be seen as a cash cow for wealthy shareholders, as a business. The delivery of mail is an essential service.

An ACG postal worker writes...

The arrogant and bullying management of Royal Mail have recently announced an executive decision to suspend Saturday letter deliveries and impose changes to the current operational network and agreed duty structures. In doing so, they completely ignored the Communication Workers Union, which organises postal workers, failing to consult with them.

This has been encouraged by the supine attitudes of the CWU leadership, who after a massive vote in favour of strike action, called off the strike because it "was the right thing to do for our nation" with the promise from management that they would play ball. No such luck. Management have announced their decision on the CWU National Postal Workers Day, as a direct insult to the CWU.

What the end of Saturday deliveries means is that 20,000 jobs are under threat. The 20,000 potential job losses this can lead to involves "rest day cover" duties that currently cover walking postal workers rest days. If regular posties will only do Monday to Friday with Saturday off and driver



only duty on Saturdays only delivering parcels and no letters, that would mean us "rest day covers" would lose our jobs and be spare. The rumours say that we could be taken out of our local offices where we've been trained (street knowledge, sorting etc.) and dropped in offices where we have got no clue in regards to streets, areas, etc.

All of this is done in the middle of a pandemic by greedy senior management.

The union has said that it will fight these moves in the courts. Only if all else fails, they say, will they call a ballot for further strike action. Management intend to implement its plans on 11th May.

Postal workers should defy management's executive decisions and stick to agreed duties. They should prepare for unofficial action against these moves and start organising to fight these moves in the only way the bosses understand, the strike weapon, rather than waiting for the flabby responses from the CWU leadership. They should organise mass meetings in or outside the sorting offices where they can collectively decide on ways to fight back.

Goldsmith Staff Take Action

Management at Goldsmiths College in South East London have attacked casualised staff by installing a freeze on hiring for the lowest paid teachers, Associate Lecturers (ALs) and Graduate Trainee Teachers (GTTs).

The Warden of Goldsmiths, Frances Corner, announced the College's decision to refuse to extend the contracts of Associate Lecturers (ALs) and Graduate Trainee Tutors (GTTs) during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to make use of the Government's Job Retention (furloughing) scheme. Frances Corner has an annual salary of £238,000 whilst ALs and GTTs account for 7% of the College's wages bill whilst doing 40% of the teaching work.

The decision acknowledges that the Senior Management Team (SMT) have received a 'large number of applications to furlough Associate Lecturers'. It then goes on to state that, despite the fact that the 'JNCC [Joint Negotiating and Consultations Committee] has discussed furloughing Associate Lecturers... SMT has decided it is not appropriate to extend the contracts of Associate Lecturers with the purpose of furloughing them.'

No rationale for the decision was given, except for the ambiguous statement that SMT 'decided it is not appropriate'. The question is, what does 'not appropriate' mean here? From a legal perspective, it is clear that extending the contracts of Associate Lecturers and Graduate Trainee Tutors with the purpose of furloughing them is absolutely 'appropriate'. Government advice clearly states that 'no employee on a fixed term contract can be re-employed, furloughed and claimed for if... their contract expired on or after 28 February 2020'. Furthermore, the Government also clearly says that 'if the employee's fixed term contract has not already expired, it can be extended, or renewed'.

It is perfectly clear that the furloughing scheme is intended for those on fixed term contracts, as ALs and GTTs are, and that those contracts can be extended with the express purpose of furloughing. This is a sentiment that was also affirmed in an article written by Michelle Donelan, the Universities Minister. It is also clear that Goldsmiths intends to make use of the fur-

loughing scheme for other staff members, with the Warden's statement also claiming that 'HR will formally write to the staff to be furloughed next week proposing furloughing and giving them a week to consider and confirm their agreement'.

As a result, teachers have decided to withhold unpaid labour and marking, through a refusal to return assessment grades until Goldsmiths reverses its decision. One graduate teacher said 'it seems like Goldsmiths has shifted their financial concerns onto the most precarious among us. As frontline staff, we are often the only people the students have direct and sustained contact with. This has become clearer through this lockdown, as we have worked tirelessly and over our contracted hours to make sure our students stay connected with the college, providing pastoral care alongside our teaching roles'.

Meanwhile Goldsmiths is fine with expensive projects like a new gallery and the enterprise hub which will cost £6million.

Thanks to Anarchist Communist Group Workplace Notes

Liverpool Labour News

Locally, in response to the pandemic, the Liverpool Solidarity Federation have also demonstrated that as workers we can take action outside of party politics and trade unions and win.

Back in April, hospitality workers at Pub Invest, a company that owns most of the venues at concert square and employ over 800 people, came together in response to not being offered furlough once their workplaces shut, leaving them with no money to survive. A demand letter with 121 signatures from workers and a social media backlash, soon meant the company changed their tune. While at the end of the day this victory belongs to those workers at Pub Invest, members of SolFed played an influential role in organising at this workplace.

On a smaller scale members of SolFed organised with a local worker to reclaim stolen wages and also helped a student to gain a rent reduction from YPP letting agents, in both cases just under £700 was won. The simple threat of collective action to back up demands was enough to succeed.

At the end of June we also hosted our first outdoor open meeting to discuss the re-opening of hospitality on the 4th of July and how we might respond as workers.

Obviously these cases pale in comparison to the strikes we see in the States. However, they demonstrate the merit of taking action as workers and tenants to defend our interests. As an anarcho-syndicalist organisation we have distributed information on rights at work, provided training to encourage workplace organising as well as taken action as and with workers and tenants to make tangible gains. In SolFed we are not just looking for safe working conditions or a higher wage but an end to a system that places profit above our very lives and that is built on exploitation. It is through the use of direct action to struggle against the ruling class that we can demonstrate the necessity and develop the capacity to abolish the capitalist-state system and finally take control of our lives.

Thanks to Liverpool Anarchist Newsletter

Polish Labour News

The Poznan IP demands the implementation of the wage agreement

At the beginning of 2020, the Employee Initiative and other trade unions associating employees and workers employed by institutions and plants financed from the budget of Poznan signed an agreement with the city regarding wage increases for 2020. Salaries were to increase by an average of PLN 300 gross from September 1. For the sake of the living conditions of employees and employees of the budgetary sector, the Poznan Institute of Intelligence does not see any grounds for not implementing the increases planned for 2020.

By the end of June, the directors of individual plants were to agree with the trade unions what would be the best option to split the raise. The city, however, began to withdraw from the contract. An annex was proposed that, in fact, was nothing more than a consent to stop wage increases due to the Corona virus. Solidarnosc and the ZNP signed it - the Employee Initiative no.

In response to the refusal to sign the annex, the authorities stated (in a letter sent to the union at the beginning of July) that the city's income had decreased (taking into account the period from March to May this year) by PLN 111 million, although they already knew that the situa-

parliamentary question, explained then that "total revenues of local government units from (key in the structure of revenues) shares in PIT and CIT income taxes and from the general subsidy after 5 months of 2020, despite the COVID epidemic - 19 are at the level of 100.1 percent. Compared to the same period of 2019" (PAP Local Government Service of 18/06/2020).

What is even more interesting, in the resolution adopted by the Poznan City Council on June 23, 2020 (budget correction), the city's revenues were planned at PLN 4,429 million, and expenses at PLN 5,160 million. The comparison with the budget resolution of 17/12/2019 - in which we read that the city's budget revenues are planned at PLN 4,385 million, and expenditure at PLN 5,154 million - shows that the city budget has not deteriorated, but even improved. At the end of June 2020, the planned revenues increased by PLN 44 million, and the expenses by only PLN 6 million - compared to the assumption from December last year.

In its response, the Employee Initiative stated: "Probably COVID-19 has changed the city's budgetary situation, but the scale of negative changes is not clear for us - as a trade union. It is also important what will be the priorities in the city's budget expenses and how they will be set. We believe that over a dozen thousand



tion improved significantly in June. The reduced revenues until the end of May were mainly caused by delays in PIT settlements for 2019 (postponing them by a month), which, however, was finally compensated by inflows to the city's treasury in the next period. Deputy Minister of Finance Sebastian Skuza, responding to a

employees and female employees of local government, municipal cultural, care and education institutions, who today are struggling with a decline in real wages as a result of cuts and inflation, cannot bear the economic consequences of the outbreak of the epidemic in the first place. At the same time, many of these people work, as they are metaphorically put today, 'on the front lines', as in the case of care institutions, where wages have been very low for years. On August 17, another round of talks with the city took place, which announced the possible need to withdraw from the current wage agreement. The delegation of the

Employee Initiative emphasized once again that it did not know the reasons why the increases would not be introduced. In response to the argument that despite the economic situation the city is trying not to lay off people, it was replied that the staff shortages were so great that many plants and institutions should de facto be closed due to insufficient staff.

Ultimately, the city is to present new data on the budgetary situation within a few days, which would justify the withdrawal from the increases. At the moment, the position of the union has remained unchanged. For the sake of the living

conditions of employees and employees of the budgetary sector, the Poznan Institute of Intelligence does not see any grounds for not implementing the increases planned for 2020.

Therefore, we call on the city to return to the implementation of the provisions of the signed wage agreement. After all, as President Jacek Jaskowiak said, "contracts must be kept".

SPAIN TODAY

THE PLIGHT OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

Just a few days ago, the day labourer Eleazar Blandón was abandoned in a health centre after suffering a heat stroke hours earlier that made him lose consciousness while working. It was there that he died. His case has reached a minimum media coverage that shows what our eyes witness for decades in different parts of the Spanish State (Lleida, Murcia, Almeria, Huelva, etc.) and especially against migrant people: the new slavery and the old misery. But, is it something that is so far away or is it something that we live in our field here in Ciudad Real?

The harsh working conditions of work as a day labourer are known due to its eventuality, climatic exposure and physical demands, to which are added those that depend on the employers: tiny salaries that can reach € 30 for 10 hours, which can be deducted in many sometimes for costs of transport, food and a precarious accommodation (if they should not take refuge in shacks or live on the street); extremely precarious contracts; discharges from social security for half of the hours worked; overtime hours not paid as such or even unpaid; piecework with rhythms set by machinery and not by physical capacity, which is pushed to the limit; delayed, lowered or denied wages; a continuing threat of dismissal; denial of basic rights such as health care for accidents; absence of means of protection.

Most of the seasonal workers are migrants whose economic and legal desperation, both for themselves and for their families, pushes them to accept these deplorable conditions. Therefore, their legal situation

becomes an extra dependency and work vulnerability that their bosses know how to take advantage of. If the peasantry has been squeezed, despised and undervalued historically, even more so now that racism and xenophobia are unpunished, so present in our society.

The very precarious living conditions that arise from this work context make their health look tremendously exposed. When we are going through a pandemic, their enormous economic dependence, the exploitation suffered, the impossibility of respecting security measures and the difficulty of access to water and other basic resources exposes them much more to become infected (in addition to suffering other diseases or injuries), being socially stigmatized and designated as propagators and assigning them an unfair responsibility for the spread of the virus to public health that excludes and makes them invisible.

On the other hand, the main associations of the agricultural sector, generally made up of owners and therefore employers, try to deny this reality, being outraged by an increase in labour inspections instead of being outraged by the loss of food sovereignty, dependence on the international market, the excessive power of the country's large food platforms, the enormous price differences between the initial product and the market and, above all, in the face of the conditions to which other colleagues expose the

workers they employ. They make their problem that of others, taking advantage of even more the most vulnerable: union cannibalism.

The government also obviates a possible regularization of people in an irregular administrative situation, making them even more defenceless against possible employer abuses, for fear of the possible legal consequences that any type of complaint of labour abuses can lead to. The only measures to promote work in the fields have consisted of expanding the right to work of foreigners and that the contribution did not imply the cancellation of certain economic benefits, but not in improving their conditions or fighting against the impunity of the exploiters. But we already know that you shouldn't ask for pears from the elm.

What makes us think that all these circumstances, which describe the national agricultural panorama, do not occur in a province like Ciudad Real, characterized

by agriculture being its main economic activity? Towns such as Tomelloso, Bolaños or Socuéllamos are known for their large expanses of countryside and the need for a large labor force to collect their crops. Denying that the rights of workers are being violated here as in the rest of the country is a sign of a voluntary ignorance that tries to look the other way to avoid social responsibility with those who are leaving the skin so that we can have something to take us to the mouth.



For all these reasons, from CNT Ciudad Real we denounce the deplorable working conditions and the violation of human rights, the complicity of the government and farmers' associations and the criminalization of certain media and political and social sectors.

Belarus Uprising

Today Belarusians have woken up in a new country. In it, people openly talk about hatred for the government and prepare for a violent confrontation with the police and state. They discuss online and live effective methods of struggle. Several factories went on strike the day after the elections.

And although the electoral commission reports about the victory of the dictator once again, objectively speaking, Lukashenko lost the election. He lost the election not to some certain candidate, but rather to the Belarusian people, who said that 26 years was enough.

How has Belarus turned from a stable dictatorship, where the most peaceful people live, into a protest centre in Europe?

Economic and political crisis

Economically, Belarus is not an independent country. For many years, the Belarusian economic miracle has been able to survive only at the expense of cheap oil from Putin and direct money transfers from the Kremlin. Contrary to the fact that Lukashenko and Putin are not friends, this scheme worked relatively long while the Russian government was bathing in oil money.

With black gold prices falling, the Russian government was faced with the question of redistributing resources. Officials began to look at where the money invested was yielding some kind of result. Belarus did not give any special results. Contrary to all investments, Lukashenko extended his hold on power and hindered Belarus' integration into Russia – a process launched back in the 90s during Yeltsin.

The instability of Lukashenko over the past 10 years has shown that the Russian authorities cannot rely on him much. Turn to the West in 2015 added wood to the fire of discord between Moscow and Minsk. By early 2020, Lukashenko found himself in a very difficult situation. New oil and gas contracts have become much more difficult to conclude. The Belarusian authorities wanted at least some minimal concessions, but Russia was ready to give these concessions only when activating the project of the union state, with the joint currency and other points for the absorption of Belarus by Russia.

Political difficulties with Russia traditionally lead to economic problems in the country. During the last 5 years Lukashenko tried to neutralize this dependence by working with the West, but Western grants and loans cannot pull the

Belarusian economy alone. In early 2020, the Belarusian ruble started to fall heavily

against other currencies. Over the past 20 years, Belarusians have managed to survive several waves of such a fall, the largest being in 2011. The fall of the Belarusian ruble means for many Belarusians, including the fall in their real earnings. In addition, problems with the payment of salaries at state enterprises began to arise.

Fighting corona-virus with tractors

Lukashenko explained that it is due to economic problems that that Belarus can't afford any quarantine measures against the corona-virus. If at the beginning of the epidemic the dictator was still shouting that the Belarusians would be able to avoid getting infected by work in the field and visiting the sauna, a month later he had to admit



the real reasons for the lack of quarantine.

The corona-virus proved to be one of the most serious challenges for the Belarusian dictatorship, which it failed. Instead of typical populism and care for their people the authorities left the population on self-sufficiency.

Medical care in Belarus is nominally free of charge, but many services have to be paid for, as there is not enough money from the budget for drugs and medical equipment. It was impossible to test for corona-virus in many cases. Many could not afford to stay home and go to work. It is difficult to assess the real scale of the Corona-virus epidemic in Belarus. The state is the only institution that has real figures, and these figures are kept secret. In addition, many cases of corona-virus were labelled as pneumonia, including fatal.

In order to maintain medical care, small businesses and a large number of ordinary people have, in fact, engaged in decentralized support of medical staff. Some restaurants and bars prepared food for the medical staff from the donations made by

city dwellers. As in other countries, grass-roots initiatives produced protective masks. Taxi drivers transported medical personnel without payment.

A few months later, many people had the feeling that the state had abandoned them. But, on the other hand, there was a sense of solidarity, the certainty that neighbours, friends and even strangers from the Internet would not leave you in trouble. This feeling has restored to Belarusians the importance of the public as opposed to the state. Solidarity has become not just a word, but a direct practice.

And if in many countries, which were under the impact of corona-virus, with the fall of the number of infected, solidarity began to fall, in Belarus the structures of solidarity continued to work in other spheres as well. For example, in June, half of Minsk lost access to clean water. And while officials insisted that there was no problem with water, residents of the districts with water were organizing and delivering water to the neediest parts of the city.

Thus, one of the most important results of the corona-virus (the epidemic did not end in the country) was the growing awareness of the collective strength and the results that can be achieved through joint actions.

Elections during the virus

It was a mistake for Lukashenko to decide to announce the elections in the midst of the corona-virus: in early May, they announced that the elections would be held in August. The moment of maximum dissatisfaction with the authorities was chosen. Thanks to this, the election campaigns of his opponents literally began to gain a huge amount of support from the very first days. One of the presidential candidates, blogger Sergei Tikhonovsky, began holding rallies with an open microphone at the place of collecting signatures. This format attracted a huge number of people across the country, who were given a platform to express their discontent. A few weeks later, Tikhonovsky himself and many other major opposition politicians were detained and charged in far-fetched criminal cases.

Instead of extinguishing the protest and dissatisfaction with the authorities, the repression provoked even more organization around another candidate – banker of Belgazprombank (daughter of Gazprom) Viktor Babariko. Unlike other candidates, Babariko was not engaged in political struggle and for many he looked like a “moderate” candidate who called for fair elections and did not plan illegal demonstrations across the country. Contrary to this, Babariko's popularity was also growing among the more moderate part of the population.

As a result, the authorities decided to arrest Babariko and his inner circle on corruption charges. This step provoked another wave of discontent, the final stage of which was the announcement that the two largest opposition candidates would not be registered in the race for presidency. This decision resulted in major protests across the country with the first clashes with the police in Minsk: the demonstrators repulsed the detainees and saw that the OMON was absolutely unprepared for a violent confrontation with the people.

The clashes with riot police in July this year were a turning point for many in society. The dictatorship, which for 26 years had been built in part on its indestructibility through the support of the security forces, was suddenly extremely fragile. Videos of the confused OMON riot police quickly spread over the Internet and showed that one doesn't have to train for 3 years in camps in Russia or the EU to fight the police.

Lukashenko did not deny registration to only one serious opponent, Sergei Tikhanovsky's wife, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya. Tikhanovskaya originally planned to run for president in order to give her husband and other opponents of the regime a voice. But after the majority of politicians were arrested, she remained the only candidate around whom voters could unite.

Tikhanovskaya is not a politician and is not trying to become one. The main requirement of her entire election campaign is new elections. She openly says that she has no plans and does not want to stay in power. After the victory in Lukashenko, she planned to announce new fair elections, which should have changed the country.

Such a simple demand has united many political groups. Activists from the staffs of the imprisoned politicians got involved in her election headquarters. Tikhanovskaya's very election campaign relied heavily on the self-organization of the population in various parts of the country. Meetings with the candidate were officially registered in many places in the country where the candidate herself had not visited. Instead, there was a stage for speeches and an open microphone. Again, the microphone was rarely picked up by career politicians who feared reprisals, but rather by the working population and small businesses. In some cities, anarchists also spoke on stage.

Tikhanovskaya's popularity soared in just a few weeks. In July, she managed to gather one of the largest rallies in the history of the country – 50,000 people in

Minsk. In other cities, she gathered from several hundred to 8,000 people. For a long time the authorities did not take any measures and allowed people to gather.

Just a few days before the election, the authorities suddenly came to their senses. Instead of banning the gatherings, the decision was to play fools – all the venues declared open for rallies began to hold government events or repairs. The ban on assembly has provoked the next wave of discontent, but in active stages of protest has not turned out, as there were only a few days left before elections.

At the same time, during the last week the Belarusian police started actively detaining bloggers. Such tactics are not new and have been used by the authorities for many years – before any protests there are constant detentions of journalists and bloggers, who can cover these protests only

Re-election

Even before the beginning of the election campaign many people expected major protests in Belarus precisely because of the economic crisis and the coronavirus. It was logical for many to concentrate their protest efforts on election day and the following days. For instance, large media platforms in social networks and groups in telegram called for protests on election day several weeks before the elections.

Both protesters and authorities were preparing for these elections. There were pictures of military and police equipment on the Internet. Lukashenko attended training of riot police to disperse the protests. It was clear that the authorities would not try to bring down the degree of discontent, but rather to press the population by force.

It's not surprising that in the evening of August 9th thousands of people came out all over the country. Only according to the reports of the authorities themselves, the demonstrations took place simultaneously in 33 cities of the country. More than 50,000 people took part in those protests. The largest demonstrations were held in Brest, Baranavichy and Minsk. Several thousand people went out in the other regional centres.

To resist the demonstrators in Minsk, internal troops and police from all over the country were collected. The day before the election, transport columns were moving from the regions to Minsk. On election day, the city was cordoned off. Buses without license plates drove around the city and randomly detained pedestrians or journalists. Internet access was turned off or severely restricted throughout the country.

By evening, the situation had changed radically. Crowds of people started going out into the streets and moving towards the centre. The same situation was observed in smaller cities of the country. Towards eve-

ning, the first clashes with OMON began, as the people tried to free the detainees. The riot police themselves ran around the city at first, wearing T-shirts and batons with no special uniforms. The attacks on OMON quickly made it clear that the situation on that day would not be normal, with people being pulled out of the crowd and simply detained.

Just an hour after the first clashes, the centre of Minsk began to resemble a combat zone. Czech noise grenades, Canadian water cannons, Belarusian MAZs – all worked to disperse the protesters. For the first time in the country's history, people began to erect barricades, as well as directly clash with law enforcement agencies. A huge number of people were released from the hands of law enforcement officers at night in various parts of the country.

Solidarity during the protests again showed the incredible power of collective opposition to the dictatorship. The crowds paralysed any action by OMON and the military, contrary to all preparations. The lack of the Internet only played a negative factor for the regime – people went out to the streets to find out what was going on.

For two hours in the centre of Minsk and other cities people were fighting against the Belarusian authorities. They fought with great energy, which they had been saving for so many years. The successful confrontation shows once again the fragility of the Belarusian dictatorship.

The movement itself today is not the traditional political parties that lead the Belarusians to a bright future. Protests are organized through media platforms and have no clear leaders. Groups of people gather in the streets and decide on the way to go. The lack of a clear plan may hinder the effectiveness of the protest, but the lack of clear leaders makes it impossible to suppress easily.

The repression last night was brutal. There were so many victims. In rage, riot police threw noise grenades right at people. At least once a police truck rammed a crowd in the center of Minsk and killed one man. According to human rights defenders, at least three people were killed by the regime that night. The first blood was spilled, but people do not plan to stop. The plan is to take to the streets every day at 19:00 before the fall of the dictatorship.

There are calls in the telegram for direct democracy in the country on major channels. And although some fear that such calls exist due to misunderstanding of the concept, Belarus has rebelled and many demand the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of the era of direct democracy.

Source: pramen.io

Aug. 11 2020

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Class Power on Zero Hours Written and Published by Angry Workers World Distributed by PM Press

Leftist Activoids drawn into the Tentacles of the ALP Octopus & Orbit of the Corporate Unions

Recent years have seen an increasing rightward shift amongst many leftist groups in Australia particularly from the Trotskyist heritage becoming effectively satellites of the ALP and the union hierarchy. They are often drawn into the union hierarchy's 'smoke and mirrors' performances associated with enterprise bargaining helping with the fake picket lines and rallies which help the union bosses' isolate workers and provide flimsy pretexts for not holding mass meetings of union members on State and National levels to provide industrial solidarity. As such meetings and industrial action would be 'illegal' under the current IR system. Behind the scenes the corrupt union bosses get up to all manner of 'illegal' rorts. (1) Whilst providing tacky tableau for ALP election stunts and camouflage for treacherous backroom sell out negotiations by the union bosses.

These leftist groups publications play into the 'smoke and mirrors' being uncritical of the corrupt union bureaucracy and are likely in certain cases to be funded by the union hierarchy/ALP or via their fronts such as Get Up. Some of the most notorious of these performances in recent years have been the Hutchison Ports 2015, CUB 2016 and Baiada chicken processing factory 2011 disputes which have featured leftist activoids and low level union officials with some grass roots from the workplaces in these sell out performances. (2) Fake victories are won by the union bosses trumpeted in the corporate media and real cutbacks to workers jobs and conditions are achieved for the bosses. Where Leftist activoids could help genuine community picket lines such as those initiated by Sydney Transport Users Opposing Privatisation in 2016 to fight the privatisation of Region 6 of State Transit, they of course had no interest. As presumably such action would upset their ALP/Greens/Union hierarchy financial backers and dirty deals with the Govt. and bosses.

In contrast to these groups and their activoidism which ultimately assist the corporate set up and employer offensive, Angry Workers World have engaged in serious industrial organising entailing a

'cold' approach involving not waiting to be approached by workers and often involving 'salting' meaning militants getting jobs in various strategic factories in the West London area in the UK to initiate and assist campaigns over six years. Although they appear to lack any developed perspective for tackling the dynamics of the employer offensive. This drive has focused on campaigns involving salting for an overtime strike at Waitrose and a slow down at Sainsbury's ware houses in the area, a general union organising drive in Sept. 2017 associated with the IWWGB (Industrial Workers of the World of Great Britain) in West London warehouses and factories and a salting based organising campaign also looking at IWWGB shop recognition in the area at Bakkavor ready meal factory, Tesco Customer Fulfilment Centre and a 3 D printer manufacturing plant. The reports on these organising efforts explode the myths spread by various commentators that the UK has become de-industrialised and emphasise the continuing role of low paid labour intensive work in manufacturing, despite the advent of such high tech initiatives as robots. Another strand of their activity is 'Solidarity Network' type work involving helping out small groups or individuals in work places and the community over grievances in the area. Associated with this activity is their publication 'Workers Wild West' and workplace bulletins which they distribute particularly at factory gates and elsewhere in the area. They are heavily influenced by the Faridabad Workers News paper and group based in an industrial city in India. They seek to be locally rooted on the industrial and community levels like the Indian group in West London. However the Angries admit that their pioneering organising efforts over 6 years in West London generally and particularly the above 3 workplaces and associated complexes of factories/warehouses did not result in any major industrial action or the winning of IWWGB shops. Although some workers secured small wages/conditions gains and the group achieved a small increase in their network of contacts and IWWGB recruits in the area.

A Seriously Flawed Strategy

A big cloud hanging over the group's organising efforts in the area is the defeat of the Gate Gourmet workers strike in 2005.

Whilst few strikes occurred in the area prior to their activity. All aspects of the progress of the employer offensive and the low morale of workers in the workplaces targeted and across industry in the UK. Whilst the bosses had a well set up 'regime' in the plants based on collaboration with the corporate unions GMB at Bakkavor and USDAW at TESCO via 'Partnership Agreements', staff forums, restrictive union rules affecting strike ballots, and UK IR legislation which make 'official' industrial action extremely difficult to take, together with divisions and nepotism within the workforces. Consequently this 'hill' was just too difficult for the Angries to take. They are realistic and realise that even if official major industrial action was achieved, the union hierarchy would likely make every effort to sabotage it and the bosses would resort to scabs potentially leading into a box canyon. They ignore the isolation/sabotage tactics of other corporate unions. In the process of these grass roots organising hard yards and 'solidarity network' activity which would be hardly a flea bite to the ruling class and potentially drawing them down the slippery slope of being pseudo social workers, leftist activoid super heroes and copying the corporate unions on a micro level, they seem to have burnt themselves out somewhat and lost valuable time in the sector where they should have focused their limited resources and militants.

A militant with decades of experience across industry combined with extensive historical/theoretical research could perhaps have sorted them out. Put them on a more realistic path, helpfully 'trimmed back' some of the middle class/student left sub cultural oppression mongering they have picked up from previous leftist groups they were involved and encouraged them in lines of relevant research. The scarcity of such militants and an associated organisation is symptomatic of the appalling state of contemporary syndicalism in the Anglo World. Whilst a major chasm in the Angries' historical research is apparent.

The Angries & 'Base Unions' & Confusion about Syndicalism

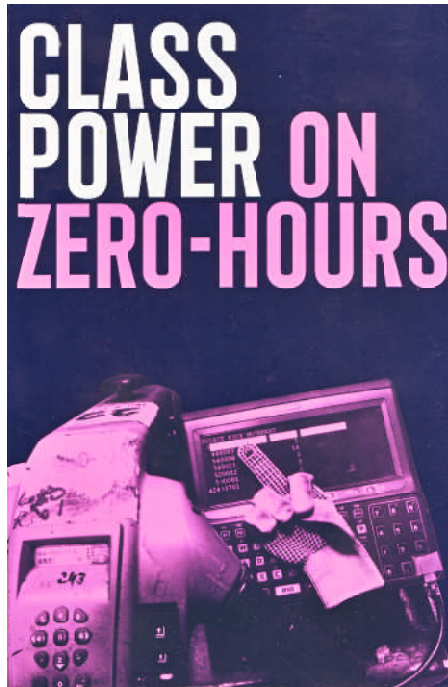
They describe such unions as the IWWGB and UVW (United Voices of the World) as 'base unions' due to allegedly being more democratic and militant than the 'corporate' unions and syndicalist. However both are registered as 'trade unions' with the UK IR set up with various restrictions on taking industrial action. Certainly contradicting syndicalist advocacy of 'direct action on the job'. According to the Angries, the IWWGB supports regional and national 'liberation' movements and

so heavily influenced by bourgeois ideology. Obviously contradicting syndicalist internationalist principles. They also incorrectly consider syndicalism is 'non-political'. A cursory study would reveal it is not. Certainly syndicalists oppose collaboration with political parties and politicians but organise industrially to overthrow the capitalist set up via the insurrectionary General Strike to establish workers control of industry and community control of communities, highly political stuff! The authors do see problems setting up 'Base Unions' like IWWGB, Workers Initiative in Poland, SI Cobas in Italy or UVW in central London as in West London they have not been approached by militant workers to take strike action, the general very low level of industrial action and migrant workers in the area were predominantly from countries with no recent histories of class struggle. (A likely trajectory of these 'base unions' in the UK is an ever closer orbit with the corporate unions which they copy in certain respects and inevitable bureaucratisation.) However, they decided to use IWWGB for organising drives as they considered valuable its visibility as a formal organisation with associated regalia and as a legal vehicle. However, their organising drives with the IWWGB proved to be unsuccessful. A thorough study of the history of international syndicalism since the late 19th Century would have provided important insights to the Angries regarding a better route to organising 'tough nuts' and the role of strike wave movements in the emergence of mass syndicalist union movements. Whilst they could have developed a grasp of the key role of such 'economic combative' organisations in facilitating workers self education, a revolutionary mass media, facilitating campaigns in working class communities over rents, etc and organising on the industrial/international levels as part of the revolutionary project. A much better way forward than their over reliance on workers spontaneous organising as part of their perspectives for the revolutionary project presented in the last part of the volume. Their lack of interest in this area may partially be explained by their 'Left Communist' background and a certain 'anti-intellectualism'.

'Strategy of the Indirect Approach'

A much more effective strategy would be 'indirect', focusing on transport industries and so tackling the employer offensive. As in such sectors new spearheads of the employer offensive are often launched orchestrated by the Govt. Particularly the railways where militant networks are likely to already exist would be much better sector for the Angries to focus and

link up with via 'salting' and provide outside-the-job organisation to assist on-the-job organisation to overcome obstacles to militant action. Culminating in big actions which can inspire direct action by workers in other sectors in the form of strike waves. In this way slowing the tempo or turning the tide against the employer offensive. Whilst many in the UK leftist milieu who are currently slumbering and or absorbed in unwholesome identity politics informed 'navel gazing' could be inspired to assist their initiative. Certainly one reason the Angries give for



their lack of success with organising in West London is insufficient numbers in their group and supporters for effective activity. Whilst they were unable to encourage copy cat groups from leftist milieus in other cities, contributed by the progress of neo-liberalism.

The Angries and their supporters could help launch a national syndicalist transport workers paper which later on could be transformed into local editions. One precedent is 'Transport Worker' published by Solidarity Federation but ceased operation many years back. In the context of raised workers morale in West London and other industrial areas doors would open to successful new syndicalist organising drives with workers inspired to approach local syndicalist groups for help and with the support of a syndicalist transport workers union, easy shop recognition victories and conditions improvements would be facilitated. In this context an expanding syndicalist union movement could emerge breaking out of the encirclement of the Corporate unions interwoven with the 'Deep State' at the top levels, allied with the British Labour Party and its satellites/parasites like the Socialist Party

wiping out their base. The long term goal of the establishment of a mass syndicalist industrial union confederation would certainly establish a major syndicalist pole of attraction in the UK labour movement to help turn the tide against the employer offensive, assist the revolutionary project internationally and tackle the threats of environmental destruction and a looming WWII.

The Role of the Workplace Paper

Despite a major activity of the Angries being Newspaper production and distribution focused on workplaces, they grossly under estimate the importance of such publications. Just focusing on their role as transmitters of information (See page 229). Failing to grasp the critical role of a specific industry paper in playing the psychological game with the bosses and union hierarchy and work place organising. In particular raising the morale of workers with satires/cartoons and producing collective discussion on the job which is the prelude to direct action, through contributions and regular distribution by militants so as to energise and provide them with ways to fight back against the bosses so raising their morale. Readers' circles in the context of major industrial action can transform into workers organisations facilitating new syndicalist union organising drives. Just by the paper coming out and being distributed on the job, significantly undermines the dictatorship, climate of fear and brainwashing associated with 'corporate identity' the bosses and union hierarchy are imposing on the job these days. In this way 'outside-the-job' organisation can interact and significantly assist 'on-the-job' organisation to thrive.

'Un-Democratic Socialism'

A significant part of the last section of the volume is devoted to a very good critique of so called 'Democratic Socialism'. This orientation which is influential amongst leftwing currents associated with Jeremy Corbyn former leader of the British Labour Party, its satellites such as the Socialist Party and many younger generation leftists has little to do with genuine socialism and the overthrow of the capitalist setup. Just old style social democratic policies favouring extending the welfare state, nationalisation of some industries, etc to help out the capitalist set up in crisis. The Angries provide a range of valid criticisms of this current. Including over emphasising the 'autonomy of governmental politics' associated with confusion about the capitalist nature of the State, the purely 'formalist' character of 'workers participation' schemes often tackily at-

tached to Social Democratic nationalisation proposals, which in reality provide no possibility for workers control over industry operations. The Angries also provide a critique of the 'Democratic Socialist' regime of Salvador Allende in Chile focusing on its contradictions which facilitated the Pinochet Military Coup in 1973.

In conclusion, the Angries certainly display a refreshing seriousness regarding industrial organising. However a serious flaw exists in their strategy contributing to their lack of major success, contributed by significant gaps in their historical/theoretical research, lack of extensive industrial experience and interaction with highly ex-

perienced industrial militants. Consequently they fail to grasp aspects of the big picture of industrial organising, revolutionary strategy and a more appropriate sector to focus their activity. Deficiencies in their industrial organising experience is reflected in their failure to grasp key aspects of workplace papers. However, they do a great job in regard to their 'Workers' Inquiry' into obstacles and associated 'management regimes' militants face in on-the-job organising in contemporary UK large scale workplaces and exposing various myths about UK de-industrialisation and hi-tech manufacturing and the deficiencies of so called

'Democratic Socialism'. They over emphasise 'spontaneity' in their revolutionary strategy and under emphasise the importance of mass syndicalist industrial unionism.

Mark McGuire

Notes

1. For a discussion of rorts in the corporate unions see 'Spotlight on Rorts in the Union Office' in RW Vol.36 No.2 (231) Aug.-Sept. 2018

2. See 'Hutchison Ports Dispute' in RW No.3(224) Nov.-Dec. 2015; See discussion of CUB Dispute in Vic. Rail News in this edition of RW page 9.

FORGOTTEN REVOLUTION: THE LIMERICK SOVIET 1919 by Liam Cahill, Orly Kelly Publishing Rochestown, Eire, 2019. The Centenary Edition.

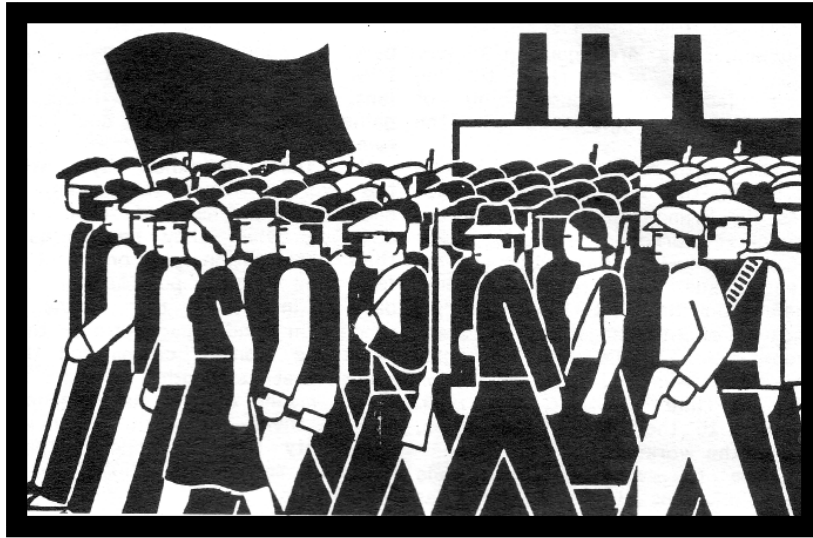
The period in Irish history from 1913 to 1923 has been termed the Troubles. Beginning with the Dublin Lockout, through the guerrilla struggle for independence, the civil war over the treaty settlement with Britain, up to the final victory of the Free State forces over the "diehard" IRA, Ireland underwent a decade of armed conflict, social unrest and labor strife. A "Red Tide" of revolutionary outbreaks on the European continent had followed the World War. Ireland was no exception, but in Ireland the actions of an aroused and disaffected working class were complicated and often overlapped with the fight for national independence.

The author notes that between 1918 and 1923 there were some one hundred strikes, land seizures and workplace occupations across the whole country – some merely lasting days, others for months.. The most memorable of these was the general strike in Limerick in the Spring of 1919, where for two weeks a "soviet" or trade union strike committee assumed the governance of an entire city of 38,000.

The Limerick area was considered one of the many centers of disaffection in Ireland by the British administration. The Royal Irish Constabulary noted the great popularity of the local Sinn Féin party and other nationalist organizations. They also regarded stepped-up labor agitation as equally subversive of Crown rule – particularly the growth of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. By then the ITGWU had reached a national membership of some 100,000 – 3400 of which toiled in Limerick. Originally founded by

the radicals James Larkin and James Connolly, the syndicalist ITGWU was explicitly anti-capitalist, demanding ownership and control of Ireland's national resources by the working class.

The immediate cause of the general strike was the April proclamation of Limerick and environs as a Special Military Area by



the British military following a gun battle between the RIC and Republican Army men. This provocative new regime of martial law required local citizens to apply for safe-conduct passes to present at check-points both within and without the city of Limerick – including workers going to and from their workplaces. Most galling was the requirement that eligibility for a permit depended upon the approval of the much hated Royal Irish Constabulary – the body of native-born Irishmen who constituted the eyes and ears of British rule in Ireland. Anyone associated, or suspected of association with the ITGWU, Sinn Féin, the Irish Republican Brother-

hood/IRA, or any nationalist group could be denied a pass – at a time when there was a significant overlap between nationalist and trade union membership.

Supported by an outraged citizenry, 14,000 workers went out on strike, suspending regular business operations and shutting down workplaces, shops and pubs. The press in Ireland and England was quick to label the Limerick strike a "Soviet" – the Irish Times called it "a very bold and candid experiment in Irish Syndicalism" (44).

Through the two week duration of the strike, the Limerick United Trades and Labour Council was able to maintain public order and assure the continuation of essential services of water, gas and electricity. An adequate food supply was maintained at prices set below market rates by the strike committee. Food supplies and contributions were sent in by sympathetic farmers and shopkeepers, and by other Irish and British trade unions. A shortage of money moved the Soviet to produce its own currency, promissory notes of various denominations accepted by cooperative merchants and shopkeepers, redeemable after the strike in funds donated by supporters.

Most employers opposed martial law and the permit system but were equally opposed to the strike. The Catholic Church hierarchy and parish priests were initially sympathetic but urged conciliation with the British authorities. With the exception of Loyalist Ulster, rank and file unionists both in Britain and Ireland were supportive of the Limerick Soviet but

See Page 20

NEWS & NOTES

Some of the most important news lately in Sydney has been the threatened 48 hour bus strike by the Rail Tram & Bus Union (R.T.B.U.) in late August. The media reported the strike was mainly over COVID-19 safety issues on the buses. However according to the grass roots the most important issue focused upon at depot union meetings was Privatisation of State Transit by the Berejiklian Govt. The union bosses called off the strike without achieving anything really. Just a worthless promise from the NSW Govt. of a review of COVID-19 safety issues on the buses and a delay in the privatisation. Although it was well known on the job, that the company interested in a major slice of the pie had developed cold feet over the price demanded by the NSW Govt. The union bosses went on to claim a fake victory. The whole ridiculous charade no doubt was cooked up and approved at one of those 'top secret' weekly meetings between the RTBU leadership and NSW Transport Minister Constance. However, the strike threat highlights the growing effectiveness of A.S.N. assistance to militants in countering the union bosses 'dead end' parliamentary strategy to resist privatisation and raising awareness of COVID-19 safety issues on-the-job. (See article page6.)

In the NSW Railways a new push for Driver Only Operation of new interurban trains is looming in mid December of this year. Whilst the most explosive news lately has been the uncovering of a M.O.U. (Memorandum of Understanding) okaying D.O.O. on these trains way back in 2017 by NSW Trains and the RTBU leadership. The M.O.U. is in breach of both union rules and Rail E.B.A. (Enterprise Bargain Agreement) 2018. The A.S.N. has been assisting militants to expose this treacherous scam by the union bosses to the grass roots. (See article page 3.)

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Parkville Vic. 3052

SPARKS

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

MEMBERS' VOICE

Grassroots NSW Public Transport
Workers Organisation
User.tpg.com.au/retepsni/MembersVoice
Email: Membersvoice2010@yahoo.com

Facebook [www.facebook.com/pages/
Members-Voice-RTBU-rank-and-file-Group/
53124000425721323?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Members-Voice-RTBU-rank-and-file-Group/53124000425721323?fref=ts)

Rank and File First

Grassroots NSW Public Transport
Workers Organisation
Rankandfilefirst@outlook.com

STOP

"Sydney Transport-users Opposing
Privatisation"

PO Box 703
Leichhardt 2040
Facebook STOP Privatisation
[@STOPPrivatisation](https://www.facebook.com/STOPPrivatisation)

Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name
Address.....
General Secretary
PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

If undeliverable, return to
PO Box 92 Broadway NSW 2007

Continued From Page 18 their leaderships were often equivocal. Was the strike an example of revolutionary class struggle, or an expression of Irish nationalism? Or was it some combination of the two? Right wing elements in Sinn Fein and the IRA rejected social radicalism and aimed at a multi-class movement for national independence. Leftists, following Connolly, recognized little distinction between one and the other. The author takes note of the “class tensions that lay uneasily beneath the superficial unity of the movement for independence” (88). These tensions would come to a head later on in the violence of the civil war period.

The strikers in general held no hostility for the rank and file of the occupying army - many of them conscript holdovers from

Continued From Page 2 on anarchism and biographies of anarchists. He used facebook to create an archive of anarchist history not available anywhere else as he recounted memories and events from his own and other people's lives.

Christie wrote *The investigative researcher's handbook* (1983), sharing skills that he put to use in an exposé of fascist Italian terrorist Stefano delle Chiaie (1984). In 1996 he published the first version of his historical study *We the anarchists: a study of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), 1927-1937*.

Short-run printing enabled him to produce three illustrated volumes of his life story (*My granny made me an anarchist*, *General Franco made me a 'terrorist'* and *Edward Heath made me angry* 2002-2004) which were condensed into a single volume as *Granny made me an anarchist*:

the World War who were themselves union members, less than enthusiastic about the duty they were ordered to perform. A Scottish unit actually had to be relieved and shipped out - considered too sympathetic to the local population.

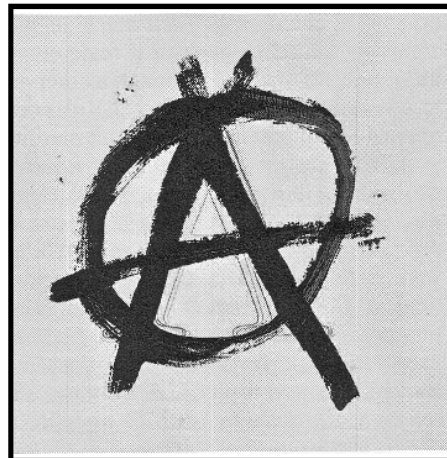
Under pressures from the local employers and the Irish Trade Union Congress itself, the strike committee agreed to mediation with the British military, undertaken by the local clergy along with Limerick's Sinn Fein mayor. The strikers began a return to work and martial law and the permit system were finally ended at the beginning of May. Cahill considers that the strike could not have continued without national trade union support. And this was not forthcoming from an increasingly conservative leadership that had no taste for social revolution and considered the struggle for national independence to take

precedence over issues of class. Although the Limerick strikers were successful and demonstrated the power and efficiency of labor organization, Cahill insists that their efforts ended in a “short-time honorable draw but a long-term defeat” (153).

Following the Limerick events, the author notes the subordination of Irish Labour's officialdom to the strategies of the nationalist movement - a movement increasingly dominated by Ireland's middle classes and whose final triumph by the mid-1920s would result in a conservative Free State government purged of radicals and IRA “diehards” - and a much weakened labour movement.

Martin Comack
Boston Labor Solidarity Committee

General Franco, the angry brigade and me (2004). His final books were the three volumes of *¡Pistoleros! The Chronicles of Farquhar McHarg*, his tales of a Glaswe-



gian anarchist who joins the Spanish anarchist defence groups in the years 1918-1924.

Committed to anarchism and publishing, Christie appeared at many bookfairs and film festivals, but scorned any suggestion he had come to ‘lead’ anyone anywhere.

Christie's partner Brenda died in June 2019. He slipped away peacefully, listening to “Pennies From Heaven” (Brenda's favourite song) in the company of his daughter Branwen.

Stuart Christie, 10 July 1946-15 August 2020

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/rjdhgk>