

REBEL WORKER

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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Widening War in the Middle East stokes flames of inflation! Lead up to Xmas! Time to Organise grass roots committes on-the-job to Wage a United Transport Workers & Others Campaign to settle accounts with inflation & achieve the real demands!



Iran backed Houthi Rebel Fighters at an Anti-Saudi Rally in Yemen

DEBATE ON UWU ELECTIONS P.2; NSW RAILWAY NEWS P.3; LETTERS P.5; SYDNEY BUSES NEWS P.5; VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS P.6; BRITAIN TODAY P. 9; FRANCE TODAY P. 10; BOOK REVIEW CORNER: DEBATE ON REBEL WORKER REVIEW OF SARAGOSSA BOUND: A CHRONICLE OF THE DURRUTI COLUMN; NEWS & NOTES P.19;

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Unless otherwise stated, signed Articles do not necessarily represent the position of the A.S.N. As a whole.

Any contributions, criticisms, letters or Comments are welcome.

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Debate on the UWU elections

The United Workers Union leadership election (and why it didn't really matter)

11/9/26 Back in June, the United Workers Union (UWU) wrapped up a hotly contested election for its National Convention. The UWU is one of the biggest unions in the country, with 150,000 members in dozens of industries, including warehousing, hospitality, aged care, and early childhood education.

Two tickets pitched themselves to members. 'United for You', led by union president Jo Schofield, ended up winning with a slim majority. But they faced a serious challenge from a group calling itself 'Members First'.

Members First had a slick campaign and some of what they had to say sounded pretty good: Less focus on the Labor Party, no back room deals

without delegates present, and more money for strike funds and organisers.

But despite its name, and what some on the Left claimed during the campaign, Members First was no rank-and-file movement. The ticket was the project of UWU's national secretary, Tim Kennedy, and was

wing. The ticket's campaign carried on their faction's tradition of prioritising political lobbying over industrial organising. Under their model, unionism is a kind of 'service' that members sign up for: legal advice and other perks are provided by the staff of the union in exchange for dues.



run with very little member involvement.

The election, then, was a factional battle between sections of the officialdom, and the parts of the Labor Party they align themselves with.

Two sides, same coin

The UWU was founded as a merger between the National Union of Workers (NUW) and United Voice (UV) in 2019. The forces behind the two election ticks.

United for You represented the UV

The NUW, on the other hand, placed more emphasis on traditional industrial organising, in industries like warehousing, logistics and food manufacturing. The leadership of the Members First campaign came from the NUW faction, and their election promises - more organisers, support for delegates, the occasional serious strike - reflect their own priorities.

The NUW approach, and the promises of Members First, might look pretty good at first glance. But

See page 8

ASN APPEAL

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N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS

The Lead Up to Xmas: Time to tackle the Wages Rot & Achieve the Real Demands!

Some of the most important news lately has been the new flare up in the continuing conflict in the Middle

East steadily stoking the flames of inflation. According to what economist Bill Mitchell wrote earlier this month, “real wages have declined in the last 3 consecutive quarters and are now 6.4 per cent lower than they were in the June-quarter 2020,” “Over the last 25 quarters, there have been only ten that have delivered real wages growth.” The real value of workers’ wages is now at the same level as in September 2011 eliminating a

decade of wage increases.

Making a mockery of enterprise bargaining and its so called wage rises. The lead up to Xmas is a great opportunity to organise on the job to build grass roots committees for united rail, bus, tram, truckies and others direct action to “settle accounts” on the wages front and achieve the “real demands”.

Expose: TfNSW's Internal Strategy to Undermine Worker Rights: And the Silence Enabling It

A coordinated system of consultation failures, fragmented rule-making, managerial compliance, and union inaction is reshaping the working conditions of thousands inside TfNSW.

Workers across TfNSW have encountered the same pattern: decisions imposed without consultation, entitlements re-interpreted without authority, and internal directives treated as binding

deliberate, coordinated strategy.

A strategy designed to circumvent laws, the Enterprise Agreement, and even TfNSW's own policies - without ever admitting it.

This expose outlines how that strategy operates, how silos enforce it, how management at all levels willingly participates, and why unions have remained silent while rights are being eroded.

The Strategy: Circumvent,

made without proper consultation, despite clear legal and Agreement requirements.

2. Replace Agreement provisions with internal directives Silo-specific rules are invented and enforced as if they were contractual obligations.

3. Fragment interpretation across silos each silo applies its own version of entitlements, creating confusion and preventing coordinated challenges.

4. Diffuse accountability through structural ambiguity Workers and managers are told: “A decision has been and we’ve been told to implement it.”

5. Enforce compliance through managerial obedience Managers at all levels willingly issue unsupported instructions, even when they know they cannot explain them.

This is not incompetence. This is a strategy - a deliberate structural method for reshaping workplace rights without renegotiation, consultation, or scrutiny.

Silos: The Engine Room of the Strategy

TfNSW's internal architecture is built on silos: Rostering, Payroll, HR, Operations, and others. Each silo operates as a self-contained



despite having no basis in the Enterprise Agreement. These incidents have often been dismissed as isolated misunderstandings.

They are not misunderstandings. They are not isolated. They form a

Fragment, Enforce

The behaviour occurring across TfNSW follows a consistent, deliberate pattern:

1. Circumvent consultation Decisions affecting workers are

regime with its own internal logic, its own interpretations, and its own unofficial rule book.

How silos enforce control

Silos are not accidental organisational structures. They are functional tools, also known as compartmentalisation:

They fragment responsibility so no one can identify who authorised a directive.

They control information so workers only see the version of “rules” each silo wants them to see.

They create inconsistent interpretations, so challenges become isolated and easier to neutralise.

They prevent workers from recognising patterns by ensuring each silo operates differently.

Above these silos sits TfNSW itself coordinating the overall strategy while allowing each silo to carry out its part.

This layered structure ensures that every decision appears local, disconnected, and untraceable, even when it is part of a coordinated plan.

Management: The Enforcers of Unsupported Directives

Management at TfNSW does not resist this system. Management enables it.

Across all levels, managers routinely issue instructions they cannot explain;

enforce rules that do not exist in the Agreement;

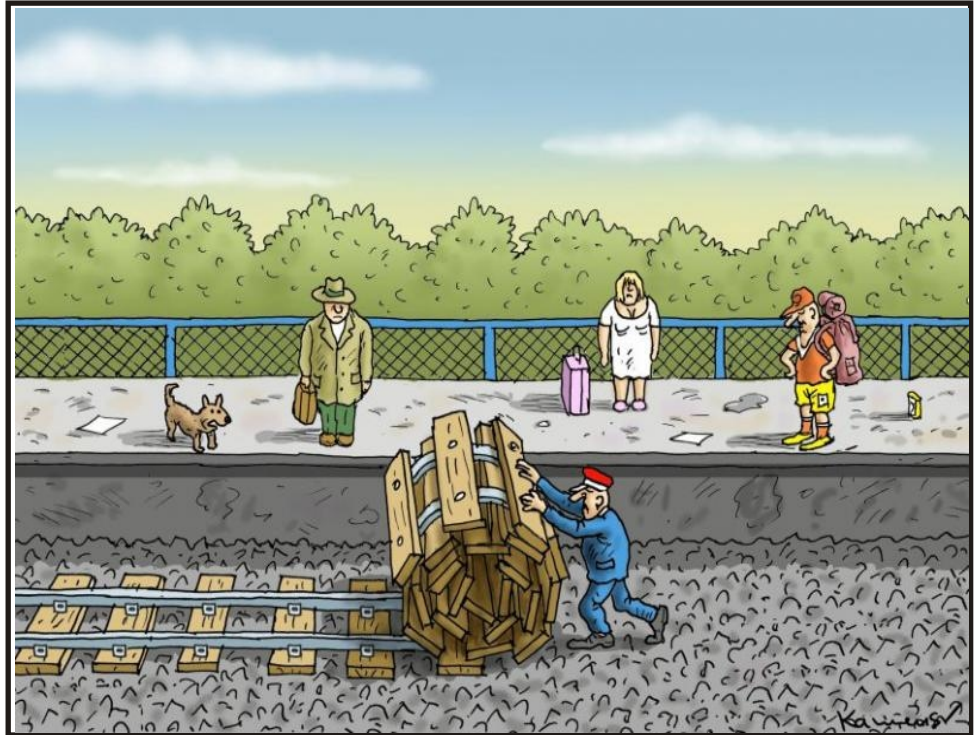
repeat directives without knowing who made them;

refuse to provide reasons because they do not have any;

comply instantly with any instruction passed down, regardless of legitimacy;

Attempts to obtain clarity from managers are futile. Not because managers are powerless - but because managers are willing participants in the strategy.

They do not question directives. They do not seek justification. They do not challenge unsupported instructions. They simply enforce whatever they are told, without hesitation and without



accountability.

This is not passive compliance. It is active enforcement.

Managers have become the delivery mechanism for a system designed to bypass the Agreement while maintaining the appearance of procedural legitimacy.

Union Silence: The Most Damaging Element

While TfNSW expands its internal rule-making and managers enforce unsupported directives, the unions remain silent.

Workers have noticed. Workers are asking questions. Workers are not receiving answers.

The silence is now impossible to justify.

Three explanations are being openly discussed among workers:

1. Ineptitude A failure to recognise the scale and deliberate nature of TfNSW's strategy.

2. Complicity A willingness to allow TfNSW to reshape workplace rights without resistance.

3. Misplaced priorities Where “social justice” branding, external activism, and political posturing take precedence

over the core responsibility of defending members inside TfNSW.

Whatever the reason, union silence enables the strategy. It accelerates the erosion of rights. It leaves workers exposed to a system designed to circumvent the Agreement.

The Consequences: And Why Members Must Recognise the Strategy

Workers inside TfNSW are facing: a coordinated plan to bypass consultation;

a structural system designed to fragment accountability;

a network of silos used to manipulate both workers and managers;

a growing reliance on internal directives that override the Agreement;

a union movement that appears unwilling or unable to confront any of it;

This expose is not speculation. It is a description of what is happening now.

The question is no longer whether TfNSW is undermining rights. The question is why unions are allowing it

By Railway Johnny

LETTERS

Dear RW

It has been brought to attention that at the farewell function for Andrew Holt, RTBU representative at Blacktown, selected attendees were provided with wristbands entitling them to complimentary alcoholic drinks funded by the RTBU, while other union members were required to purchase their own drinks.

If this is accurate, it raises a legitimate concern about fairness and transparency. Given that RTBU activities and expenditure are ultimately funded by members' contributions, members could

reasonably expect to be treated equally rather than seeing certain individuals receive privileges paid for from collective union funds.
J.

RTBU 2026 ELECTIONS RIGGED!

Dear RW

The RTBU officials didn't tell members about nominations for the coming union elections apart from mention on the RTBU Express Web Site. They put nothing on notice boards. They sent no emails to

members and nothing in the journal regarding the period for nominations in the elections.

I am an elected member of the salaried division and weren't even told. So I missed out being on the ballot. However, the RTBU officials tapped those they wanted on the shoulder to nominate.

I complained to the Electoral Commission and they stated all is in order. If this goes ahead then I will be making a formal complaint against the Electoral Commission.

Railway Jeffery

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS

Leichhardt Depot News

A Positive Development for a Change

RW: What's the latest situation with management at the depot?

Leichhardt Driver: In the previous May-June 2026 edition of Sparks, if you read that issue the reference is to "Bat Shit". There was mention of a new depot manager at the depot. He was in reality an acting Depot manager. He had moved his personal belongings into the depot manager's office. So it seemed he definitely had the job.

However something "mysterious" occurred and he did not get the job. He has returned to his staff supervisor position. It seems word got around in management circles about his record of "unorthodox methods" and bad relations with drivers. We now have a former Leichhardt depot manager as depot manager. He held previously an area manager position.

RW: How is the magazine "Sparks" going down at the depot

LD: I have noticed quite a bit of interest. With many finding the

content amusing. Especially the "Bat Shit" statement in the last issue.

RW: What is the situation with the depot yard?

LD: There has been a lot going on in

hailed into the office over bus crashes were not actually driving the buses involved. One was on his day off and not at the depot that day and another was not in the yard at the time of the accidents.



the depot yard associated with the introduction of the electric buses and the devices to recharge them. There have been cables everywhere. While the lanes have been narrowed. As a result there has been some bus accidents in the yard. However two drivers who were

Kingsgrove Depot News

RW: What's the situation at the depot?

Kingsgrove Driver 1: The big issue for most of us remains the rosters. We are angry with them, but its not

clear to us how to tackle the issue. The rosters are rubbish! They are steadily getting worse. In particular the bus running times are steadily deteriorating. As a result we are facing a constant erosion of our lunch/meal break times.

RW: What are your impressions of the situation at the depot?

Kingsgrove Driver 2: I'm a part timer, our rosters don't change for better or worse. They remain at 7 hours 30 minutes. Other news has been an influx of the new electro buses into the depot. So far I haven't noticed any issues with them. However I prefer the older diesel

buses.

Tempe Depot News

RW: What's the situation at the depot with the rosters

Tempe Driver: In regard to issues of shift length I personally have no problems. However we are having a continuing very serious problems with layover breaks and associated bus running times. Mostly the layover breaks are inadequate with only some being adequate. In many cases you reach the terminus and you have to start your run back again.

There is absolutely no time to have some exercise and going to the toilet. Often there are no toilet facilities available at the terminus. You feel guilty to take more adequate layover break time because commuters are waiting for your buses at the run commencement stop.

RW: What is other news at the depot?

TD: At Tempe the depot fleet has received 10 new electro buses. So far we haven't had any problems with them. Particularly regarding such issues as cables and recharging facilities.

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of RW, Drivers, Conductors and other V/Line employees will discuss current issues at V/Line. As in previous issues of RW, names have been changed.

RW: What is the issue of Velocity trains with three carriages having to stop at the same end of the platform as six carriage trains?

Rastus: A new manager for drivers has been appointed. He comes from outside and he claims some drivers of six carriage Velocity Trains are stopping short on the platforms. He has introduced a new rule where all Velocity trains whether they be of six or three carriages have to stop at the end of the platforms.

RW: Was there any consultation with the Union over this new rule?

Roscoe: One word: "No".

Allison: The first conductors knew of this rule was when three carriage trains were stopping at the end of the platforms. The Customer Service Managers were not informed and it was only drivers who told the conductors what had happened.

Ichabod: An example is Morwell where the platform on the UP platform is six cars but the Booking Office is at the Traralgon end of the platform. As a result the three car train goes to the end of the platform. Regardless of the weather, passengers have to walk to the end of

the train. This also happens at Ballarat, Traralgon and Lorne.

RW: What is the situation at Footscray?

Roscoe: Footscray, Sunshine, Tarneit and Wyndham Vale can take nine carriage Velocity Trains in Peak Hours. Nine car trains are to be introduced on the Melton Line.

Rastus: At these stations, the Velocity trains stop where the six car trains stop.

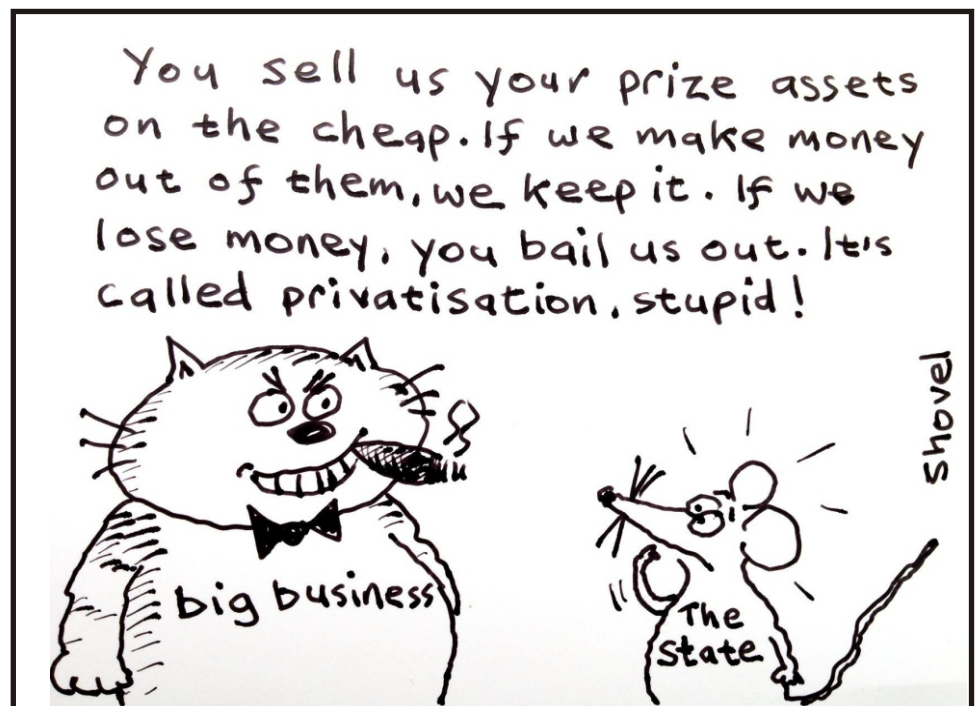
Ichabod: A number of drivers operating these trains of three cars are stopping short on the platforms. The passengers in these trains are happy with the

arrangement, particularly during wet weather when the train stops under the Verandah.

Allison: At Footscray, a three car train stopped under the Verandah. A customer service employee who was on duty that day DOBBED the driver of this train into management.

RW: What happened?

Roscoe: The driver faced disciplinary action he faced, because another rule has been introduced where if you front Human Resources, you are not allowed to



talk about these issues.

Allison: The majority of conductors and station staff did not like what happened in Footscray. You see all new starts are told during training that its their duty to DOB in their fellow workers. A number of people have informed these trainers they will not DOB in fellow workers.

Archie: This role is causing tension between train drivers and conductors.

RW: Is there a way to solve this impasse?

Rastus: Yes, there is. In the Suburban Electrified area, they used to run 2 car, 4 car and seven car trains. In off peak, trains were reduced in size to cater for the demand.

Roscoe: In every station in the electrified area, there were signs on the light stanchions, two car, four car and seven car. These signs stated where these size trains were to stop.

Rastus: V/Line at the country stations have signs painted on the platforms. These signs are painted yellow. They should be painted white. These signs for 3,6 and 9 cars should also be placed on light poles on stations in the V/Line area. In the Suburban Area, a sign V/Line train 3 or 6 cars could be placed on light poles with agreement with Metro Trains. These signs only need to be erected at twelve Metropolitan Stations.

Ichabod: This suggestion could be implemented but knowing V/Line management the answer for the suggestion would be "NO".

RW: Once again we have run out of space.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say, V/Line should erect 3 and 6 car stop signs on light poles at V/Line Stations. As for the slug who dobbed in the driver at Footscray station, drivers have a word for you, GET OUT OF THE RAIL INDUSTRY!

In this issue of RW we will discuss an event which happened fifty years ago in Victoria with the Rail System.

RW: Could you discuss this event?

Alvin: In the Victorian Parliament in September 1976, the Minister of

Transport commented that a number of Country Passenger Services were to be replaced by buses under contract to the Victorian Railways.

Rastus: Most of the services to be replaced were operated by Rail Motors. These Rail Motors were built between 1920 and 1952. The latter built Rail Motors were nearing the end of their economic life.

RW: Were any new Rail Motors purchased?

Roscoe: In early 1970 two Rail Motors were purchased for the Ararat Portland service. Two similar Rail Motors were purchased from the NSW Railways in 1975. These Rail Motors were to operate certain Ballarat and Geelong trains.

Ezra: The Rail Motor services to be replaced were Bendigo Sea Lake, Korong Vale, Robinvale, Bendigo Cohuna, Bendigo Echuca Deniliquin,

Passenger services were shut down after a Public Inquiry. The closure procedure was part of the Railways Act. The closure could be refused. The Inquiry was held by the Transport Regulation Board. The TRB would issue a licence to a Bus Company to operate a replacement service with passenger prices set by the TBA. Most of the objections to Passenger train closures were that rail tickets could not be used. The services to close in 1976 could be operated by the Railways but now with services operated by buses under contract with the Railways.

This idea was copied by Ireland where a large number of Rail Services were replaced by Buses operated by Rail Operators, but in Victoria the services were to be contracted to Private Bus Operators. The Victorian Railways was not to run these buses.

Rastus: The first service to be



Swan Hill Piangil, Kerang Koondrook, Ballarat Linton, Castlemaine Maryborough, Tallarook Mansfield, Traraglon Maffra and Nyora Wonthaggi.

Irvine: The passenger service to Port Fairy was to be replaced by buses beyond Warrnambool.

Ichabod: Before 1975 Country

replaced by this arrangement was Murton to Hopetoun which closed in July 1975. Despite objections, the closure was accepted by the population in the district.

Alvin: What the Public was not told was that after two years if passenger numbers did not pick up the Railways would go to the TRB to

discontinue the service.

Ezra: The Rail Services were replaced between November 1976 and February 1979. Employees who worked these services were redeployed if they wanted to remain in Railway Employment.

Rastus: What surprised Railway Employees was the service from Woodend to Daylesford was not included in the round of closures.

Irvine: This service was reprieved for Political reasons. Due to deferred maintenance, the track deteriorated and after the speed was reduced 20km on the branch. The service was replaced by buses in 1978.

Rastus: The Passenger service closures continued. Due to a large Grain

UWU Elections Cont. From P.2.

the two strategies aren't as far apart as they seem.

The empowerment of members promised by Members First was incredibly limited, and largely focused on 'transparency'. Even the promised strike funds were a fraction of the union's actual resources. Members weren't engaged in democratic structures as part of the campaign, and very few attended election events.

Members First wasn't an example of organisation from below-it was an advertising campaign, controlled from above.

Power to the rank-and-file?

Despite the hundreds of thousands spent on campaigning by both sides, only 31% of members actually voted. Neither ticket mobilised members in a genuinely democratic or militant way, because, ultimately, both want to maintain the power of the officials and their links with the Labor Party.

Throwing money at an election isn't how you build the confidence, militancy, or participation of members. On paper, Members First may have been a marginally more militant ticket. But had they somehow managed to win, they would still be in the exact same

Harvest in 1978-1979 to provide the train crews to move the harvest, certain passenger trains were replaced by buses. Some of these services never returned. Examples being Benalla, Yarrawonga and the Cross Country service from Geelong to Ballarat. The closure of the passenger service to Yarrawangee was confirmed in 1979. Geelong to Ballarat in 1981.

Irving: There were further cuts to Country Passenger Trains in 1980 and 1981. These service cuts will be discussed in future issues of RW.

Alvin: In 1981 a revival of Country Passenger Trains in Victoria on the main lines happened. A new "Deal for Country Services" was introduced and despite further cuts

position as their United For You opponents.

Without a real, well-organised rank-and-file movement, with power based in workplaces, the officials are left balancing between members, the bosses, and their mates in the ALP. With all the power on the bosses side, and pressure from the government to keep members in line, they have every reason to settle for bad deals.

The only people that can really put members first are the members themselves. To win democratic control over our union, we have to get organised at the level of the rank-and-file

No saviours from above

The UWU election was a fight for control of the National Convention, a body of 500 which then elects the day-to-day managers of the union. Rather than elect Convention delegates by industry or workplace, members are grouped together by the electorate they live in.

This system was designed to entrench the power of the Executive and prevent an alternative base of power forming among specific groups of workers on the shop floor.

Still, there are industry specific structures for parts of UWU's coverage (farms, early childhood

to services in the 1990's improvements have been made to services to Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour, Traralgon services. Finally most of the buses that replaced the services discontinued in 1970's are still operating under contract to V/Line.

Rastus; What should be remembered about the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's was both Political Parties did nothing to improve Country Train services. Hardly any new rolling stock was constructed. It was the Unions and Community Groups who fought to retain what country services remain in Victoria today.

education, logistics etc.) Delegates and other members should use these to make connections with each other and facilitate democratic decision making. These structures can be used to pull the leadership in behind members' actual demands, or push beyond the leadership entirely.

Connections between workers elected from the shop floor would be the basis for genuine member control. Where these structures don't function democratically, or in industries like hospitality, where they don't exist, we have to build them: shop by shop, street by street, suburb by suburb.

Only a real rank-and-file movement, based on democratic rank-and-file groups, can make a clean break from the Labor Party and embrace militant industrial action. This would have been true even if Members First had won.

No faction fight is going to bring the change we need, because saviours never come from above. We, the members, are the union. And it's our job to make it a fighting one.

Thanks to The Picket

Comment: The article fails to grasp the nature of corporate unionism which the UWU is a leading example. In particular, its integration into the Corporate set up/ALP Octopus

tentacles/Corporate media/Deep State. Through UWW officials' contacts with the ALP Godfathers/Deep State/ASIO and associated networks in the AEC (Australian Electoral Commission) the officials would be able to rig any election in their collegiate electoral system. As part of this scam, deep state infiltrators or those who made a deal with the ALP Godfathers would be "allowed" to be elected. As a result of the officials' Deep State/CIA training/Corporate connections, etc, they would be able to engage in sophisticated manipulation in the case of a crisis. If pressured into taking seeming militant action and achieving victories, they could give it a demoralising swing for workers and take advantage of it for their bureaucratic/ALP machination. (1)

The UWW officials would have long experience like the officials of other corporate unions in co-opting/corrupting union reps making them part of their machines. If this doesn't work in certain cases, the union officials would conspire with managements to get the union rep sacked or attend their union meetings

to disrupt them. In the case of the RTBU(Rail Tram & Bus Union) in the late 1990's at Central Station in Sydney, the RTBU sub branch meetings where militants had influence and held the Secretary position, these meetings were constantly attacked/disrupted by groups of union officials. In the case of Leichhardt bus depot in Sydney some years back, a militant was elected as union rep and immediately led a wild cat strike involving 70 or so drivers in a mass sickie over speed up issues. Subsequently, he was quietened down by the officials, going along with them and the bosses. At Port Botany bus depot in Sydney some years back prior to privatisation, a militant was assisted by the ASN to be elected as union rep. He was a trainee so the union officials and the bosses conspired to frame him up for the sack and replace him with one of their stooges.

The article is basically grasping at straws regarding "democratising" the UWW. A more realistic strategy would be a focus on transport industries so as to launch a

strike/direct action wave movement across industry. In this context of raised morale of workers in industries covered by the UWW, syndicalist education and networking of militants in which Rebel Worker distribution would play a useful role and the industrial solidarity of a breakaway syndicalist transport union, major syndicalist breakaway unions in various sectors of the UWW would be possible. Leading to the establishment of a new syndicalist union confederation based on direct action, ultra democratic processes and opposition to all political parties. M.

Notes

(1) See "RTBU Elections 2018: Were They Rigged?" In RW Dec.2018- Jan. 2019 Vol.36 No.3 (223) on www.rebelworker.org & "From Corporate Bureaucratic Unionism to Grass Roots Controlled Direct Action Unionism: Perspectives for Strategy & Activity in Australia, Today" in RW No.41 No.3 (235) Dec. 2023 - Jan. 2024 on Libcom.org and www.rebelworker.org & "Spotlight on Rorts in the Union Office" in RW Vol.36 No.2(231) Aug.-Sept. 2018 on www.rebelworker.org

BRITAIN TODAY

Birmingham Bin Strike

16/9/26 The 18-month bin strike in Birmingham is far from over. Bin workers in Birmingham have been on strike since March 2025. When the Labour council in that city attacked bin workers' pay and conditions, walkouts started in January, leading on to an all-out strike from March 11th. The council wanted savage cuts that would result in a pay cut of 8,000 pounds a year. In addition, lorry drivers were downgraded by this vicious anti-working class council. Birmingham Council admitted that the supposed deal promised by the former leader of the council, Labour's John Cotton, is far from official. Since the May elections, Labour has lost control of the

council. Now a coalition of Liberal Democrats, Greens, and Better Birmingham Independents, led by Roger Harmer, has said that no official settlement was ever agreed by the council itself.

Harmer said that his minority coalition would not be rushed into a deal. Cotton had said that compensatory payments to the hundreds of bin workers had been 'agreed'. This was just a pathetic attempt by Labour to save itself at the May elections-and it didn't work!

The Labour council paid scabs to break the strike. Police attacked picket lines and army officers were employed to help in the strike-breaking operation. Workers responded to the breaking up of picket lines by mounting mass pickets. The Labour council used Section 14 of the Public

Order Act to attack pickets. However, the determination of the bin workers increased. The Unite bureaucracy could not think beyond a legal challenge, when the police began breaking up picket lines. It was workers themselves organising mass action that led to increasing confidence.

The council attempted to enlist firefighters to clear rubbish. However, firefighters responded with a categorical rejection of such action.

The Unite union, to which the 400 striking bin workers belong, failed to organise massively. In addition, Sharon Graham, leader of Unite, has sabotaged the demands of the bin workers by replacing them with a so-called "fair settlement" which involved payments of lump sums of between 14,000 and 20,000 pounds. This fails to compensate the bin

workers

for many thousands of pounds lost in future earnings, and to challenge the new conditions brought in by Labour. Whilst saying that Unite would give "unwavering support" to the strikers, she turned up on the picket lines just once in these long months of struggle.

All eyes should be on the Birmingham strike and how both the Liberal Democrats and the Greens react. As for the 'left' union chief, Sharon Graham, she cannot be trusted. She sent her emissaries to negotiate secretly with Reform, who were in danger of seizing Birmingham Council, before being blocked by Harmer's coalition. She did not consult with the striking bin workers over this squalid manoeuvre with the hard right party. To avoid defeat, the bin workers will need to increasingly look to their own independent organisation and to extend the fight to other council workers and beyond.

Thanks to Jackdaw 26

May Elections & After

The May council, mayoral, and Welsh and Scottish Parliamentary elections showed the shifting ground of British politics. The two main establishment parties, Labour and the Conservatives, were decimated in England and Wales, and many, well those who bothered to vote, did so against the attacks both had led against working conditions and living standards of the working class. This disgust was expressed in Wales and in Scotland with votes for the nationalist parties, which adopt centrist to left social democratic language. Labour lost almost 1500 council seats, in England, whilst the Tories, with a much reduced 1,300 seats, lost a further 600 seats.



However, the biggest benefactors were the hard right populists of Reform, who won roughly 30% of the council seats up for grabs, including 14 councils. These included traditional Labour strongholds like Barnsley, Gateshead, and Sandwell. They came second after the Plaid Cymru nationalists in Wales and in Scotland grabbed 16% of the vote.

Farage and Reform are exploiting the anger felt by many with successive governments, and fanning the flames of racism in British society. Many were disgusted with the way the Starmer government carried on with austerity measures like previous Tory governments. The vote for Reform appears to be higher in the most deprived areas. On the other hand, some working class voters voted tactically to block Reform. This wasn't by any means a guaranteed vote for Labour, as the Greens won 500 councillors, an increase of more than 400.

In fact, the Greens seem to be filling the vacuum of social-democracy relinquished by Labour, with

increasingly left-sounding promises. The nationalists of Plaid Cymru and the SNP use similar rhetoric to gain working class votes. Zack Polanski referred to the Greens as the 'workers party', and put forward a charter for workers.

However, like Green Parties in other parts of the world, and indeed with already sitting Green councillors and councils in the UK, the hopes of the Green Party posing a genuine alternative will soon be dashed. In over 40 councils they have helped implement cuts just like the rest.

Where they now have wrested control, will they refuse to implement austerity measures?

Well, Polanski has said that councils have no choice in implementing cuts because it's due to the decisions of central government. No mention of local organising of workers and local people in alliance with intransigent councillors, or a cartel of councils pledging to refuse to implement cuts. This doesn't even enter his head!

Thanks to Jackdaw 26

FRANCE TODAY

Repression of Grassroots Union Activist

21 Sept

For several months, Flo, a SUD Industry union representative, has

been the target of attacks from the management of his company, Bodet Time & Sport, based in Trumantines (49). It seems that speaking his mind and doing his job as a staff representative irritates the bosses.

Elected for 12 years within the company, Flo tirelessly defends its employees. He is committed to the values of self-managed unionism, a far cry from the compliant unionism that prevailed until now. When it comes to holding management accountable and defending employee rights, there's no room for half-measures. Especially when management is trying to impose a

weekend of work.

From then on, things escalate very quickly. On April 3rd, he received a letter summoning him to a pre-dismissal interview. Four days later, he was suspended without pay, with immediate effect. On April 15th, his pre-dismissal interview took place, during which he was accused of three offences, all related to his union activities. Professionally, Flo's record is impeccable, as the director reiterated during the extraordinary meeting of the Works Council (CSE) convened on April 17th to decide on his situation. Unsurprisingly, the CSE, where the SUD Industry union holds a majority, voted against his dismissal.

Management persisted and therefore contacted the labour inspectorate. The inspectorate launched a formal investigation. From then on, Flo and his supporters demonstrated to the labor inspectorate that he was a victim of union repression and that, in the past, he had been repeatedly obstructed in carrying out his union duties.

This procedure clearly aimed to silence a union member. Bodet's reactionary management[1] wants him fired and will go all the way!

They've even gone so far as to ask the production manager to file a police report, which is completely absurd. An excerpt reads: "He harshly criticised me, using insulting remarks, for prioritising orders over social responsibility and employee well-being." He is reportedly suffering since then; these remarks are haunting him, and he's taking anti-anxiety medication. This same manager had no qualms about making employees work weekends, imposing overtime during the heat wave in June 2026, or covering up genuine harassment cases.

A first inter-professional and inter-union support rally of about a hundred people took place in front of the company on April 17th during the Works Council meeting. Everything is being done to ensure that our colleague doesn't lose any wages and that his legal fees are covered. A wave of solidarity, which began within his company, quickly spread to the national level.

On June 19, the labour inspectorate refused the dismissal, but also considered that Bodet was "exerting pressure on the union and violating the employer's duty of loyalty." As for the alleged verbal abuse: "no personal attacks or threats. He is simply showing signs of fatigue following a tense mandatory periodic negotiation." Bodet now has two months to appeal. Let's make sure our comrade doesn't feel alone by contributing massively to the solidarity fund and by being ready to mobilize in the streets. There will always be a fighting unionism to organize the workers at Bodet!

Jon (UCLangers)

[1]Bodet's management includes members of the boards of directors of independent, fundamentalist

widespread abuses, and regain control of our lives.

This Tuesday, July 7, Marine Le Pen and her party were convicted by the Paris Court of Appeal, which upheld their guilt in a case of misappropriation of European funds. While the sentences are broadly similar to those of the first instance, one significant difference stands out: the ineligibility sentence imposed on Le Pen includes a partial suspended sentence, but one sufficient for the months between the two trials-during which she was ineligible-to count as the "unsuspended" portion. In short: despite having embezzled millions of euros of public money, she will be able to run in the 2027 presidential election.

We will quickly gloss over the absurdity of a candidate who advocates "order" and "firmness" towards criminals daring to run for



Catholic schools. In 2014, a family member donated 165,000 euros to Dieudonné et

Trial of Le Pen

As the appeal trial of Le Pen and the National Rally has delivered its verdict, the inadequacy of the justice system in the fight against corruption and the far right is glaring. Only our struggles and our self-organization will allow us to combat the far right, put an end to

the highest office in the land despite a criminal conviction. Neither the National Rally nor the state has ever had any issues with white-collar crime, the kind typical of the bourgeoisie. The mainstream media, moreover, focused exclusively on the impact on the presidential election and quickly dismissed the issue of corruption. This conviction is not an exception; it is part of a widespread corruption within the corridors of power, extensively documented by investigative

journalism. We do not believe this corruption is an institutional anomaly. On the contrary, we see it as a logical consequence of state structures, which concentrate power in the hands of a few, enabling all kinds of abuses. We are not arguing that a person should be reduced to their criminal convictions-in our class, it is society that largely drives people to delinquency-but rather that we have nothing to expect from the justice system in a capitalist system, where its role is to protect the powerful.

This cowardly and lukewarm sentence serves as a stark reminder to those who might have placed their hopes in bourgeois justice as a tool to combat the far right. A conduit for the police and a veneer of legitimacy for political power, the justice system, like all state institutions, is a machine at the service of capital and the oppression of the people. The Lyhanna case recently reminded us that its function is not to protect the masses, including their most vulnerable members.

The Sarkozy case reminded us that,

even in the face of an unprecedented corruption scandal, the sentences handed down to the political elite will always be ridiculous compared to those imposed on us. The Le Pen affair is part of this pattern: the justice system is merely putting on a show to save face, while using every possible tool to avoid impacting the projects of capital. Because, like Bollor and Strin, a whole segment of the bourgeoisie has long chosen to bet on the far right and actively campaigns to boost its vote share.

While Le Pen is trying to buy time by appealing to the Court of Cession, the 2027 election will be doubly important for her, as she will seek to gain not only power but also the protection of presidential immunity. She would then be benefitting from a republican tradition: Chirac and Sarkozy also took advantage of this privilege to escape prosecution in their time. Whatever individual choices we make in the face of this new attempt by the far right to seize power, we must bear in mind that, like the

justice system, elections are merely one cog in the machine of the state, a state whose power is entirely tied to that of capital. To have an impact on the world, the fight against the far right must be waged first and foremost on a daily basis and throughout the year. The recent adoption, with the support of the entire right wing, of the "presumption of self-defence," a flagship measure of the National Front and National Rally platforms, serves as a stark reminder: without grassroots activism, far-right ideas will continue to infiltrate our lives, regardless of which party is in power.

Faced with the far right, we must organize at the grassroots level. Only a revolutionary project will be capable of breaking the power of the state and capital, and thereby halting the fascization of the world.

Libertarian Communist Union, July 15, 2026

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

DEBATE ON REVIEW OF ZARAGOZA BOUND: A CHRONICLE OF THE DURRUTI COLUMN BY ROBERTO MARTINEZ CATALAN

Hello Rebel Worker Paper:

I read with interest the review you published of my book: *Zaragoza Bound: A Chronicle of the Durruti Column* last edition. I would like to clarify a few points that have been misunderstood; perhaps because I wasn't clear enough.

First of all, far from dismissing the system of Workers Councils, I argue precisely the opposite: that it would have been the best solution to the revolutionary situation that arose in July 1936.

As I explain, at the plenary session of the Catalan CNT on July 21, the path forward was debated in light of the scenario of war and revolution unfolding before them, with the discussion polarizing into two positions: 1) Postpone the revolution and collaborate with the other anti-fascist forces to defeat the military

uprising, a proposal that prevailed; 2) Dissolve the Generalitat and proclaim Libertarian Communism; "going for broke" is what García Oliver called it, a euphemism he used instead of "taking power."

On page 38, I recount how García Oliver, according to his memoirs, proposed at that plenary session "what started (...)" and "events being forced in such a way that (...) the anarcho-syndicalist unions 'go for broke', meaning organize libertarian communist life throughout Spain". A proposal, I went on to explain, that: "Given that the CNT did not account for the majority of the working class, never mind the overall population, some rightly labeled this proposal as an 'anarchist dictatorship'". And here's the key passage: "The most striking thing about the matter is that it seems

that all of the participants there were pondering a hypothetical proclamation of libertarian communism and furthering the revolution along those or very similar lines, and the understanding was that the CNT as an organization should 'prevail after the revolution'.

Neither at that point nor, more significantly, in any subsequent debate surrounding this topic, was there any discussion of turning the main committees that had mushroomed right across the country -once they had been democratized and coordinated until they constituted a central authority- into the governing agencies of a future revolutionary regime. A formula a lot more coherent than the establishment of some sort of a trade union dictatorship or collaboration

with other antifascist factions regardless of ideology, something that might have attracted the support of other revolutionary factions, as well as of workers of no particular political persuasions. Instead, they thought of those revolutionary committees as just temporary bodies doomed sooner or later to fade away, and there was no doubt about this because they were extraneous to their organizational models". These democratized committees would, in fact, have constituted Workers Councils (or free Soviets). At least that is how I see it.

Second, as I note in the highlighted passage, in my opinion these committees should have been coordinated to the point of establishing a central authority; primarily to coordinate the economy and the armed struggle. However, this central authority—whether called a Council, Committee, Junta or Government (as I do at the end of the book, knowing full well that it is highly controversial)—should not have been guided by the same logic as a traditional government, but rather by a revolutionary one: control from the grassroots, rotation of positions, equal pay as any other worker...

Does this mean I advocate for the

necessity of the state? It depends on what is meant by state, for it is a rather slippery concept, open to interpretation. If by state we mean the existence of some kind of central power or authority, regardless of its characteristics, then yes, that can indeed be said. But if by state we



mean a bureaucratic structure separate from society, which tends to perpetuate itself in power and whose main objective is the defence of the interests of certain ruling classes; in that case, no. And I want to emphasize in this regard that in my book I speak of a revolutionary government, and in no case of a revolutionary state.

Finally, one of the key issues I wish to raise is not that of the state, but that of power; the need to establish a workers' power that fills the vacuum

left by the collapse of the state and is capable of meeting the challenges posed by the onset of the Revolution. The seizure of power I advocate is not in the sense of any particular party, union, organization or leadership group; but in the sense of the class. The working class as a

whole must seize and exercise power through its own agencies.

The Revolution, the emancipation of the workers, as enshrined in the statutes of the First International, must be the work of the workers themselves.

Best regards.

Roberto Martínez Catalán.

Real History and imaginary councils. On the review of Zaragoza Bound

Xxxxx's review of *Zaragoza Bound* is surprising for one fundamental reason: it seeks to discuss one of the key issues of the Spanish Revolution — the question of revolutionary power — whilst deliberately ignoring the very bodies through which that power was effectively exercised by the Catalan proletariat between July 1936 and May 1937.

This is not a minor omission. It constitutes a historiographical shortcoming that undermines the whole of his argument.

The July 1936 revolution did not produce soviets similar to those in

Russia, nor workers' councils comparable to those in Germany in 1918–1919. It produced something different: an extensive network of revolutionary neighborhood committees, local committees, defence committees, factory committees, supply committees, control patrols and bodies for economic and military coordination, which emerged from the defeat of the military insurrection and took on functions that had until then belonged to the state apparatus. It was these bodies that ensured supplies, organised production, enforced revolutionary order, coordinated the repression of the counter-revolution and enabled the expropriation of factories, workshops and public services. This

is the fundamental historical fact of the Catalan revolution.

However, the reviewer pays them scant attention. He prefers to shift the debate towards an abstract discussion of workers' councils, the soviets and various revolutionary experiences unrelated to the Spanish reality. The councils are repeatedly presented as an alternative to the State, as a superior form of proletarian democracy and as a response to the theses defended by Roberto Martínez Catalán. But the more he insists on these abstract models, the less he speaks of the revolutionary organisations that actually exist.

The consequence is clear. Where the reader — or the historian — ought to

start from the specific forms taken by the revolution in order to understand its nature and its contradictions, the review replaces the facts with abstract categories. Where it would be necessary to examine the functioning of the revolutionary committees, their relationship with the trade unions, the mechanisms that coordinated their activities and the causes of their subsequent dismantling, the review chooses instead to take refuge in analogies drawn from other historical experiences. In this way, concrete history is overshadowed by the weight of doctrinal speculation.

defeated the rebellious army on the streets of Barcelona. The question was how to coordinate that power, how to consolidate it and how to prevent it from being absorbed by state institutions whose reconstruction was facilitated by the very collaborationist policy of the CNT's higher committees.

It is significant that the review, which is specifically devoted to discussing the issue of revolutionary power, overlooks this fundamental question. Even more significant is its treatment of the Friends of Durruti, whose historical importance it seems to fail to grasp.

signified the dismantling of one of the key achievements of July 1936 and the subordination of the revolution to the objectives of the Republican State.

That is why they rejected militarisation. Eight hundred militiamen from the Fourth Gelsa Group of the Durruti Column abandoned the front and returned to Barcelona with their weapons. They were revolutionary deserters who were breaking with the confederal leadership's policy, convinced that the revolution was being sacrificed for the sake of the war. In Barcelona, together with other anarchists opposed to the CNT's collaboration with the Generalitat government, they founded an organisation dedicated to defending the continuation of the revolutionary process: The Friends of Durruti.

This fact is crucial to understanding the origins and nature of the group. The Friends of Durruti were not intellectuals who reflected on power from a distance. They were revolutionaries who drew political conclusions from their experience of combat. Barely two months after formally establishing themselves as a group, those same militants found themselves once again on the front line, erecting barricades and fighting during the May Days of 1937 against the counter-revolutionary offensive led by Stalinists, Republicans and the forces of law and order. Their programme was born out of that experience.

And that is precisely why it is impossible to understand their proposal for a Revolutionary Junta if it is interpreted as a mere libertarian variant of the State. The Revolutionary Junta did not seek to create a new state structure separate from the proletariat. It sought to coordinate and centralise the revolutionary power already existing within the revolutionary committees, the defence committees and the workers' organisations that had emerged from the revolution itself. Its legitimacy was to derive from these bodies and not from a specialised bureaucracy or an apparatus separate from the



And yet, the central problem of the Spanish Revolution was never the choice between the State and the workers' councils. The real historical problem was the conflictual coexistence of two antagonistic powers. On the one hand, the revolutionary bodies that had emerged from the proletarian insurrection of July. On the other, the Republican state apparatus that the Generalitat and the central government gradually rebuilt until they regained the monopoly on administration, coercion and the armed forces.

The crucial question was not whether there should be power. Revolutionary power already existed. It was exercised by the neighbourhood committees, the defence committees, the local committees, the trade unions and the workers' organisations that had

The Friends of Durruti did not emerge as the result of an academic debate on the State, nor as a doctrinal elaboration intended to correct certain theoretical shortcomings of anarchism. They arose from a specific and traumatic revolutionary experience: the militarisation of the confederal militias and the gradual subordination of the revolution to the needs of the Republican State.

A substantial proportion of its members came from the Durruti Column. They had fought on the Aragon front and had experienced first-hand the process of militarisation imposed on the revolutionary militias. They believed that the transformation of the confederal columns into units of the regular army meant much more than a mere organisational reform. It

working class.

Here we see another of the review's fundamental weaknesses: its constant confusion between power and the State. Every State exercises power. But not every form of power constitutes a State.

The revolutionary committees exercised power. The collectives exercised power. The control patrols exercised power. The defence committees exercised power. The Revolutionary Junta proposed by the Friends of Durruti would have exercised power. The historical question lies precisely in analysing the nature of that power, its forms of organisation, its mechanisms of control and its relationship with the working class.

Reducing all these experiences to an undifferentiated form of the State does not resolve any theoretical problem. It simply eliminates it by means of an arbitrary definition. It is a conceptual simplification that prevents us from understanding both the Spanish Revolution and the most original political contributions that emerged from it.

The same analytical poverty is evident in the repeated reliance on authors such as George Orwell, Simone Weil and Franz Borkenau. No one disputes the testimonial value of their writings. They constitute useful sources and, at times, are

extraordinarily thought-provoking. But it is difficult to accept that in 2026 they are still being used as the primary interpretative authorities whilst an extensive body of historiography produced over recent decades – drawn from trade union archives, administrative documentation, the labour press, court records and unpublished sources – is ignored.

Orwell spent a few months observing a POUM column. Weil stayed in Aragon for a few weeks. Borkenau was an occasional observer. None of them studied the revolutionary committees in Barcelona. None had access to the documentation currently available. None were able to reconstruct the complex dynamics of the revolutionary bodies that emerged in July 1936. Their value is anecdotal and literary. To make them the main basis for a historical interpretation reveals an excessive reliance on old Anglo-Saxon narratives and a worrying lack of awareness of subsequent research.

But the underlying problem is not a bibliographical one. It is a methodological one.

History is not about selecting examples that confirm a pre-existing hypothesis, nor is it about substituting ideal models for the facts. Nor is it about projecting our contemporary political preferences onto the past. The historian's task is to take actual reality as their starting

point, reconstruct specific processes, identify their contradictions and explain their transformations.

The catalan revolution did take place. The revolutionary committees did exist. The defence committees did exist. The collectives did exist. The Friends of Durruti did exist. All of these are documented and verifiable historical realities. It is these facts that must underpin our theories, and not our theories that should take the place of the facts.

That is why the central question remains the same as that posed by the revolution itself: what were the organs of proletarian power that emerged in July 1936, how did they function, and why were they defeated? As long as that question remains unanswered, any discussion of workers' councils, State or revolutionary power will continue to remain in the realm of abstraction.

The story begins precisely where abstractions end and facts begin. And the facts, in this case, are stubborn.

Conclusion: Roberto Martínez Catalán's book deserved a better reviewer.

*Agustín Guillamón
Barcelona, junio de 2026*

Agustín Guillamón's answers to a comrade's questions on revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The proletarian revolution can only exist as the destruction of the State, and any form of power separate from the working class ultimately becomes a counter-revolution.

1. Generally speaking, I do not consider it appropriate to speak of complementarity between the

dictatorship of the proletariat and social revolution. Historically, the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat has functioned as an ambiguous formula which, far from reinforcing the social revolution, has justified the reconstruction of the State in supposedly transitional forms. The social revolution implies the immediate abolition of capitalist and state social relations; the dictatorship of the proletariat, by contrast, refers to a centralised political power that tends to place itself above the class.

2. As regards the definitions you use, the definition of 'social revolution' is

appropriate, in that it emphasises self-organisation and the simultaneous abolition of the State and capital. The definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, reproduces an ambiguity present in certain formulations by Marx: speaking of the 'conquest of political power' and of a 'transition' opens the door to a state-centred conception of the revolutionary process which history has tragically disproved. The experience of the Russian Revolution shows how the identification of proletarian power with the power of a party and a state apparatus ultimately led to Stalinism.

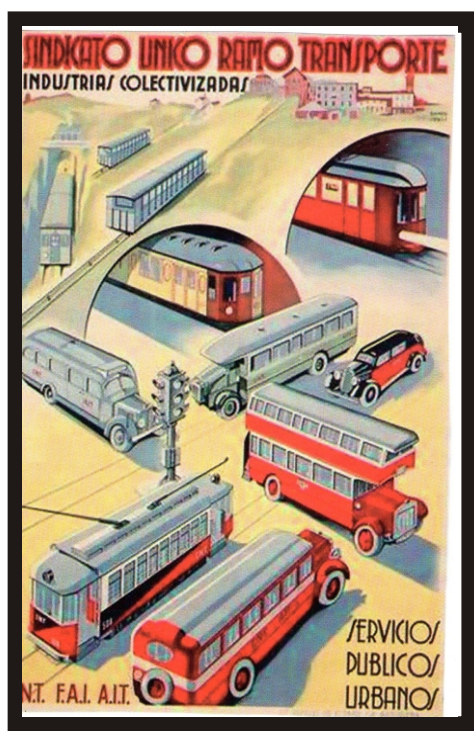
3. Your conceptualisation of the foundation of revolutionary power is correct in identifying the crux of the disagreement. For Bakunin, power is neither political nor representative, but social, collective and immanent to proletarian self-organisation. In Marx, at least in some of his more problematic arguments, power tends to crystallise as class rule, that is, as a separate political form. This is not merely a matter of two different strategies, but of two antagonistic logics of power.

4. I do not agree with the idea of an analytical complementarity between Marx and Bakunin in their interpretation of the Commune. It is precisely the Commune that demonstrates the limitations of any interpretation that seeks to reconcile social self-organisation with political power. Its defeat did not stem from a lack of state power, but from the fact that it had neither completely destroyed the State nor extended the revolution. To speak of strategic complementarity between social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat strikes me as even more problematic: historical experience shows that the latter ends up eliminating the former. I recommend you read my book on the Russian Revolution.

5. In the revolutionary process of 1936, we can clearly speak of a social revolution, but not of a dictatorship of the proletariat. What did exist was genuine workers' power, exercised through committees, collectivisation and militias, which was progressively dismantled in the name of anti-fascism, political unity and the reconstruction of the republican state.

6. There are clear parallels between the Paris Commune and 1936: the emergence of organs of proletarian power, the inability or refusal to destroy the State, international isolation and, ultimately, defeat. In both cases, the counter-revolution came not only from outside, but also from within the politically organised working-class movement itself.

7. My critique of state anarchism is neither moral nor ideological, but historical. Anarcho-syndicalism exercised immense power, yet refused to recognise it as such. It declined to formulate a theory of power because it identified power exclusively with the state. This constitutes a genuine theoretical void: without a theory of revolutionary social power, existing power ends up being ceded to the class enemies.



8. If anarchism is to revitalise itself, it must abandon dogmatism and complacency. Its tasks involve a radical critique of the State, of mainstream trade unions, of parliamentarism and of all forms of political mediation. But, above all, it must re-root itself in the real experience of the working class, develop a rigorous theory of proletarian power and recognise that revolution is not an abstract ideal, but a concrete historical process, involving mistakes, defeats and lessons.

9. On the other hand, revolutionary anarchism — represented during the Civil War by the Friends of Durruti, the neighbourhood committees, the defence committees, the factory committees, certain trade unions for

brief periods, and various anarchist groups — must make a clear and definitive break with state anarchism, that is, with those sectors that participated in the Republican governments and embraced the need for state reconstruction. During the Civil War, these sectors ran the Organisation in Catalonia in a top-down, hierarchical manner from a 'Committee of Committees' which bore more than a few functional similarities to the central committee of a Leninist party. Taking stock of this experience remains a fundamental necessity; this was, precisely, the task of **Balance**, the journal I edited for many years.

10. It is important to understand the concept of the Revolutionary Junta developed by the Friends of Durruti from March 1937 onwards and set out in greater detail in the pamphlet **Towards a New Revolution** (1938). This proposal arose from the realisation of the failure of the confederal leadership and the gradual defeat of the revolutionary organisations that had emerged in July 1936.

The Revolutionary Junta was conceived not as a new state apparatus separate from the working class, but as the body responsible for coordinating, unifying and driving forward the revolutionary power already being exercised by the workers' committees, the trade unions, the militias and the other organisations that had emerged from the revolution. Its role was not to replace these organs of revolutionary power, but to centralise action in order to deepen the social transformation underway: the expropriation of factories and businesses, the organisation of a new public order under workers' and popular control, and the mobilisation of the militias on the war front against fascism. In short, it was to be the instrument for consolidating, extending and providing a common direction to the new social relations and forms of power born of the revolution.

The Friends of Durruti sought to

address the fundamental problem that Spanish anarchism had failed to resolve: how to defend and deepen the revolution without rebuilding the State and without ceding power to political parties and republican institutions. The Revolutionary Junta was not conceived as a party dictatorship or as a traditional government, but as the organised expression of proletarian power exercised directly by the class's

revolutionary organisations. In this sense, it represents one of the most important theoretical endeavours of revolutionary anarchism to overcome the limitations demonstrated by the CNT-FAI during the Civil War.

For this reason, the debate on the Revolutionary Council remains today an indispensable point of reference for reflecting on the problems of revolutionary

organisation, proletarian power, the coordination of grassroots organisations, and the defence of the revolution against the counter-revolution. Without a clear answer to these questions, any revolutionary process runs the risk of repeating the defeats of the past.

Best regards from Agustín Guillamón, June 2026.

Czechoslovak Anarchism Yesterday & Today

ACG: Can you introduce your organisation? Your activities etc?

Czechoslovak Anarchist Association, CAS for short, is a new organisation that operates in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. After a few months of discussions and preparations we had our constitutional congress in the autumn of 2023 in the city of Brno in Moravia. CAS was founded by older participants of the movement, almost exclusively blue collar workers.

Some of us were active in other Anarchist organisations which are now defunct. In the past, besides Anarchist Federation (AFED), the Federation of Social Anarchists (FSA), which was affiliated with International Workers Association (IWA), also used to be active in Czechia. Also, the Anarcho-Communist Alternative (Anarchokomunistický Alternativa - AKA), Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists - Solidarita that followed an example of Workers Solidarity Movement in Ireland. Also strong was Anti-fascist Action (Antifashistický Akce) that was connected to FSA.

We see ourselves as Social Anarchists, i.e. Anarchist Communists.

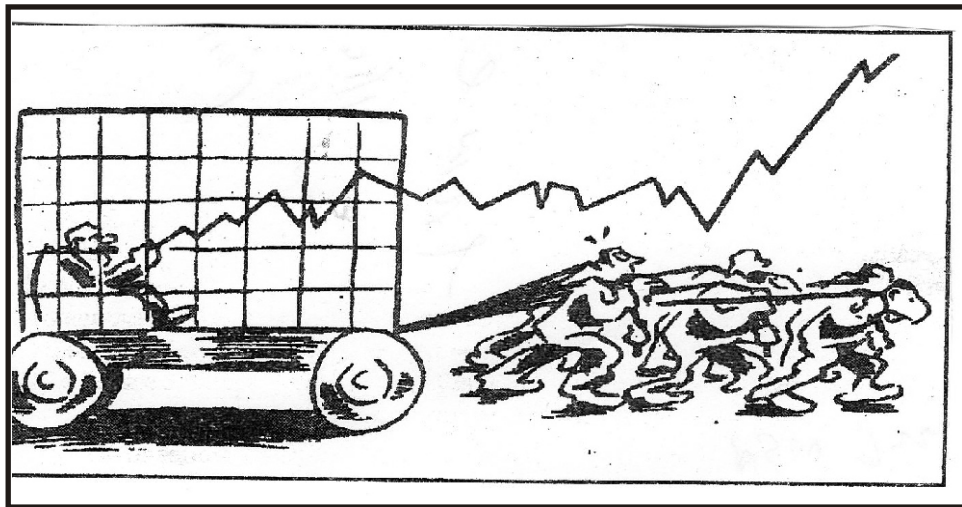
Since AFED was the only active organisation and we've had our political differences for a long time, the outbreak of war in Ukraine was the last straw and we decided to start a new organisation in order to return the anarchist movement its class and internationalist character. Also to

show that anarchism isn't just a lifestyle but a path towards emancipation of our oppressed class and last but not least to reinforce the fact that it is in contradiction with our principles to collaborate with the State, to join the Army, to take part in militarism and murder.

Currently, we mostly focus on educational and

Central Bohemia are organising music events under the banner 'Make Music Not War'.

We have to admit that our language skills are not very good which limits us to maintain contact with other countries. Currently we are in contact with you (ACG) and comrades from ACN. And with friends in Slovenia and Poland.



agitation/propaganda work - running our website and social media platform, publishing printed anarchist newsletters and pamphlets within the Anarchist Library for our self-education but also to introduce anarchism to the wider public. At the moment we are working on building the structure of our organisation and establishing local groups. And as soon as it is possible we will start organising public events/actions.

Some of our members are involved in Black and Red Scouts, Manufacturing Co-operative Solidarita and Seeds not Bombs initiative. Our members in

We are not a part of any international federations, maybe in the future but first we need to strengthen our own organisation.

In short, what's the political situation in the Czech Republic and Slovakia?

For both countries, as former satellites of USSR, low class consciousness is very typical. That helped transform both countries into colonies and assembly lines for Western European and American corporations. The wild restoration of capitalism after 1989 created a new elite of millionaires that became rich thanks to embezzlements and scams (so called tunneling

misappropriation of whole factories).

Agriculture was destroyed as well as many factories and industries. Unions are toothless and don't defend the interests of workers. Sporadic strike is more of a miracle than exception and thus the workers are in permanent defensive thanks to their own passivity. In the last few years the Czech Republic has been exclusively ruled by right wing political parties, the strongest party is ANO and it has an oligarch leader. Social Democrats historically discredited themselves and are unable to get seats in the parliament. The Communist Party was also pushed out and lately is heading more towards nationalism.

In Slovakia, Social Democrats are currently in power but their victory is above all thanks to agreement of a large part of the population with the party's decision not to support Ukraine militarily.

More than drawing from left wing programmes, Slovakian Social Democrats are inspired by the Hungarian populist Orban. The second strongest party in Slovakia are the Liberal Democrats.

Young generations are indoctrinated by school and the media to liberalism and communism is of course the worst swearword. Frustration and hate is spreading mostly amongst the generations that lived through the state socialism era and now they think back with nostalgia of the times of social security but also of order. Many people now support call outs and fill town squares for bizarre right-wing groups that call for leaving the EU and NATO, refusing to support the Ukrainian war effort but also full of hatred for immigrants and so on. These right-wing groups are currently organising demonstrations against the reforms of the current right-wing government. The Left isn't able to mobilise itself and is leaving a vacuum that is filled by these populists. The Anarchist movement is marginal, and furthermore divided, to be able to

mobilise any resistance.

In short, what is the history of Czech Anarchist Movement?

The Czech Anarchist Movement has a rich and long history. It began in the late 1870's or early 1880's.

The prominent anarchist pioneers were also present at the birth of the Workers Movement in Bohemia. In the years 1880 - 1889 the movement was mainly influenced by Johan Most.

It had to work under very hard persecutions and therefore many anarchists emigrated to France, England but mostly to the USA. A strong Czech anarchist movement was active in Chicago and Czech Anarchists actively participated on the May events in 1886. Several Czech workers were shot dead by the police at demonstrations connected to the Haymarket event. Czech Anarchists were part of the International Working People Association (IWPA) and later on they were actively involved in and setting up of IWW branches.

Back in Czech from the year 1900, anarchists were mostly involved in building union organisations. The strongest presence of anarchists was amongst the miners. But large numbers were also amongst textile, glass, and construction workers. The stronghold of Czech Anarchism was in Northern Bohemia and particularly in the North Western Coal mining region where they gained the upper hand over social democrats. They were publishing newspapers and pamphlets, organised unions, and workers educational groups, founded production and consumer co-operatives. They also organised several major miners strikes, for example in 1906 when 20,000 miners took part in the strike and they stopped work at 120 mines.

Development of the anarchist movement was being constantly slowed down by repressions, whilst socialists were allowed to function

without difficulties in exchange for reconciliatory politics towards the State and capitalism and seats in the Austro-Hungarian Empires parliament.

After WWI young generations of anarchists from more intellectual organisations, Czech Anarchist Federation revised their program, their leaders entered politics and the chief Dr. Bohuslav Vrbensky even became a member of the parliament of Czechoslovak Republic. Later on, they founded the Socialist Party and eventually joined with the new Communists Party. It had about 3000 people.

After the War, the syndicalist organisation of anarchist miners (Czechoslovak Association of Miners) was established with about 14000 members. They refused the proposition from Dr. Vrbensky to join the Communists Party but they also didn't develop any anarchist theory or praxis and focused exclusively on the workplace struggle. Because of the economic crisis and mass unemployment in the 1930s their numbers dropped to about 3000 and they merged with another miners organisation.

After WWII the anarchist movement didn't re-establish itself. The dictatorship of the Communist Party, that started 3 years later, wouldn't allow it anyway and would crush it right at the beginning.

For the resurrection of the Anarchist Movement we had to wait for a long 40 years.

And what is the situation now?

After the fall of the Communist Party the Anarchist Movement was restored in Czechoslovakia. Especially in the 1990s there was an upswing within the younger generations. The movement continued to grow until 2002 and peaked during the IMF and World Bank summit in Prague.

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NEWS & NOTES

In this edition we look at the outcome of elections in the UWU (United Workers Union). Its one of largest corporate unions in Australia. Its officials have been notorious for innumerable sell outs of workers' strikes and jobs losses with industrial campaigns set up to fail for many years. It also has an ultra bureaucratic regime based on a collegiate electoral system with rank and file members denied voting rights in ballots.

We present a debate about the way forward to break the hold of the ALP aligned union bosses. (See article page 2.)

We also look at important developments in Transport for NSW and particularly in the NSW Railways. With the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) officials giving "right of way" for a new management strategy involving making adverse changes defying EBA clauses and provisions. (See article page 3.)

In Sydney Buses, we look at management changes and a worsening situation in Region 6 with rosters and associated inadequate bus running times. However we can report on a positive development at Leichhardt Bus Depot in which the ASN has assisted militants and their agitation. (See article page 5.)

In this edition we present a debate about a book review concerning aspects of the Spanish Civil War and Revolution 1936-39 from the last edition of RW. During these events, anarcho-syndicalists played a crucial role. (See articles page 12.)

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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 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 practicing co-operation and mutual aid. We have an equal part in making 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 their 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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Many local anarchist groups were active besides the national organisations CSAF (now AFED), O R A S o l i d a r i t a , Anarchokomunistická alternativa, Federace sociálně anarchistů - IWA and Antifashistická akce (run purely by anarchists). There was more or less only one active organisation in Slovakia Svaz Priama Akcia - IWA (Union Direct Action) and it is still active. Throughout the years Food Not Bombs groups were also active in Czechia and Slovakia. After 2008 the movement saw a big decline, many older activists left. And for many years the only organised movement has been represented only by AFED which doesn't have a good effect on the shape of our movement. For many, Anarchism became only a lifestyle, "youth revolt" or an occasional revolt and the anarchist movement isn't able to work continuously and systematically. Nonetheless this year's Anarchist May Day saw an upsurge of young people interested in anarchist ideas and young people are the future of every movement. We believe better days lie ahead.

Czechia and Slovakia has a big population of immigrants from Ukraine. Can you describe the situation of Ukrainian workers?

Firstly, several tens of thousands of Ukrainian workers emigrated to Czechia and Slovakia long before the outbreak of war. They ran away from their country because it was plundered by its own capitalists.

The wages they got paid could only

keep them away from starvation and they lived in poverty. They left to find their new home here because the old "fatherland" didn't give a shit about them and only worked for the interest of capital. In Czechia only, we talk about 300 000 people.

And after the outbreak of war, another 380,000 people ran away to Czechia. Every week another 1,300 more arrive. At the moment there are about 100 000 able-bodied men of fighting age in CZ that should be going back to Ukraine and join the army. But they left intentionally because they didn't want to take part in the war - they didn't want to become murderers but also didn't want to become cannon-fodders. As they themselves said during our conversations: "I'm not gonna die in war, it's not my war!"

We had conversations with many Ukrainian workers, from factory workers to public transport drivers. Many of them arrived with wives and kids. Their answers and reasons are almost identical - as we said earlier, they are refusing to die for a country that let them starve and work their asses off for Ukrainian capitalists. Most of them are convinced that it's a war between USA and Russia. They are not planning to return after the war ends.

Most of them are working as labourers and this type of work isn't paid well in Czechia. Still, by their own words, they earn three times more than in "their country" and can afford higher standard of living. Of course, many middle-class people also left Ukraine, some of them succeeded but others had to find blue collar jobs and despite of

this they don't want to go back. We spoke with one couple like this. They work in the automotive industry but the wife used to teach at a university and husband was a manager. When the war started, they sold their house, took out all their savings so they could bribe officials and the border control so that he as a man falling under the mobilisation could cross the border. Now the borders are guarded and people are dying while attempting to cross but still despite this some people manage to get out. Of course, poor people cannot afford to pay the bribes. Ukraine became one big concentration camp for its working class, where the ruling class can have them massacred as they please, in the frozen trench war that can only end by mass rebellion. So far, we can see growing numbers of local revolts against army recruitment officers. It's gratifying to see that although Ukrainian workers don't regard themselves as anarchists, they are acting like anarchists and refuse to follow orders of the rulers to pick up arms according to the slogan "Your war, our dead."

The Czech media and government stirred up strong anti-Russian feelings so Russian people are mostly leaving Czechia. Currently there's approximately 40,000 Russian citizens living in Czechia, if anyone is arriving it's mostly students. As well as the Ukrainian workers, the Russian workers came here to find jobs. We haven't spoken with Russian war resisters but with some Russian students and of course they don't agree with the war and don't like Putin.

Thanks to Organise