

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

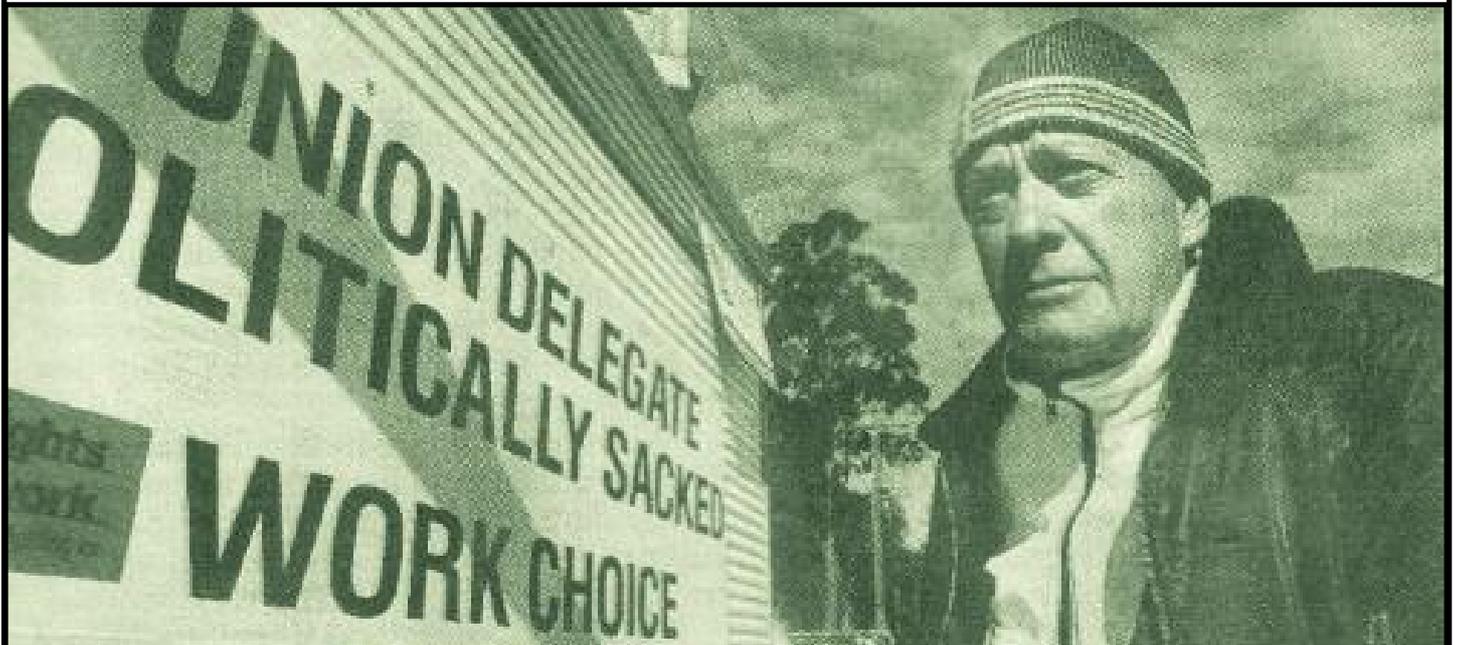


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Paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network 50c

HOWARD TO SHOW HIS CLAWS IN HIS NEXT TERM IN GOVT. WITH A NEW I.R. LAWS PUSH!



NATIONAL NEWS; N.S.W. RAIL NEWS;
STATE TRANSIT NEWSFLASH; SYDNEY
WHARFIES' NEWS; N.S.W. FIRE BRIGADE
NEWS; U.K. TODAY; FRANCE; POLAND;
BOOK REVIEWS ON ANARCHISM TODAY;
NEWS & NOTES;

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

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

Comments are welcome.

REBEL WORKER

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National News

Howard's Dirty Secrets

The Howard Government has been sprung developing a plan to introduce a uranium enrichment industry in Australia despite massive opposition. The plan was revealed after a shelf company called "Nuclear Fuel Australia" delivered a report to the Prime Minister recommending the development of an enrichment industry. Enriched uranium has only two purposes, electricity generation and weapons manufacture.

The Government has refused to rule out the report and has recently entered discussions with India to establish a preferential trade agreement that will be worth billions of dollars to Australian capitalists. India is currently denied access to large amounts of uranium as it has refused to sign the international non proliferation treaty designed to limit the spread of atomic bombs.

The Howard Government has been pushing the global use of nuclear energy as a way to reduce Carbon Dioxide emissions while at the same time exporting the largest quantities of coal in the world.

Howard's arguments are a scam designed to fool Australians into accepting a market in atomic weapons and the use of Australian deserts as an international nuclear waste dump.

Thanks to Sparx

Howard's Planned New I.R. Attacks

According to latest information, the Howard Govt. has engaged consultants to conduct secret studies aimed at determining the economic benefits of forcing State Governments to transfer their industrial relations power to the Commonwealth to create a fully national industrial relations system. This would see coverage under the federal system rise from 85% to 100%. The consultants are also looking into the economic results of associated award coverage falling from 19% at present to 10% of all employees, as a result of the increased take up of AWA's (Australian Workplace Agreements). With AWA's coverage increasing from around 5% of all employees to 20%. Whilst the percentage of agreements achieved via "pattern bargaining" would fall from 31% in 2006 to 10%. The final report of the consultants is to be forwarded to the Federal IR Department on 13/7/07.

Japan/Australia Military Cooperation

If you ever wondered about the Prime Minister's political judgement, your concerns would have been confirmed by John Howard going to Tokyo to sign a Military and Intelligence Co-operation Declaration with the militarist Japanese Prime Minis-

ter Shinzo Abe. I do not know who advises Howard on Foreign Affairs, but the Japanese/Australian Security Agreement has serious ramifications for Australians.

Shinzo Abe is in the midst of a political campaign to overturn Japan's 60 year old Pacifist Constitution. In order to overturn the Constitution, he requires a two thirds majority in both Houses of Parliament and needs to obtain the support of a majority of Japanese electors. His standing in Japan is plummeting as he attempts to rewrite Japan's Pacifist Constitution. Faced with an aging population, many of whom survived the horrors of WWII, the Japanese electorate is more interested in health care and the growing gap in Japan between the rich and poor, than dreams of military glory. Much of Japan's post war economic recovery is due to the small amount of GDP, that has been channelled into defence spending, compared to what other countries like Australia, China and the US spend on defence.

The possible remilitarisation of Japan has set alarm bells among members of Australia's Returned Services League (RSL) who have not forgotten the brutal treatment meted out to Australian prisoners of war. It has also set alarm bells ringing in China, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Pacific. These countries, especially China and Korea, bore the brunt of nearly 30 years of war with the Japanese Imperial Forces. Considering Australia's economic dependence on China, it makes no sense to sign a formal military pact with a Japanese Government that refuses to acknowledge the brutality of the Japanese Imperial forces.

Thanks to the Anarchist Age

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N.S.W. RAILWAYS NEWS

Rebel Worker: What's been happening at Central lately?

Station Assistant: At Central, the local "Workers' Rights" Group has been very active lately. It has been involved in the circulating of a petition which is encouraging workers to look beyond the personality of John Howard and seriously examine the policies of the Howard Govt. such as the GST and WRA (Workplace Relations Act) and take account of its negative features for workers' conditions and wages. The conclusion they would be hoping workers would draw from such reflection, is to vote for the ALP in the upcoming Federal elections to be held towards the end of the year. This petition, represents a turn toward grass roots canvassing by the ALP. Its in line with the canvassing done by Westmead hospital workers in their local area some years back. I think we should support the petition, as in the event that the Howard Government has another term in office, our conditions will be seriously jeopardised when our EBA comes up for renewal in 2008. As under Howard's Work Choices, such conditions as overtime with associated penalties are eliminated. The petition activity definitely reflects a concern of the union hierarchy that many workers may vote Liberal and the need to tackle this problem.

Some other important issues that the group has been focusing upon is the provision of childcare and a gym in the workplace. The necessity for childcare is particularly important at Central. Last year 5 kids were born to staff at the station. Consequently some of these workers are having to harass others to swap shifts to cope with their childcare responsibilities. They are having great difficulties balancing their family and work responsibilities. Local childcare facilities would resolve their problems in this area.

Generally there has been much more involvement by the union hierarchy in en-

couraging grass roots participation in various campaigns such as the anti-Work Choices Rallies, which is a significant step forward for our union.

Other news is that the bosses intend to use Central to trial the new public transport smart card. Consequently, we are all being sent to training courses in anticipation of the trial. Associated with this move, the RailCorp General Manager has been attacking barrier staff, creating obstacles to the performance of their jobs.

RW: What were your impressions of the accident some months ago on the Harbour Bridge involving a train being halted by the falling of overhead power



lines?

SA: As a result of this accident there was no power for the train to operate for 3 hours. Whilst passengers were obliged to remain in their carriages for this extended period. An important contribution to the failure to allow passengers to escape the stopped train was the bureaucratic nature of RailCorp. The indecision of Train Operations management prevented any action to release the passengers from the train being taken. The train crew were unable to act on their own initiative, and had to wait for Train Operations to give the go-ahead. Train Operations whilst having too much authority regarding running trains, has insufficient responsibility to passengers and workers.

RW: What's happening with the carriage cleaners?

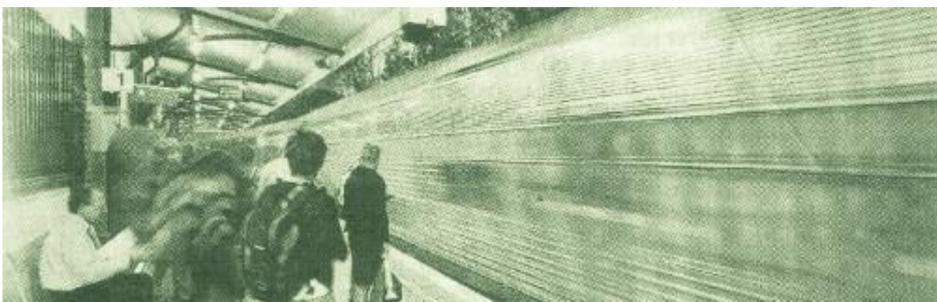
SA: The junior management responsible for carriage cleaning continues to act in a high handed manner and ignores workers' concerns regarding such issues as injuries and safety.

RW: What's happening on the staffing issue?

SA: Lately Nick Lewocki, RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) State Secretary has been protesting in the media about stations in the City Rail network being understaffed. With over 200 positions not being filled at these stations. He has also criticised station masters for not providing

clean stations. Rail Corp has replied to this criticism, stating that they consider only half of these positions need to be filled to ensure adequate customer service, cleanliness, amenities and safety at stations. Both sides however, agree that there is a staffing shortage.

As a result of this staffing crisis, many station staff are having multiple rosters imposed on them. This speed up in workers' jobs and the associated increase in stress levels, has been worsened by a senior Rail Corp executive. He has been placing increased duties on staff, particularly at the major stations, without providing appropriate compensation. As part of the new procedures, he has introduced, he wants more station staff allocated to the barriers and to operate the wide gates to help with commuter overflow at peak periods. However, due to station staff performing their normal duties, plus security duties which have been added to their jobs, they can't cope with the new barrier responsibilities.



STATE TRANSIT NEWS

PORTBOTANYDEPOT NEWS

Rebel Worker: What's the latest with the dispute over the new Digital Camera equipped buses?

Port Botany Driver: The most significant news is that management had told us that as of 21/5/07, all buses at the depot would be equipped with the cameras and we would have to drive them. However, due to our continuing concerns that these cameras will be used in disciplinary matters, our union rep has told management that any bus fitted with the new CCTV's would not be driven by our members, until the dispute was settled. This response, caused a sensation amongst the bosses, who had been acclimatised over the years for the union reps at the depot rolling over to their demands.

Latest news is that, we have lifted the ban on driving the digital camera equipped buses. This decision was made after management gave some verbal assurances to the Union that, until the dispute was resolved properly, only one camera on each bus would be activated, that the new CCTV policies would not come into effect until it had been agreed with the Union, and that the entire issue would be aired before a full Executive Meeting in the next week so that the Delegates would have the opportunity to discuss and decide on the policy and issues. So, we are still driving the buses, but expect STA to fulfil their end of the deal and resolve the dispute properly, otherwise all bets are off.

RW: What are some of the nefarious aspects of the new cameras?

PBD: On the TV recently, there was talk that the footage from the cameras would only be kept for 12 days and then destroyed. This is incorrect. It can be stored on hard disk indefinitely if the bosses so wish. Whilst the bosses via transponders at the depot can check up on drivers instantaneously within 1 Km. With mobile transponders, they can check up on us anywhere. With developments in the technology they will have finger tip indexed access to this footage and can call it up on us over a period. These cameras appeared to be aimed to focus on passengers entering the bus and are likely to be fitted with optical character recognition technology.

RW: What's the latest with the enterprise bargain agreement (EBA)?

PBD: The whole union hierarchy involvement in the process, has been characterised by undemocratic and manipulative features. Initially the officials sent out a so called "survey" regarding the EBA which was highly slanted toward accepting a ceiling of 3% pa on any pay rise achieved, which the union officials' ALP masters want. However, following the circulation of the "suggestions for a grass roots log of claims" leaflet which pushed an EBA with a 15% over two years pay rise, the union



hierarchy made a dramatic "U"-Turn and adopted this demand. The "suggestions for a grass roots log of claims" has been generally well received on the job.

Subsequently, the officials together with some of their union rep cronies, held a secret "back room" meeting, which our union rep was not invited to attend to draw up the union EBA log of claims. In developing the log of claims they took up points raised in the survey and elsewhere, entailing 20 items. Why this secrecy? Why wasn't a mass meeting held to decide upon the union EBA log of claims? Despite these brazen undemocratic features, members seem to be happy with the union log of claims. To the union officials credit they have stated that they will consider adopting any further items members want to add to the claim. One member has raised the is-

sue of lowering the limit of 35 years service to qualify for a Gold Card. The union log of claims had nothing to say on this issue.

RW: What's your outlook in regard to the log of claims?

PBD: I'm not optimistic that the officials will seriously pursue the claim, due to their strong connections with the Rightwing Faction of the ALP. Whilst the ALP State Governments, as I have mentioned want to impose a 3% pa ceiling on pay rises and there is the Federal Election coming up toward the end of the year.

Consequently, we are likely to see a situation which is common to other unions, where the whole drawing up of a "log of claims" by the officials is a cynical charade, and when negotiations commence with the bosses, its abruptly thrown out the window. Any industrial action is largely token and is rapidly called off, due to the officials' stranglehold over the EBA campaign and their desire to appease their ALP masters' electoral considerations. The EBA negotiations become a ploy to sell a crook deal to the membership via slimy tactics.

As a result of these factors, we must be super vigilant and should the officials

make moves to roll over to the bosses, we must take rapid action to stymie it. We must defy them and establish grass roots control of the campaign.

RW: What are your ideas for pursuing the EBA campaign?

PBD: A "Work to Rule" style campaign would be a most effective means of waging it, particularly given the shortage of drivers in the STA presently. In the past, such campaigns have been ineffective as they have not been properly organised. Some ways to ensure the effectiveness of this action, would include the following: the issuing of an info sheet to drivers outlining driving rules and an emphasis that drivers shouldn't corner cut on rest breaks and be prepared psychologically to book

up VOT for late running. Whilst, with the introduction of the STA's "big brother" digital cameras we will be obliged to strictly adhere to their rule book.

RW: I've heard that the STA has taken a bizarre new turn with their efforts to recruit new drivers?

PBD: This is certainly the case, as spotlighted with the appearance on the clip up board near where the driver sits on the bus, of an advertisement, which offers \$21 per hour if you become an STA driver. No driver in the STA is on such a wage rate. If by this advert., the bosses mean to put new drivers on AWA's (Australian Workplace Agreements) involving the loss of penalties and other conditions, we currently enjoy, in exchange for this higher wage rate, such a move would certainly be in breach of Howard's "fairness" requirements regarding AWA's. Another slimy aspect of the STA's new driver recruitment campaign is the offer of a \$500 "spotter's fee" to anyone who can find a recruit. These measures certainly indicate a desperation of the bosses to employ more drivers. It raises the issue of why they don't improve our wages and conditions, so more drivers are retained. With their meagre EBA wage offer of 2.5% pa and unacceptably tight running times which they impose, there is little evidence of such a sensible approach.

RW: What were your impressions of the "Seniors & Safety" courses?

PBD: We were recently treated to seminars on this topic. At the end of the courses we were approached to sign off, on some statement about attendance. The likely hidden agenda of the bosses of this ploy was to make us legally responsible later down the road in the event of some injury to an elderly person on our bus, and so allow the STA to escape its responsibilities. We weren't caught by this scam and no one at our depot signed the document. At other depots I've heard there were mass walkouts from the seminars.

RW: What's the latest on Safety issues?

PBD: Associated with the introduction of new "gas buses" at the depot will be the installation of new safety shields. Some drivers such as those on the PM shifts are likely to vote against operating buses with these shields, as they consider they can cope with the safety problem. By taking such an approach, they could be jeopardising some positive efforts the bosses have made on the issue. They have spent considerable sums on such measures as having security guards in buses and security guards in cars following buses, in the evenings. As a result of these drivers opposing the shields, the bosses may be encouraged to dismantle various safety improvements.

As a result of an agreement with management, depot inspectors are supposed to re-

port all safety breach incidents on the road to the union at the depot. It appears due to likely management pressure, they have not been fulfilling this requirement, with some incidents not being reported.

RW: I understand the bosses have been pursuing a "sickie crackdown" against drivers?

PBD: Lately, we have been issued letters concerning our attendance absences from management. Due to the bosses' poor record keeping, major errors are being made in regard to the alleged absences. Consequently, we decided at recent union meetings not to accept the reports and to speak to the union rep about having a thorough investigation of the issue.

RW: How are things with the union?

PBD: Since Chris became the union rep we have been having plenty of yard meetings to discuss various issues, which is a big step forward at the depot. We need more people to get on the union and roster committees, to help out with the good work.

WAVERLEYDEPOTNEWS

RW: What are your impressions of the prepaid 333 services?

Waverley Busie: There is quite a bit of discontent amongst some drivers concerning the run. Many who went over to the 333 may have sought to avoid the responsibilities associated with collecting cash fares, but now face the responsibility of operating a much larger bus. With 20 buses of the depot fleet and 50 to 60 drivers going to the 333's, there is much less opportunity for overtime particularly on Sundays. Whilst those on the 333's are complaining that shifts in their rosters are either too long or too short. With some complaining of boredom due to the same old routine of work. Prior to the advent of the 333's, there was a much bigger pool of shifts to swap. Now there is much less scope for swapping. However, there is much more work for the 380's which are mainly patronised by people such as tourists wanting to go to the Bondi area and unaware of the 333's. Whilst the 333's are mainly patronised by locals.

An important safety issue has cropped up with the bendi-buses operated on the 333's. The concertina/fabric section in the bendi is a vulnerable spot, where in the event of another vehicle colliding with the side of the bus, passengers could be injured. As its construction is very fragile. In this section there is nothing for passengers to hang on to in the event of a collision and its likely they would be knocked to the floor. Whilst the driver is too far down in the bus to intervene. Despite these factors I have noticed groups of 6-7 standing in this

area unaware of the dangers, perhaps due to their unwillingness to sit with other passengers. There needs to be clear signs installed stating that this section on the bus is a strictly no standing zone whilst the bus is in motion. Given the STA bosses have the means to put up such signs. Why they're in action on this issue? Could it be a ploy for State Transit to avoid legal responsibility? As without such a warning sign, the driver would be made responsible in the case of a passenger injury.

I recently spoke to a 333 driver who had some good ideas for remedying these problems. He mentioned that he was unable to look back far into the bus, particularly due to the screen bars near where he sits and the high seats prior to the turntable, preventing him from turning around. He suggested that the camera in the bus rather than being focused on the driver, be focused to look down the corridor in the bus and that a speaker should be installed in the problem area, so the driver can advise passengers to move down further into the bus. He also mentioned that he had observed plenty of fare evasion and that the bosses were failing to take any action on the issue.

RW: What were your impressions of the May Day March and Rally?

WB: I attended the proceedings and noticed there were only 2,000 people in attendance, which is very poor in a city with a population of 3-4 million people. I also attended several meetings of the May Day Organising Committee which I noticed were dominated by the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia). Contributing to the poor turn out was the Committee's failure to issue and put up posters around town to advertise the event. Perhaps this inactivity was contributed by concerns about the legalities of postering in the city.

RW: What's happening with the enterprise agreement?

WB: Recently there was a petition circulating at the depot initiated by the Central Station organising committee to demand that if the ALP's Rudd is elected into the Federal Govt. that he won't attack workers' conditions secured by such agreements. It particularly emphasised securing such conditions as union representation, collective bargaining, paid holidays. This petition has now been closed at Waverley, with 370 people signing it. Involving both drivers and their friends. At a recent union meeting, we were read a document outlining the STA's offerings for next the EBA which focused on a meagre 2.5% pa wage rise which is below the CPI and various fringe benefits and salary sacrifice items to divert our attention from the paltry wage rise. This insulting pay rise offer by the STA, just goes to show they are ignoring the issue I raised in the last edition of

Sparks concerning the 10,000 years of collective experience we possess and the good ideas we have for reducing costs and improving services which would provide for a decent pay rise. Instead of listening to us and taking advantage of our knowledge, they squander huge sums on expensive high flyer

LEICHHARDTDEPOTNEWS

RW: What's been happening at Leichhardt lately?

Leichhardt Busie: Several weeks ago, there was a serious incident involving the previous manager and a group of 12 drivers. Due to a malfunction in the operation of the green machines, 12 drivers including the union rep were accused of short pay-ins. Despite management being aware of the technical problem, the manager went on a savage rampage against them. One driver was brazenly accused of stealing and when the driver mentioned he was going to see the union rep over the false allegation, he was greeted with a tirade of obscene abuse from the manager who was standing over him. As a result of the stress, the driver was put on under by the boss, the driver had to go off on sick leave. Other drivers were also dragged into the manager's office over the allegation.

RW: What's been happening at the depot?

LB: Shortly after this manager departed the scene, an amazing event occurred, with the installation of a change machine at the depot. For at least two years, drivers had complained to management about the lack of a change machine, without any action being taken. Despite change machines existing at other depots. Consequently, we have had to go to banks in our own time to get change, and constantly scrounge amongst ourselves for change. The excuse, the bosses gave for inaction on the issue, was that change machines were being phased out.

Another related problem is the inadequacy of the \$10 float we are issued with when starting on the job. We are expected for that this inadequate sum will last us forever. In reality we mainly have to use our own money as a float. This sort of thing doesn't happen in shops, but we have to put up with it. The float we are issued, should be increased to at least \$50 or \$100.

BURWOODDEPOT NEWS

RW: What are your impressions of the "fish" program?

Burwood Drover: It's a purely motivational program which was introduced by our General John Lee, STA CEO. It's run by a driver instructor and a peer. It costs State Transit \$2000 a package. I think the major reason for the bosses' introduction of it, is their fear that many drivers will resign en masse after the new super changes come into law in September of this year. Drivers who have been on the job for many years and have built up considerable super, may resign to take advantage of these changes and also take their long service leave entitlements. These changes allow tax free super lump sum payments on termination of employment for taxed super funds and 15% taxed lump sums for non-taxed super funds. According to surveys which the bosses have conducted, there is a very low level of morale amongst many drivers and the bosses consider there is a strong likelihood of mass resignations, which would create chaos for bus operations. Consequently, they consider a bit of corporate brain washing of drivers may assist retaining employees.

tion being taken over the issue and rumour is circulating that the union's draft log of claims features a claim for a 7.5% pa pay rise over two years.

Latest news is the union hierarchy is now facing a major crisis associated with the Howard's new IR laws. Under these laws, State Transit will be obliged to cease the pay roll deduction of our union fees. To get around this initiative, the union officials want our union dues directly debited from our bank accounts, and if we refuse, we are being threatened with being tossed off the traffic fund.

RW: What's the latest with the bosses' plans for restructuring grades?

BD: They plan to eliminate the CFS 2 & 3 positions. My feeling is that those who occupy these positions aren't considered by the bosses to be over brilliant with computers, so the bosses can't transfer them to some other administrative job. So they are going to wait for them to retire, and then abolish the positions.



RW: What's happening at the depot?

BD: I have safety concerns about 15 new buses which are coming to Burwood. In particular regarding the additive of urea used in the turbo cleaner of these buses. This chemical is used in making explosives such as the bombs which exploded in Bali and is highly dangerous. As yet the bosses have provided us with no information on possible hazards of this chemical.

RW: What's been happening with the union?

BD: Recently, the union rep at Burwood got into a spot of bother. Early one morning, he had banned several buses for faults. However, the STA bosses retaliated by unleashing a "legal eagle" to threaten him with legal action over causing late running of depot fleet buses and breaching the STA's contract to the Department of Transport. In regard to the enterprise agreement, at the last union meeting at Burwood, there was talk of industrial ac-

BrookvaleBusDepotNews, Opinion&Othersideofthe Story!

RW: You are Government employees and as such you must have certain legal rights. Do you know what your rights are?

Amigo: Not really. Apparently down town they have this fat book with all kinds of employment rights and conditions explained in it but only very few people have access to it.

RW: Can you give us an example as to how rights are suppressed maybe to prove your point?

Amigo - I'll try. The other day I asked a manager something like this "Mr. Manager, the RTA are giving some Bus Drivers a hard time renewing their authority cards on medical grounds. Apparently you have to be a superman in health other-

wise you will be subjected to so many tests which will cost the Driver up to \$1000 or more in doctors reports, exams, etc, just to prove their fitness. I know one Driver who was ordered to provide a specialist endocrinologist report just because he disclosed the truth on the form that he had 6.3 glucose in his blood ! Now Mr. Manager, these Drivers have been serving the STA for a long time so will the STA pay for the medical reports? He replied not one penny! What happens if they are found to be medically unfit I said do they get the boot, redeployed, retrained or what rights do they have?

RW: Very interesting question. What did the Manager reply?

Amigo - He gave me the most cryptic and ambiguous reply I feel. He said something like this " well it depends on what other training the Driver has, it depends if we have any vacancies etc" I felt this was like saying 'it really depends if we like you or not as to whether we keep you on'. But I said surely there must be a blanket policy for all not just pick and choose. I said can you give me your reply in writing so that I can cross check it for accuracy etc? The Manager flatly refused to give me a reply in writing. So why would he refuse to give me the policy in writing ? Is it because the policy is discriminatory?

Is it because they don't want you to know your rights? Or do they want to be able to shift the goal post when it suits them or what?

RW: How many days Carer's Leave are you allowed?

Amigo - Well as far as I know they give and pay us for 5 only, but as far as I know (check it out) in work choices it should be 10.

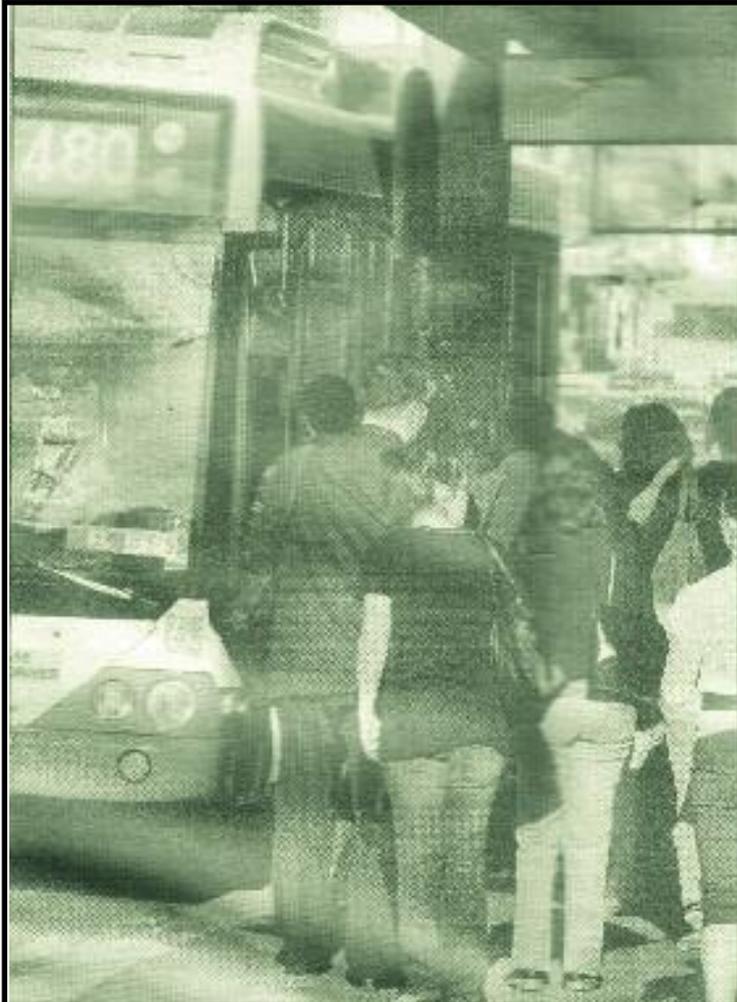
RW - Is the STA going to pay out sick leave as per work choices?

Amigo - I don't think they are addressing this question. Some Drivers have asked if they can cash in their sick leave, but have not received replies or the reply was we don't know, or don't know if the entitlement is going to be applied from the date work choices came into effect or if its going to apply to the whole of their accumulated sick leave entitlement.

It could be big money as some drivers have over 12 months of sick leave that could be worth up to \$40000 or more.

RW - If our memory serves us correctly, Drivers EBA runs out in June. Has a new one being drafted yet and explained to Drivers?

Amigo - I don't think so I have not seen it. I would think it will come out late and there wont me much time to discuss it or debate it. I think, as previously, many Drivers will probably agree to it to get the increase without really knowing what each and every clause of the EBA means.



RW - You mean the STA Union will not hold a meeting, or issue an explanatory booklet with the EBA, to explain what each and every clause of the new EBA will mean?

Amigo - If they did it would be nice, but I don't think they operate like that.

RW - What do you feel are some of the important aspects of the EBA which Drivers ought to be careful about?

Amigo - Well I think most Drivers know the usual trickery that might take place e.g. give an increase in one hand and take more away in the other hand.

Drivers have been conned before. I think what Drivers should ensure is that the STA cannot just unilaterally adjust the roster of any Driver, unless that Driver agrees to it, otherwise the whole thing becomes a shambles. I mean if the STA can change

spread times, if they can change roster times etc, then in effect they have an open cheque to control and reduce Drivers annual incomes any time they want to. By reducing the spread for example they can make Drivers work the same number of hours and/or more hours for less money! Check out this other side of the story for yourselves as you might find it interesting.

RW - What about Health & Safety?

Amigo - I am very worried STA and Councils are still operating Bus Stops right on pedestrian crossings. Unbelievable but true? Check out Woodbine street in North Balgowlah near Bangaroo. I think it's a death trap waiting to happen. The bus stop is just centimetres before a busy pedestrian crossing. What happens is even school buses stop there and as soon as the children get off they want to cross the road in front of the bus which is off-course obscuring the crossing. Offcourse irate motorists want to zoom past the bus but they cant really see the children. How can they when the big bus is obscuring them?

Also, we are having problems with the Volgren buses which have high entry and exit platforms. We have switches intended to lower (kneel) the bus but they do not work. I have booked up this problem but nothing has been done!

RW - We heard that Brookvale Bus Depot has been secured with cameras, gates, boom gates, security guards etc looking a bit like Fort Knox. What do you think about that?

Amigo - I think its over the top. I don't really think its effective enough to justify the tax payers

money being spent on it. Its good that those security contracts provide profits for the contractor and wages for his/her employees, but could that money not be spend on other things which provide real benefits to people?

I mean if they are so genuine about safety etc, how is it that anybody can just walk on any bus and put their bag or luggage unattended in the luggage compartment behind the Bus Driver and walk away? One would think there would be a big sign there saying something like "Luggage Bay Closed - No unattended luggage is to be left here" or something like that.

SYDNEY MARITIME NEWS

Rebel Worker: Before you start, please explain the change from P&O Wharfie to Port Botany Wharfie.

Port Botany Wharfie: Well, last year the whole worldwide P&O operation was bought out by Dubai Ports World (DPW) for around \$6 billion. DPW is owned by the royal family of the United Arab Emirates.

So I can't use P&O Wharfie any more – and Dubai Ports World Wharfie or DPW Wharfie are both mouthfuls. So Port Botany Wharfie it is. The DP World buyout is not the only change of ownership that has

happened over the last 12 months. Patrick Stevedores has been bought out by Toll Holdings in what was a very hostile takeover. This of course left the Maritime Union's arch enemy Chris Corrigan out in the cold. More recently DP World sold its newly acquired P&O Trans Australia truck fleet and the Bulk and General arm of its stevedoring operations to an Australian consortium that involves none other than Chris Corrigan.

There is also a rumour flying around that DP World wants to offload its Australian stevedoring arm. After all, Australian ports are small fry compared to the massive Asian ports that DP World wanted to gain control of.

If the rumour is true, you can probably guess who would be first in line to buy it . . .

RW: So what has been happening on the Sydney waterfront?

Port Botany Wharfie: One by-product of all the ownership changes is the terrible treatment that wharfies at the Darling Harbour P&O / DP World operation are coping. The state Labor government decided a few years ago to phase out shipping in Sydney Harbour. After much tooting and frooing it looks like the Darling Harbour P&O / DP World operation will close down in a few weeks and the Patrick / Toll operation will quickly follow.

This is all complicated by the fact that P&O / DP World sold its bulk and general operations (which includes Darling Harbour) to the new Corrigan consortium.

The 20 or 30 P&O / DP World permanents left down at Darling Harbour have been offered either redundancy or transfers to the DP World Port Botany terminal.

While the redundancy isn't great (it's capped at 40 weeks of service), DP World originally offered to transfer the permanents to Botany as non-permanents! And this is to blokes that have 20 and 30 years of service, it's disgraceful. P&O / DP World management certainly have a nerve. More importantly, if they can get away with undermining permanency in this instance, it would no doubt quickly flow through the industry. Like the waterfront isn't casualised enough already!

More recently I have heard that, after nu-



merous rounds of negotiations with national MUA officials, the company has now offered to transfer them to Botany on their existing conditions for 12 months. That's when the current Botany EBA expires. Who knows what will happen then.

RW: Tell us about the other news from the Botany area.

Port Botany Wharfie: Vopak Terminals, a bulk petroleum and chemical storage plant just across the road from DP World, sacked 12 workers who refused to sign AWAs.

They were all dismissed on April 26 and given 15 minutes to clear out their lockers and get off site. Management used the old "dismissed for operational reasons" line on them and replaced them with labour-hire casual workers.

The members of the National Union of Workers had been negotiating a new collective agreement since September last year. Apparently they had won the right at

the Industrial Commission to take protected industrial action, which was to start the Monday after their sacking. Unfortunately management got in first.

Vopak have used WorkChoices to sack skilled terminal operators with 20 and 25 years experience and replaced them with unskilled and untrained casuals. I have already heard stories about truck drivers getting accidentally covered in chemicals by the inexperienced casuals.

As far as I know the 12 workers are still picketing out the front between 6am and 2pm. A heap of us, MUA members

marched over during one smoko break and handed over hundreds of dollars that was collected at work. The address is 49 Friendship Road, Port Botany for anyone that wants to show their support.

RW: Any other news?

Port Botany Wharfie: There were serious dramas down at Port Kembla at the end of May. The *Capo Noli*, a ship carrying gypsum tried to get the Filipino crew to discharge cargo using the ship's cranes. This is despite international agreements that state that loading and unloading of ships is wharfie's work – not seafarers' work.

Canada Steamship Lines who chartered the ship, had the gypsum loaded in South Australia by MUA members, so why they decided to try and get the seafarers to unload it is anyone's guess.

Long story short, after a four-day stand off and "community assemblies" that stopped trucks from getting the gypsum, it was agreed that MUA labour would unload the cargo after all.

RW: Finally, how are the MUA national elections going?

Port Botany Wharfie: To be honest, they are just plodding along. Part of the problem is that there is not much competition this time around.

Federally both the National Secretary and Deputy National Secretary will be re-elected unopposed. The two Assistant National Secretary positions are being contested by two incumbents and one outsider.

Similarly in Sydney both the Branch Secretary and Deputy Branch Secretary will be elected unopposed. The two Assistant Branch Secretary positions are being contested by four people, but one of those asked at the start of the voting period that he not be considered as a candidate.

So in effect it's another three-way contest for two positions.

The lack of competition will probably mean that the historically high voter turnout that the MUA experiences will be lower than usual.

The campaigning by the various candidates has also been very lacklustre. None of them have raised any of what I would call the "big questions".

Actually fighting to get rid of WorkChoices (instead of just wait for Labor to partially repeal it), planning to win

better conditions and more permanency with industrial action, democratising the union with more frequent elections and the right to recall any elected representative – none of these ideas have got so much as a mention from any of the candidates.

So I dare say that, no matter what happens, it will be MUA "business as usual".

N.S.W. FIRE BRIGADE NEWS

ToxicFoamScandal

The NSWFB (NSW Fire Brigade) has been caught out holding over 50,000 litres of foam concentrate that contains chemicals known to cause cancer in mammals. The foam concentrate was

first identified as harmful to the environment in 2002 and was supposed to have been phased out over the last 5 years.

The foam was outed after the FBEU was given a military hazmat guide that recommended against use of the foam. Further research established that the cancerous ingredient was banned in Europe and the UK and has not been manufactured for years. A quick audit of the brigades established

the toxic foam was stowed on almost every fire truck in the state. The Union immediately banned the foam and the State Labour Courts were brought into the dispute. The courts demanded the bans be lifted, the foam be replaced and any member coming into contact with the foam should be immediately decontaminated on site.

Thanks to Sparx

Cont. From Page 20 "Workers' Councils" which was

influential in the Solidarity milieu. It of course fails to take into account the need to build the coordinated on the job organisation in the here and now, for workers to fight the bosses. Support for "Workers' Councils" became an important feature of the Class War groups ideology.

However, due to his chance encounter with some members of the urban guerrilla "Angry Brigade", the author made a "U-Turn" from serious syndicalist style activity into the wilds of the left subculture. The most important manifestation of this turn was his launching together with others of "Class War". This group and subsequent federation has been noted for its support and claims for organising various spectacular stunts and riotous outbreaks against the capitalist set up. It has also sought and attained considerable media attention through this activity and the lurid rhetoric "eat the rich", "kill the cops" of its paper. This notoriety and the 15,000 to 20,000 claimed circulation of the paper has not led to any mass anarchist/syndicalist upsurge amongst workers, as Bone hoped. However, congeries of class war style sects and youth subcultures have appeared, some of these sects having strong Stalinist tendencies.

The book particularly focuses on Class War's involvement in the British Miners' Strike of 1984-85. The author recalls how Class War's often extreme attacks on the capitalist set up and support for the miners encouraged the spontaneous emergence of Class War groups throughout the country which helped with picketing and other activity for the miners. Whilst the author emphasised the importance of inspiring and organising riots in the urban areas to divert the police and assist the miners action. However, the author fails to take into account the importance of solidarity action by workers in other strategic sectors, which was not forthcoming and decisively contributed to the defeat of the miners. Any discussion of strategic organising to assist this solidarity action was absent in Class War. Its second conference discussed on p188-191, shows ample evidence of its left sub cultural "corroboree" feature and an extreme absence of a scientific climate, with its degeneration into a discussion of politically correct "sexual lifestyles". Shades of Maoist practices, which the author appears to recognise, but was unable to tackle.

The book concludes with the author's recollections of various riotous stunts Class War organised such as the 1985 Bash The Rich demos, the Henley Regatta disruption amongst other actions. With the subsequent, better organisation of po-

lice intervention, increased repressive legislation and the massive growth of CCTV's, the scope for this activity has been severely limited in Britain particularly in recent years.

In conclusion, the book under review certainly sketches the activism of someone quite lost in one of the extreme corners of the left sub cultural labyrinth. A victim of historical legacies and sociological factors, he is unable to fully grasp. Being a dynamic phenomena, the capitalist set up in Britain has taken advantage of the various revolts and stunts, Class War and the author initiated and encouraged or laid claim, to organise the development of a strong state with constantly increasing repressive laws, massive surveillance and plans for an new ID Card, super charged by the current "Terrorism" hysteria. This capitalist "fight back" will create difficult terrain for "outside the job" organisation which the milieu around the various anarchist and syndicalist groups could supply if their different "chapels" were dissolved, to assist workers on-the-job self organisation and direct action in strategic sectors such as the critical transport industries which is vital to the emergence of genuine mass syndicalist unionism in Britain and globally.

Mark McGuire

BRITAIN TODAY

It's war in Royal Mail

By Rob Ray

June 19th, 2007

A battle between postal workers and managers over the future of the Royal Mail looks set to turn nasty following a litany of attacks on working conditions, staffing numbers and now wages. As one of the most significant workplace battles of recent years comes to the boil, Freedom talks to Pat (the postman) about how class warfare is in the post:

“The strike is important because the CWU (Communications Workers’ Union) is one of the last of the big unions and, although undeniably reformist, is viewed as a threat by the business-friendly major political parties.

“The leadership might be Labour, but at grass roots level the CWU has a large hard core of militant trade unionists. Many of them have previously worked in other industries with a history of fighting the employer. Others began their working lives as Postal Cadets, seeing their conditions improve when the old UPW/UCW was a byword for militant action, and deteriorate as the leadership fell under the spell of Blair.

“If we lose, we are looking at massive job losses, even more unmanageable workloads, mail being delivered in mid-afternoon, closure of smaller delivery offices. Because Royal Mail and the Government have friends in the media, we have little support among the general public, but given time they will see closure of local post offices, later delivery times and a massive increase in unwanted junk mail.

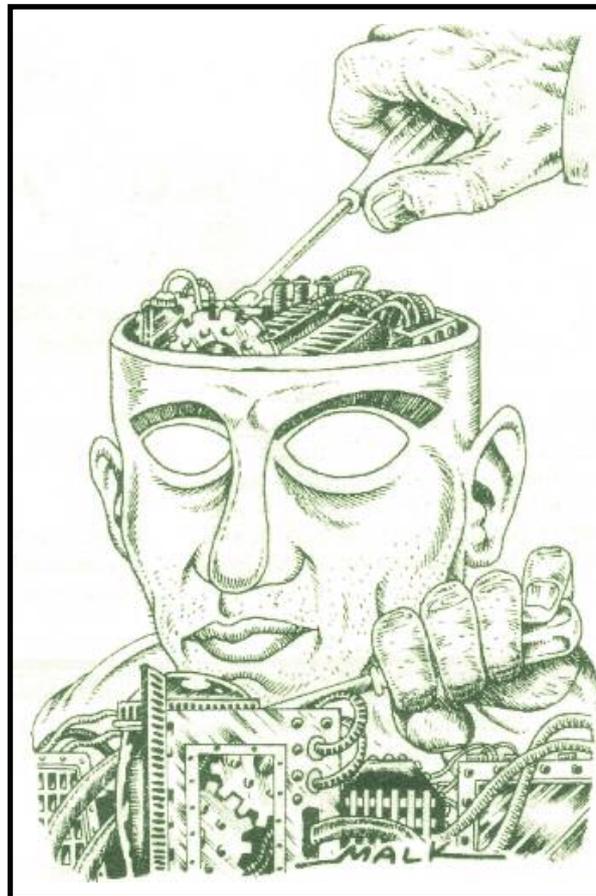
“That the CWU might sell us out is a concern. (CWU General Secretary) Billy Hayes’ constant clinging to the Labour link is an embarrassment. No matter how many hospital wards or schools close, regardless that child poverty has increased, that they’re engaged in an illegal war or that thanks to his party and its treatment of asylum seekers racism is on the rise Billy remains a puppet. The CWU even closed its internet forum because of irate posties telling Billy and his chums exactly how life really is. It’s possible that Gordon

Brown will phone Billy and ask him to call the whole thing off. If that happens, it gives the Government a free hand to work us into an even earlier grave.

“This had been about more than the pay issue and workers have taken the opportunity to include the stringent absence procedure, the arbitrary conduct code, and harassment by junior managers, late start times, inadequate equipment and not being allowed holidays when required in their decision to vote Yes. If our office is any barometer of feeling, it will be solid. One or two scabs might turn in, but their

will be their first experience of industrial action. A victory would give them confidence and a clear view of what can be achieved by solidarity.

“The more support we have from our anarchist comrades and those on the left who see this as a genuine workers’ struggle and not just another recruiting campaign for their particular pressure group the easier the victory will be. The more CWU members realise their interests lie outside of any political party the better for us and the worse for Leighton, Crozier and that whole mob of asset strippers.”



effect will be minimal. Leighton has misjudged the mood just as he did in 2003 when we lost the pay ballot.

“We can win. There is plenty of militancy on the shop floor. We’ve been fighting the bosses since the day we left school and some managerial fart in a suit carrying sandwiches in his briefcase and sod all in his head holds no fears for us.

“For trade unionists, a victory over Royal Mail and therefore the Government would be a boost. For many younger staff, this

Bridgwater postal workers strike for three days

By Anonymous

June 19th, 2007

Over 100 Royal Mail workers have been on strike in Somerset against new working practices which would see them lose hundreds of pounds.

Royal Mail managers have been sent to Bridgwater to cover the strikers’ work, which was set to last from Friday to yesterday.

130 workers at the sorting office are on strike over plans to reorganise working practices. One postal worker on this is the west country.co.uk commented that he “would lose £500-£600 a year if we agree to the pay and changes.”

Previous strikes have been staged at Bridgwater including wildcat strikes in 2002 calling for a shorter working week.

All's fare in train robbery

June 19th, 2007

Rob Ray looks into the strange case of train travel price hikes which have no apparent economic basis for Freedom newspaper Two major train companies have announced large price rises this month, with Arriva deciding to raise their off-peak fares by over 30% and South West Trains 20%.

The hikes, which have sparked outrage in consumer groups and unions, follow

annual price rises which were substantially above the average for each company, at 5.7% and 5.3% (over a percentage point above inflation and above the industry average of 4.5%) earlier in the year.

The exceptional rises have caused controversy because despite the high level of the hikes, regulator Office of Rail Regulation (ORR), led by Chris Bolt (a leading pro-privatisation specialist who was instrumental in steering through the privatisation of water utilities) have refused to investigate it.

Neither Arriva nor South West trains – part of the Stagecoach Group, have seen significant problems on any of their train lines prior to the rises.

Arriva saw a slight reduction in profits at the end of last year following the ending of a major franchise in the North, and additional bid costs to the government, but nevertheless paid out a dividend 5% higher than for 2005, and boosted executive David Martin's pay packet by over £150,000, just under a 50% increase, along with a £246,800 bonus.

Stagecoach meanwhile had reported an outstanding year, with revenue up 5.7% and profits rising from £50m to £58.9, and dividends up by 12% per share. Again remuneration for the directors was up.

The discrepancy between companies in apparently healthy circumstances and in a period where fuel prices have not been unpredictable.

Both the TSSA and RMT rail unions demanded that an investigation be launched when the companies scrapped their cheapest fares, saying it amounted to abuse of the monopoly positions in the market.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "Talk about the climate challenge and the

Consumer groups have expressed strong concerns that avoiding an investigation of such high rises, on the back of several consecutive years of hikes, will simply tempt other monopoly contractors to follow suit.

Between 1998 and 2006 train fares have risen by an average of 46.2%, while staff cuts, poor maintenance of rolling stock by many companies, the threat of closing rural lines and poorer timekeeping than under British Rail has continued.

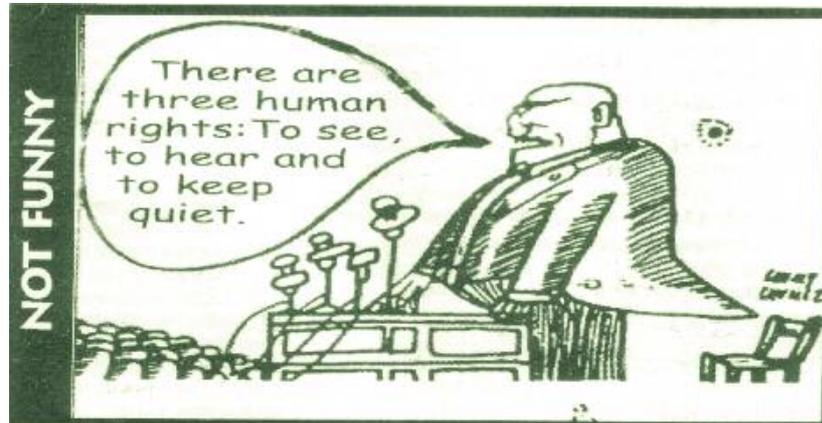
On many main lines this is the fourth successive year in which tickets have risen by more than inflation.

Train companies say the extra money is to pay for service improvements. But allegations have surfaced that overcrowding on the network, combined with an unwillingness to invest

have led companies to hike prices, in order to cut down on rising passenger numbers and improve profits.

The cost of bus and train travel has outstripped the price of motoring since Labour came to power, according to the latest official figures. According to the Office for National Statistics, bus fares have risen by 52.9% over the past decade. According to the AA, the cost of running a small family has risen from 41.52 pence a mile in 1997 to 56.15 pence in 2005 - 26%.

Thanks to "Freedom & Libcom"



importance of reducing carbon emissions will remain just talk if the government allows never-ending fares hikes that can only result in ever more polluting road traffic".

"A fundamental shift in policy is needed that will use fares policy to encourage people out of cars and onto trains, and alongside that we need to recognise the need for substantial public investment in new rail capacity.

"Only last year the Commons Transport Select Committee condemned the sham-bolic state of rail-pricing structures and exposed the private sector's inability to operate the railways as a public service.

FRANCE

NO GOD, NO CAESAR, NI
TRIBUNE

THE FUTURE IS OURS !!!

The result of the presidential election will inevitably affect our living and working conditions as well as our struggles. The candidate for the Right party finally won, including many of the Extreme Right's nauseating ideas in his discourse and program.

The themes and the results of this election confirm that the French society and political life have drifted to the right.

In this situation, the Left is totally unable to suggest an alternative, be it political, social or economical. This is all the more terrible that many workers and many from the lower classes have voted for this candidate who, using demagogy or confusing them, managed to appear as the providential man bringing answers and solutions to their everyday problems and their fearful futures. Yet, these people cannot expect anything from this new president and his program!

In his very first discourse, the future president listed the founding ideas of his society project: work, authority, morale, merit, national identity.

So many values that fit the interests of the ruling classes and a reactionary nationalist society project.

Inevitably the inequalities will go on growing, precarity will develop, the demolition of the public services and of the social protection will be accelerated. This moralism, tinged with religion, will reinforce their hold on society and the repressive and security tendencies will grow, making even more victims among the immigrants and the illegal residents. Very

concrete measures will quickly follow if we don't oppose them: reconsideration of the work code, attacks against the right to strike with the implementation of the 'minimum service' in the public transports, and a new tax shield in favour of the rich. So many measures that will greatly affect the workers and the lower classes and that will reinforce that in-egalitarian capitalist society.

Rage and struggle rather than resignation !

In such a situation, we know that only a power struggle on the social level can

French Post: What Union rights before that?

Union rights at La Poste (French Postal Authority) came from the statute of the public sector which insured two types of rights for unions. The first one concerned unions declared which benefited as soon as they are constituted at La Poste four fundamental rights: leafletting outside the workplaces, union boards, collecting dues and organising meetings outside work time.

The second one concerned organisations

is only liberties for mainstream unions. People from the same side can now discuss the future of all workers...

Union and the Bosses Partnership against Class War

The agreement was presented as the expression of a renewed social dialogue which comfort the place of the « representative unions » and this is all true:

mainstream unions have the monopoly of the freedom of speech, more means and advantages which are insured to the union permanents. It is a dialogue where unions leaders and the bosses of La Poste do social work by crushing other unions. And by the way, the preamble declares that « the use of the right to go on strike induces the obligation for mainstream unions to give a notice to the bosses ». It condemns wildcat strikes opening the door wide to future repression against those who dare going on strike spontaneously. The preamble also states that « using those rights insure the respect of the persons and their fundamental liberties like freedom of movement and freedom of work ». This partnership between the bosses and the unions as well as those who remained silent authorised the interdiction of the picket line, blockade of the workplace and the repression against workers on strike, workers who use the historical tactics of the working class.

We can clearly see here the liberticide aspect of this text restraining not only union rights but also reinforcing the control of the right to go on strike. The model is given by the MEDEF forcing for a strong union partnership with the bosses, « cogestion » instead of the class war. Naturally it shows the actual situation between classes. And it is bad news for the workers.

Workers and unions autonomy against trade Unionism

This is an historical agreement for two reasons. First because it is the logical outcome for Trade unions or « cogestion » unions. It tells a lot to hear nothing from unions.

It shows unity among trade unions sharing the same counter revolutionary values and using the same tactics than capitalism and without really trying to oppose it. Beyond particularities specific to each



change things and avoid that France undergo the same ultra-liberal experience as England in the 80s with Thatcher. It is necessary to stop the wait-and-see attitude that is so frequent after elections, we must organise and demonstrate, go on strike, occupy places in order to stop the liberal and security wave that is coming at us. We must defend what remains of our public services and our social protection system. Let's count only on ourselves and on our struggles, everyday, in our neighbourhoods, at our work places, in order to create an autonomous and emancipating social movement that will contain other ideas and a different society project.

They get tougher, and so will our struggles! The countdown is set off!

called representatives which means they got a certain number of votes at the elections of the administrative council or at the paritarian elections. So, they benefited from offices, time off for union work, permanents (full time shop stewards) paid by the company, the possibility to organise meetings during work time. This is the kind of unionism that we denounce. During the years 1984-1988, La Poste tried to suppress those four fundamental rights but the Administrative Court maintained them systematically. La Poste capitulated. On top of those rights our syndicates won locally (Lyon, Paris, Val d'Oise, Bordeaux,...) offices because of our representativity and the federation of Postal workers of the CNT (National Confederation of Labour – syndicalist union) won in 1989 the possibility to use union envelopes.

The January 2006 agreement suppressed all those rights of declared unions. There

organisations this unionism turns its back on the working class. And the leaders of the SUD-PTT Federation by not opposing this agreement bury for good the notion of an alternative union, that notion they presented to create at the beginning of the 90's. The SUD-PTT (Leftwing Postal Union) Federation did support this text which ban all possibilities of expression of other unions. Now it becomes clear that the reconstruction of a revolutionary syndicalism cannot happen through the cogestionary institutions. A divide splits between grassroots activists either in a syndicalist structure or by self-management in committees supporting struggles, in general assemblies and those who are integrated in structures put on by the State and the bosses. Many SUD-PTT members understood that and

protested against the position of their federation and gave their support to our struggle. Because as soon as the text was applied, the CNT boards were removed from certain workplaces (Tours), had to give back occupied offices (Bordeaux, Lyon) and sanctioned the CNT for handing out leaflets (Paris).

Organising the Resistance

The Congress of the CNT-PTT Federation which took place late April 2006 in Bordeaux planned out a resistance line to this attack of La Poste bosses. On the



legal side, we contest the agreement in Court and the lawyer of the Federation demanded that La Poste abrogates it because of discrimination and illegality.

Meanwhile our federation started a campaign on the ground with mass leafleting, posters, stickers, stamps to stick beside postal stamps, petition cards to send to La Poste headquarters. A Confederal leaflet will be addressed to La Poste users. We have also met other small syndicalist structures hit by the same interdiction like the Confédération Autonome du Travail (Autonomous Confederation of Labour)

and the Syndicat des Fonctionnaires (Civil Servants Union). An unitary leaflet is on the way along with a text to send to the local sections of various unions.

One thing for sure: the struggle continues, the federal action knows no weakness and when work starts or under the coat CNT leaflets pass around. It is not the open repression nor the legal interdiction that will crush the anarcho-syndicalist and revolutionary syndicalist movement whether it is at la Poste or elsewhere.

21/6/07 Thanks to CNT-F International Newsletter

POLISH LABOUR NEWS

Poland's health care workers' strike: new challenges and old problems

June 24th, 2007 by laureakai

As a mass health-care strike enters its sixth week, all that may be achieved is the speeding-up of the privatisation process.

The Doctor's Strike and the Nurses' Occupation

Poland is entering the sixth week of a very serious doctors' strike. Thousands of doctors around the country have been protesting the state of the health care system and one of its main problems: low wages for health care professionals and long working hours, usually compounded by the fact that most people work extra shifts to make

ends meet. Many doctors also have handed in their notice as a direct action, saying they'd rather quit than work under these conditions.

The strike was called by some doctors and did not relate to all health care workers, which irritated some other members of the medical profession, most particularly nurses, who also wanted to take action. In former strike actions, it has typically, for whatever reason, been nurses, not doctors who have taken part in and organized more radical direct actions, and this time the same happened. About one month into the strike, the nurses organized a mass demonstration to Warsaw and started a protest action that is finally breathing some life into the struggle.

On June 19, despite heavy rain, about 20,000 health care workers marched in Warsaw. Towards the end of the march, four nurses demanded to see the Prime Minister and ended up occupying one of the offices of his building. They have been there since that day, despite threats made

by the government. Other nurses, demanded a meeting with the Prime Minister, who wanted nothing to do with this strike except to strongly criticize the workers; they have refused to leave from outside the PM's office. They declared that they would stay there all night if they had to. They have been there 5 days already.

The nurses have widespread public sympathy, but that doesn't mean that masses of people have joined their action. Still, people not only from the political scene have arrived with food or words of support for the strikers. Their demands are thought to be reasonable: pay rises, better working conditions and a rise in the amount of the GNP spent on healthcare from the current 3.7% to 6%.

The Situation in the Health Care Industry

The health care system in Poland is in deep crisis for many reasons. The amount of the GNP spent on health care is on the bottom of the list of OECD countries and is kept low as a policy of forcing the system into the ground as a way to introduce privatization. The system is also rife with corruption.

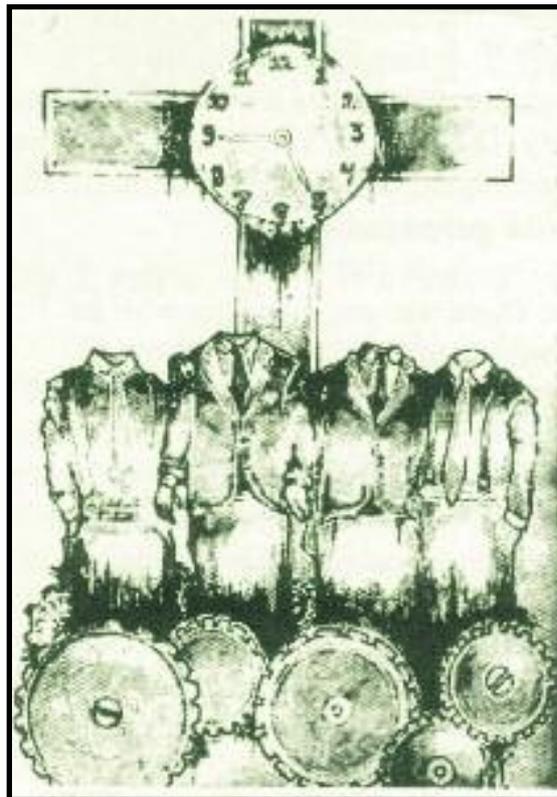
Salaries for doctors and nurses are notoriously low. There are no standard salaries, and what one earns often depends on numerous factors, but all too often, health care workers earn about half of the national average wage, often around 250-300 euros a month. Some workers get by only because they work extra shifts but in many cases, this overtime is not voluntary; the health care system is the victim of a brain drain with many of Poland's professionals having gone abroad in search of a better living. In many hospitals, people have to work more and more – even up to 80 hours a week – just to keep the hospital operating.

The state, which usually pretends to want to maintain the health care system, in fact does everything possible to push towards privatization. Many hospitals are charged with "poor management" and then debt collectors are sent to them. The government has been encouraging and empowering these debt collectors to go to hospitals and repossess equipment and even to evict them. While it is true that some hospitals are in deep debt or are seriously mismanaged, the government's stance has done nothing to help them. In place after place, the government has closed down hospitals and clinics, overloading those that remain. Private hospitals have been moving into some of the hospitals abandoned by the state.

The Politics of Privatization

In fact, the state's strategy has been a brilliant way to spread support of privatization. Although the quality of health care ranges dramatically from place to place, many people in fact depend solely on privatized health care already.

In some areas, there is simply no public health care readily available. For example, last year during an emergency situation, we found out that there were no clinics working on the east side of Warsaw



on the weekend! In a city of well-over two million people, no public clinic was available within a reasonable distance on the weekend. More typical is that people who go to clinics find that they have to wait on some unreasonably long lines. A trip to a clinic may mean that you have to take even a whole day off work to wait in a line. Yet other times you need treatment and are told "but we don't have this equipment or medicine" or that there is a great line. People are sometimes asked to provide their own medicines or, more often, to pay the hospital to purchase the equipment. It is also "understood" that if you want to avoid waiting in a long line for some procedure, some doctor can serve you privately – at a price.

Recent figures show that the state allocates far too little money per person during their stay as well, except for politicians who are allowed to use special hospitals.

With the system in such a state, many people in fact have either bought themselves private insurance with a private medical provider or get this as a work benefit. These people, who are in fact perhaps the bulk of those with above-average paying jobs, also pay for the state system through mandatory contributions, and tend to complain that, although they pay, they are not able to make use of the system because it's just too bad. Thus, although most people want to see free health care for the poor, there are segments of society that

see privatization as something cost-effective for them as individuals. Add to this the constant neoliberal consensus spread through the media and politicians and you have a lot of people thinking that privatization is the only option for the system.

Among those that fight for privatization is the doctor's union OZZL which called the strike. Although many of the doctors in it have a different idea, and although in the past year they have modified their politics slightly to be more "social", the OZZL is advised by right-wing think tanks which have developed a program of health care reform for them. The main idea behind this program is that privatized health care will work better. Recently this union has proposed giving all citizens "health care vouchers" in equal amounts which they could spend choosing their own service providers.

Anarchists have unfortunately not always been able to come to some consensus on how to treat this issue. The movement in Poland was heavily influenced by libertarians who dominated anarchist ideology in the 80s and 90s and thus you find those that like vouchers. On the other hand, some anarchists recently follow in the statist ideology of the leftist "social state" and rather uncritically support the state institutions. In the past, there have been many long discussions on the health care system inspired by some articles written by those who want to tackle the issue from an anarchist perspective.

It has been my long-standing opinion that neither the state-run system nor the privatized one is the solution. Few people can support the idea of pumping more money into the state-run system when they are aware that a certain portion of it is misappropriated by bureaucrats – but this does not mean that privatization is the answer in a society where the capitalist health care system threatens to create layers of society which can afford some health care, leaving others to fend for themselves. Some soft version of anarchist ideas can be promoted in the here and now as a solution.

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Anarchy in the UK

In the virtual absence of anarchy in the UK (or any where else) there's no corresponding dearth of scholarly, philosophical and academic texts upon anarchism emanating from the British armchair.

Kina, R., *Anarchism*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2005

Kina first categorizes traditional or recognized anarchist personalities and schools by means of a name-dropping extravaganza and a dense, labored, ism-infested analysis. The authoritative tone, scientific-looking tables and graphs ensure that, the casual reader will be alienated by this overwhelming show of expertise as well as totally confused by 20 pages of doctoral level meta-theorizing.

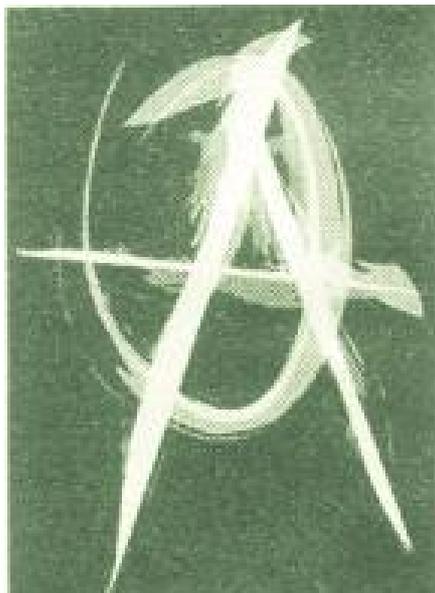
On page 21 the world is then introduced to “new anarchist thinking”. The “main thrust” of which “is: The belief that the struggle by workers for economic emancipation no longer holds the key to anarchist revolution”(p.21). The parameters of Kina’s “new anarchy” are defined by “primitivism”, “post modernism”, “ecologism”, “feminist post structuralism” and “anarcho-capitalism” etc (p.22-5). This by no means exhausts the list and there seems to be no end to the lists of new anarchisms (e.g. “anti-anarchist-anarchism”). The arsenal of this ism-bombardment is an array of trendy-academic-isms, (as long as they aren’t anarchist-isms).

There is endless analysis and elucidation of primitivism throughout the book, but knowledge of post-modernism and structuralism is simply assumed because their meaning and relevance is never really explained to the reader, not even in the introduction. The basic idea behind this intimidating and wholly academic terminology is that the quest of rationality and science is fundamentally at odds with the nature “of reality”. Along with a rejection of all this boring and outdated class struggle stuff, the “new anarchists” also reject the “truth” and liberating potential of the “scientific, rationalist tradition that has dominated anarchist thought” (p.37). This erroneous distinction between the “old” and “new anarchism” is the central focus of Kina’s book.

Chapter Two examines anarchist attitudes to power and authority ending with similar conclusions to chapter 1. The new anar-

chism looks “beyond class inequality to the cultural and ecological impact of the global market economy” (p.51). Kropotkin didn’t promote an exclusively class and property based conception of struggle and liberation, nor did he blindly follow the prevailing scientific-rationalist case for the large-scale industrialization and capitalization of trade and agriculture. Kropotkin’s famous book *Fields, Factories and Workshops* was, surely one of the first works to alert people to the economic and social-ecological ills and absurdities of abandoning culturally local or bio-regionally based economies.

Kina’s Post Modernist/Structuralist/Situationist anarchists, unlike poor old Kropotkin, “understand



that power permeates social relations” rather than being “centralized” or based upon “property relations” (p. 73). Kropotkin, not unlike Kina’s post-moderns, thought that, the source of organization, authority and power was “everywhere and nowhere”. That all associations held possibilities for liberation and enslavement: “It is not the form of an association which involves slavery; it is the ideas of individual liberty which we bring with us to an association which determine the more or less libertarian character of that association. This applies to all forms of association. Cohabitation of two individuals under the same roof may lead to the enslavement of one by the will of the other, as it may also lead to liberty for both. The same applies to the family or to the

co-operation of two persons in gardening or in bringing out a paper. The same with regard to large or small associations, to each social institution”

Chapter Two ends with a discussion of “lifestylism” and “primitivism” that Kina rightly associates with individual rebellion and expression as compared to the “postmodernist focus on networks of individuals and their movements” (p. 74). Again, Kropotkin also conceived anarchism as emerging, to a very large degree, from the networking of like-minded individuals in every conceivable area of human interest and inquiry. Even under state-capitalism, Kropotkin observed: “Europe is covered by thousands of voluntary associations for study and teaching, for industry, commerce. Science, art, literature, exploitation, resistance to exploitation, amusement, serious work, gratification and self-denial, for all that makes up the life of an active and thinking being. We see these societies rising in all nooks and corners of all domains: political, economic, artistic, intellectual. Some are as short lived as roses, some hold their own for several decades, and all strive—while maintaining the independence of each group, circle, branch or section,—to federate, to unite, across frontiers as well as among each nation; to cover all the life of civilized men with a net, meshes of which are intersected and interwoven.”

The fundamental principles and interests of post-modernism were anticipated and explored by thinkers like Kropotkin (as Morris has recently argued in his book upon Kropotkin). Post modernism is just an intellectual fashion statement born of state subsidized French universities who have been enabled to flood the Earth with their dross because the French Government wants the world to continue to believe that Paris is the center of the intellectual and philosophical universe. There is nothing new, in fact there is nothing at all behind Kina’s “post modern anarchism” which is an ephemeral academic phantom-ism, representative of nobody and of no organization, anarchist or otherwise. Primitivism’s only disciple is the Unabomber and Zerzan and Perlman its chief advocates are philosophical nobodies entirely unworthy of comparison with Kropotkin.

The 3rd and Final chapters consider the relationship between anthropology and anarchism, followed by brief summations of a number of different conceptions and strategies for achieving anarchism. The

presentation is entirely inconclusive and based upon material familiar to anybody acquainted with anarchism. The book ends with a brief and open-ended consideration of pacifism and violence with particular reference to the contemporary anti-globalization movement. It is concluded that: "The promise of the anti-globalization movement is that it avoids the staging and workerism of syndicalist strike actions"(p. 155).

The Anti-globalization Carnival is no more spontaneous than a worker's rally, far less effective and much more easily characterized as an amusing side-show. The superior forms of protest and struggle promoted by Kina see the self-assembled netizens of the anti-globalization network dressed as fairies aiming fluffy toys at the security forces protecting WTO and G8 conference venues. Such protests are highly staged theatrical performances that avoid the curse of workerism through being stupid irrelevances; street theater entirely removed from the drama of the main stage.

Sheehan, S., *Anarchism*, London, Reaktion, 2003

Sheehan begins his book on anarchism where Kina ends hers. Anarchism is introduced to the reader through a discussion of violence and pacifism within the context of an interpretative analytical account of the methods and events of the anti-capitalist/globalist protests in Seattle (1999) and Genoa (2001).

The "anarchist convergence center" established in a warehouse in Seattle, conducted "non-violence training sessions" and, "served as a clearing house for a variety of organizational needs" of anarchist and non-anarchist affiliates of the anti-capitalist network. The "Carnival against Capital" was self-organized in the "absence" of "traditional parties of the left" through the networking of "anti-hierarchical affinity groups" linked by "consensus decision making at every level". "Throughout the 5 days of protest, key anarchist principles were seen to work so successfully that other non-anarchist militants adopted them" (p.1-2).

These "Carnivals", Sheehan announces: "inaugurated a new moment in history" (p.159). It is nearly 8 years since history recommenced in the battle for Seattle at the WTO meet in 1999. As the present Doha round of the WTO bumbles along it is abundantly clear that the poorer nations have achieved little and are again forced to accept the conditions imposed by and favoring the interests of rich capitalists predominantly representing a few very wealthy countries and trading blocs. The executives of global capitalism were not even tickled by the "mini armies of protesters dressed as fairies and armed with

feather dusters" (p.8). All the books under review in this essay cite the anti-capitalist network and the Zapatistas as contemporary examples of anarchy in action and combine this with misplaced optimism concerning their ability resist the globalization of Capital. We haven't recently heard much about the anti-capitalist network or the Zapatistas. These icons of the late 90's and early noughties seem to have faded away. Both of these anarchist-like movements were the first extensive anti-hierarchical non-party grassroots movements or networks to really utilize the global organizational potential of the Web. And this in itself makes them of historical interest. But, at the risk of sounding pessimistic or cynical, it must be remembered that, there are very probably more child rapists self-organizing in cyber space as there are anarchists. The gay and lesbian Mardi grass sees half of eastern Sydney dressed up as fairies on an annual basis. The "carnavalesque disruption of order" (p.17) is a major local and international tourist attraction and as much a part of the establishment as any other staged event in Sydney's annual calendar. The gay and lesbian Mardi grass is the institutionalized disruption of normality and the assertion of diversity through the institution of carnival. It's a relatively harmless and frivolous act of collective self-organization by the gay community. But, clearly if the global capitalist offensive is to be contained and defeated strategies that strike at its economic and industrial heart will have to be developed and deployed. This involves something very much more than dressing up as fairies at demonstrations and idolizing the most remote province in Mexico. There isn't anything intrinsically wrong with these activities and preoccupations, but the march of global capitalism isn't bothered by any of it.

Both Kina and Sheehan believe that the issue of "anarchism and violence" is "unresolvable" (p.17). But, both authors also qualify this with the idea that: faced with massive modern technological armies "opposition in the form of violent protest is doomed both in principle and practice"(p.17 & 156). They base this assertion upon the ideas that confronting massive state military forces is impractical without a massive anarchist army that would have to be hierarchical and centrally organized to be effective in the anti-capitalist war. Yet, it is precisely the flat, non-hierarchical, locally autonomous organization and networking combined with the asymmetric use of targeted violence that the global terrorist jihad has employed in bringing the USA army to its knees in Iraq and elsewhere. The jihadists have taken maximum advantage of the net operationally, militarily as well as to peace-

fully spread their message of religious fascist-puritanism, hatred and violence. The jihadists aided by new technologies use anarchist methods of organization to successfully fight for irrationalism and fascism whilst the anarchists assembled a group of pink fairies and conducted polite discourses on how Foucault informs us that we must abandon rationalist thinking? The jihadists spread their medieval theocratic message of irrationalism and intolerance by every means at their disposal whilst the new anarchists toy with the dangerous and defeatist ideas that reason is dead, pacifism is sacred and all views of the world are equally valid.

Kina spreads her ism web too widely, devoting endless space to non-anarchist anti-statist expressions of capitalism and primitivism. In contrast Sheehan is unequivocal about the non-authoritarian socialist roots and essence of the anarchist movement: "Primitivism is a particular brand of American anti-authoritarianism that claims to be anarchist but which, like anarcho-capitalism, has a more natural home on the individualist fringes of right-wing extremism"(p.43).

Kina and Sheehan unfortunately share a commitment to what Kina (p.65-6) terms "post-situationist anarchism". This (proliferism) basically entails the idea that anarchism is quite incomplete, insufficient or theoretically inadequate without incorporating (in a large dose) the insights of Marxian alienation, "Nietzsche's Anarchism" and Foucault's postmodernism. Accordingly on page 57, just when we thought we were going find out more details about anarchism Sheehan suddenly presents us with a ponderous scholarly chapter wholly devoted to the Social Ontology of Marx and Nietzsche that rightly belongs to another work on 19th Century German metaphysical philosophy. After our Marxist re-education session we abruptly return to anarchism in the fourth chapter. Sheehan provides us with a brief and informal overview of important historical acts of anarchist direct action—the Diggers, Ranters, the French Revolution, Alexander Berkman, the Russian Revolution, the Spanish Revolution, Paris 1968, the British Angry brigade, the Red Brigade, the British Class War Federation and the Zapatistas. Comparison of violent and non-violent forms of Direct Action is the major theme that the author uses to link these events and movements together. Chapter 4 ends with a brief consideration of the Christiania communal squat in Copenhagen. Both Kina (p. 118) and Sheehan (p. 84) falsely suggest that Kropotkin supported small-scale communal experimentalism that he vigorously opposed on numerous grounds.

Sheehan's book ends very feebly with a directionless pastiche of "cultural anarchism" involving consideration of everything from Shakespeare's Plays to avant-garde movies.

Colin Ward, *Anarchism*, Oxford, O.U.P., 2004

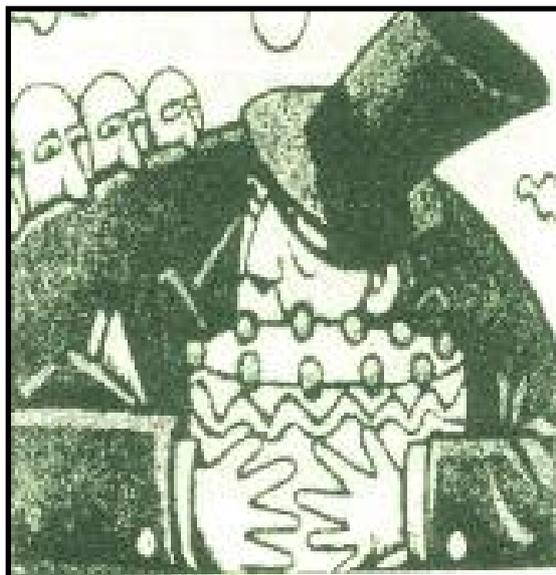
If you wished to give a book introducing anarchism to an interested but ignorant friend or colleague then Ward's 1973 study *Anarchism in Action* would widely be considered a good first choice. A good second choice is his new *Very Short Introduction to Anarchism*.

In contrast, Kina's or Sheehan's studies wouldn't come to mind when seeking-out a basic introduction to anarchism. Kina's book despite being billed by the publisher as an ABC of anarchism is nothing of the sort. It is in fact a collection of post-doctoral academic articles most usually found in scholarly journals and best enjoyed by upper level university political theory students. Sheehan's book doesn't pretend to be a basic introduction but it is clearly one of its major aims. He starts quite boldly but the book unexpectedly morphs into an irrelevant, verbose theoretical presentation of German metaphysics. Sheehan when he isn't promoting Marxist Ontology provides an informal overview of historical and contemporary trends in anarchism but the general emphasis upon unstructured tangential exploration of cultural anarchism renders it inconclusive, directionless and ultimately confusing.

Ward covers the same ground as Kina and Sheehan (and more besides) in one third of the space in a language and style that is far less intimidating and confusing. Ward pays considerable more attention to clearly presenting in a scholarly format the subject matter of anarchism "in a very few words" as "simply" as he can. Many of the great anarchist writers of the past sharpened their quills penning newspaper columns and penny pamphlets. The desire, necessity and ability to present a case in a short space and in a way that can be generally understood by a very wide audience is actually usually only acquired through many years of work in this sort of literary environment. Ward is no exception to this rule. As founder-editor of the influential and fondly remembered British monthly *Anarchy* (1961-70) and prolific contributor to mainstream national British social journals (e.g. *New Society*) Ward developed the ability to write in a clear, scholarly way that not only appealed to student radicals of the 1960's and 70's, but also to their teachers and the public generally. I believe that as an unabashed disciple of Kropotkin Ward has also made a conscious and successful attempt to write, as Kropotkin

does, in as clear and as succinct a way as one is able. The other important principle that Ward learnt from Kropotkin is that, anarchism is not some complicated intellectual theory but is always in action and existing 'everywhere and nowhere'. Anarchism permeates society and if one looks into the 'nooks and corners' of contemporary and past societies one finds organizations and practices in specific historical, geographical and cultural contexts that, unconsciously embrace anarchism as the most practical solution to the needs of individual and collective life of the day.

After covering the major historical personalities and events Ward takes a thematic approach to introducing anarchism. Each subject is presented by means of beautifully selected plumb quotations from authoritative historical and contemporary sources unified and combined by lucid analysis. There are chapters and sections devoted to the welfare state, nation-



alism, fundamentalism, prisons, education, federalism, regionalism and the sexual revolution. These self-contained little studies may be described as highly polished updated versions of the sort of articles that once featured in Ward's *Anarchy* magazine with respect to their length, content range and style. Ward's cultural approach to introducing the achievements, failures, ideas and concerns of anarchism is essentially similar to Sheehan's but far surpasses his work in terms of economy, focus, relevance and clarity.

Ward like Sheehan is unequivocal in his rejection of the new-age theories of anarcho-capitalism and anarcho-primitivism. The anarcho capitalists are dismissed as unimaginative academic apologists of "untrammelled market capitalism" (p. 69).

The relative success of cultural anarchism when compared to its dismal political failures is a positive influence that both

Sheehan and Ward wish to emphasize. Civilization is just as much a utopian and largely unrealized goal as that of anarchism. In fact anarchism as Kropotkin portrayed it: would be the very height of civilization. The global spread during the past two decades of aggressive and regressive religious fundamentalisms and, an exploitative cancerous consumer-capitalist neo-conservative culture has reversed in Ward's lifetime many of the advances in our thinking and practice with respect to sexuality, tolerance, education and ethnic and social integration. Primitivism's enthusiasm for a return to a taboo-ridden tribal past is as fanciful as it is repugnant. Primitivism regards civilization as something which has been achieved but the opinion of the overwhelming majority of people is that humankind still lives in a barbaric state and the goal of a civilized, secular, tolerant, educated, socially, ecologically, regionally and globally integrated world is a very distant dream that may never be realized. Rather than anarchism opposing civilization, Ward is correct in stating that anarchists relative to their comparatively small historical movement have contributed enormously to a series of "modest gains in civilizing" sexuality, education, punishment and so on (p.75).

Kina's "new anarchism" is focused upon the postmodern rejection of truth and reason. Such approaches grossly misrepresent the historical spirit of anarchism and are inherently foolhardy in a world threatened by religious and ethnic stupidity, hatred and intolerance. Ward highlights the growth of individual (mystical ecology and primitivism) and mass clerical (Islamic and Christian) irrationalism and fundamentalism. He regards these trends as the greatest threat to the development of libertarian thought and practice in the world today. Ward warns us that this contemporary mixture of primitivism, postmodernism and irrationalism is a dangerous intellectual and social exercise as "toleration" itself was a product of science and reason and cannot exist without it (p.38).

My only criticism of Ward's excellent little book is that it concludes rather weakly with a vague final chapter conveying familiar environmental messages of small is beautiful, local is focal and best is less. After a really rather good penultimate chapter on regionalism and federalism these ideas are not adequately linked with futuristic anarchistic visions of local and global federations of ecological regions paralleling or replacing both local cultural and national territorial identities, boundaries and borders (a perspective sometimes known as eco- or bio-regionalism).

Graham Purchase, VijayaNagara 2007

Cont. From Page 14 The Union of Polish Syndicalists (ZSP) have taken the first steps towards a dialog on this issue. In a statement in support of the nurse's strike, we ask what can be done to overcome this impasse where the government runs things badly and bureaucrats are interested in their own profit and capitalists run things for the own profit, and badly at that. We maintain that part of the problem is that people do not control public spending directly and, if they did, they probably would chose to devote funds to social needs rather than buying F16s or giving sweetheart contracts to some politicians' families. Medicine should be "socialized" in the meaning that society should have direct control over it together with health care workers. ZSP proposes that the health care system come under direct popular control immediately. It also calls for other industries which are involved in labour conflicts, for example teachers who also recently had some warning strike action, to join forces together. Finally ZSP calls for the general society, all of whom are effected by this issue, to show more support for the nurses.

The Outlook for the Protests

Unfortunately, the outlook does not seem to be very optimistic. Years of right-wing media and intellectual dominance have ensured that there are many proponents of privatization in society. Many ordinary people also do not identify with doctors. For some, they are seen as an arrogant class of corrupt profiteers determined to improve their material condition at the cost of poor people who cannot afford too many bribes. The media, especially during the doctors' strike, is filled with stories about "rich doctors" who live in villas.

They quite deliberately stir up class envy, even though journalists on average aspire more towards the richer class of people than the poor and if privatization of the health care industry really becomes more widespread, you'll find increasingly more profiteers from the industry living in villas that would make those few doctors' houses really seem quite modest. Surely the owners of private clinics and pharmaceutical companies already live in luxury and some are on the list of the richest people in the country but there's no big campaign against them in the media.

Besides the media campaign against "rich doctors", the authorities decided to make a few spectacular arrests for corruption. A

chiropractor for example, was arrested for signing people's sick leave papers, apparently taking bribes to fake a few things. No doubt such things exist but it is being sickeningly used by the government in their campaign against doctors. It might seem strange for people from other countries, but the current government is mired in populist rhetoric against "educated elites" which they use to manipulate the poor.

Doctors and nurses are under fire and presented as some evil group of greedy bastards and even criminals that the government cannot negotiate with because they constitute some sort of anti-social element.

In one of the PM's favourite type of ma-



nipulation, he suggested that he might want to hold a "referendum". The current government is quite fond of holding referenda on questions they think they can win as they are confident they can ask questions which will guarantee that the people choose their ideas. (This didn't work for them in the past however when they held a local referendum on the Rospuda Valley bypass, sure that 99% of the local people supported government plans. It turned out that only a small group of supporters voted for it.)

The PM proposes that people are asked whether or not they want their taxes raised to pay for the doctors' and nurses' pay rises. He claims that "people need to be told the truth" – that there is "no way to pay people more without raising taxes".

Such actions of the PM need to be strongly criticized as it's a gross manipulation to claim to ask the people to decide, yet not to ask them whether they want to spend money on other things, for example the Polish military missions in Iraq or Afghanistan, which most people are against.

Right now, the outlook does not look too bright because society is very passive and neither the doctors nor the nurses have been able to mobilize people, despite the fact that most people support at least the demands for pay rises and more of the GNP spent on health care as reasonable, especially in light of the fact that the economy, we are told, is always "growing" and "booming". The doctors, one has to say, organized an extremely weak protest: they rarely were seen on the streets or in the media and normally their union leader did all the talking. There were no "real faces" for the people to see, nor do people get a sense of determination to fight, despite the fact that in reality, many are very determined. The PR for the struggle was absolutely abysmal. The nurses on the other hand are much more visible for the average person, camped out on the streets of Warsaw. Only now with the nurses' action does anybody from the public actually have the opportunity to go and show any sign of support. And, quite sadly, for some people, only now that the nurses are camped out do they realize that we are in the midst of a very serious strike. Amazingly, the widescale doctors' strike made little impact on society. One of the worst case scenarios would be some sort of compromise made by the Tri-Partite Commission, which I fear might actually be the outcome of this.

Solidarity and OPZZ, which sit in this commission, are long-time supporters of privatization, as of course are the business institutions which sit on this commission. Some doctors who have given in their notice (and, in some cities this concerns whole hospitals), may be hired back as contract workers at slightly higher rates, or may try to work in the private sector. It is very likely that some hospitals may hire back some people but make cutbacks elsewhere to compensate. They may, for example, liquidate "unprofitable" wards; already in some cities they are discussing this.

The most likely outcome of negotiations through the Tri-Partite Commission is probably going to be further attempts to divide the doctors by giving in to some of them and deciding to phase in more privatization.

Laure Akai
Thanks to Libcom

NEWS & NOTES

The most important news covered in this edition of RW, are plans by the Howard Govt. to massively increase the number of AWA's (Australian Workplace Agreements) imposed on workers, as part of its agenda for its next term in office. (See article page 2.) Given the current lame duck performance of the ACTU and the union hierarchy in fighting Howard's IR laws, particularly in the shape of anti- Work Choices rallies and a focus on electing Another Liberal Party into Office, we can expect a complete cave-in by bureaucratic unionism to this new far reaching employer offensive. The establishment of a direct action alternative and the long range serious work to achieve it is an ever more important priority to hurl back this Howard Govt. and employer gauntlet.

In State Transit, the ASN has been assisting militant drivers in out manoeuvring a ploy by the union bosses to lower workers expectations for securing wages and conditions improvements via the production and circulation of a "suggestions for a grass roots Enterprise Agreement Log of Claims". Latest news is that the union hierarchy in the buses has adopted the chief demand of the document involving a 15% wage rise over two years. Whilst, there has been an interesting flow on effect, with other NSW Public Sector Unions also adopting similar wage rise demands in their EBA Logs of Claims. These demands are in sharp contrast to the meagre 2 and half percent pa pay rises offered by Public Sector employers.

Rebel Worker has a new internet Web Page.

Its address is www.rebelworker.org

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

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

Your assistance on the financial plane is also very welcome.

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Where we stand:

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

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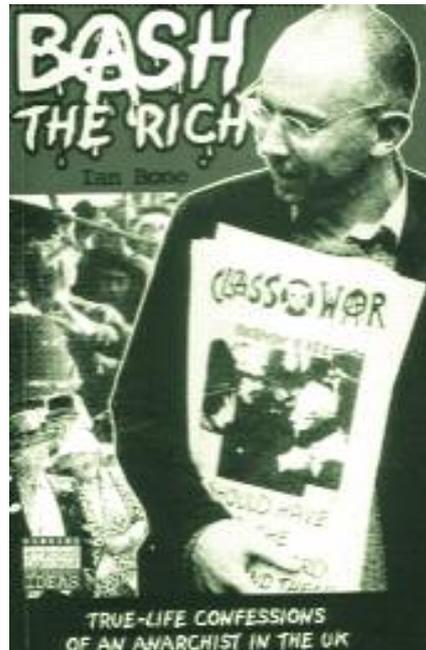
The legacy of mass Stalinism in the shape of the Communist parties for many decades in the 20th Century and the subsequent hatching of Trotskyist/Maoist groupings has established hegemony within the anti-capitalist milieu in much of the Anglo-European World for the building of vanguardist leftist sects.

Groupings which are fundamentally existential – existing and growing for their own sake to maintain micro bureaucracies and expanded egos of party gurus. They are characterised by elitist orientations with often ridiculous pretensions to resolve every issue under the sun and associated correct positions and the pursuit of endless opportunistic campaigns. These groupings often manifest extreme Stalinist tendencies involving the resort to all manner of devious tricks to manipulate campaigns and their members.

Converging with this legacy was the upsurge in the late 1960's of students, sectors of the lower middle class and workers with high levels of autonomy in their jobs, with little experience of the class struggle into the anti-capitalist milieu and a decline in militant worker involvement. The influx of these layers is associated with the interconnected expansion of tertiary education, the welfare state and union bureaucracies since the 1960's and the successes of the global employer offensive since the late 1970's. These marginal layers due to their objective lack of involvement in the class struggle, often develop a defused focus on the various misdeeds of capitalism and being attracted to the divisive and irrational bourgeois ideology of "identity politics" with all its absurd notions of "monolithic" imaginary communities of oppressed "women", "queers", "blacks", "indigenous", etc and a worship of the autonomous organising of these groups.

The Stalinist legacy merges seamlessly with this reactionary divisive bourgeois ideology producing all manner of bizarre antics within the leftist milieu, particularly navel gazing political correctness displays and a pseudo religious climate within such groups and at various public meetings/centres.

To varying degrees, the largest groupings in the anarchist/syndicalist milieu in Britain since the 1960's have been se-



verely affected by this leftist influence, particularly the DAM/SF (Direct Action Movement/Solidarity Federation), ACF/AF (Anarchist Communist Federation/Anarchist Federation), Class War Federation and the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World). In the case of the DAM/SF, it has involved redefining anarcho-syndicalism into a sect building formula. Involving a "Globalist" conception focusing on all manner of issues, outside the job. Certainly, with the formation of a mass syndicalist union movement, would be cooperation with other group-

ings on various campaigns eg residents groups to wage rent strikes, but contemporary British syndicalism is very far from that situation. Whilst, a certain layer in it, view its very few, small and fragile industrial networks as the "building blocks" of mass syndicalist unionism, which indicates an extreme pretension. In the case of the ACF/AF, it confuses participation in the formalist structures and rituals and opportunistic "organising" of the IWW with the serious organising which could establish genuine mass syndicalism. The IWW has particularly displayed an "existential syndicalist orientation" with its "strategically senseless "organising" amongst Scottish "parliamentary workers" including members of parliament, achieving its largest "shop" organisation.

The book under review focuses on the memoirs of Ian Bone, founder of the Class War paper who was deeply entangled in this exotic fringe of the British Left subculture. Initially, the author sketches his working class origins as the child of domestic servants. This working class connection brought the author some contact with the reality of the class struggle, but not enough to prevent his swirling into the student New Left upsurge of the late 1960s.

At that time he became involved in his local area in one of the myriad ephemeral student anarchist groups, without any connection with a militant workers' movement. In this milieu he became envious of the more efficient organisational techniques of the orthodox Leninist groups and critical of the ramshackle Anarchist Federation of Britain, which his group was associated. Consequently, he shows that he became drawn into the orbit of the "Solidarity" groups, which had a significant composition of militant workers and specialised in producing analyses of workers' struggles and other relevant topics in the shape of pamphlets. At this stage he outlines how he picked up support for the abstract calls for the formation of

See Page 9