

JOB CONTROL



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INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL UNION AND
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AUSTRALIAN ADMINISTRATION.
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F. E. Weston, Printer, Keswick.

PREAMBLE OF THE W.I.I.U.

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people, and the few who make up the employing class have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the toilers come together on the political field under the banner of a distinct revolutionary political party governed by the workers' class interests, and on the industrial field under the banner of One Great Industrial Union to take and hold all means of production and distribution, and to run them for the benefit of all wealth producers.

The rapid gathering of wealth and centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trades union unable to cope with the evergrowing power of the employing class, because the trades unions foster a state of things which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping to defeat one another in wage wars. The trades unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These sad conditions must be changed, the interests of the working class upheld, and while the capitalist rule still prevails all possible relief for the workers must be secured. That can only be done by an organisation aiming steadily at the complete overthrow of the capitalist wage system, and formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

How to Organise Industrially, and Become an Efficient Fighting Member in the One Great Union.

How the W.I.I.U. Organises the O.B.U.

SHOP, JOB, OR MINE CONTROL BOARDS.

SUCH BEING BRANCHES OF A LOCAL INDUSTRIAL UNION.

A Branch of a Local Industrial Union is composed of ALL workers in a given Shop, Mine, Wharf, Works, Job, or Section, who shall elect a Job Control Board consisting of the following:—President, Vice-President, Corresponding and Financial Secretary-Treasurer, and Minute Secretary: all these to be elected by ballot of the whole members of the Branch; and a delegate elected from each Department (or equivalent, according to industry) on the job.

Rank and File Rule.

The Job Control Board, through general shop or mass meetings or referendums, deals with questions pertaining to the shop or job alone. In this way we get directly at the boss, employer, or mine-owners, at the closest possible range.

But Local Autonomy does not end there. The Branch decides its own initiation fee and local dues; the dues to be high enough to cover the cost of the monthly due stamps, purchased from headquarters, and local financial requirements.

This is the One Great Union built up from the bottom, and executive rule from the top abolished. (Executive rule has been the curse of all Unions in Australia, as witness the A.W.U.)

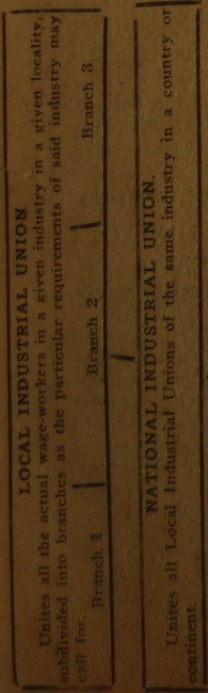
SECOND—THE LOCAL INDUSTRIAL UNION.

THE STANDARD FUNDAMENTAL UNIT OF THE W.I.I.U. ORGANISATION. BRANCHED ACCORDING TO REQUIREMENTS OF INDUSTRY.

Local Industrial Unions unite all the actual wage-workers of each particular industry of a given locality, and are sub-divided into Branches as the particular requirements of the said industry may call for.

This Local Industrial Union functions through a central committee or council, composed of delegates from each of the Job Control Boards, having all necessary officers to transact affairs of general concern, to maintain communication between the branches and larger subdivisions of the same industrial union, and so on. All detail work except important matters that require attention of the entire local membership, is to be attended to by the central committee or

PLAN
of the
W.I.I.U.



DISTRICT INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL.
For the purpose of establishing in a given district solidarity of action a council is organised, composed of delegates of Local Unions of at least five or more, located in that district. Councils are chartered from the General Administration of the W.I.I.U.

DEPARTMENTS OF INDUSTRIES.
Are organised of National Industrial Unions of kindred industries, in accordance with the provisions governing such body.

GENERAL ORGANISATION.
American Administration.
The General Executive Board elected by Departments, and Referendum of Membership. The Gen. Sec.-Treas., the Gen. Organiser, Editor of Official Paper, and Literature Committee, elected by the Regular Convention of the Workers' International Industrial Union, composed of delegates from all subdivisions of the organisation.

- International Bureau of the W.I.I.U.**
- American Adm.
 - Australian Adm.
 - British Adm.
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MEMBERSHIP AT LARGE.
Wage-workers in a locality participate as persons on equal terms.

LOCAL RECRUITING UNIONS.
Organised by wage-workers employed in different industries within an Industrial Local Union has yet to be organised.

council. Such important matters to be referred to a general meeting or a general referendum of the local membership.

The Local Industrial Union committee to meet at least once a month, and delegates to report back to their respective Job Control Boards. The secretary shall call a special meeting, on being instructed to do so by two or more Branches.

JOB CONTROL

THE SHOP BOARD OF CONTROL AT WORK.

An Example in the Meat Industry.

[As an illustration that is timely as to the value of correct Job organisation in educating wage-workers as to consciousness of their class position (i.e., making them class-conscious) the following article is illuminating.

In the following article the writer demonstrates how education on the job is proceeding all the time—an undeniable proof of our contention that on the job is the only place that "Missourian" education can be effectively imparted, i.e., put right into their hands so that they can turn it over and look at it—the issue on the job, no matter how small, being immediately grappled with and made the most of to stimulate initiative and resourcefulness amongst the workers, and clearly does the writer give a proletarian significance to the much discussed term "economic power."]

"The workers must realise that their old craft unions are obsolete, and that to meet the Boss on something approaching equal terms all the workers in a given Industry must belong to one union, and through their shop committees enforce their demands," said the man on the soap-box.

The speaker went on in an elaborate discussion of shop control, and showed how the O.B.U. of all the workers would grow from the shop committee. It was in Broken Hill in 1916. The speaker was a young enthusiast who seemed only to live that he may spread the gospel of the O.B.U. He always had a large audience, and he seemed to be successful in infusing his listeners with his enthusiastic spirit.

I used to like listening to him, though I had a kind of a notion that his ideas, though fine to listen to, would not work out; the "Bone-heads," as he pleasantly used to designate us wage-plugs, were, in my opinion, not likely to fall in with the new idea of Industrial Unionism. The shop committee idea, though splendid in theory, would not work.

Well, that is some years ago, and I've learnt a whole lot since then. In fact, I've learnt that the shop committee will

work—more than that, that it is working and working well.

Where?

Why, in Adelaide, in South Australia.

This is how I came to make the great discovery. I used to work a thousand feet under up in the Hill until I got "leaded," when I came down to Adelaide to look for a lighter and a healthier job. I spent many weeks tramping after jobs, but being a single man and not having a reject-medal or a pull, I was invariably told, sometimes politely, more often brusquely, to go and fight for my dear old country. Now my dear old country had never been particularly kind to me, and I had always an instinctive "snowt" on a uniform or anything military, but I had to eat, so being half-full of lead I decided to sink my principles and go and draw my reject-medal, which in those days was the equivalent to a meal ticket.

However, to my utter surprise, I was passed as fit and sent into camp, and eventually to France. I returned a hero, etc., a few weeks ago with a bit more of Broken Hill inside; this time I got it via Germany. When discharged I had a lot of medals, but the job seemed to be as elusive as ever until I luckily secured a start at the Adelaide Metropolitan Abattoirs as a laborer. When I arrived on the job I had to report to a certain Foreman, who turned out to be the boss of the Maintenance-gang, and he sent me out with three or four men into the paddocks to help repair some fencing. It was right here that I bumped into something that was altogether new to me in unionism.

When we arrived at our allotted place there were one or two men already at work, and before I had my coat off one of them, a tall, plunt-spoken son of Australia, came over to me, and in the crispest of language said, "Say, cobber, have you got your ticket?"

Now I had not the slightest notion of what he meant, and a little "touched" at his manner, replied, "What ticket, and what the blazes has it got to do with you, anyhow?"

"Well," he said very deliberately, "It's your Union ticket I mean, and it's got a whole lot to do with me, because I'm the Rep. for this gang."

Being on new ground, and I confess not a little in awe of this plain-spoken person, I became conciliatory, and invited him to explain, pointing out that though I was always a Union man, I had just returned from the salvation of democracy stunt, and at present belonged to no Union, but if the A.W.U. had a hold of the job then I would take out my ticket.

A slow smile spread over his homely countenance, and preceded by a deliberate spit, he said, "There ain't no A.W.U. on this job; our Union is the Australasian Meat Industry Employes' Union, and every man on the job excepting a handful of 'crafties' are members."

"Oh, well," I said, "so long as it's a Union it will do me, though I never thought that I would ever be eligible to belong to a Butchers' Union."

"This ain't no Butchers' Union, son," he rapped back. "We are all Meat Industry Workers here. I'll give you your ticket first pay-day."

"Right oh," I said, and went off with a mate down the fence. This Meat Industry business had me thinking; I failed entirely to see how we workers repairing an old fence a mile away from the Abattoirs could by any stretch of imagination skite about being Meat Industry Workers. I received another surprise about 9.30, when we heard a shout from the Rep. of the gang. "What's up," I said to my mate. "Smoke-oh," he replied, at the same time squatting down and filling his pipe.

Well this is something new, I thought, as I followed suit. I'd experienced smoke-oh in the shearing sheds, but never before in the paddocks. After smoking in silence for a few minutes I said to my mate kind of reflectively, "I wonder what would have happened this morning had I told the Rep. to go to blazes, and that I would not join the Union, would you blokes have refused to work with me?"

"No, mate," he replied. "It wouldn't have happened just like that, but all the same you wouldn't have lasted long on the job." His cock-sureness got me a little nettled, and I asked him to explain. "Well," he said, "if you had refused to join, Dick there," pointing with his pipe up the fence to where the Rep. and his mates were smoking, "would have gone over to the works in the dinner-hour and reported you to the Board."

Now the only board that I had any knowledge of was the Metropolitan Abattoirs Board, under whose administration the Abattoirs was conducted, and I laughed at the thought of Dick reporting me to that august body for refusing to join the Union.

"You wouldn't laugh long," said my mate. "If you doubt my word, try the experiment." I saw that he was dead serious, and not a little hurt, and quietly told him that it was amusing to me to think that Metropolitan Abattoirs Board would interfere with me for refusing to join the Union.

"Abattoirs Board nothing," he snorted. "I'm talking of OUR Board, THE BOARD OF CONTROL," and the way he rolled out these words showed how proud he was of this Board, whatever on earth it was. I would have liked further information, but it seemed as though I was a regular dub amongst these men, and not caring to parade my ignorance, I kept quiet, but I was thinking terribly hard. I began to wonder what had happened in the Union world since I had been away.

When we were knocking off that night the boss instructed me to report to the Engine-room next morning, as they were a man short, and there was some coal to shift. I did as instructed, and was given a shovel and placed with a gang of men on some coal trucks. As I was working I chuckled to myself at the thought that my experience as a meat industry worker had been extremely brief, and thought what a fool I would have been had I taken out that six months' Union ticket; but my amusement was extremely short-lived. My shovelling-mate, who had been eyeing me somewhat curiously during a spell in the work, leaned over on his shovel towards me and said, "Say, mate, have you got your Union ticket?" I was a bit wary this time, and replied, explaining my position and my willingness to join. "Oh, that's all right," he said. "The Delegate will be along at smoke-oh, he'll fix you up," and went on working.

Now I was wondering what Union I was soon going to be requested to join, and could only think of the Engine-drivers' and Firemen. To make sure, I asked my mate what Union he belonged to. He looked at me kind of surprised like, and said, "Why the A.M.I.E.U., of course; there's only one Union on this job."

"Is that the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union?" I asked.

"It sure is, mate, and it's some Union at that," he replied, as he spat on his grimy hands and went on working.

My head began to turn; I couldn't get the hang of it at all. Here was I grimy as a sweep again, soon to be requested to join a Butchers' Union. When I had calmed down a little I asked kind of apologetically, if there was an Engine-drivers' and Firemen's Union. "Not on this job," my mate replied. "We're all Meat Industry Workers here." I shut right up, and just made up my mind to find things out kind of quietly. At smoke-oh sure enough along came the Delegate, whom I found out later was a fireman just come on shift. I was quickly pointed out to him. I got in first, and apologised for not having that ticket, and explained the circumstances. "That's all right, mate," he said. "First pay-

day, if you are in this gang." He seemed to be in a hurry, and asked the gang if there were any complaints as he moved over towards the big dining room on the works. "Must be a Board meeting on," said my mate. "Joe seems to be in a hurry; wonder what's up?" "Joe's our Rep. on the Board," he added, turning to me. I didn't laugh this time, but nodded kind of wise-like. This Board business quite had my goat, but not for worlds would I parade my ignorance.

Well I found out that I was a kind of emergency-man at the beck and call of each department on the works. I had a day on the coal and completed my first week back in the Maintenance-gang repairing roads. When pay-day came around Dick was on the job collecting money, and I lost no time in securing that much-discussed Union ticket.

From conversations which I had had with different men and from laying awake at nights trying to think things out, I was beginning to see a little light. A suspicion was growing in my mind as to what this board business was. I was soon to have these suspicions confirmed.

The first day of my second week, owing to a rush of work in the Mutton Slaughtering Department, I, together with several of the Maintenance-gang, was transferred to that department as laborers. My job was to pick up sheep's heads, put them in a barrow, and wheel it round to what was known as the "brain specialist," who was a man terribly adept with the cleaver, and with a precision that was remarkable separated the brains from the head and packed them on trays for delivery to the chilling rooms. The job was light, though somewhat unpleasant. It kind of reminded me of Armentiers and one or two other stunts that I would have far rather forgotten. I thought as I was working that, now that I was right at the seat of Government like, I would soon find out a few more things about the mystery that kept me awake at nights. I seemed to be right in the hub of this much-applauded meat industry. Soon enough things began to happen. I had not been going long before I was baited up by a fellow laborer. I had my newly-acquired ticket in my overalls pocket, and I felt really comfortable when the inevitable query, "Say, mate, have you got your ticket?" was rapped out.

"Sure, mate," I said, putting down my barrow and producing the paper. He just glanced at it, then said, "Right, oh! one of Dick's blokes; if you have any kick coming to you, let me know—I am your Rep."

Along about 9.30 one of the slaughtermen sang out in an authoritative voice, "Put down two more to cut out for smoke-oh," and right along the boards two more sheep were stuck down. Just for the moment there was a lull in my work, and I took advantage of it to look round. I noticed that

the long row of slaughtermen, working something like a complicated piece of machinery, all seemed to have their eye upon the one in the centre of the board who just previously had sung out the order to stick two more sheep down. I noticed also that they all completed their sheep at the same time, and hung it up on the rail together. My military experience taught me that there was some organisation here somewhere, and I started out to find out particulars. I first looked round for the boss. I saw him several times wandering about with a paper or two in his hands, but except for the fact that he had a white coat on and an official looking cap, there was nothing to show that he was the boss. He certainly had nothing to do with the machine-like precision of the delivery of the mutton from the dressing hooks to the hanging rails. I thought I knew though, and my first question brought oil.

"What is that big bloke in the centre?" I said to my mate, nodding over to the man whom they all seemed to eye so closely.

"Him! Oh, he is the clock! He is just cutting out for smoko," was the reply.

Well, here again was a new one sprung upon me, but abandoning all caution, I button-holed my informant, and he, nothing loth, made palaver. "It is just like this," he said, "the slaughtermen do a certain tally every day, and the day's work is spread so as to make it as convenient as possible for all hands. The clockman sets the pace, and all the slaughtermen follow him, and no one is allowed to speed up ahead of him. He makes the pace to accommodate all hands, including the laborers."

"I suppose the Boss gives him his orders, then, before starting in the morning," I said.

He looked at me with a suspicious glance, kind of as though he suspected that I was pulling his leg. Seeing that I was very green, and knowing that I was new to the job, he said, "Boss, be damned! That bloke over there with the ice-cream apparel is the rubber stamp."

"Who gives the orders, then?" I said greatly puzzled.

"Why, us blokes that does the work, of course," he said. And then, taking compassion of my ignorance, he explained that through the Board of Control all the work was regulated, and each clockman on all the killing-boards, and in all the killing departments, received their instructions from the general delegate, who was also president of the board. When I had fully realised the significance of things, I knew that my suspicions were well based. Anyhow, I was from then on prepared to endorse the remark of my coal-trimming

mate. "It's some Union at that, mate."

Smoke-oh came, and all hands adjourned to the big dining-room for half an hour. When work was recommenced I learnt a lot between then and dinner-time about this clock system. I came to the conclusion that it was given that name because it works like a clock. And it sure does, but I could hardly see how the discipline was maintained which alone made such a system possible. This was not an army unit under strict military discipline.

However, I had not yet completed my education, for the next few days I was buffeted about between department and department, and from gang to gang. I was out in the stock-yards punching sheep and cattle, a day or two in the By-Products Department, a turn in each of the three slaughter halls, a day or so on the offal floors, handling offal or hides and skins; a day in the blacksmith's shop, and I finished my second week in the chilling rooms.

No matter where I went I was asked the inevitable question, "Have you got your ticket?"

I found out a whole lot about the things that were puzzling me. Though I had often heard the term Industrial Unionism, I was only just beginning to realise its meaning, and that it was something altogether different from the kind of unionism that I had previously been acquainted with. I had constant visions in my mind of that young Broken Hill O.B.U. enthusiast, the Dreamer I used to call him. It was only now that I began to grasp his ideals. The SHOP COMMITTEE and SHOP CONTROL which I used to think splendid ideals to dream about, now seemed to be quite practical. My early suspicions were being confirmed; the SHOP COMMITTEE was operating on this job, and I had seen a little, just a little, of the control that it exercised. I was soon to see it in full working order.

I graduated into a regular hand in one of the mutton slaughter halls, and took my lunch hour and smoke-ohs with the whole of the slaughtering gangs in the main dining-room. One day during the lunch hour I noticed one of the men distributing papers from a large bundle. He wore an O.B.U. button in his coat and, by the way, there were many on this job wearing this favour. He had a variety of papers, all of which seemed to be ordered. I noticed amongst them the "Australian Worker," "The International Socialist," the "O.B.U. Herald," and the "Official Organ of the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia." It seemed to me that the O.B.U. papers were the most in demand. When the news-agent reached my table I asked for a paper. "You will have to wait, mate, until I see if I have any left over," was the reply I received. I asked a table companion who this man was, who was selling papers. "Why, that is Jack!" was the

reply, "he is the delegate here—he is the President of the Board of Control."

Jack came to me a few minutes afterwards with a paper. "It is the only one I have over," he said.

It was an "O.B.U. Herald." I paid my penny. "Do you get through many?" I asked.

"About a hundred O.B.U. papers and numerous 'Socialists' and 'Australian Workers,' and the demand is increasing."

I opened my paper and read of O.B.U. ideals and the methods of Shop Control, and I saw at once the influence that had been at work which made possible this newer kind of unionism with which I was becoming acquainted. I strolled about the big room. At some tables a card game was in progress, at others a serious game of draughts; at others again a kind of small debating club, and at these tables there was always a fringe of interested listeners. From these tables I heard made use of such words as "class-conscious workers," "wage slave," "solidarity," etc., which again brought to my mind visions of that O.B.U. enthusiast in Broken Hill.

We were extremely busy in the slaughtering departments that week, and there were rumors of overtime to be done. This overtime question seemed to be a vexed one from a few vigorous remarks which I overheard from certain laborers. The following day the rumors materialised and the word went round that overtime was to be done that day. "Will it be done?" I asked the brain specialist whom I was supplying with material upon which to exercise his remarkable skill. "It will if the Board says so," he replied, "but not a hoof if it says no." "Is the Board going to consider it?" I asked. "You bet your life!" he said, "there is bound to be a talk about it at dinner-time."

This was what I had long been waiting for, a chance to see this almighty Board with its working clothes on. I could kind of feel that this overtime question was a vexed one. I kept my ears open, and it seemed that the slaughtermen, sensing some easy money, were in favor, but the laborers seemed antagonistic, and I heard frequent references to the last time overtime was worked. There was a fly in the ointment somewhere, and it was easy to be seen that there was going to be something doing over this matter.

Sure enough, during the dinner hour I got my first glimpse of the Board. About 12.30 the big dining-room became uncomfortably crowded. Men were there from all parts of the big plant. I noticed several late workmates from the different gangs, and all eyes were centred upon the long table at the top end of the room, which I suddenly

realised must be the Board table. I strolled up to get a closer look, and sure enough business had been commenced. It was the Board alright, and it was going some. The business was getting a severe thrashing. Jack was chairman. I saw my old friend Dick getting in a deliberate kick now and again. The fireman was there, easily distinguished by his grimy appearance. Every department must have been represented, for there were about ten men present. Jack called for a show of hands once or twice, and not once was a decision unanimous.

After the last vote the Board broke up, and I was wondering, half disappointed like, if after all this almighty Board which I had for the first time seen in action had failed on this occasion to function. My doubts were soon dispelled. After a few hurried remarks with the secretary of the Board, and the jotting down of a few notes, Jack held up his hand for order.

"Order, comrades," he said, and order it was. You could have heard a pin drop anywhere in the big crowded room. Every man and every boy had his eyes on Jack, as a suspense which one could kind of feel permeated the whole room full of men. Expectation was impressed on every countenance. "Comrades," began Jack, "the Management are asking that overtime to the extent of two hours be worked in all slaughtering departments, and your Board has considered the matter. The decision that has been arrived at is:—

(1) That after enquiring on the telephone from the Union Office, we find that there are members unemployed and looking for work.

(2) That on the last occasion upon which we worked overtime certain laborers, not directly connected with the slaughtering departments, but who were occasioned extra work, did not receive extra pay at recognised overtime rates.

(3) On account of these facts your Board has decided that until all unemployed members are absorbed, and until the laborers concerned are promised the pay that they should have received on the last occasion that overtime was worked, no other overtime in any department shall be worked."

The shout that greeted this decision showed that it was popular. Here and there could be seen a disappointed face, but in all quarters the decision of the Board was accepted as mandatory and irrevocable.

During that afternoon the Rubber Stamps were very busy in their attempt to dissuade the men from their attitude, but the inevitable reply was, "See Jack, the delegate." The Big

Gun, the Works Manager, came down to see Jack about the matter. He pleaded and cajoled, and finished up with threats, but all to no avail. When knock-off time came the work was left; not a hoof of overtime was done.

Next day I noticed several new men on the slaughtering "Boards." These, it turned out, were the unemployed. "It is sure some Union," I reflected, upon learning this fact. At dinner-time the crowd was in attendance again, and I noticed that the Board was again sitting. It seemed that yesterday's request was again being discussed. In a few minutes the delegate again called for order. He said that the Management had again requested overtime for that day, and had put on all the available labor, but still refused to concede the demand in regard to laborers. The Board had decided to stand by its recent decision, and no overtime would be done until these laborers had secured their rights. Again was demonstrated a vociferous approval.

During the afternoon I again noticed the Big Gun interviewing the general delegate, and judging from the actions of these two, the argument was somewhat vigorous. However, after the departure of the Gun, Jack cut off his leggings and put on his coat. "Surely, I thought, he has not got his time." I knew that if this was so there was bound to be trouble. No, I dispelled the thought, he seemed too pleased for that. I asked a mate, "What is doing?" "Everything is O.K.," was the reply. "Jack is going round to all departments notifying them that the management have agreed to pay the laborers, and the overtime is to be done."

I saw quite clearly how it was that the laborers held the Union in such high respect. This one incident, and it was a small thing compared with others which occurred later, showed to me the value of Industrial Unionism. I could see that the key men in this industry were the slaughtermen, and that the economic power which they held was the lever which secured the rights for their less skilled companions. Several such incidents occurred, some were small, others were fairly important, but always whatever the Board said, that went. The discussions round the Board table were sometimes vigorous and not a little heated. One could see that at times there was a clash of interests, but when the vote was taken and the decision given, all sections loyally upheld the general delegate and his directions.

I could see now what would have happened on that morning when I thought of telling Dick to "go to blazes" when he asked me had I got my Union ticket. My destiny would have been decided in the slaughtering halls and not out in the paddocks. I made up my mind to have a yarn with the delegate. There were one or two things that I did

not understand. I waited for several days in the hope of catching him unoccupied for a few minutes in the dinner hour. But he never seemed to have any spare time. He was the busiest man on the job. His smoke-oh and dinner hours always seemed fully occupied. One day it would be the distribution of papers or fossicking out certain information concerning the working of a department or it would be an interview with the top office (and these were very frequent, for arguments were always happening), or it would be the collecting of a subscription for some deserving cause, or perhaps a mass meeting of all the men, and all the time he was collecting union contributions. I remarked to a table mate, during one dinner-hour in which I was hoping to button-hole the delegate, "Jack seems to be kept going. I suppose he gets well paid for the work?" "Not much, mate," he said; "he gets nothing but the petty bit of commission on the Union money which he collects." "He likes the work," he added, "but there are not many who could do the job would do it just for the love of it." "A labor of love," I said to myself; "no wonder it was some Union when there were members prepared to do work for the love of it, which was far more strenuous than that done by most Union Secretaries for a fat salary."

However, I got my chance eventually. I caught him sitting down just about to open his paper. I sat alongside of him, and felt kind of mean at the thought of disturbing his few spare minutes. He saw that I wanted to speak, and laid down his paper. "What is it?" he asked.

"Well, old man, there is a whole lot I want to ask you about the Union, and especially about this Board of Control, but I hate to trouble you."

"Go ahead!" he said, "it is no trouble whatever. What do you want to know?"

"Well," I asked, "about this A.M.I.E. Union—how did it come, and how was it organised?"

He seemed pleased at the question. "That is easy," he said. "It started as a Butchers' Union in the days when the butchers' business was simply a trade, and when all employees were simply butchers. As the trade developed, owing to the development of the Export Trade, and the separation of the slaughtering industry, a division of labor was brought about and specialisation as in all modern industry became the rule. The Union simply expanded in sympathy with the development of the industry. The Butcher is now simply a unit in the meat industry, and as he lost his identity so did his Union. He is now a worker in the meat industry, and the A.M.I.E. Union is his Union. We had leaders who knew something of industrial history, and of working class

economics, and though eventually we would have been forced by the development of the industry to organise on industrial lines, through the influence of our leaders, we advanced in the industry, and kind of took time by the forelock."

I had been reading a little lately, and knew that what he said was correct. "Now tell me about this Board of Control," I asked.

"Well," he said, "on any job where there are several sections of employes engaged the Board of Control is necessary. Our Board is made up of one representative of the men in each department; it does not matter how many or how few men there may be, each department or gang has its Rep. These Reps. are elected by the men concerned, and the President is elected by the whole of the employes. The President has only a casting vote when such vote is necessary. Our policy is that where the Management puts the Rep. in the shape of a foreman, we put our Rep. in the shape of the Delegate. If our Rep. and his foreman cannot settle any dispute in their own department, then it is taken to our General Delegate, and if he cannot fix it with the Works Manager, then it comes before our Board of Control, and whatever it decides upon, that goes. Though we are part of the A.M.I.E. Union, we have complete control of our own affairs. We do all our business on the job, and only trouble the Union Office when any action is necessary which may affect any other sections of the Meat Industry."

"I see," I said, "but what I cannot understand is how do you secure the discipline which is essential that you must have to give effect to the decisions of your Board?"

"We had a bit of trouble at first," was the reply, "but a small fine inflicted upon the offenders works wonders; but really the real reason of our success is the fact that many of our members thoroughly understand scientific organisation. The Literature which we have been distributing for the last three or four years has had its effect."

"How many sections of labour have you got?" was my next query.

He had them all at his finger ends. "There are Slaughtermen, Slaughtermen's Laborers, Chilling Room Men, Stockmen, Branders, and Drivers, Maintenance Gang, Carters, Engine-drivers and Firemen, By-Products Laborers, Bricklayers and Laborers, Blacksmiths' and Plumbers' Laborers, and Laundrymen. That is all we have up to date, but all the other crafts on the job have applied for membership in the Union, and will come in eventually. The Craft Union official is the only stumbling block, but he cannot fool his members much longer."

I told him that I had heard of the Triple Alliance between the A.S.E., the Federated Engine-drivers and Firemen, and the A.M.I.E.U. in other States.

"Yes," he replied. "In Queensland the three Unions have their joint Board of Control, but that idea is no good to us. There is no room in our opinion for more than one Union on one job. The Engine-drivers and Firemen on this job have resigned from their old Craft Union, and we are now considering a proposal from the A.S.E. members in which they suggest joining our Union, and at the same time retain their membership for the sake of benefits in their old Union. I think that we shall agree to the proposition providing these members pledge themselves to subject themselves to the rules of our Union and the decisions of our Board of Control whilst employed in the meat industry."

"Just one more question," I said, "and then I am finished. How is it that, seeing the power that you have, for I have seen that you absolutely control the job, that you do not demand a far higher rate of wages than you are receiving. I admit that you are getting slightly more for your unskilled men than the rates that prevail outside, but why not go for a bigger slice of the profits, when undoubtedly you have the power?"

"Now you are talking," he said. "It is a fair question—you wonder why? Well, I will tell you. So far as the Metropolitan Abattoirs Board is concerned we could beat them to a frazzle in a few hours without even quitting the job. Our members often demand that we take such action, and it is the hardest job in the world to persuade the rank and file that such action would practically mean suicide. Our leaders have carefully thought out the possibilities of such action, and the decision they have arrived at is 'not yet, boys.' You see, it is like this," he went on, "the little arguments that we have had have been small affairs, and really only concerned the Abattoirs Management. When we set about raising the standard or conditions and rate of wages which workers outside would soon aspire to, then the dispute goes out of the control of the Abattoirs Board and into the hands of the O.B.U. of the employers. That is, the Employers' Federation take a hold. Now we are a pretty solid Union, and in all Australia there is not a better organised section of workers, but with all our strength we are not foolish enough to take the gloves off with the well-organised O.B.U. of employers. We have too great a love for our Union to deliberately run it upon the rocks. We are doing the next best thing, that is, ramming for the O.B.U. of all the workers. That is why, as you will have noticed, all hands here and also in the other sections of the Meat Industry, are ardent and vigorous supporters of the O.B.U. As soon as other industries reach the

standard of organisation attained by the workers in the Meat Industry, then we will take off the gloves. In the meantime we will get what we can and help to spread the gospel of the O.B.U."

"Just another before the whistle," I pleaded. "Tell me this, Is this Board of Control identical with the Shop Committee of which I read such a lot now?"

"The same thing, mate," he replied. "Call it what you like, the name does not matter much. The idea is to control the job in your own interests, and in the interests of your fellow-workers everywhere." The whistle blew, and back to work we streamed.

All that afternoon the picture of that dreamer in Broken Hill, was before me and his message was sounding in my mind. I had a vague sort of a notion that I had met him quite recently. Of course I knew that I had not, and that it was Jack, the Delegate, and his message that was in my mind. Well, no one could call him a dreamer; he was practical to a degree, and yet he held the same ideas and sang the same song.

That night as I lay awake still thinking of shop control and employers' federations, I answered the question, which if I had only read the gospel with understanding and less credulity of the intelligence of the "Bone-head" class, I could have answered years ago. The Shop Committee and One Big Union of Workers. The Shop Committee—a beautiful ideal, but will it work? Sure it will work; I have seen it working. It's working now, and working well.

I slept and dreamed of Shop Committees springing up all over the country, and I saw the O.B.U. of the Workers of the World; I saw my Broken Hill enthusiast, and old Dick and Jack the Delegate were very prominent. Oh! I saw some wonderful things! Then the alarm brought me back to mother earth and breakfast and the sordid round of toil, but life seemed brighter. I am now a propagandist for the O.B.U.

"JOE THE BEAR."



"GO SLOW!"

A Lesson in Tactics

[It has ever been shown by the W.I.I.U. and its official literature that Tactics on the Job are preferable to striking. Never at any time, however, have we had patience with those individuals who advocate slowing down as a cure for unemployment. We have always maintained that to apply a tactic successfully, there must be a thorough strategical understanding, otherwise it acts as a sword of Damocles. But realising this, and knowing the limits to which any tactic is confined, particularly to slow down, we have always decided the idea of advocating it as a policy for the relief of unemployment, thereby raising it to the dignity of a principle. The Slow Down tactic is useful in gaining concessions and ameliorations from the boss, or, as in this instance, preventing victimisation, when applied at the right strategical moment on the job. It is preferable to striking and starving yourself into submission. For a time it may ease the yoke of wage-slavery from off your neck. But what we desire is the abolition of the yoke itself.

The writer states: "I enclose an article which, at the request of rebels working at the Port Adelaide Meat Works, I have written for publication in the 'O.B.U. Herald.' It is a faithful description of 'Go Slow' tactics which were successfully used by the Produce Depot Board of Control on the 23rd inst. (Oct.)."]

From September to January each year is the killing season in South Australia. At the South Australian Government Produce Export Works, at Port Adelaide, is treated the surplus of stock which is not required for local consumption, and this season a large number of workers are employed.

Meat industry workers are nothing if not progressive, and the agitation started last season for the establishment of the Board of Control for this Works, has this season borne good fruit. Where, as in previous seasons, there was a Union representative on the job for every craft, there is now only one—The Australasian Meat Industry Employes' Union. Every

man and boy, excepting clerks, is a member of this Union, and has representation on the Works' Board of Control. Job control is the objective of this Board, and the following incident will prove that this objective is in a fair way of being realised.

The Board usually, when it has business to do, meets in the dinner hour, and continues to sit until its business is concluded. It has been kept pretty busy this season, and has done some very effective work in the interests of Meat Industry workers. It is rapidly becoming a power on the job, and a menace to the authority of the Bosses; so it was decided by the Management to smash it. The Management, by the bye, would not recognise this Board, but would only negotiate with the men through their Union secretary.

One of the delegates to the Board of Control, a young rebel from the Tallow and Fertiliser Department, who through attending a meeting of the Board lost an hour's time, was given a week's notice on this account by his foreman. The Management, of course, expected the same procedure would be taken as previously, that is, that they would be approached by the Union secretary, who would respectfully plead for the re-establishment of the victimised worker, and promise to be good in future, etc.; but there was nothing doing in this line this time. In fact, the Union secretary knew nothing of the whole business until it was over. The day has gone by for Meat Industry workers to allow their secretary to do their business; they are competent to do their own, and as they say, who should know their business better than the men on the job? No! different methods were adopted this time. This is how they worked:—

The "red-headed rebel," as he was called on the job, accepted his notice without comment, but reported his case to the Board of Control. The Board told him to keep on working and to say nothing. The word soon travelled to all the Departments that "Red" had got the sack, and numerous were the inquiries that were hurled at Fred, the general delegate, a wise little

guy who, although only a youngster, had had a big experience of Job Control and scientific methods of fighting in other big Meat Industry Centres.

To all inquiries the reply was:—"The Board will attend to the matter when the week's notice is up, and you can bet your life 'Red' won't leave the job.

Now, many of the men, though good rebels, had not had Fred's experience, boy though he was, and were inclined to doubt his assurance. Some were for an immediate stoppage of work, as in the old days, when a comrade suffered victimisation; but there were many others who had also experienced scientific methods of fighting, and these solidly backed Fred up in his strong condemnation of such out-of-date and suicidal tactics.

Many were the conjectures amongst the slaves; aye! and many were the doubts expressed. Many of the older ones used to putting their blind faith in their Union were for the calling of a special meeting in the Trades Hall, as in the old days, or at least calling the Union secretary on to the job.

The days went by and Fred's only reply to inquiries was: "Leave it to the Board." Wednesday afternoon arrived, and with it "Red's" pay envelope. He would not accept it, and old "Scottie," the foreman, was nonplussed as to his next move. He had realised previously that there was something doing. He could not understand how it was that "Red" was so unconcerned at getting the sack. "Red" went straight to Fred, and in a few minutes, from all the

Departments, came the delegates to the Board of Control. The Board sat immediately, and in a very few minutes decided its line of action. The day's work was almost finished, and all that the expectant workers heard of the Board's deliberations was that it had instructed "Red" to go to work in the morning as usual, and that a mass meeting would be held on the job in the morning.

The "heads" were very concerned, and many were the inquiries as to what was likely to happen. "Wait until to-morrow," was the only reply which could be wrung from Fred, and no one else was competent to express an opinion.

In the morning the work commenced as usual, and proceeded until 9 o'clock. "Red," still acting under instructions from the Board, did not start, but spent a pleasant hour reading in the dressing-room. At 9 o'clock "Mac," the Works manager, arrived on the job, and Fred immediately interviewed him. Now, Fred is no orator, and in very plain and very unvarnished terms he stated to the Works manager the desire of the men that "Red" should be immediately reinstated without loss of pay. Now, the manager—a really decent old fellow at heart—was in a dilemma; he pointed out that he very much regretted having to discharge "Red," but discipline had to be maintained, etc.

But Freddy was firm and made it very plain that the Works would be tied up if "Red" was not started immediately. Now, "Mac" had had some little experience of Fred and his Board of Control, and knew it was no idle threat, and great was his concern. However, the general manager was expected on the job during the morning, and it was agreed that Fred should discuss the matter with him. In the meantime, the Board of Control had organised a mass meeting of the men; all work was suspended and every man and boy was in attendance. Freddy reported to his Board, which in a few minutes delivered its instruction to the men. It had decided that until "Red" was re-instated, a fifty per cent. reduction in the amount of work would take place in every Department for the remainder of the day, and if "Red" was not working before night the output would be further reduced. The men were to re-commence work immediately, and put this instruction into operation.

Some there were who attempted to decry this method; said it wouldn't work; it was "I.W.W.-ism,"

and the terrible doctrine of "Go slow." However, these were few, and the discipline of the Board of Control was strong, and the work re-commenced.

Fred knocked off work, procured a bicycle, and rode around to the different Departments, kind of supervising things. The "Go slow" was a complete success from the very start. Slaughtermen reduced their tallies to six sheep per hour, and all other Departments reduced their output proportionately. Rebels in each Department made themselves organisers. Freezers saw more sunshine than on any other working day. Preserves only filled half the usual number of tins. Can-makers only made half the usual number of cans. Boners, tallow workers, butter-workers, fertiliser workers, stockmen, engine-drivers, firemen and greasers, slaughtermen's laborers, and offal men all took their part, and the "heads," worried enough before, now began to grow really anxious.

The general manager had been on the job some time, but Freddy was in no hurry to meet him. However, he ran into him as he was dodging from one Department to another. He wanted to know how it was that he was not at work.

"I am organising this 'Go slow,'" replied Fred.

"Well!" said the manager, "I am Boss here, and you had better get back to work."

"Not till the men tell me," said Fred. "We have got Job Control here, and so far as we are concerned, there ain't any Boss except our Board of Control."

"I'll have you put off the Works," replied the General Manager.

"All right," replied Fred, quite unconcerned, as he rode off to attend to another Department.

The manager, scratching his head, pondered for a few moments, and eventually turned on his heel and retreated to his office.

About two in the afternoon scouts were sent out to search the Works for Freddy. The general manager wanted to see him at once. He was found and escorted to the office.

"Now, tell me what all this trouble is about," the general manager said.

"Nothing much," replied Fred. "We were only asking that 'Red' should be put back to his job without loss of pay. We are asking a bit more now, and that is that our delegates to our Board of Control shall be free to attend its meetings, and also that you give it complete recognition. If this trouble isn't fixed up to-day we might find something more to ask for to-morrow."

"Well," the manager replied, "the Works are upside down. I have just figured out that we stand to lose £600 on this morning's work, and we must get back to normal working conditions. We will put 'Red' into another Department, and give him a better job; how will that suit you? You see," he added, "we have to maintain discipline, and the dignity of the positions of our foremen."

"No good," replied Fred. "Red' has just got to go back to his old job. Our Board also has to maintain discipline, and 'Red' has no little amount of dignity which has to be considered. If you want to transfer anybody, transfer your foreman."

They talked for an hour—or, at least, the manager did, and Fred listened. Meanwhile, the "Go slow" went merrily on. At last the manager said, "All right, you win. Take 'Red' down to his job, start your men, and I'll recognise your Board of Control from now on. Fred took 'Red' down and started him; but there was little work done that day. All Departments again knocked off work, and another mass meeting was held, to celebrate the complete victory of the first "Go slow" on that job. Rebels took the opportunity of showing how one Union only operating

on a job was far more efficient than the old idea, and how impossible it would have been to have put in scientific methods of fighting the old system. They showed how, under the Board of Control system the workers were preparing themselves for the day when they would inevitably be called upon to shoulder the responsibility of completely conducting the industries in which they worked for the benefit of the community. They showed how the structure of the A.M.I.E. Union provided for Job Control, which accounted for its strength and the superior conditions and wages which its members were able to wring from the Boss, and each one strongly appealed to the worker that when they gravitate into other industries they must demand and organise their Boards of Control or Shop Committees, and trust more to their own intelligence and solidarity than to the Trades Halls or mealy-mouthed politicians.

There were rebels there from distant parts. From Ross River, Alligator Creek, and the Burdekin, where methods of fighting the Boss had developed into a science. From distant Darwin, where they make revolutions. From far north-west Wyndham. From New Zealand, Broken Hill, and Brisbane, where militancy is a strong characteristic of the slave, and each and everyone agree that the finest and the most intelligent exposition of the "Go slow" was that which they had just carried to such a satisfactory conclusion, and that the solidarity and intelligence of Meat Industry workers in Port Adelaide was something that even the most militant workers should aspire to.

Everyone was satisfied excepting the boys, who reckoned that the "Go slow" should have been extended over at least another day.

The day's work concluded with the meeting, which also concluded with every verse of "Solidarity" and the "Red Flag," sung as they had never been sung in Australia before, and three rousing cheers each for the Red Flag and the Russian Revolution.

"JOE, THE BEAR."

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“Laborin' man an' laborin' woman
Hev one glory an' one shame—
Ev'ry thin' thet's done inhuman
Injers all on 'em the same.

Slavery ain't o'nary color;

‘Taint the hide that makes it wus.

—James Russell Lowell.

All it keeps for is a feller

‘S jest to make him fill its pus.”

