

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

FRENCH AIRLINE WORKERS SHOW THE WAY FORWARD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST NEO LIBERAL BOSSES WITH DIRECT ACTION!



5/10/15 Air France workers storm a meeting over major job losses and rippoff clothes of bosses, who flee the scene!

**HUTCHISON PORTS DISPUTE; NSW RAILWAY NEWS;
STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH; SYDNEY CABBIES' NEWS;
OPAL CARD NASTIES; VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS;
BRITAIN TODAY; SPAIN TODAY; POLISH LABOUR NEWS;
GERMANY; FINLAND; TURKEY; LOST FOR WORDS; BOOK
REVIEW CORNER; RIVOLUZIO GILIOLI; NEWS & NOTES;**

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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

P.O. BOX 92

BROADWAY 2007 NSW

E-mail:

rworke@chaos.apana.org.au

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HUTCHISON PORTS DISPUTE

8/8/15 Stevedoring company Hutchison Ports Holdings sacked via text messages and emails, 97 workers in Sydney and Brisbane. Whilst the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) hierarchy proceeded to orchestrate another “smoke and mirrors” performance to facilitate the bosses’ agenda and create an election stunt to assist the electoral fortunes of the ALP in the upcoming Federal Elections likely to be held in 2016.

In particular, the performance was designed to divert workers attention away from the revelations of the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption and focus attention on the Liberals support for employer attacks.

“Community Pickets” and Leftist Activoidism

Rather than call nationwide maritime stoppages to defend the sacked workers and act in solidarity with the striking Hutchison’s workers, the union officials with the particular aid of various leftist activoid groups, launched so called “community pickets” at Hutchison’s operations. However, given the company outsourced its work to the two other stevedore companies, Patricks and DPW, the “community pickets” were largely symbolic. It was a way to divert attention from the union hierarchy’s opposition to taking effective action to defend the sacked workers and seriously challenge the IR racket. It also just goes to show how these leftist activoids, which lack any strategy to build an alternative grass roots controlled union movement and are unwilling to conduct the long term serious industrial or-

ganising in strategic sectors to achieve it, can be so easily taken advantage by the union bureaucracy, as part of a “sellout circus”. Some of these activoids focus on an “aimless” industrial activism approach, involving helping out small groups of workers in peripheral sectors with their grievances. Certainly they have assisted a tiny number, but in reality they are playing at activoid super heroes/cum social workers. In no way threatening the hold of bureaucratic unions over workers and their entanglement with the ALP and the IR racket or effectively helping the other 100,000’s of workers in similar situations and countering the employer offensive. They of course publicise via the internet these “microscopic” achievements to impress their activoid counterparts elsewhere who have also lost the plot in regard to serious long range industrial work and the hard yards it requires.

On 13/8/15, after Hutchison workers continued to defy Fair Work Australia demands that they cease industrial action, and their gaining the sympathy of workers in other sectors, and worrying the corporate set up, that their action would inspire industrial resistance in other sectors, the Federal Court following MUA approaches, intervened. It made the decision to require the return to work of Hutchison workers until a settlement was negotiated between management and the union hierarchy. However, it included the clause, that the employer had the right to prevent any retrenched worker returning on the job and was not obliged to provide relevant employees with work, “if they are unwilling or unable to do so”. The MUA officials agreed to all aspects of the court decision, ceased industrial action and even agreed to pay the wages of the sacked workers.

“Fake Victory”

The union hierarchy deceitfully called this decision a victory. This fake victory was also trumpeted in the corporate media. A similar fake victory had been proclaimed by the MUA officials, associated with the outcome of the 1998 Patricks dispute.

Most disturbingly, was the role of Bob Carnegie, recently elected MUA Qld State Secretary in this union boss orchestrated sell out “circus”. He had run his election campaign on the basis of encouraging industrial militancy and membership control, but went along completely with the “smoke and mirrors”, and the media stunt associated with the return of the striking Hutchison workers to work. Did he develop an “understanding” with the MUA and ALP hierarchy, prior to the

elections and as a result, there was no need for Electoral Commission and ASIO, “ballot adjustment” practices? Similar to the rorting of the RTBU (Rail Tram and Bus Union) elections in late 2014 (See RW Vol.34 No1(222) Mar.-April 2015). Shorten and other ALP and union hierarchy identities took the opportunity for photo shoots at the lame duck “community pickets.”

Another particularly, disturbing feature of the “Community Pickets” was the resort to standover tactics and harassment by MUA officials and CFMEU (building and mining union) delegates against one leftist group which criticised the big sell out moves. Death threats were made against them, members of the group were forced from the picket and their literature ripped out of their hands. These strong arm tactics no doubt were also aimed at intimidating Hutchison workers who were also opposed to the union officials’ scam. Intriguingly there are plans afoot for a merger of the MUA and CFMEU bureaucracies. Rather than a move to help out the workers, the likely hidden agenda is a move to liquidate the extensive real estate assets of the MUA and maintain its bureaucracy, given mounting job losses in the maritime sector associated with various cave-ins by the MUA hierarchy to the bosses’ attacks and new technology deployment.

Latest news, is that as part of a new Enterprise Bargain Agreement developed following backroom discussions between management and the union officials, there are a range of vicious attacks in its clauses and the door opened to ensure the sacking of 100 workers via so called “voluntary redundancies”. Workers will be pushed off the job due to low wages and the pressure of the union officials. As part of the EBA, wages will be cut via the extension of the base rate of weekly shift hours from 30 to 35 per week, introduction of casuals, reduction in super entitlements, flexible rostering, etc. This EBA will have flow on effects throughout the maritime and other sectors. *Ed.*

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 P.O. Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

LOOKING BACK? NO! LOOKING FORWARD.

What a year it has been so far! The reform process for rail and for the buses has rolled on unabated. It seems that this will never end unless we put an end to it.

Reforms are sold to the public and employees alike as an attempt to make things better, more efficient. Yet for many of us it is easy to form the opinion that not much has changed or that in some aspects things are worse than before. But that hardly matters when we are bombarded by Government propaganda that the reforms have transformed public transport in NSW for the better.

While the Opal Card in N.S.W. has been convenient for lots of commuters it comes at a premium price. Despite privacy concerns, and overcharging, a majority of

also places many more people onto the surveillance database used by law enforcement agencies who have access to the Opal Card collected data.

What do you do if you don't have \$40 for the online top-up of your card, or the \$10 required for the top-up from a card retailer? The N.S.W Government says, "go jump". Many more unfortunates will be forced to run the gauntlet without any form of authority to travel.

Why remove the flexibility that is already built into the system? It gives people choice. What about those that only have to use public transport once, due to being a tourist, car breakdown, emergency commute e.t.c.?

They will all have to go through the unnecessary rigmarole of obtaining an Opal Card, even if it is to be used only once. Cancelling a card must be done within 90 days or all money contained on the card becomes the property of Opal. Cancelling is not easy if you are a tourist or for some rea-

not necessarily mean that we will get an efficient and world class railway. Were rail does best is where it is State run and funded well.

The constant downgrading of jobs has been a feature of the latest reforms. Staff on lower wages and with less experience have replaced skilled and dedicated old hands in most positions. The replacement of full time workers with part-timers is an accelerating trend. The old Team Leader positions on Stations will soon be a thing of the past as will the Station Support Officer positions. They are already being phased out, just as the Trainer Guards have lost any prestige and respect that went with their jobs.

The difficulty for many, is that, if their positions are abolished and they need to stay on the job there is no assurance that they can take a lower graded job, or even a job of equivalent grade and pay, or even more impossibly, a job that is graded higher than their current position. A complicating factor for employees "surplus to requirements" in the future is that under the terms of the current Enterprise Agreement, from October 2017, redundancy payments for long term employees will be half of the current entitlement.

Yet in N.S.W despite all the anguish over the unending reforms, despite all the fear and uncertainty, no fight-back has eventuated. The reasons for this are many and varied. However we, the ordinary members, the rank and file, must bare a burden of responsibility. We can no longer just sit back and expect anyone else to do our bidding when the knife is at our throats. It is high time we prepared to take bold steps.

That the union leadership has by and large failed to heed the pleadings and advice of it's own members is nothing short of unforgivable. They have been prepared to negotiate with management devils at the expense of their own membership, who have basically been blind sideline spectators in a game where the rules keep changing. Really it is just a matter of showing some leadership where there now is none.

One thing that the recent tentative, restrained, Melbourne Metro E.B.A. stoppages, have shown, is that when the leadership does stand up and do anything they will get the support of an overwhelming majority of the membership. The leadership may have to be cajoled and pushed, prodded and reluctantly rolled along by the ranks in this process. However by forcing the leadership into turning the rusty old wheels of inertia, making the impossible



people are using the smart travel Opal Card. There have been problems, such as the card readers on buses losing signal causing commuters being either unable to tap on or tap off. This leads to the maximum fare being charged against the card. Also a few times in the city, peak hour ticket readers at station gates have malfunctioned causing a massive traffic jam of commuters being unable to tap on or off or even get through the gates.

At the end of this year single trip tickets, paper and plastic, will be phased out forcing people onto the Opal Card. This removes flexibility in the way that people travel and disadvantages poorer people who live hand to mouth on a daily basis. It

son you no longer need the card. You are required to fill out a form and send it off for a refund which will be credited to your bank account. Many other countries in our region have a much more flexible cancellation policy, the card holder being able to cancel the card and obtain a refund at the airport or at major rail stations.

The N.S.W Government hasn't invested meaningfully in public transport infrastructure like other comparable cities around the world have. Yet \$billions have been made available here for private sector roads and tollways. The extension of privatisation into many of the areas of public transport won't reduce costs and does

seem possible, workers feel their own power. The leadership is much stronger because of this, (no matter what members feel about the organisation of the campaign), simply because it acted positively in the perceived interest of members.

At this point we need to ask "who are the real leaders"? No industrial action can be contemplated without the rank and file. Organisation and leadership make the union strong and so does the support of the membership.

The intervention of the Andrews Labor Government in the negotiation process between Metro and the R.T.B.U (Rail Tram & Bus Union), is about taking away the lead provided by the union leadership and the rank and file. Intervention by any political party with an axe to grind can't really help members resolve the issues with the company in any conclusive and meaningful way. There had been criticism of the Andrews Government transport policies and their cosy relations with Metro from both the rank and file and from certain quarters in the leadership, to a limited extent. Perhaps the Andrews Government has inserted itself into negotiations in an effort to limit the damage to the ALP in Victoria. The rank and file should not welcome such intervention which removes the ranks from confronting the class enemy in the form of the company. The problem is that it weakens the union and it's members in the long run by removing them from the battle front and forcing them into a political compromise. Things haven't been resolved satisfactorily in Victoria yet, however the industrial action which was giving the ranks confidence and pride seems to now to be on the back-burner.

In the other States, especially N.S.W. there is little or no organisation on the ground and pleas from members fall on deaf ears.

If you put a cracker up the N.S.W. leadership's arse and set it off they would deny the explosion ever took place despite their hemorrhoids leaving them unable to sit.

Recently in Sydney a petition by members was sent to the union office threatening to resign if there was no support for a campaign from the union leadership to halt management breaches of health and safety laws. Several months later little has changed. Station staff are still being forced to stand for prolonged and unreasonable periods causing exacerbation of health related conditions. The consensus of members does not seem to matter a fig because according to the union a "risk assessment" has been done. Baloney! They are not taking our concerns seriously. If we had acted together this issue could have been resolved in our favour. We failed and our leadership failed. To them the bread and butter issues of the members do not matter.

Meanwhile the N.S.W. Government, in an act of bastardry have enacted legislation officially truncating the Sydney to Newcastle line at Hamilton. Neither Liberal nor Labor in Government has really been opposed to the truncation of the line to Newcastle. The City of Newcastle is left effectively with no rail line to N.S.W.'s second largest city. For the Libs developers and money men have always been more important than people, though both the major party's have pandered to these groups. Some politicians from both major party's have been caught with their hands in the honey pot over the years.

This precedent now opens the way for governments to seize public spaces and infrastructure and flog them off to developers. People from around the world are now asking why a government would even contemplate closing an efficient mass transit system to a major city when it is already built, operating and serving the community.

For people employed in this section of rail, job prospects are dismal with unemployment rates running at 9.2% in the Hunter region and near 5% in the Newcastle region. Some of those affected by the closure will possibly be given redundancy, some may be placed in vacant positions elsewhere. For many other former employees travel distances to jobs in other areas may be just too great.

While unions in N.S.W. have supported the "Save Our Rail" campaigns and rallies, nothing much has been organised by them in a concrete way to stop the closure going ahead. Instead they have tended to make political capital out of the closure against the Liberal Party and for the A.L.P. in this State. A massive disobedience campaign involving workers from around the State may have had some effect in halting the closure. However we will never know if such a step would have been effective because such a bold move was never tried.

The N.S.W. Greens and several small left wing party's have been vocal in their support for the Newcastle community, continuing their agitation against the line closure which now looks certain to go ahead.

In the coming year, in the lead up to EBA 2017, lets get together in an effort to be heard loud and clear. We aim to hold a Members Voice meeting later this year which we will advertise across the public transport networks. If you want to have your say in a broad based rank and file network you will be welcome to attend and give your input. Support this network and let's see what's possible in 2016. In the meantime just drop us a line at Sparks or just pass on any information about what is happening in your workplace.

STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH

BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS

Rebel Worker: What are your impressions of the impact on Burwood due to the restructuring of bus operations associated with the closure to buses of George Street and various route changes?

Burwood Driver: I have particularly noticed due to the route changes that much less passengers are catching our buses from the city up to Railway Square. In the

past buses would be full when reaching Railway Square. Now there are much less passengers on board at this stop. Many disabled people are angry about the route changes and have made complaints to drivers. They have been particularly affected due to their problems with mobility. The STA's line on the changes is that it's all going well. Whilst, the union has wanted us to report any anomalies. Its early days yet, to see whether our concerns will be listened to. It seems the restructuring is all about a further extension of "Optimisation". We are seeing a lot

more runs being cancelled and inadequate staffing levels to do the work. I believe this is a common phenomena throughout the STA. Drivers who have been on the same line of work for many years are now being displaced. The way lines of work are being organised has meant many shifts are being shortened, resulting in lower wages for many of us. Also we are seeing more bizarre aspects of "Optimisation" with quite irrational situations where other depots are now taking over our runs despite the commencement stop for the run being very close to our depot. Whilst we are taking some of other depots' runs. There is inadequate training in regard to these changes. Particularly this has been the

case in regard to the turn at Balmain Wharf. Consequently, many are encouraged to take sickies, worsening the staffing problems.

RW: What is the situation with the bosses?

BD: Many had been worried that the new "Performance Reviews" would turn nasty. So far there seems to be no serious attempt to crack the whip. However, where we are being severely affected is in regard to commuter complaints. If there is such a complaint, the supervisors are quick to haul drivers over the coals. The driver is always seen to be in the wrong. Consequently its necessary to get the union involved to reinvestigate the complaint and

tion", the management changes at the depot, and the commuter complaints crack down, has been a state of low morale for many of us at the depot.

RW: How is the situation with the Opal system with the depot fleet?

BD: There has been major progress on this front. The bosses recently had the Opal Techs come out and supplied them with a long list of complaints about the Opal malfunctioning on numerous buses. Consequently, the problems with the Opals have mostly been resolved.

RW: What is your outlook for the tramway extensions in the City?

BD: I see serious problems resulting from the extensions. I think it will result in

RW: What's the situation with inspectors?

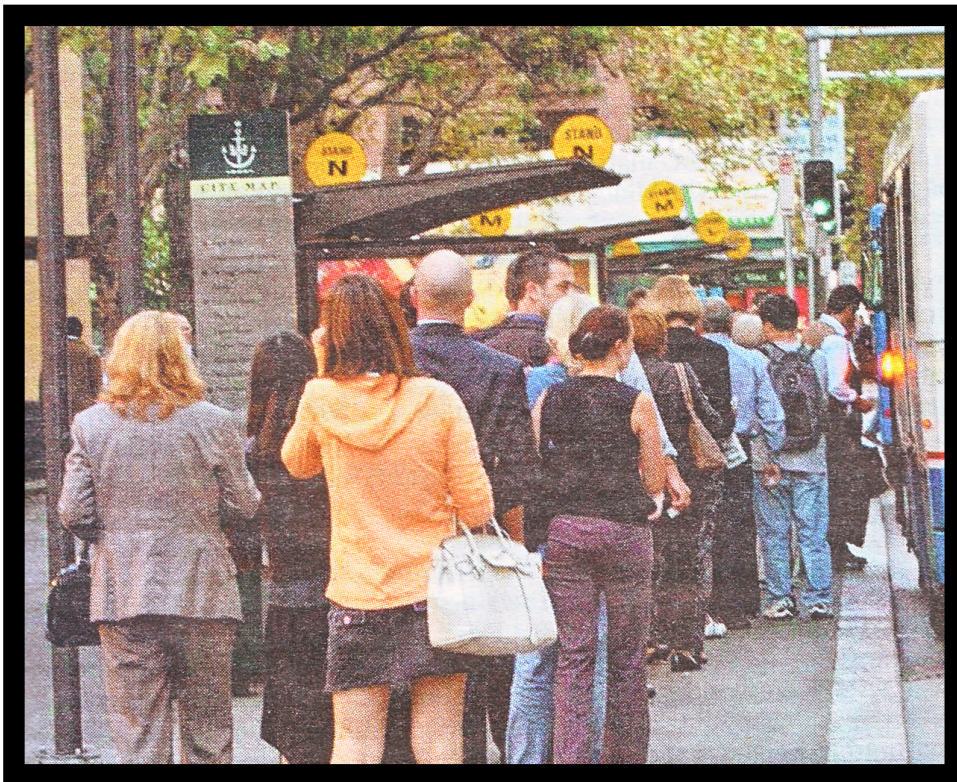
WB: In the past, corridor inspectors would walk up and down Bondi Junction interchange, so as to sort out problems and assist commuters. Now there is no one doing the job. All responsibility is now being put on individual drivers to cope with the chaos which can occur such as buses parking in the wrong spots. There is no one to guide new drivers and drivers from outside the Eastern Suburbs depots regarding decision making about parking in the interchange. Veteran drivers from the Eastern Suburbs, are finding this situation, with many drivers having no idea what's going on, to be very frustrating. Transport for NSW has put more responsibility on everyone in the STA. We are being pushed to meet the unrealistic timetables by reducing the layover times at the end of our runs from 8 minutes to 6 or 5 minutes. Peter Rowley says this is a great idea. Whilst drivers are under pressure from continuing problems with the Opal system and anxiety from passengers boarding the bus from the back door, due to the confusion on this issue spread by the STA bosses.

RW: What are your impressions of the new "performance reviews"?

WB: Recently I attended one of these meetings. These reviews, were introduced by the bosses in recent months, as they found their previous draconian approach to handling drivers perceived deficiencies leading to the sack for many, was considered to be not sustainable. These reviews are supposed to occur every 6 months. The sting in the tail of these cosy little chats is a focus on whether your bus stop leaving times are considered inadequate. If so, you are pushed down the disciplinary procedure slippery slope and ultimately face the sack. Another sting I noticed was an attempt to intimidate me from taking sickies. Most Waverley drivers are not falling for this bullying. Latest news, is that the bosses are continuing with their little intimidation trick of putting stickers on your journal about alleged deficiencies in your work.

RW: What is the situation with the mechanical section at the depot?

WB: The section has faced major cutbacks in staffing in recent times. A few years back, the section had been 20-25 mechanics and apprentices. Now it's been effectively reduced to a skeleton staff of only 10-12 staff. The staffing has been cut by over a half. There appears to be a low state of morale amongst the mechanics. Whilst I have noticed a lot of bus maintenance isn't being properly done due to this corner cutting by the bosses. There is always at least one bus breaking down on runs. Definitely



so force the bosses to back pedal. We have now a new manager, who seems quite gung ho. The previous manager, whilst seeming quite distant, when approached on an issue by a driver, often proved very effective in tackling issues. Achieving a satisfactory result for the driver concerned.

RW: What are the latest developments with the part timers.

BD: So far no more part timers have been introduced. However, as they don't work on weekends, their deployment has had a major impact on other drivers. Particularly, those with families are being affected. With the driver shortage, they are being denied weekends to be with their families. The overall impact of this aspect, together with the extension of "Optimisa-

much more traffic chaos and commuter disgruntlement over delays. After all what happens, when one of the trams breaks down or two cabs collide in front of a tram on a route along say George Street? It will bring the entire line down and disrupt the traffic flow.

WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

RW: What's the staffing situation in the STA?

Waverley Busie: Overall the STA is 150 drivers short. There is a high turnover of staff. There are never enough drivers. DOC's and overtime is always available. You don't see many older drivers around, you mainly see brand new drivers. The bosses are even training up the new drivers on Saturdays.

the maintenance work on bus engine electronics is not up to scratch. As a result, many bus engines are experiencing spluttering and stalling.

RW: What have been some of the ramifications of the new tramway extensions construction and the STA restructuring of bus operations in the Eastern Suburbs?

WB: The 389, 378, 311 and 325 are now ending in the western side of the City. We have recently been shown a video about the changes to these routes, sponsored by Peter Rowley, the CEO. There is also a second phase in regard to changes to these routes, with the 440 being merged with the 378, and going to Bronte. Rowley is using the new routes associated with the restructuring to wave the big stick. Threatening us with the loss of the routes if we don't "perform" and meet tender requirements.

RW: What are your impressions of the depot?

WB: It's not a bus depot anymore! It's a money making factory! We are constantly being worked ever harder. After a day's work, we are very tired.

RW: What's the latest with the ferries?

WB: Recently I was down at Circular Quay and met some of the Ferry workers who are now employed in the franchises since privatisation. They complained about the staff cuts which have followed the carve-up of the Ferries and the current

low level of morale. As a result there is a high turnover of staff. They mentioned that the ticket booths have been closed and the ferry wharf area has a very run down look, due to private operators focus on money making and corner cutting. It re-



mined me of a K-mart store. You don't feel welcome there, as there was an absence of staff to provide assistance.

RW: What is the situation with the STA's tight fisted approach toward supplying buses?

WB: On Sunday 6th Sept, there was a Kite Festival held at Bondi Beach, resulting in a major influx of people catching buses from the Bondi Junction interchange. As I noticed on Boxing Day last year, there

were 100's of people waiting at the interchange. There was no attempt by the bosses to allocate extra buses to cater for the exceptional circumstances and major passenger influx. The replay of this chaos just goes to show how silly and irrational are the bosses' in their approach to running the buses with their focus on just making money.

RW: What are the latest developments with the private bus companies?

WB: I recently heard on "Facts on Radio" that Transport for NSW has demanded that the private buses now adopt the STA blue/white colour scheme. Consequently, there will be no way for commuters to easily distinguish, the difference between private and STA buses. It was not made clear, whether the private companies will have to pay for the new colour scheme or Transport for NSW would cover the costs. In Adelaide, there are currently four bus companies and each has a different colour scheme. It was also mentioned on the program, that for the last five years, the private buses have had a very poor record in regard to late running. Bizarrely, according to ex-Waverley private bus drivers, the private bosses aren't taking a hard line with drivers on this issue. In stark contrast to the draconian attitude of the STA of punishing drivers in regard to late running.

SYDNEY CABBIES' NEWS

CBD/AIRPORT BLOCKADES THE ONLY WAY FORWARD TO FIGHT UBER-X TODAY EXECUTIVE MAKES U-TURN ON TACKLING UBER-X, BUT LEADING INTO A DANGEROUS DEAD END!

As a result of the militant upsurge and big attendance by cabbies at the rally outside the NSW Parliament on Thurs. 10/9/15, the TODA (Taxi Operators and Drivers Association) exec. has changed its position on Uber. Instead of now trying to talk cabbies out of taking direct action, for fear of alienating commuters, and encouraging reliance on politicians and Government reviews, now they are supporting industrial action.

In the media, they are talking about a strike and a boycott of the Airport. Given the TODA exec. is composed of experienced cabbies, they must be aware of how useless and counterproductive for cabbies is such a tactic. Obviously Uber drivers

and cabbies not participating in the strike, will just strike break and worsen the incomes of cabbies and pay-ins which are already hard hit from the shrinking pie, associated with the 1,000 extra cabs on the road approved by the Liberals and Uber competition, reduced pub hours and the recession. It's obviously, all about sabotaging effective action by cabbies to fight Uber, and points to the pressure of the ALP aligned Union Bureaucracy on the TODA Exec. The ALP and the Liberals support Uber. Whilst the Greens have no policy on Uber as yet, but have a policy on ride sharing.

SOME ALARMING ASPECTS OF UBER-X

Uber-X is following the typical strategy of a company which is seeking a monopoly in an industry. As a result of lobbying the Government, it has been allowed to bend the rules and barge into the industry. Its seeking to wipe out conventional taxi operators by out competing them via lower fares and better communications. How-

ever, should it achieve the monopoly, it will be in a position to screw savagely both Uber cabbies and commuters. This has been seen already at Xmas and New Years Eve, where Uber cabs were charging commuters extortionate fares of over a \$100 for trips which are normally much less.

20% of taxi drivers are already undercutting their mates by joining Uber themselves...and selling out the conditions of the remaining 80% who are standing on principle and not "double-dipping" (i.e. relying on taxi network radio and apps AS WELL AS Uber...to achieve radio bookings and a bigger personal slice of the customer pie?)....The current "non-enforcement" of the law is encouraging taxi's to "scab" on their mates as well!

PREPARE TO TAKE EFFECTIVE DIRECT ACTION NOW!

There is no time to waste debating the madcap scheme of a cabbies' strike and Airport Boycott proposed by the TODA exec. With the favourable period associated with the traffic chaos/congestion associated with the tramway extensions construction coming in up in early October fast approaching, planning must start right now regarding organising blockades of the city and the airport, to put the pressure on the major support base of the Baird Gov-

ernment, Big Business. One day's action may be that all is required to send the message to halt Uber-X. Overseas experience, in the case of France has proven the effectiveness of this type of action by cabbies in forcing the government to halt Uber.

BLACK PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN BY UBER-X AGAINST CABBY

ANTI-UBER RALLY THURS.10TH SEPT. 2015

Information has come to hand, that UBER-X launched a campaign against the Cabby Rally outside the NSW Parliament, misrepresenting it as organised by the NSW Taxi Council and large taxi plate owners, to undermine taxi solidarity. Uber-X sent an email along these lines to all Uber drivers and riders with a simple "press button" reply on mobile phones. They did the rest. They breached customer privacy by using personal data base emails to bombard all state politicians through an electronic electoral roll search. Even The Greens MP's received hundreds of Uber initiated emails from their constituents even though these voters may have used Uber once and were unaware of a single button hit meaning they were giving Uber carte blanche to spread any lies and filth they liked in their propaganda campaign -hiding behind confidential Uber user email addresses. An important lesson to be drawn from this campaign by Uber-X, is not to rely on lame duck, media stunts, and take the hard hitting direct action approach involving all rank-and-file cabbies.

INSIGHTS ON THE IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES OF UBER-X

One prong of the Uber-X immediate strategy is about shopping around in regard to various State Governments and to strike a deal for Uber-X with the State Government, which best advantages them. Then using it as a template for deals with all the other State Governments. According to the Canberra Times 18/9/15, Uber-X has demanded from WA Govt. to pay a single licence fee, for ALL its drivers. This will leave taxi drivers still paying individual licence fees. According to a submission to the WA Government, rather than paying a per-vehicle licence fee, Uber would pay a flat (minimal) "Platform" fee where Uber as the "Platform Operator" would set their own minimum service and safety standards (all the way from the USA). Implications of this strategy is that it would shift taxi regulation from the State Govt. to a private platform operator. This will devalue existing taxi licences who will have to pay much more when totalled up.

If this happens... A PRESS RELEASE NEEDS TO BE PRODUCED AND

SHOULD HIGHLIGHT THE COST OF A UBER ONLY FUTURE...WITH THE STATE GOVERNMENT WITHDRAWING ALL STATE REGULATION

If the NSW Transport Minister wants to back Uber,...e.g on safety.. compliance, etc...checks on driver's criminal records, updates on driving infringements records, then the State Govt has to come clean...

*ABOLITION....Cabbies should push for the immediate abolition of uniforms (replacement cost is \$500 plus a year, extra for dry cleaning, etc)...

*ABOLITION of quality controls and safety regulations imposed by Roads & Maritime Services (RMS)...ABOLITION of driver ID cards for public vehicles...\$120 a year processing fee plus cost of passport photos \$30 a year...ID Cards...ABOLITION of displaying ID cards in taxis for passenger verification of driver qualifications....

*ABOLITION....of network insignia's on vehicles,,,cost \$1000s of dollars a YEAR...



*ABOLITION of POLICING of taxi drivers by govt. (RMS) inspectors at airports railways and on road...which cost taxis millions of dollars in fines each year....e.g. "out of uniform" at airport rank in over \$150 per infringement...many drivers are booked...we should demand a moratorium on inspectors issuing infringement notices until the UBER issue is resolved.

*ABOLITION of compulsory radio fees for cabbies...over \$1200 a month...nearly \$20,000 a year for some owners...and COMPENSATE OWNERS FOR INSTALLATION COSTS of emergency videos and satellite tracking?

*ABOLITION...of taxi insurance...beyond existing normal third party person fee for a normal driving licence?

*ABOLITION of taxi plate system...State Govt must refund the \$60+ million to owners for the annual cost of their plate renewals? THESE DEMANDS may just force our "tech savey" Liberal Transport Minister to realise that taxi drivers will no longer subsidize state coffers if he wants to play the "throw the baby out with the bathwater"....or "Uber versus Taxi Industry Sanity and Safety" game. Submitted as a personal view...from a cabbie with 44 years as a bailee driver and not one cent super....since 1971! These demands may wake up the NSW Transport Minister...to the cost of his future budget revenue coming in from cab drivers but not Uber drivers.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT UBER-X

See Book," Raw Deal: How the 'Uber Economy' and Runaway Capitalism Are Screwing American Workers", by Steven Hill, St. Martins Press. It provides a very good history of the Uber phenomena. Check: Australia-Asia Worker Links Web Site aawl.org.au or Sparks Web Site for NSW Cabbies on latest news regarding actions against Uber. Remember Uber is a global problem in 100 + countries.

STOP PRESS

Latest News regarding Uber is that the NRMA also wants to get into the act. Whilst Ticktoc is another contender. Its major difference from Uber-X is that drivers for it must be registered as commercial drivers with appropriate insurance and licences.

Letter

Dear RW

The TODA is not as culpable in thwarting meaningful action as RW paints. However they are very naive.

That Macquarie St action was not an initiative of TODA- many TODA execs were behind it though.

Rather it was the instigation of some very disillusioned identities from the Bailor/Base cab fraternity- one in particular. These folk are scathing of the Taxi Council- the TC Ltd have taken much of their money on the promise to fight Uber with the the funds raised and their consensus is that the TC have squandered much of it. And so one particular identity among this group put up the lion's share of the funding for Mac St. and simultaneous rallies in QLD & Vic.

The lack of action at the present time stems from I feel a great sense of confusion at the direction that is needed.

Ex English bobby the famous Russell Howarth- the guy who has been until several months ago was dishing out citizens - arrests to Uber drivers. Uber injuncted Howarth to stop his activities. He and Michael Jools (ATDA) counted this with counter court action seeking to prevent

Uber from carrying on their Uber X Y by way of Ct ruling , that was heard last week (2 days - I counted 7 silks) It has been adjourned until Friday.

The Howarth/ Jools legal team want \$50K to go on. TODA and ATDA normally hate each other however they have come together over this.

And so there is a climate of directing it all at the Ct action and I suspect not upsetting the barristers with civil disobedience.

Concerned Cabbie

SOME ALARMING FACTS ABOUT THE OPAL CARD

Are you aware that the supplier of the Opal Card Technology, Cubic is also a contractor for the US NSA (National Security Agency)? See abraxascorp.com/leadership.html on the internet. There has been a conspiracy of silence by the mainstream media, the Government and political parties about it. If you register for the card, then all your details and movement information are trawled up by the NSA. Under the Five Eyes Agreement, exposed by Edward Snowden, this information is supplied to ASIO, and other security/police/government organisations. According to an article in the Sydney Morning Herald 22/5/15 "Opal Card



data surrendered to Police and Immigration authorities". This information has been supplied on request to NSW police

and Immigration on various occasions.

According to an article in the Sydney Morning Herald 1-2/8/15 "Tap and gone? More change is on the cards", it's likely in 2 years time, that registration for the Opal will be compulsory for all commuters. It even considers that the card will be dispensed with, and such a process as "iris recognition" may be used for Opal opera-

tion at Barriers and on buses, trams, etc at some stage in the future. Would you like ASIO, the police, Immigration and the NSA to have such intimate information about you?

As important steps toward imposing compulsory Opal registration for all commuters, registration for university students has already been imposed. Whilst from 1/1/16, the Government wants to impose compulsory registration on seniors and pensioners. See Sydney Morning Herald article 4/8/15, "Opal takeover: Pensioner Excursion and Travel Ten Tickets cut from next year."

The Opal Card gives authorities a statement which is basically a list of everywhere you've been in the month. Effectively it could be used to track you on public transport in real time.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

Over the last few issues of RW, we have spoken about V/Line employees and their continuing battles with Human Resources. In this issue, various employees will discuss these issues. Once again names have been changed.

Rastus and Roscoe: We have some good and bad news.

RW: What is it?

Rastus: One of the females from Human Resources has resigned and the drivers are elated that she has gone.

RW: Was this female, the idiot who walked around the pass yard wearing a vest and high heel shoes?

Roscoe and: Yes. it was and this person was also the slug, who grabbed a Booking Clerk's Christmas Tie, saying he was not in uniform. She got into trouble over this incident. A previous edition has a description of this incident.

Clarence: Good riddance, but there is a rumour she resigned, before she was shoved.

Rastus and Roscoe: Now we have the bad news.

RW: What's that?

Roscoe: Our training classes have been moved from the main office in Southern Cross to another location, so we cannot listen to Conductors lagging in Conductors to management.

Clarence: The drivers may have departed, but we still have our moles in the office.

Roscoe: Unfortunately, there are still stand downs occurring in the industry.

Clarence: Regarding stand downs, may we introduce you to Penelope and Penrod, who will talk about the issue.

Penelope and Penrod: We work as conductors somewhere in the state for V-Line and we have approached your magazine to discuss these stand downs.

Clarence: These stand downs are unjust.

Penrod: You are correct. They stood people down with pay, while they investigate the matter. The person stood down is not allowed to talk to their workmates. The only way, the conductors and station staff hear of a stand down is through a rumour around the workplace.

Rastus: They can stand you down for up to four months, while they investigate the matter.

Roscoe: Think of the shifts they have to cover for a person stood down. Think of the overtime.

Clarence: V/Line knows how to waste money, which could be spent on overhauling carriages and locomotives.

Penelope: The latest stand down is over a conductor leaving the van door open, whilst departing a train at a Country location.

Penrod: This rule about the Guard's van door of a N and H set is unjust and it is used as an excuse to give conductors a final warning.

Penelope: In one case, a conductor shut the van door and was departing the train and as the train was slowly moving down the platform, a passenger opened the door and jumped on the train. The conductor was reported by a manager and had to front a CSM. The union demanded to look at the station camera. The move was opposed, but commonsense prevailed and the matter was resolved in favour of the conductor.

RW: Who introduced this rule?

Penrod: The rule was suggested by a couple of WH122 KIOS who had no knowl-

edge of Railway Operations, who convinced the gullible conductor manager to introduce this rule, because N sets and H sets are equipped with power doors.

Rastus and Roscoe: Well, that conductor manager is no longer with us, as his contract was not renewed.

Penelope: The conductor, who was stood down was doxed in by a station employee to a regional manager.

Roscoe: You have those types who are hoping to be in the good books.

Penrod: This rule about the Van Door was introduced without any consultation with the union.

Rastus and Roscoe: The XPT has power doors and the CountryLink guard observes the train from the rear of the XPT, until it clears the platform at Southern Cross. In Sydney, suburban trains have power doors and the guard also, when the train departs, observes the train until it clears the platform.

RW: NSW still has guards on suburban and interurban trains.

RW: Who introduced the rule that a person, who is stood down cannot discuss the matter with other employees?

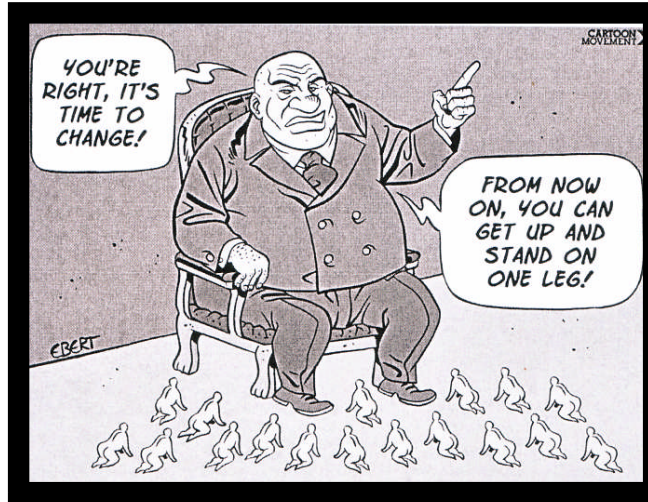
Rastus and Roscoe: There is "no" rule. It was just added by some jerk in Human Resources.

Penelope: Some employees have checked through V/Line's Code of Conduct and there is no rule stating that a person in trouble with management cannot discuss the matter with fellow employees.

Penrod: Human Resources say this is, because if people discuss the matter, it would lead to industrial unrest.

Rastus and Roscoe: As we have said, in previous issues of Sparks, if a person is stood down, call a meeting of your fellow employees and issue an ultimatum to Human Resources. Reinstate the employee by a certain time or else.

Penelope: When the long serving conduc-



tor mentioned in issue 150 was stood down, an employee discussed the stand down and was threatened with fronting Human Resources. He told the CSM to mind his own business.

Penrod: I think of the stress a stand down causes to the person's family. It can lead to tension in the family and to marriage breakdowns.

Rastus and Roscoe: Human Resources would not care what happens to the person's family, as long as they nail a scalp.

Roscoe: We, drivers say the law of the Van Door should be revoked. We would prefer the Driver to observe the train along the platform until it clears the platform. This rule has been in use, since the railways were invented.

Penelope and Penrod: The conductor who is stood down has been victimised ever since they joined the job by various CSM's and managers. We think they are out to hang this person.

Rastus and Roscoe: What makes us sick is the double standards of V/Line over this Van Door. At a Country Location a train arrived with the van door open and the conductor was looking out. A driver saw this. Was this conductor put in? No, because he is a well known crawler on the job.

RW: Let us hope they do not succeed in terminating this person. What about CSM's?

Penrod: They are now under their respective Regional Managers. In fact, at one depot, a CSM is being bullied by a Regional Manager, because he goes out and helps the conductors he supervises.

Penelope: You see this manager, thinks employees are to be in their place and does not like supervisors sticking up for the troops.

Rastus: We will see how long the manager lasts.

RW: Once again we have run out of space. In regards to the rule of the Van Door, it should be revoked and conductors should observe the train until it clears the platform. I thank you, Penelope and Penrod for coming forward. Management will try to find who you are, but they will not succeed.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say, if you are stood down, tell your workmates. As for the CSM, who is being victimised by a Regional Manager, you have support of the Drivers. Finally, we will conclude this article, with the following message. You TOUCH one, you TOUCH ALL.

BRITAIN TODAY

NEW LABOUR PARTY LEADER

After a campaign that seemed to drag on endlessly in the wake of the general election, Jeremy Corbyn has won the Labour Party leadership by a landslide. The most immediate consequence of this has been a surge in membership. Here are some reasons not to get caught up in the tide.

In writing this, I'm going to try not to re-tread old ground. So, for as incisive a summary of why anarchists aren't celebrating Corbyn's win as you're likely to get, have a read of this piece by Red and

Black Leeds. Scott Jay's piece here on Libcom (internet discussion board) is also worth looking at, a good send up of the ever decreasing circles the left leads itself in.

But rather than argue over whether you should hope for Corbyn to be different, I want to consider a different question. Even if you believe that his leadership will be a good thing, that he will stick to his word and deliver improvements, is that any reason to stick all your eggs in one basket and actually join the Labour Party?

Well, no. The most basic reason is that even if you're of a mind to vote for Labour in an election, you don't have to be a party

member to do that. But digging deeper, let's go through the main reasons certain elements of the left are urging everyone to get on board now and dismantle them.

1. The fight isn't just against The Tories

The most common trope now that Corbyn is Labour leader is that now 'the left' has to unite behind him in order to take on the Tories, who after all are 'the real enemy.'

Who knew the free market didn't exist beyond the Tory party?

The Tories are, of course, laying siege to the working class. They're desperate to push through reforms crippling the ability of workers to take collective action against the bosses, they're slashing jobs,

they're stripping away the support some of the most vulnerable people in society rely on, and they're selling off public services for private profit. Just as a start.

But what the Tories are doing is the culmination of over three decades of ruling class assault that begun halfway through the Labour government that preceded Thatcher. It is a counter attack by the forces of capital against the post-war social democratic settlement, and it has accelerated as the working class has gone into retreat.

The point is that the Tories are only one faction involved in this assault. The Liberal Democrats now insist that they were a moderating influence during the years of the coalition, pointing to the acceleration under the Tory majority government as proof, and Vince Cable has come out swinging against the Trade Union Bill. But, of course, they were the first party to support a public sector pay freeze and back in 2010 Cable was a leading proponent of restricting strikes in key public services.

Then of course there's Labour. Not only New Labour, though of course that's a convenient cut off point for party apologists, but 'old' Labour who just as keenly broke strikes, cut jobs, implemented austerity and attacked the unemployed. And, under Harold Wilson, who made the first attempt to bring in what became Thatcher's anti-strike laws.

All politicians are chameleons in opposition. In power, they're the managers of the state and servants of capital. That's a core function and doesn't change depending on the colour of their rosette.

2. We can't just wait five years

The most common strawman thrown at anybody critical of electoralism in general but of Corbyn in particular is that all we want to do is sit at home and wait for the revolution.

It hardly needs saying that this is a woeful misrepresentation of anarchist and revolutionary thought. Do you really believe we think a revolution will pop up spontaneously like a surprise fart? But it ignores the fact that many people can't afford to wait for a general election either.

Now, the left in Labour won't simply be waiting for the election – they'll be building for it by knocking doors, persuading more people to vote, turning up to constituency meetings, perhaps trying to de-select right-wing candidates, and so on. But none of this has a concrete effect until

a vote comes and maybe Labour win, and maybe they're not as bad as the Tories, but they still run the state and keep capitalism healthy.

On the other hand, the work that anarchists advocate can have concrete effects now. Whether it's on as small a scale as winning one worker back stolen wages, or as significant as a whole workforce winning the living wage, it's a concrete gain in the present. That's where improvements in people's lives come from: forcing businesses to stop using workfare, taking on unscrupulous landlords, helping claimants fight benefit sanctions.

Nor are these victories limited to those directly involved. They give workers confi-



dence to take on new battles, they put the bosses on the back foot, and they create the upward pressure that can force social change.

That's the campaigning and organising we need to do. Not to get one faction of the state in power at the expense of another, but to force concessions from the state and capital no matter who's in charge.

3. The Labour-trade union link is a millstone around our necks

One of the supposedly strongest reasons for having faith in the Labour Party is the trade union link. Not only the fact that the party was founded by the unions, but that it maintains a connection to a majority of organised workers through the affiliation of major modern trade unions.

However, Labour wasn't founded by organised workers but specifically by the union bureaucracy. That is, by that layer of the trade union movement which acts as a buffer between the workers and the bosses, and whose role is to moderate class anger in favour of compromise and accommodation. From the very start, its relation to militant rank-and-file workers was spelled out by Liberal Prime Minister David Lloyd George's observation that "the [parliamentary] Socialist is the best policeman for the syndicalist."

His job is to sell Labour's interests to you, not yours to Labour

In practice, we can see this in the collaboration of the Trades Union Congress with the public sector wage freeze imposed by the 1945 Labour government. In that period, when Labour was waging war on the dockers, 90% of strikes were unofficial because the TUC was actively suppressing official action to the benefit of the Attlee regime.

The TUC also tried to suppress strike action during World War Two, committed as it was to help the national unity government maintain productivity for the war effort.

More recently, we can see the role the Labour link to the trade unions plays with opposition to strike action when it might embarrass Labour or, heaven forbid, when Labour are the bosses. When Labour are in opposition, the call is to just wait until Labour are in power because then it will all be better. When Labour are in power, then of course resistance is utterly beyond the pale.

Now that Corbyn is leader, Mark Serwotka has said that he won't rule out the PCS union affiliating in the future. Others in the union are more forward, calling for it to be debated at next year's Conference. They would do well to remember that the reason for all of the above is the same reason that PCS stood alone when Tony Blair implemented five years of job cuts that dwarfed those in the following five years of Tory-led coalition: the link between the unions and Labour is nothing less than a millstone around the neck of organised workers.

4. We need a movement independent of any party

Many of those socialists who supported Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign and who support involvement in the Labour Party argue that him winning the leadership, and even possibly winning the general election, would just be the start. To ensure that he was able to follow through on his promises, and to defend against attacks from both the Tories and the right wing of Labour, the party would need to become a movement. Corbyn himself endorses this approach.

#JezWe Can

Over in the US Bernie Sanders, the Democratic Party senator campaigning to be a presidential candidate, made a similar

point: “The biggest mistake that Barack Obama made was essentially to tell his supporters, ‘Thank you very much for electing me, I’ll take it from here.’ I will not make that mistake.”

The first problem with this analysis is that it doesn’t quite fit the facts. Organizing for America, the grassroots campaign that saw him elected on a ticket of ‘hope’ and ‘change’, evolved into Organizing for Action. It wasn’t abandoned after the election victories and it didn’t evaporate – rather it was heavily stage managed to set the agenda for the president in local communities across the country. But therein lies the problem; far from the (massively naïve, it must be said) social democratic ideal of a politician who serves the people with a grassroots movement at his back, that movement was harnessed to serve the politician on issues of his choosing. And sure, they promoted relatively progressive issues, but they were a safe distance from any risk of criticising Obama when he needed criticising.

Even if not as tightly controlled as OFA, any grassroots movement built around getting a specific person or party into power is always at risk of simply being harnessed by them in order to serve their own ends. This is doubly the case when said person or party faces attacks and character assassination from the other side.

So grassroots Corbynism will almost inevitably get bogged down in an almost knee-jerk defence of Corbyn’s person and policies based not on their merit but on the simple fact that the right wing hates them.

Much as Obama’s grassroots expended their energies arguing with birthers and tea partiers while the President oversaw the murder of thousands of people via drone strikes, record numbers of deportations, attacks on civil liberties and more besides. Is it such a stretch to see the left in the UK performing such ideological acrobatics? It already happens to a great degree. The same people who in an effort to get Corbyn elected leader were highly critical of the Labour establishment up to and including Ed Miliband were only a few months earlier denouncing the very same criticisms as unhelpful ultra-leftism when the Labour Party’s shot at state power was at stake.

To formalise this tendency into a movement to defend and apologise for Labour no matter what, using the spectre of Toryism as its excuse, can only harm any potential to build the real movement we need. You can hardly put pressure on somebody to act in your interests if you’re sheltering them and justifying their actions at every turn.

5. There are no short cuts

The strawman anarchist, sitting waiting for the revolution in the minds of social democrats, is a lazy beast. Clearly, doing nothing and expecting that someday everything will come up good requires no effort whatsoever.

But what we really advocate, on the other hand, requires a lot of effort. Organising

even on a small scale requires a lot of slow, patient effort, difficult conversations, carefully thought out planning, and ultimately confrontation when you present your demands to the other side. If you lose, it’s more difficult next time because people are more reluctant to get involved. If you win, it’s more difficult as things escalate to include more people and bigger actions.

Yet this is the bread and butter of revolutionary change: not waving a flag about and shouting slogans, but putting your ideas into practice to show that they work, winning concrete gains and increasing working class confidence in our own collective strength.

How much easier, then, to simply vote for someone else to do it for you? To put no effort into analysing the forces weighed against this actually working? To organise with a recruitment quota and a script rather than under the steam of your own initiative? To when it all fails give it no thought whatsoever except that next time, despite the long dead trail of next times at your back, it will all be different for no reason other than blind, desperate hope?

But there are no short cuts. The liberation of the working class is the task of the working class ourselves, and that means it’s a task outside the boundaries of the Labour Party.

Thanks to Phil’s Blog

SPAIN TODAY

MARIEL BAKERY STRIKE

The Inter-Professional (cross-trade) Union of the CNT (Spanish section of the International Workers’ Association IWA-AIT) in the city of Alcoy (pop. 60,000) has been engaged in an indefinite general strike of workers of the Mariel Bakery and its retail outlets since August 10 2015.

The workers went on strike demanding the four months’ back pay owed to them and did not intend to return to work until their demands were met. The owners had repeatedly promised to pay, but their promises were not fulfilled. [The Mariel enterprise was purchased in 2013 by the investment company Gutsen & Vergelsa.] Thirteen fellow workers were fired recently, in some cases without due notice.

Now 22 workers have resolved not to return to work until they receive their back pay (up to 3,800 euros each). The workers halted work at the main bakery and three shops in the area which sell bread and pastries.

Employees work for the company under contracts. Now they are trying to get the contracts officially cancelled so they can begin to receive unemployment benefits.

According to spokespersons for the workers, since the purchase of the company by Gutsen & Vergelsa the work situation has become “intolerable” because of ongoing “workplace stress and the constant delay in paying wages”. This outfit is already well known for its questionable practices and speculative operations (taking over companies in financial trouble and liquidating their assets without honouring their debts).

On August 31 the strikers began picketing the main bakery, demanding back pay now for five months. They intend to picket daily from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m. until the matter is resolved. Production in the bakery is completely halted, and 13 of the company’s outlets (in Iba, Alcoy, Onil, Cocentaina and Muro) have been closed.

The CNT of the Marina Alta region has posted the following appeal for support for the strikers: <http://blogscat.com/cntmarinaalta/2015/08/29/resistencia-en-la-vaga-indefinita-contrapanaderias-mariel-s-l/>

Greetings comrades!

The workers of the Mariel company, both the bakery and the various distribution outlets, have been in an indefinite strike situation since August 10 [2015]. As a result, and especially since they were not paid for June and July, there are comrades who need help to feed their children and families. That is why we are asking for

your solidarity to help financially these comrades affected by the struggle. Solidarity contributions on their behalf may be remitted to the following account:

Entitat: Deutsche Bank.

Titular: SOV de CNT-AIT Alcoi

No. de compte IBAN: ES51 0019 4700 7240 1000 0133

“Solidarity is not a promise, it is a necessity.”

[Thanks to www.aitrus.org for collating this information.]

[Http://aitrus.info/sites/default/files/MARIEL_20150929022140.jpg](http://aitrus.info/sites/default/files/MARIEL_20150929022140.jpg)

STOP PRESS

The strike at the Mariel bakery continues: it has now been five months since the workers received any wages. The situation of the workers is in some sort of bureaucratic limbo, as the firm filed the wrong document for bankruptcy and now the legal process for the workers to get access to their wages is paralysed. Of the 50 workers originally involved, about 30 were fired, while the remaining 20 are technically still employed but are unable to receive the documents they need to collect unemployment benefits.



http://www.radioibi.com/eniusimg/enius143/2015/09/adjuntos_fichero_c621a17504fcff76g.jpg

http://www.radioibi.com/eniusimg/enius143/2015/09/adjuntos_fichero_fa9f5239035a7d4bg.jpg

POLISH LABOUR NEWS

AMAZON WORKERS' STRUGGLE

Oct 28 at 2:01 AM

Even in the cutthroat world of the ever expanding e-commerce industry, Amazon is fast garnering itself a reputation for exploitative practices and total disregard for the dignity and well-being of its workers.

In recent months, exposés from mainstream media have helped to bring to the attention of the wider public a series of seemingly never-ending instances of serious malpractice and oppressive working conditions, characterised by managerial indifference and capitalistic callousness. Perhaps most famously was the case of Breinigsville, Pennsylvania, USA, where it was reported in 2011 that Amazon shop floor workers were required to work in summer conditions that at times exceeded 40°C, with management refusing to open loading bay doors so as to discourage theft. When workers literally began to drop from heat exhaustion, Amazon's response was to pay medical staff to wait, on call, around the corner in ambulances, ready to cart away to hospital those work-

ers who were unable to continue. Amazon management seems to pride itself on their high rate of employee turnover. The median employee tenure is around a year, with less than fifteen percent of staff at Amazon having been employed for more than five years. Those that leave often cite their working conditions as the principle reason.

Employees' every move is tracked by sophisticated electronic systems, and they are required to explain any discrepancy in their movements over the course of a day.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST IP CAMPAIGNS FOR IMPROVED CONDITIONS

Amazon's utter contempt for its workers is typified In the Polish city of Poznan, where the worker's struggle against oppressive shop floor working conditions is ongoing.

Many workers have organised themselves within the anarcho-syndicalist union Inicjatywa Pracownicza (Workers' Initiative), and hundreds have protested against rising norms, mandatory working on holidays, low pay and the alteration of

pre-existing shift patterns by management. The struggle of these workers in Poland is intrinsically linked to the struggle of their German colleagues, organised in the mainstream union ver.di, across the border, where workers have been locked in a struggle with management for improved conditions since early 2013. Strikes in Germany have had a knock-on effect in Poland, with Amazon management looking to offset the disruption caused by German workers by increasing the number of hours worked by their Polish counterparts.

Workers in Germany have been at odds with Amazon management for some time. Shop floor workers have pushed for a collective bargaining agreement that would see them regarded as mail order and retail sector employees, rather than logistics workers, who are paid less.

Amazon workers are paid significantly below the average wage for a worker in the mail order and retail sector. A delegation of Polish workers joined their German colleagues in occupations and information picket lines in Germany, while German workers expressed solidarity with their Polish counterparts, joining them for meetings in Poznan and at

the anti-precarity demonstration in Warsaw on the 25th of May. Strengthened by each other's resolve and solidarity, the militant mood in both countries grew. Workers in Poznan, angry at the increase in hours that was a result of industrial action across the border in Germany, approached

Inicjatywa Pracownicza in an effort to improve their working conditions. When shifts were increased from ten to eleven hours to accommodate the German strike on June 24th and 25th (though Amazon denied that was the reason), Polish workers expressed discontent by purposefully slowing down during the extra hours (something not explicitly organised by IP), as well as wearing t-shirts expressing solidarity with efforts in Germany. Amazon

responded by suspending five workers and firing a further two. After the slowdown, IP (whose members number have swelled to over 200 in a workplace of 2000 permanent workers) began the process of collective negotiation, demanding an increase in wages to 16 zloty per hour (from 13 zloty), employee share options, wage supple-

ments for experienced workers, the introduction of shift plans for a whole year and a work break regulation that was based on real break times. Leafleting actions and petitions have also taken place.



THE INGLORIOUS ROLE OF THE "SOLIDARNOSC"

It is worth noting the reaction of one of Poland's more mainstream unions, Solidarnosc, who are themselves attempting to organise Amazon workers in Wroclaw and who criticised the actions of IP as confrontational, preferring to con-

tinue a dialogue with Amazon 'in the spirit of mutual respect'. The results of IP's efforts, however, speak for themselves.

Amazon, rocked by the negative media publicity generated from these actions, raised wages on the shop floor to 14 zloty, but denied that it was a reaction to the actions of the shop floor workers, and continues to oppose the remaining IP demands. Legal proceedings regarding the two fired workers have begun, with assistance from IP.

Several negotiation sessions have taken place between Amazon management and the union, so far yielding no results. The last session of collective negotiations is due to take place on the 7th of September (four days before the International Amazon Workers meeting in the city), after which it will go into mediation. IP is preparing for potential strike action in the event of no discernable progress being made.

James Lavery

<https://www.direkteaktion.org/231/the-fight-against-amazon>

GERMANY

BERLIN: MALL WORKERS' STRUGGLE

Oct 22 at 5:25 PM The long-running struggle against exploitation in the Mall of Berlin has now reached a critical stage, with court cases beginning against the bosses of the construction companies that refused to pay migrant workers. Our members, who were employed in the construction of the mall and have still not received a penny for their labour, have begun to exert legal force against their bosses, and have received some validation from the courts. The first lawsuits were filed at the beginning of the year.

On August 5th, a decisive victory was won in the Magdeburger Platz court, as a judge ruled against the contractor openmallmaster GmbH, and in favour of two of our members, who are now officially owed their wages by their bosses. This amended a sentence from April 2015, to which openmallmaster GmbH had objected. They are now legally compelled to pay our members. The workers are now

due to receive 1226 euros and 4411 euros respectively, a sum calculated to their declared earnings of the time, which were between 5 and 6 euros per hour. In response to the award of a value equivalent to poverty wages, the FAU has now further demanded that the court should award an equivalent to the standardised and agreed minimum wage in the construction sector at the time during which our members were employed. Markus, the secretary of the FAU in Berlin, was upbeat about the decision, and took it as a vindication of the militant tactics used in fighting for the rights of migrant workers.

"This success shows that where a militant perspective exists, an alternative to shameless exploitation can be found in a fighting union". He added: "This is an important victory, particularly because it shows that impoverished migrant workers are not as easy targets as bosses think they are, and are also capable of fighting legally for their rights". The trial itself was a humiliation for openmallmaster GmbH. They had previously insisted that none of the migrant workers had ever worked for them, a claim made dubious by the ability of the

workers themselves to describe working practices and procedures on the building site. The openmallmaster lawyer sat in silence as our members proved him wrong. He then set out to claim that a worker without a permanent residence was unable to enact court proceedings against his company, a claim which was denied by the court, who made it clear that, even if a plaintiff had no permanent residence, that did not impinge on their ability to mount legal proceedings.

Demonstration of the FAU-Berlin in December 2014

The Mall of Berlin, which opened in late 2014, is a temple to shopping and consumerism, but a temple built on exploitation. Since the mall first began trading in Leipziger Platz, a group of migrant workers have been protesting against it, often in the freezing cold and snow. Their resolve and commitment to achieving justice has been inspiring. The workers came into contact with the FAU in Berlin, and began to build a wider campaign, resulting in large demonstrations in front of the 1 billion euros Mall of Berlin - now entitled the "Mall of Shame" - and extensive coverage

in the German and international press. The 30 workers, who are all Romanian, were recruited from building sites around Europe, and brought to Berlin with the promise of stable employment and secured housing. Instead they found themselves working illegally, without proper contracts or documentation, and sleeping rough in the streets. Workers were told that they were not allowed to register in Germany, a legal requirement to work or find an apartment. When they protested this, they were told that they could register, but that it would cost them 150 euros, a prohibitively large sum. The actual price for that is - nothing! The workers were also threatened by staff when they protested against their poverty conditions, and journalists who set out to cover the story were also intimidated.

The working conditions within the building site were similarly sub-standard, with poor sanitary conditions and little regard for safety procedures and fire protection. The fire protection issue was so great that, in the lead-up to the vital Christmas business period, the Mall came to the brink of closure, as studies revealed glaring lapses in fire safety standards, which were rectified at the last moments, allowing the shopping centre to remain open. Openmallmaster GmbH, the company against this most recent court victory was won, is just one of a patchwork of contractors, sub-contractors and dubious front companies involved with the construction of the Mall. Whilst Harald Huth, the major financier of the Mall of Berlin, can still call



himself “The King of Leipziger Platz”, some of the companies he delegated duties in building the shopping centre to, are not as successful. Some have declared bankruptcy rather than face the courts in regards to unpaid workers and safety deficiencies, whereas others flatly deny ever having employed our members. The FAU continues to fight on for the rights of our members from the Mall of Berlin, and for the rights of migrant workers everywhere. We call upon all interested parties to get involved in the campaign, either by

attending a working group meeting, by attending the court dates in person to show solidarity, or by publicising the cases of our members within your own circles. Updates on the case are published on the FAU Berlin website, alongside the dates of the upcoming court cases.

Foreigners' Section / FAU Berlin

<https://www.direkteaktion.org/231/important-victory-mall-of-berlin>

FINLAND: ANTI-AUSTERITY PROTEST

Finland: Rail Workers' Solidarity for Teachers' Strike

Finnish teachers are set to join the biggest labour movement demonstration in decades on Friday, shutting down schools and daycare centres across the country as they protest in Helsinki against government austerity measures.

The country's rail network will also stop for the demonstration, along with dozens of other industries.

Schools across the country will be closed on Friday as teachers demonstrate in protest of planned government cuts. The country's rail network will also shut down, after the Locomotive Drivers Union's board voted on Sunday to join a broad-based walkout against government austerity and pay cuts.

Finland's labour movement has been up in arms about plans to cut Sunday bonuses, overtime pay, sick pay, public sector workers' holidays and to move two bank holidays to the weekend. Now the train drivers' union has announced plans to join a protest planned for next Friday, shutting down rail transport for the day so members can attend the Helsinki demonstration.

Meanwhile teachers in schools and daycare centres will also head to Helsinki for the protest, after the teachers' union the OAJ announced it would join in. In practice this will mean that many of the country's educational establishments will be shut down for the day. Matriculation exams, however, will continue as normal, despite the disruption.

Luukkainen expects all of Finland's teachers with permanent posts to take part in the demonstration, even though the law for-

bids them from participating in political labour strikes. He says OAJ union is prepared to pay the fines participation might incur.

“The plan is to get the whole OAJ membership on board,” union chair Olli Luukkainen said.

More information tomorrow

The demonstration in Helsinki is only expected to take two hours and will begin at 11 am. Due to travel distances however, many teachers may be away from the classroom for the entire day. The union says it aims to provide further information for parents as soon as possible.

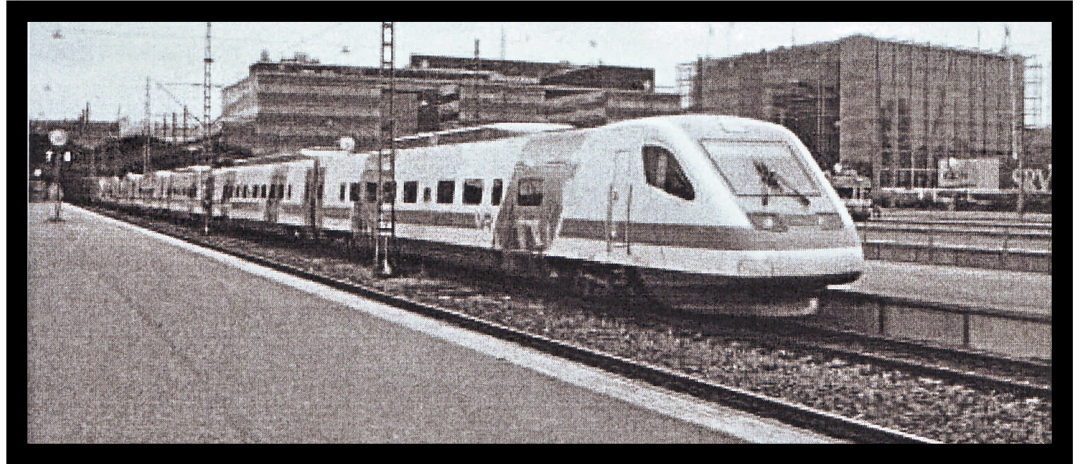
Luukkainen says teachers in Finland last participated in a large-scale demonstration like this in 1984.

“A great deal of time has passed, which also indicates how seriously the teachers are taking this matter to heart,” he said.

Representatives of Talentia, a social service employee union, say the day care workers in their organisation will likely participate in the demonstration, but will confirm the scale of their participation on Monday.

More details on the rail shutdown will also be available on Monday, according to the transport union AKT.

STOP PRESS: *An estimated 33,000 workers attended the rally from education, but also other industries, with public transport closed down in Helsinki and Turku.*



Turkey: Death of Ali Kitapci

The Peace Meeting, organised by nationwide unions (DISK, KESK, TMMOB and TTB) [Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey, Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions, Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects and Turkish Doctor's Union] was cancelled due to a bomb attack. The meeting was planned to take place in Ankara on 10 October 2015 with nationwide attendance.

The two successive blasts killed 128 people and injured more than 500 people. This horrific event, which resulted as the greatest number of human losses in a sin-

gle incident in the history of Turkey, occurred just one day before the expected date of declaration of ceasefire by the PKK/KCK.

Ali Kitapci (1958-2015) was one of the 14 members of BTS-KESK [Independent Transportation Union] who were killed in the blast.

He first got involved with the anarchist movement in England and continued to be active for the last 30 years. Apart from his fight for syndicalism, he was an active member of many anarchist organisations in Ankara since the second half of 1980s, and urged to unite anarchists for a common fight. He was the first person to or-

ganise for the anarcho-syndicalist cause in modern Turkey. He was an inspiration for many of his comrades from different ideas and generations.

In the memorial meeting held on 12 October by his union in the Ankara Train Station for the all union members who lost their lives, thousands gathered. Following this meeting, his body was buried in

Karsiyaka Cemetery with the participation of his companion and comrade Emel, his son Artun Siyah and his anarchist comrades coming from different places of Turkey. Hundreds of anarchists who attended his funeral promised to continue his fight.

LOST FOR WORDS

When did civilian deaths become collateral damage? When did bullets and bombs become ordinance? When did global warming turn into climate change? And when did terrorising and killing women become "domestic" violence? Soon even the term weekend will become redundant. Capital will make each day exactly alike. Who is kidding who? What kind of sanitising bullshit is this?

And when it comes to war, there have been so many in the last thirty years, that war itself is becoming commonplace, part of the everyday life of capitalism, which in itself is a perpetual economic war. How did this happen? How do we still live with such alienation? Why do we still not walk on the grass?

When did arguing become having a conversation? So many conversations going on. Conversations that are isolated from

one another, so as not to give even a glimpse of the overall bigger picture. Discuss this country's reshaping and murderous treatment of refugees.

If these refugees were European, or white English speakers, would they be put into off shore gulags? And more tragically, it took a dead child washed up on a



foreign shore to tug at our politicians' hearts, or at least have them be seen to be doing the right thing, if nothing else. All

this of course depends on the vagaries of what our masters of war proscribe as national security, whatever hydra's head is now in charge.

Language itself has been colonised by hierarchical power and if we are language, then this colonization is nearly complete. We live within language as within polluted air where words work on behalf of the dominant organisation of life. Power presents only a falsified officially proscribe set sense of words; it forces them to carry an identification pass, determining their place in an alienated production process and then gives them a salary. Under the control orders of power, language always designates something other than authentic experience; data and information become the only possible communication, which is itself only an organisation of appearances. Real events come to us as one dimensional scripts from the organising filing cabinet of appearances itself, as all that there is, it's just really the appearance of organisation.

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Germany's Revolutionary Workers of 1918/19

Reviewed by Thomas Klikauer, *Wild Socialism - Workers Councils in Revolutionary Berlin, 1918-21*. By Martin Comack. 97 pages. Lanham: University Press of America, 2012.

In many ways, what we know as the “German revolution” was historically shaped by events prior to the end of World War One. A good deal of that can be extrapolated from Martin Comack’s rather short but exquisite historical study that starts with name dropping (I had the pleasure and privilege to host Augustin Souchy at my house). To many, Augustin Souchy is indeed a big name and this not only because of his most insightful description of Spain’s Revolution of 1936. But the book’s strength comes undoubtedly from the ability to compress a crucial moment in the history of Germany.

As such the infinite vitality of this most outstanding contribution rests in Comack’s ability to explain what happened before, during, and – most importantly – in the immediate aftermath of World War One. The focus of Comack’s book is on Germany’s capital Berlin, undoubtedly a key industrial centre. What happened in Berlin was mirrored throughout Germany during the revolutionary years of 1918/19. The years leading up to 1918/19 signified the history conjecture shaping Germany’s labour movement. These years largely determined what followed: the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), Nazi-Germany and today’s Germany. Many will be able to draw historical links between today and what is presented in Comack’s book. In historical terms and perhaps somewhat of early predecessors of 1918/19, at least two albeit failed revolutions might be named:

* firstly, the “Peasant Wars” of 1524/25 [Bauernkriege] were not so much linked to the religious-reformist Martin Luther but to his revolutionary companion Thomas Münzer;

* secondly, and three centuries later, the 1848 revolution failed but under quite different circumstances when compared to the 1918/19 revolution.

From the last revolution (1918/19), numerous conclusions can be drawn reaching deep into today. Today, Luther’s home

state of Thuringia is – in 2015 – run by a premier of a political party called “die Linke” that many see as a direct descendent of what is described in Comack’s book. In 2015, “The Left” [Die Linke] also held sixty-four seats at the federal level being the third strongest political party in the federal parliament. Die Linke’s roots are in the trade union movement with historical links to workers council movements. But Comack’s book also shows the origins of the mighty social-democratic party (SPD). During the revolution of 1918/19, this party shored up capitalism and the ruling elites rather than workers. Today, the centre-right SPD carries on with this tradition when once again it became the stepping stone for a conservative chancellor. By 2013, the SPD party still saw its role as holding up a conservative chancellor so



that Merkel could ride to power.

At the “union-vs.-capital” side, one will be able to understand the sad remnants of the once revolutionary Workers Councils [Arbeiterräte] found in today’s works councils [Betriebsräte] which – in many cases – have denigrated into corporate co-management. To understand works councils, perhaps a distinction between work-“ers” and work-“s” councils need to be made. The former were revolutionary organisations set up during 1918/19 designed to bring industrial democracy. From there Workers Councils were set to replace parliamentary democracy through workers based forms of direct council democracy [Räterepublik]. But workplace democracy challenged not only

capitalism and its adjacent ideologies of a managerial prerogative, macho-management and Managerialism as its worst excesses, it also challenged parliamentary democracy. In other words, it wasn’t just the labour movement that was shaped by the events of 1918/19 but also the political system and political parties (e.g. “Linke-vs.-SPD” and the SPD’s unflinching support for conservatism). In short, there are at least three historical links that are of great relevance:

* *party politics,*

* *labour movement, and*

* *industrial relations.*

As for industrial relations, the Workers Councils’ “Alle Macht den Räten” [all powers to councils] envisioned a grass root based council republic of deliberative democracy as an alternative to capitalism and authoritarian macho-management. But since the revolution was a failed revolution, the outcome was not Workers Councils as grass root democracy challenging capitalism and parliamentarianism. Instead, the SPD favoured works councils and what it called “industrial councils” so that ‘a national industrial council would be giving rights to propose legislation and to comment on draft legislation – they would not act to replace parliament’. In sharp contrast to that, the SPD downgraded its “industrial councils” to advisory committees carrying connotations to what the European Union knows as the “European Economic and Social Committee” (eesc.europa.eu). These early industrial councils just as the EESC today provide a support function to capitalism. At workplaces meanwhile, revolutionary workers councils were forced to become what today are called works councils with largely information and consultation rights. These have shaped even weaker European works councils (EWCs).

As a result, what has emerged are EWCs with powers further downgraded than German works councils rendering them into information receiving and crypto-supportive debating clubs in support of European corporations. While German style works councils have somewhat considerable powers over insignificant issues and virtually no powers on business decisions, European works councils do not even have that. Significantly, German works councils – like their European counterparts – are bared from politics, strictly functioning as corporate appendages. To explain these historical contingencies, the initial term of “Wild Socialism” takes on

significance. It was during 1918/19 when the term was used by the social-democrats (SPD). The majority SPD was ideologically set against the revolutionary Workers Councils largely for three reasons:

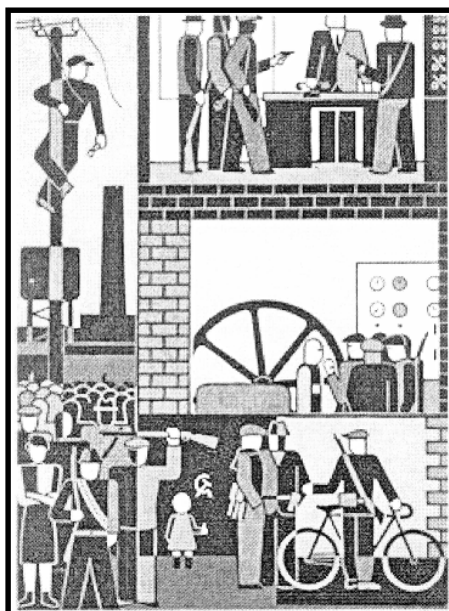
1. *Workers Councils did not represent the social-democratic accommodation of capitalism;*
2. *they did not accept the ruling elite's equating of democracy with parliamentarianism; and*
3. *they did not continue the SPD's decade long advocacy of parliamentarian democracy.*

Instead, the revolutionary Workers Councils developed council socialism from below. Such a grass root movement towards democracy challenged an SPD that had internalised its own ideology of parliamentarianism. As a consequence, the SPD sided with capitalism and the institutions of authoritarianism. In sharp contrast, Workers Councils did not side with capitalism and authoritarianism. And the Workers Council only ever partly sided with Bolshevism's 1917 Russian Revolution. Comack describes the Workers Council movement as 'an alternative to both Social Democracy and Bolshevism' (p.1). While Bolshevism and capitalism sought to control labour from above, Workers Councils sought to represent workers from below through direct democracy. In other words, revolutionary Workers Councils mirrored what today might be called a "grassroots movement".

Even though many of the revolutionary Workers Councils described by Comack appeared in Berlin, federalist Germany never had an economic-administrative centre comparable to, for example, London. Until today, Germany remains federalist in its administrative and business structure with important working class movements in the Ruhr-Cologne area, the Bremen-Hamburg region, Saxony-Thuringia and the Stuttgart-Frankfurt-Mannheim region. Nonetheless, by the turn towards the 20th century, Berlin had established itself as Germany's capital with rather sizable industries such as Siemens and AEG (electrics) and the German "Mittelstand" of small and medium sized industries. Like other regions, Berlin depicted Marx's dictum: where is industry, there is a proletariat and where is a proletariat, there is an organised proletariat.

Many of these proletarian organisations (trade unions, workers clubs, etc.) emerged in relatively large working class suburbs such as, for example, Berlin's Wedding where 'private lavatories were a rarity' (p.7; even my own Wedding flat (1980s) had no inside toilet). Perhaps what best describes a typical housing complex

of Berlin's working class are lines of several backyards. These complexes of rented flats quite often had up to three rows of housing blocks in which the working class was housed in miserable conditions. Perhaps then as today, class distinctions are expressed in housing arrangements as determined not by social need but by real estate greed. This meant, for example, that the middle class typically occupied the front house's first and second floor. For the working class things were different. From their backyard or basement flats, workers marched to local factories most vividly depicted in Fritz Lang's movie "Metropolis" (1927). Despite of their rather depressing character these living ar-



reas established a working class milieu most exquisitely portrayed in Berthold Brecht's movie "Kuhle Wampe" (1932). Such working class milieus were shaped by two elements that emerged during the early 20th century:

1. The first came with the introduction of universal education. In the wake of that, 'Berlin epitomised this education system in Imperial Germany' (Comack, p. 9). It was education "for" Imperial Germany representing Germanic order, hierarchy, nationalism, chauvinism, misogyny and authoritarianism as illuminated in Heinrich Mann's "Der Untertan" ('Man of Straw', Penguin Books) and Walter Benjamin's "Berlin Childhood" (Belknap Press).
2. The second element came with Bismarck using his Anti-Socialist Laws against workers. Bismarck combined the traditional German stick (police state) with more advanced carrot methods introducing highly limited welfare regimes 'to take the wind out of the sails of Social Democracy' (Comack, p. 10).

With that Prussia's authoritarian 'Army-Administration-Industry'

(Comack, p. 10) system was completed. Carl Zuckmayer's insightful movie "Captain von Köpenick" describes the suffocating and authoritarian-militaristic atmosphere of Berlin most exquisitely. The working class was against all this, a failed, senseless and useless war (1914-1918), an outdated Kaiser monarchy, oppressive factory regimes and political authoritarianism. But crucial for the eventual failure of revolution and the revolutionary Workers Councils was not only the strong stance of capital and management, the conservative-reactionary atmosphere and chauvinistic politics in general but also the internal fault-lines of the labour movement. Already before the war, the social-democratic party had mutated into a monstrous bureaucracy when 'the SPD employed 4,000 full-time officials, with 750 of these assigned to Berlin' (Comack, p. 14). The SPD perfectly signified the Michelsian dilemma of "bureaucracy-vs.-democracy" as well as Weber's "Iron Cage" of an all suffocating bureaucratic apparatus. Perhaps because of its overall size, the majority labour party was divided into no less than three factions:

1. *its traditional right wing,*
2. *the old guard of Marxists, and*
3. *The Young [Die Jungen] forming 'a union of independent socialists' (Comack p. 16) within the SPD. The latter group also supported 'councils of industrial workers as seen in the Russian Revolution of 1905' (Comack, p. 17).*

In any case, the high-days of the SPD's apparatus was also the time when Rosa Luxemburg's ideas on 'Mass Strike ignited a heated debate' (Comack p. 18) between the SPD's parliamentarianism and the revolutionary sections of the trade union movement. But even without mass strike Rosa Luxemburg's dictum "there is no socialism without democracy and no democracy without socialism" threatened not just the ruling elite and capitalism but sections of the social-democratic order as well as bureaucratic trade unions asphyxiated in the Michelsian dilemma, i.e. those unionists seeking to secure their apparatus position against grass root democracy.

Nonetheless, the trade union movement became increasingly important as the 'number of workers in industry doubled between 1887 and 1914' (Comack p. 21). Some trade unions and definitely 'the SPD organised itself according to the Imperial Prussian model' (Comack, p. 29). Set against the internalised authoritarianism of the SPD and some trade unions, there were also 'syndicalist tendencies in Red Berlin' (Comack, p. 28) even though Anarchism remained on the fringes of Germany's labour

movement. *To Be Continued*

Rivoluzio Gilioli 1903-37

A short biography of Italian anarchist Rivoluzio Gilioli who died in Spain.

Rivoluzio Gilioli was born in Rovereto sul Secchia in the Province of Modena on June 21, 1903. He was the son of the long-time anarchist and cobbler Onofrio Gilioli and Maria Pellicieri. This couple had 8 other children and they all had first names based on ideas of freedom and emancipation.

Thus Rivoluzio (Revolutionised) Siberia, Libero (Free), Equo (Equal), Protesta (Protest), Soverte (Subvert), Scintilla (Spark), Ribelle (Rebel) and Feconda Vendetta (Fertile Vendetta). As his daughter Siberia noted, Onofrio was "Dad was a man of exemplary life, very intelligent, an infinite goodness, always ready to raise and protect the defenceless weak, highly respected by all, even by his political opponents..."

In these years Rovereto and nearby Novi were strongholds of anarchism. The Modena region was in a revolutionary ferment with many protests and strikes. In March 1912 the peasants and sharecroppers of Rovereto went on strike leading to a harsh struggle with the local landowners. These hired scabs and put pressure on the police to arrest strikers. The movement ended in August in defeat. Onofrio participated in and supported the struggle which earned him trust and respect. He became a great influence on the radicalising youth of the town.

At school Rivoluzio showed a marked intelligence and desire to learn. Onofrio encouraged him to develop his studies. By the age of 13-14 Rivoluzio was already a declared anarchist and anti-clerical. He enrolled in the technical school of Carpi in 1914. After finishing there he continued his studies in Modena. There he became one of the most active members of the local anarchist group. In 1919 at the age of sixteen he became secretary of the local Anarchist Communist Youth group and was employed to do the accounts of the Chamber of Labour. On December 3rd of that year he witnessed the arrival in Modena of Errico Malatesta who was greeted by a huge and enthusiastic crowd in the main square.

He participated actively in the creation of workers' libraries and in the spread of anarchist newspapers of the time, like *Il Libertario* of La Spezia and *L'Avvenire Anarchico* (The Anarchist Future) of Pisa.

the Provincial Federation of Anarchist Communists (Federazione Provinciale Comunista Anarchica) and in Modena, in particular, anarchists controlled the local Camera Del Lavoro Sindicalista (Unionist Chamber of Labour) thanks to the work of militants like Vincenzo Chiossi, Carlo Nencini, and Zelindo Vincenzi.

Immediately after the war the Chamber grew rapidly organising 16,000 workers, especially among building workers.

The development of the anarchist movement in Modena corresponded to a general revival of the anarchist movement at the national level. In Florence in 1919 the Italian Anarchist Union (UAI), held its second congress which represented more than 40,000 activists. Even the regionally organised Anarchist Union of Emiliano-Romagna counted 124 groups.

Rivoluzio took part in many meetings and conferences to develop the youth groups and the Federazione Comunista Anarchico (FCA). This counted 23 groups and 600 members in February 1920 going up to 40 groups and 1200 members in Au-



gust. In addition there were a dozen groups outside of the Federation in the region.

The development of the anarchist movement in Italy has to be placed in the context of the Red Biennium of 1919-1920, two years of mass strikes and factory occupations. In Modena anarchists took a leading role in the factory occupations. Rivoluzio was deeply involved in the movement in Modena alongside other young people like his sister Siberia and brother Equo, and others like Renzo Cavani, Luigi Evangelisti and Filippo Lusvardi.

In December 1919 in Parma he participated in the founding congress of the Italian Revolutionary Youth (Unione Giovanile Rivoluzionaria Italiana).

In 1920, the police murdered eight workers in Modena province. During a protest rally in response in the main square of Modena on April 7th the police fired without warning on the crowd, killing five and

wounding twenty. In an atmosphere of continuing and repeated violence against the population by the police anarchists decided to take action and to arm themselves.

Rivoluzio was among the organisers of the theft of 6 machine guns and 12,000 rounds of ammunition from a police barracks. A wave of arrests followed but Rivoluzio managed to escape to Bologna, after 26 anarchists and 2 revolutionary socialists were denounced to the police and arrested. In May he decided to leave for France, going to Paris. There he worked as a dishwasher and then as a carrier of newspapers from printers to newsagents. He then moved to Lens in the north, where he worked on a building site. The following year he moved to Belgium with his partner Marie Lucie Lequet, then returning to Paris. In the meantime his family had been forced to quit Italy by the fascists and settled in Fontenay Sous Bois, where their home became a meeting place for Italian anarchists in exile, including Camillo Berneri, Luigi Fabbri, and Armando Borghi.

Onofrio got a job in construction and together with Rivoluzio negotiated with a construction company to provide work and passports for 80 Italian anarchists, enabling them to leave fascist Italy.

In the meantime Rivoluzio was becoming a leading light in the exile movement. In 1925 he was a member of the Defence Committee for the anarchists Mario Castagna and Ernesto Bonomini arrested after the killing of two Italian fascists in France as well as in the solidarity campaign for the Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti. In April 1927 his brother Libero, also an active anarchist, died as a result of complications from uraemia.

In 1928 he worked as a foreman for a construction company in the Eastern Pyrenees for a section of the railway from Paris to Toulouse to Barcelona. As a result he made contact with many Spanish anarchists in exile. He became interested in Spanish affairs and started writing about them for anarchist journals. He went to Barcelona with his sister Siberia and her partner the anarchist Renzo Cavani to seek a safer place of asylum for the latter, who was living underground in France. Returning to Paris he became involved in the activities of the USI (Unione Sindicalista Italiana-syndicalist union) and its paper *Guerra di Classe* (Class War). In 1932 together with Camillo Berneri and Antonio Cieri he set up the anarchist biweekly *Umanita Nova* published from October 1932 in Puteaux.

Umanita Nova was banned by the authorities in January 1933 and was then replaced

News & Notes

Some of the most important and nefarious developments in recent months, was the Hutchison Ports Holdings dispute and its disastrous outcome for its workforce. It will have flow on effects for workers in many other sectors. Typically, the union hierarchy were aided by the corporate media in the “smoke and mirrors” of this union boss orchestrated circus. Many leftist activists were also taken advantage in the scam. It particularly involved the officials initiating lame duck “community pickets”, subsequently brazenly claiming a “fake victory” and resorting to thuggery against critics of the sell out. In fact real savage attacks on workers were achieved by the bosses. Another key aspect of this “performance” was as an election stunt to assist ALP fortunes in upcoming federal elections. (See article page 2.)

In the NSW Railways, the Baird Government and management continues to go on the offensive, imposing ever more cruel conditions on station staff and ripping up the Newcastle rail line. (See article 3.)

As many are aware, George Street in Sydney has been closed to buses, and there is a phased closure to cars. The STA bosses are seizing on the development to launch new savage attacks on STA bus workers. (See article page 4.)

The role of Uber-X in the taxi industry has been highlighted in the mainstream media in recent months. In this edition, we throw new light on its tactics, short and long term strategies, and resistance by cabbies to it. (See article page 6.)

Coming up on Sat. 21/11/15 at 7.30pm is the Joe Hill Centennial Concert. Its being held at the Teachers Federation Auditorium, 37 Reservoir Street, Surry Hills. Admission \$20 and \$15 concession.

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

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WEB SITE:

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A.S.N. DIRECTORY

ASN Sydney Local

PO Box 92
Broadway 2007 NSW

ASN Melbourne:

J.Dixon
jeremytrewindixon@yahoo.com.au

ASN Newcastle

PO Box 106
Kotara 2289 NSW

Anarchist Media Institute

PO Box 20
Parkville Vic. 3052

SPARKS

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PO Box 92 Broadway
2007 NSW
Web site: <http://www.sparksworld.org>

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Grassland Infoshop

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Footscray
3011 Vic.

Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

Name

Address.....

General Secretary

PO Box 106 Kotara 2289 NSW.

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

Continued From Page 18 by La
Protesta.
Rivoluzio

was on its editorial board. It ran to 3 issues before it too was banned.

The Italian authorities had Rivoluzio in their sights, regarding him as a "dangerous anarchist" and putting pressure on the French authorities to have him expelled. He took part in the general strike in France on 12th February 1934 against the far-right street mobilisations.

An expulsion order was served on Rivoluzio on 2nd January 1935 but thanks to the support of French socialists this was suspended for three-monthly renewable periods. On the 1-2 November 1935 he took part in the Italian anarchist congress at Sartrouville where the *Comite Anarchico d'Azione Rivoluzionaria* was founded. He then took part in all the demonstrations for the right to asylum.

In June 1936 he wrote a manifesto against the war in Ethiopia with Virgilio Gozzoli and Ernesto Bonomini. This was amended by the French anarchist Sébastien Faure and published in many Italian and French anarchist papers. On the 20-21 of the same month, together with Berneri and Umberto Marzocchi and many others he took part in a conference for the right to asylum.

Continued From Page 15 The more
people view
the world
through the eyes of officialdom, the
greater the alienation. Science now provides a rationale for the military and police, and teaches how much people can be tortured without killing them outright.

Capitalism is becoming a clinically dead civilisation kept alive by all sorts of life-support machinery, that spreads a plague over the planet's surface. Thirty years or more of crisis, unemployment and a flagging economy and we are to believe in the economy. The economy is not in crisis, the economy is the crisis. No amount of international trade agreement tinkering will make any difference in the long term, except to subsidise the paranoid power of

At the beginning of 1936 he was commissioned to direct work in the port of Dunkirk. Together with Cieri he was involved in the sending of Italian volunteers to Spain. In June he went with Marzocchi to the Franco-Belgian border to facilitate the transporting of arms to Spain in coordination with Mario Mantovani in Brussels and Hoche Meurant in Wattrelos. These were passed on to Alphonse Tricheux in Toulouse and then on to Spain.

Rivoluzio also took part in the conference in Paris of all the Italian anti-fascists. Here the Communist Party unilaterally set up the Garibaldi Division of the International Brigade which was completely under their control to the indignation of the anarchists and of the socialists of *Giustizia e Libertà* of Rosselli.

On December 5th 1936 he went to Spain. His father was already there working on coastal defences, his sister Siberia was on border duties and his brother Equo in an anarchist column. He joined the Italian Column and fought on the Aragon front. Because of his technical ability he was transferred to the Company of Engineers of the Ascaso Division, and became its commander. He was assigned the work of fortifications and construction work among the collectives.

capitalist corporations and the spurious lives of the rich; with the world and most of its population and resources to be terminally plundered for profit, tax free, and with impunity.

It may not seem like it, but the sphere of political representations is coming to an end. From left to right, it's the same pose of empower or saviour, the same sales assistant adapting their discourse according to the findings of the latest polls, summits and focus groups. It's still business as usual. Consume, be silent, die. So when people directly resist and fight back against the managers of alienation, just see how the piggies squeal in protest and condemnation, because they can all clearly see themselves also having their expensive ex-

After the May Days of 1937 and the murder of Camillo Berneri he was appointed commander of the Company of Engineers of the 28th Division (ex- Durruti Column). On June 16th, 1937 while performing an inspection tour at Terraza Carrascal on the Huesca front he was hit by an enemy bullet. He died in a Barcelona hospital on June 21st, 1937. He was buried in the Montjuich cemetery.

Onofrio was arrested and sent for a short period to a French concentration camp but was fortunately not handed over to the Italian authorities. He died in Fontenay in 1968.

Equo also avoided being deported and continued to live in France and carry out political activities. He took part in the events of May-June 1968. Both Equo and Siberia have now died and the only survivor of the anarchist family is Ribelle Gilioli.

Nick Heath

Sources:

Much information in Italian on Rivoluzio and his family

<http://www.libera-unidea.org/primavera/mostra9.htm>

ecutive shirts torn off their backs, as a consequence of this exploitation. They know quite well why such violence is directed at them.

Any social contestation that refuses to see that we are facing the forced extinction of an already dead civilisation becomes an accomplice in its perpetuation. Everything must be made to disappear. There is no ideal form of insurrection. What's essential is that it gives rise to a form of action instead of having one imposed on it. The goal of any insurrection is to become irreversible; and that happens when you have defeated authority, and more precisely the very need for authority.

J.D.