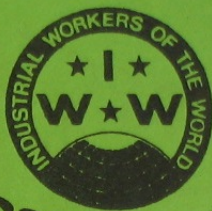


Education • Organisation • Emancipation

DIRECT ACTION



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Number 10 • Summer 1998/9
Paper of the Industrial Workers of the World



DIRECT ACTION

Number 10 • Summer 1998/9

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<http://www.iww.org.au/australia/da>



Industrial Workers of the World Preamble to the Constitution

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 the 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 workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization 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.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work", we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system".

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

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Government Attacks Social Security

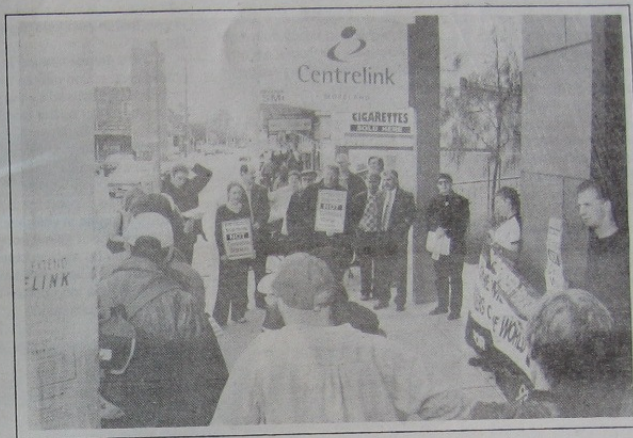


Photo: Socialist Worker

The latest stage in the government's long-term strategy to wipe out Australia's social security system began with the announcement in November that more than one if five Centrelink jobs were to go. If the thieving bastards who are in control of our country are allowed to have their way, 5,000 workers will find themselves on the other side of the dole office counter, joining the rest of us in queues that will stretch round the block!

The first hint of what was to come was the name change from **Department of Social Security** to **Centrelink**. This was a clear indication of the government's intention to wipe out the idea there's anything "social" (in other words, community based) or "secure" about the pittance that over ten percent of the population of this country depend on for survival. They want to make it seem more like charity than our right - and they're almost certainly working towards handing the whole thing over to charities and private enterprise before scrapping it altogether, in the way they've done with the CES.

But we must make certain they don't have their way. Everyone in the community must join together with dole office workers to resist and defeat this cynical attack on some of the most vulnerable workers and the poorest members of our society. Attacks on social security don't only affect the unemployed, the sick and the old, they affect all Australians. When there's no dole any more, there will be no shortage of desperate people queuing up to do **your** job for a fraction of what you're getting paid for doing it now.

As well as that, many currently thriving rural

communities will become ghost towns when a large proportion of their collective income disappears and shops and businesses are forced to close, leaving even more people without jobs. Most people in those communities will be forced to flood into the already overcrowded cities in the desperate hope of finding a way to feed themselves.

Sacking a fifth of social security workers is just one step towards the destruction of an important safeguard against total destitution. It was never something that was **given** to us, it only came into being because workers fought long and hard for its creation. The battle for social security was part of the battle against virtual slavery, fought over many decades in the early part of this century, by workers who were living way below what we would consider the poverty line today. If we're not going to end up back in slavery, we must fight for it again, now the thieving capitalist parasites are trying to take it away from us.

After the relatively strong position the wharfies were in, the government probably thinks the social security workers will be a pushover. After all, what hope have they got of winning industrial action? It won't be rich bludging bosses who lose money when dole office workers go on strike, it will be the poorest of the poor - and the government doesn't give a fuck about them! In fact, strikes in dole offices benefit the government, because they save money that would have otherwise been paid to people in dire need. However, it's still important for social security staff to take industrial action in support of their jobs - but what's **more** important is that everyone on

benefits must support them. We must always remember that without those workers' jobs our lives will become much harder. They're working for us, not the government. If we want to keep our benefits, or the security of knowing when we lose our job we won't have to beg on the streets to feed ourselves and our families, then we must stand up with those dole office workers now.

including cake stalls, petition signing days, sending guest speakers to community groups and church organisations and handing out **Stop The Cuts** material at shopping centres and train stations.

Time To Organise And Fight

If we're going to successfully fight these attacks on our social security, we must act immediately to support Centrelink workers.

If you're on the dole:

- Get together with other benefit recipients and form a social security support group to step up the



Filthy Rich In WA

In Western Australia prospects for growth of the IWW would seem to be lower than expected. Leastways this is what one would expect from an article in last week's **Waste Australian** which pointed out that the wealth of the "average" sandgroper has soared some 42 per cent in the last five years - faster than any other state in the country. And that is despite the fact that in Australia as a whole one in every fifty families in now in the "millionaire bracket".

I must admit that me and mine have not noticed too much this promotion into affluence. Of course I misspent my youth in protesting and taking drugs and reading political tracts and poetry and other dissolute activities probably better not mentioned, rather than settling down to the important business of working and making money and stuff. Checking around at work, however, it does not seem that very many of my companions there have been changed overly by this sudden showering of wealth upon them either. Some of them are a fair bit better off than me of course - the result of hard work and better general attitudes - but I still find it difficult to think of one of them as being in the "millionaire bracket". Leastways they must be hiding it well. Good manners, I suppose, not wishing to flaunt it and all that.

The only other explanation is that the average West Australian is as mythical a beast as the average income - which again I've never actually met anyone working coming close to. In which case, if the wealth has gone up 42 per cent and everyone I work with seem to have felt that, if anything, every year is a little bit harder than the one before, then (horrible thought) there must be a few people somewhere who have got more than their share. Quite a bit more.

Holy polarisation! - maybe I won't give up the struggle just yet!

West Australian, 15/10/98:

WA tops charts for get-rich-quick

• **CANBERRA**

West Australians are getting rich faster.

According to a new Access Economics study, the wealth of average West Australians has soared 42 per cent in the last five years - faster than anywhere else in the country.

The number of Australian millionaires has doubled from 71,700 to 188,200. That means that one family in 50 is now in the millionaire bracket.

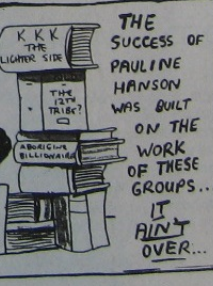
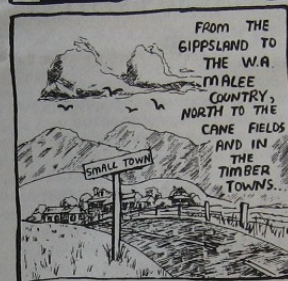
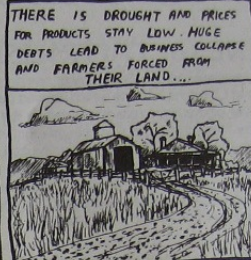
The combined wealth of those millionaires now totals \$377 billion, up on \$136 billion five years ago.

The richest 10 per cent of Australian families owned 43.5 per cent of the nation's total wealth just five years ago. Now they own 48.2 per cent of it.

And the top 1 per cent have now grabbed 15 per cent of Australia's wealth, up from 12.2 per cent five years ago.

The study also concluded that share ownership in Australia was concentrated among the very wealthy. But the number of Australian adults holding shares has certainly leapt. Seven years ago, only 28.1 per cent held shares. Now 40.4 per cent do.

MEANWHILE ...



News From Melbourne

CRIME OF THE SCENE (or CAPITALISM - IT'S A GAS!)

After widespread community and workplace outrage the Government has ordered a Royal Commission into the cause of the Esso Gas explosion & deaths at Longford, Victoria which caused gas to be cut off to homes & industry with 100,000 workers stood down. Workcover offices were recently raided by the State Police, after the State Coroner ordered they seize documents and computer files on the Longford site maintenance. Workers have been complaining for some time of the lax "standards" which lead to an ice blockage 3 months ago and no improvement up until the disastrous fire. The changes to workplace health & safety regulations by Kennet's regime mean that the family of the two dead and 9 injured cannot sue Exxon/Esso. Lawyers from Slater & Gordon are pursuing a "class action" - mass lawsuit - for damages on behalf of gas consumers (eg small business like bakeries forced to close) but seem, so far, unable to get their teeth into Esso for the injured workers and their families!

VIDEO SHOWS

Wobblies, a film about the legendary IWW, was shown on Saturday October 17th at Barricade Information Centre, 115 Sydney Road, Brunswick 3056. Made in 1981 and 89 minutes long the video uses black and white historical footage, colour interviews with "old timers" to give a good intro to the wage-slavery abolitionist movement.

Joe Hill made in 1971 and 115 minutes long was also shown portraying the renowned Wobbly organiser & songwriter's fatal experience as an agitator in the US.

Melbourne Wobs are getting a good library of radical videos together so contact us for further information or offers please. We are seeking a video of a concert by Judi Bari singing Luddite, IWW and Earth First! songs. Judi Bari was a Californian Wobbly organiser and Earth First! activist in the early 1990's who survived a car bombing but alas went down to cancer (no doubt brought on by the stress of her injuries).

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY...

Teddy Bears Banned - shock horror! An illegal picnic was held recently in Otways Ranges by anti-logging protesters. Illegal because State Government changes to stop protesters means access to Parks & Forests is restricted and it is now trespassing to go into these areas for all except Corporations. More details from OREN (Otways Ranges Environment Network)... will find them in Goolengook, East Gippsland, after luckily surviving a "controlled burn off" which endangered some protesters, the local **Woodstop** festivities are beginning. This is a series of educational camps and follow up protest weekends and actions.

More details from geco@green.net.au

BORDERS OPENS TO IWW PROTEST IN MELBOURNE

The Borders Bookshop multinational chain has opened in Melbourne in the Jam Factory complex in Prahran. Borders sacked Philadelphia IWW member Miriam Fried back in 1996 for trying to organise a union. Borders like the Body Shop has a "trendy image" as a caring Corporation eg has Amnesty International petitions etc but *refuses workers human rights to organise a union!* Borders gets radical writers like Mike Moore & Noam Chomsky, and "lefty" musicians like Billy Bragg, to launch books and CDs on their premises but not without Borders being reminded that they are union-busters. When Borders opened in Oxford Street London, IWW members turned up and leafleted staff, shoppers and Billy Bragg before leaving; closely followed by Shop Security under orders of the irate, imported US manager.

Web: <http://parsons.iww.org/~borders> E-mail: borders@parsons.iww.org
(Borders was also visited by Melbourne Wobblies (details p8.)

TOXIC 'BURBS

Werribee Residents continue to resist the toxic waste dump and have mobilised other residents in Niddrie and Tullamarine too. Meanwhile the Coode Island site of bulk hazardous chemicals and LPG storage which caught fire a few years back has been "too hot" to move anywhere else (who wants to live near it?) and has not been made safer according to nearby locals.

PLEBS GET UPPITY!

Construction workers at Longford have had a blue - 48 hour stoppage - on the site where Esso is building expanded facilities over wages and workplace health & safety practices. Unionists on the City Link Tollway, some 10,000 in total, have requested to get "Gold Passes" or they will stop work. The pass means avoiding having to pay tolls, like Kennet's mates (various rich parasites) whom as leading Citizens travel free. Mass transport trucking firms like Fox will have electronic transponders on board, bypassing the toll booths to keep speed schedules up, and get a bulk cheap deal. No Tolls at all for the public would be really popular but the privately run Toll Road & Tunnel owners will have to be kicked out to win that.

Melbourne - continued

McSlaves Uprising Day

October 12th is the international day of solidarity with the young wage-slaves at McDonalds. Mark Hopkins was electrocuted and died on Oct 12th 1992 in Manchester England.

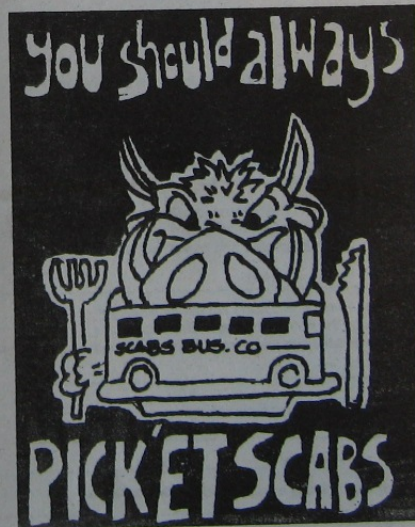
"I want every McDonald's worker to stand up for their rights, which is why I am backing this support campaign 100%. In this way Mark's death will not have been in vain." - Maureen Hopkins (Mark's mother).

A widely distributed leaflet pointed out the miserable reality behind the Happy Meal toy production at Keythinge in Vietnam, Chi Wah Toys, Kam Yuen Toys and Sewco Toys in China. The flip side detailed exploitation at high speed in the belly of the McBeast itself.

Victory? Squamish, Canada, McSlaves have unionised...others since have tried eg in Montreal which caused McDonalds to shut down that franchise and rehire, reopen elsewhere to bust the union. In the past, others have also won, but usually ended alas when the unionists reach age 17-18. They are then replaced with new intimidated non-union slaves.

McLbel Residents opposing a proposed McDonald's opening on the corner of Sussex & Bell Streets Coburg have been taking a series of protests to the Golden Arches Empire. Most recently on Saturday October 17th. Local Wobs have been getting the video, McLbel two worlds collide, shown "around the traps" here in Melbourne. At 53 minutes it summarises the trial and arguments well. Court reenactments with actors are directed by Ken Loach. The video has been shown around Australia and was introduced in Brisbane, by one of the defendants Helen Steel, on a tour of the region last year.

More information from:
McLbel Support Campaign 5 Baledonian Road, London N1 9DX
Internet info <http://www.mcsupport.org>
Email McLbel@globalnet.org.uk
MSC Australia: PO Box 558, Brisbane 4101



DISHRAG # 3

When the Kitchen's in a bloody mess
We come and clean it without stress
We'll even act like we give a toss
Cos you're a psycho, fucking boss
We are dish pigs, we know no fear
Now let's get a few things clear.

Chorus

An Injury to one's
An Injury to all
We're gona have you bosses
Up against the wall

Money, money, it's all you see
You don't get nothing away for free
You are filthy, capo, scum
Don't fuck with us, your day will come

We do what anyone asks us too
Hose the mats, clean the loo
But as we smile and say "sure thing"
We'd rather hit you with a bin.

Chorus

Your games of power make us laugh
Like when you say we need a bath
We are dishpigs, make no mistake
And we'll be dancing at your wake
We are dishpigs and you better decide -
Under which pan you're going to hide.

Chorus

...
The long awaited new edition of the Dish Pigs (dish washers) mag is out with some humorous stories and good information. Managing Managers, The God Ole Days, McHistory, Doin' the Dishes, Piggling at the Docks (Food not Scabs kitchen at the Webb Dock picket line during the War on the Wharfies), Net Pigs, Bottom of the Food Chain, Life's Short... Laugh Hard!...

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Melbourne IWW

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IWW Protest Outside Borders Melbourne

On Saturday at 12 noon, about 10 people met outside of the new Borders bookshop to protest about the working conditions of this new US bookstore chain, and their union busting reputation. In trendy, gentrified rich area of South Yarra, holding a protest was an unusual activity, and definitely made waves. The workers in surrounding shops could not recall seeing any union come there for far too long! We also leafleted workers in other small bookshops in area.

We had two leaflets to hand out - one specifically addressed to the workers. This leaflet also talked about what had happened to workers in the US stores. The other advertising the protest listed the address, telephone number (for those who could not attend to call up asking for a job, about wages, union membership) and details on how to see the "union-busting manual" website, Borders global base, ie 200 super-stores, expanded to London, Singapore and now Melbourne, next?

All in all we had many favourable responses to the leaflets. Most people read the leaflets handed out, several talked to us, and appeared interested. We had many comments eg "well, I won't be shopping here again", "I didn't know this", "It's good to see an upsurge in socialist activity", "Keep it up", "I complained about this shop last week, because they didn't have many books with Australian content!" "Good on yas for leafletting".

One of our members met with a woman who was the public relations officers for the shop. She expressed concern that we had not notified the shop of our intention to picket the store. She explained that the workers conditions at Borders Melbourne had been set up differently to the US stores in that all workers had individual workplace agreements, with very special benefits. These special benefits were exactly explained. She also expressed her commitment to free speech and said she would have liked to hand out leaflets with us also! (I kid you not!)

We signed up one member for the group, and are now one short of becoming a branch. After a picnic, video showing, attending various local demonstrations eg against racism, by students protesting fees etc we are being seen as "doing something".

All in all a pretty favourable time!
X342086 & Delegate 98-149

For more information on Borders Books' union busting activities:
<http://parsons.iww.org/~borders>

Toxic Waste to Toorak!!!

Wembee residents and workers (both at CSR and in local market gardens, teachers etc) have succeeded in stopping the toxic waste dump.

This is a major victory, although now pressure is on to move the dump to somewhere else. **Direct Action** recommends Toorak - it's already populated by human toxic waste, a bit of the chemical sort couldn't make it any worse!

However, it will probably end up just overloading the Dandenong and Niddrie-Tullamarine dumps.

Victorian Prince Sir Jeffrey Gibb Kennel went nuts slagging off CSR for giving in to the western suburban peasants....

Be a Wobbly — Join the IWW...

Real Democracy! All policy decisions are made by referendum. The IWW internationally has just one (mostly) paid officer, the General Secretary-Treasurer. The seven-member General Executive Board is elected annually by the entire membership. All officers may be recalled by referendum. IWW workplaces and branches make their own decisions about bargaining and strategy.

To Join mail this form with a cheque or money order for initiation fee plus first month's dues to: IWW, P.O. box 78, Bellingen, NSW 2454, or contact your local delegate (see list, p2).

IWW - An Affordable Union!

Monthly Income	Dues
up to \$1000	\$5
\$1000-\$2000	\$10
over \$2000	\$15

Initiation fee is equal to one month's dues

I affirm that I am a worker and that I am not an employer
 I agree to abide by the IWW constitution and regulations
 I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes

Name: _____
Occupation: _____
Address: _____ City: _____
State: _____ Postcode: _____ Phone: _____

Membership includes a subscription to **Direct Action**

"Showcase" Work-for-Dole Scheme

From Bill Bartlett Dole Bludger at large

I gate-crashed a meeting organised by the sponsors of a Launceston (Tasmania) work-for-dole scheme on Monday, along with another old agitator and my teenage daughter who was facing conscription.

The work-for-dole scheme was called "Red Coats Project" and it quickly became apparent that this is not your usual scheme, in fact the organisers openly told the assembled LTU's (long term unemployed) just that.

The meeting began with a brief run-down of the basics of work-for-dole by a representative of the government body administering Social Security benefits (Centrelink). She was somewhat matter-of-fact and presented it in a casual bored manner which didn't invite any response, let alone attack. The representative of 'Northern Job Link', the agency sponsoring the project, followed and Jesus was he a smarmy slick bastard.

Within minutes he almost had me believing that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. He raved on exuberantly about the flashy uniform, the amazing contacts and "networks" that would be opened up to lucky dolees, even promising us mobile phones, fashion sunglasses, sneakers, and extensive publicity - "your picture will probably be in the paper..." Blah, blah, blah.

There seemed little room for doubt that we would soon be joining the beautiful people, probably becoming special guests on television chat shows, being invited to present the Academy Awards...

At about this time we started interrupting with questions. I wanted to know a bit more about exactly what sort of work participants would actually be doing? He brushed this off - he didn't really seem to know - stuff like helping old ladies out to the car with their shopping was the only example he could think of. What's more he didn't seem all that interested, it became clear that the

organisers were focussed entirely on the publicity angle. Truth be told, there was no work to do, there was no useful function for the work-for-dole workers besides creating a positive public relations image for work-for-dole itself.

It dawned on me that this was, actually, a showcase work for dole scheme. You know, like the showcase concentration camp set up by the nazis, like the showcase prisons operated by the Russian and Chinese "communists".

This was a project whose only purpose was to be for show. This was confirmed when it was revealed that the organisers were intent on only taking on volunteers. They had already interviewed 200 people for the 40 positions in similar meetings earlier in the day, and the meeting I attended was cut short only after some further persistent questioning. He simply announced suddenly that anyone who wanted to volunteer should stay behind and the rest of us could leave!

Of course it is obvious why such a project cannot take the risk of conscripting any surly young rebels. A show project would also have a great deal of potential to create catastrophic bad publicity, especially in the lead up to a federal election which had been announced only the day before the meeting.

Oh, BTW, the Federal Minister for Social Security, Senator Jocelyn Newman, is based in Launceston. What a co-incidence.

The risks are that any unemployed who are conscripted would take full advantage of their official uniform and position as officially sponsored "helpers", and start soliciting gratuities (begging) in the Central business district. Perhaps even shaking down retailers for bonus payments so they would refrain from demanding tips from customers! :-) I know damn well that is what I would do.

But when I asked Smarmy what the policy was as far as gratuities,

he seemed somewhat surprised. "Huh? We haven't even considered that," he replied. "I don't think we'd want to know about that", he added after some consideration. My officer asked the obvious question - "So you probably wouldn't have a policy or want to know about soliciting gratuities?" he asked innocently.

Super slick then realised the direction the line of enquiry was heading and tried to dismiss the whole thing as ridiculous, but we reminded him that the government was only offering an additional 10 bucks a week to people on the scheme, and he himself, just a few minutes earlier, had been going on about this project being a great opportunity, "it's what you make of" was how he put it. We were simply entering into the spirit of free enterprise!

Surely the old ladies and the retailers would be happy to slip us a few bucks for our trouble? User pays, reciprocal obligation, that sort of thing?

Anyhow, that was about it. It was hardly an unqualified success, either for us or for the other side. We were up against someone who was significantly more quick on his feet than we'd expected, and he got the

better of us overall I imagine. But he was far from a happy chappy about being put on the spot either.

Clearly the timing of this thing strongly suggests some sort of election campaign stunt by the governing Liberal Party sometime in the next four weeks. I shall be calling on my friends to please keep an ear to the ground as I have some very interesting ideas on how to spoil any such political campaign stunt. Bailing up politicians during elections campaigns has, after all, become something of hobby of mine over the years.

It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it.

Bill Bartlett - Bracknell, Tas.



I PREFER A TRAM CONDUCTOR

Tram Conductors, a part of Melbourne since the system began, were attacked by various Governments and Bosses over the years eg. in 1990 the then Labour Government enforced contracts and brought in "scratch tickets". A fiasco with workers locked out, occupying tram depots, picketing blockaded trams in the City Streets (after the power to the entire system was turned off) and scabbing bus drivers. Railworkers who had fought, and lost, a debacle campaign to defend train guards and station assistants; also continued to work.

The incoming Liberal-National Coalition regime speeded up the cuts begun by the ALP and collaborated with the gutless union officials who walked away from the fight with their political mates in the ALP and then the present regime's massive layoffs and now privatisation.

Conductors are "social lubricators" not just ticket machines, helping people on and off trams and with directions and all sorts of current information. This lack of a human face, as the drivers are busy avoiding the traffic chaos, has seen many boycott the system. Railways outside of peak hours are even more scary as they are desolate of people...

DON'T MOAN ORGANISE

With the removal of tram conductors, and railway station assistants in Melbourne; there has come, an officially unadmitted of course, 60% drop in revenue. Passengers boycott the ticket machines that do not sell the popular daily tickets.

A group of ex-connies with a core group of 5-10 have been organising various events. One popular character is Super-Conductor, complete with bright yellow leotards, green cape and mask who has been at the forefront of actions like a "full monty" strip on the steps of the

GPO.

A public march on the last day of connies on the trams, holding life-size cut-outs of past connies en route ended with a "gauntlet" of ex-connies for trams to pass through in the City Mall.

Circus Oz at the Melbourne Town Hall had ex-connies perform several tricks, click their punches and script an act with a ticket machine... which it was revealed in the end, hid a cowering lookalike of Premier Jeff Kennet!

All the IPTC (I Prefer a Tram Conductor) activities are spied on by the Bosses informers, usually Inspector stooges who report back for updates on files of ex-workers.

During the election hype it was stated that privatised trams may bring back connies as "roving conductors" for peak hours only; with multi-functions as cleaners/office workers. IPTC are holding out, calling instead for reinstalling conductors on all trams (first to last) at all hours.

A supporter of the bring back connies campaign, Roberto D'Andrea, who is a tram driver, has been reprimanded three times for speaking out in the media.

Roberto has also been to Calcutta, India to encourage that City to retain its public transport, tram conductors and with some success and media interest here and there.

Talk-back radio, letters columns in papers and surveys of passengers all underline public hostility to the removal of connies and the hated ticket machines. Tram Depots are like ghost towns these days with the workforce halved and then cut again to prepare for privatisation profit seekers. Drivers grumble in private but very few make public their protest.

Roberto has not been sacked, for he has a good work record and is popular; his only crime is dissenting from the Boss and to sack him would bring further media focus to

this enforced silence on the unpopular ticket machines and removal of connies.

ONE BIG UNION?

The former Australian Tramway & Motor Omnibus Employees Association union merged with the Australian Railways Union to form the present Public Transport Union. With private owners like National Bus, some bus drivers went over to the Transport Workers Union which usually organises truckers.

In the 1960's discussions to amalgamate all transport workers: rail, tram, bus, taxi, bike courier, plane, ship and trucks was squashed by the Political Bosses in the competing unions.

At present various new formations for the pseudo-unions have been argued over. Remaining union members (numbers dropped off with such a long series of sell-outs) are faced with the same scenario: further division or to go back to that vision of One Big Union for all transport workers?

The dominant, but recently militant, Maritime Union (itself an amalgamation of the former Waterside Workers, Painters & Dockers and Seamen's Unions) got support from PTU and TWU members. BUT any attempt to make a permanent solidarity will be resisted by those who as Bosses have profited financially or as bureaucrats politically, from the division which makes ruling the wage-slaves so much easier.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreements have seen much trading off of conditions for paltry 2 - 3% "increases" quickly destroyed by inflation, and the new Goods and Services Tax.

Under State Government legislation it is illegal for public servants to criticise their benevolent Bosses in the media. This silences teachers in schools, nurses in hospitals and drivers of trams and trains (who work without guards or station assistants).

Public Transport Users Association, Disabled Rights, and the Coalition on Public Transport are similarly marginalised community

Trams - continued

groups. Some coordination with the remaining "trouble-makers" like the IPTC activists could happen and in turn finally help mobilise the workers and ex-workers themselves.

These wage-slaves are enduring yet another election alas. The incumbent sell-out artist, Lou DiGregorio, stands for a third, 3 year-term & versus another ALP faction backed wannabe Boss.

Once the spectacle is over and everyday life of exploitation returns (with the 'hangover' of surviving in a privatised system) many more headaches face the trammies - drivers, ex-connies and long suffering passengers!

SPARKS the voice of some dissident transport workers is available from PO Box 92 Broadway NSW 2007.

ex Brunswick Depot connie



Life Membership For Pat Mackie

The following is the text of a letter from the IWW General Executive Board to long-time Australian wobbly, Pat Mackie:

Dear Fellow Worker Mackie,
In honour of your lifetime of activity in the class war, the General Executive Board of the Industrial Workers of the World has voted you a lifetime membership in the IWW. This membership is retroactive to last dues paid.

A dark period in the history of the working class movement is over. We hope the sectarian and divisive politics that kept many working people from joining together is gone. The IWW is growing again and regaining a true presence in the struggles of our class.

In looking to our future, we look to our past and thank those who organised and fought for what we have today. We salute you Fellow Worker. Thank you for all you have done for workers everywhere.

For the One Big Union,
Morgan Miller
Chairman,
General Executive Board
Industrial Workers of the World

Sailors' Union of the Pacific Opposes Flags-of-Convenience

SUP Statement:

The Sailors' Union of the Pacific condemns P&O Nedlloyd's decision to replace organized crews with FOC sailors. We, with similar experience, are opposed to the use of slave-labor to boost the bottom line of any shipping corporation. These floating sweatshops, using flags of convenience and offshore corporations to slip through the protections of cabotage, labor, safety, and environmental law, are a hazard to coastal areas as well as to the men and women, often ill equipped for the job, who serve aboard them.

Training, language difficulties, experience. These and many other reasons exist for the maritime community to desist from this destructive and dangerous practice. The SUP calls upon the Government of Great Britain to step in and protect the last remnants of the once-great British flag Merchant Navy. Further, the SUP pledges our support in whatever action the ITF and RMT deem appropriate. As the Mersey Dockers and the Maritime Union of Australia have shown, the world is our picketline!!

TO: John Coger, President Rail, Maritime, and Transport Union
From: Gunnar Lundeberg, President/Secretary-Treasurer, Sailors Union of the Pacific

Dear Sir and Brother:
The decision of P&O Nedlloyd to sack 300 British and 30 New Zealand mariners is outrageous!

The Sailors' Union of the Pacific (SUP) will assist in any way deemed appropriate to reverse this move. P&O Vessels call at U.S. West Coast Ports where the SUP has offices (San Francisco, Seattle, and Los Angeles).

Please keep us advised.

In Solidarity,
/s/ Gunnar Lundeberg

DIRECT ACTION

WORKERS'

Members of Your
Class on a Long Bay
Gaul for TREASON



Jesus Christ
was Crucified
FOR TREASON

From page of Direct Action 7 October 1988.

Where We Come From

The History of Direct Action

SPECIAL
MAY DAY ISSUE



"An Injury to One is an Injury to All"



The general May Day issue of Direct Action called for the return of the Press.

Direct Action, then a monthly, was first published by the I.W.W. in Sydney in January 1914. They borrowed some dough from a member and bought themselves an archaic printing press so that all restraints upon expression of "clear cut revolutionary principles" were removed. In a statement of principles it set itself as being: "For the first time in the history of the working class movement in Australia, a paper which stands for strait-out direct-actionist principles, unhampered by the plausible theories of the parliamentarians, whether revolutionary or otherwise." With the new paper, they declared: "Every contributor, every supporter, is a member of the wage-earning class, who is conscious of his slave status in modern society, who is imbued, therefore, with motives stronger than mere sympathy or sentiment in voicing the aspirations of his fellows."

Success came quickly for their efforts under the initial editorships of Tom Glynn, J. B. King and Tom Barker. The paper was cheaply priced (1 penny) and full of short, humorous, irreverent and stinging comments upon events of the day. In 1915 the paper had moved from a monthly to a fortnightly by May and to a weekly by October. It quickly became an important organising tool for the group. Its sale, together with cheap pamphlets, became an important source of finance for both the locals and the central organisation as dues were often "very light". A regular weekly circulation of 8000 copies made it by far the most impressive revolutionary paper in Australia to that date. And of course radicals in those days tended to pass their papers along when they had finished with them so a single paper often counted for many more than one reader....

Their militancy and anti-war sentiment quickly brought them into conflict with the state and large sections of the community misled by the current war hysteria. Generally, the paper did not conceal the dim view it took of developments and, in

the middle of 1915, its editor was arrested for producing a poster advising the Australian working class to "Let those who own Australia do the fighting - Put the wealthiest in the front ranks; the middle class next, follow these with politicians, lawyers, sky pilots and judges. Answer the declaration of war with the call for a General Strike ... Don't go to Hell in order to give the plutocratic parasites a bigger slice of Heaven. - Workers of the World, Unite ! Don't become Hired Murderers ! Don't Join the Army or Navy !" - which put this attitude rather well.

During September and October of 1916 twelve leading militants within the organisation were arrested and charged with treason - a hanging offence. Many of them had links with *Direct Action*. John Hamilton, a miner, had put up the original cash to buy the press while Glynn was editor and J. B. King a former editor. The charges, later changed to conspiracy to commit arson, were a police frame-up. The most dramatic case in a broad suppression, the twelve were brought before a right wing judge already famed for the viciousness of sentences he imposed upon working class activists. Upon a technicality the press *Direct Action* was printed

upon was confiscated.

Sentences imposed upon the Sydney fellow workers by Justice Pring (three varieties - five, ten and fifteen years of hard labour) tended to put most other things into shadow for a while. *Direct Action*, however, refused to be suppressed just yet although it had to be put out to a commercial printer.

Late in 1916 Australia's Prime Minister pushed through the first Unlawful Associations Act - designed to banish I.W.W.ism once and for all. "This organisation", he said, talking about us, "holds a dagger at the heart of our society, and we should be recreant to the social order if we do not accept the challenge it holds out to us. As it seeks to destroy us, we must in self defence destroy it."

However, we proved more difficult than expected to destroy and in the first three months of 1917 seemed to be, if anything, expanding. May saw *Direct Action* prohibited from being sent through the post. Tom Barker remembers that "We had to seal and stamp every one of them separately, then the men would go out all over the place and put them through the post boxes. As a matter of fact, it's said that the paper was better delivered in the time when it was illegal than it was before, because people took a pride in getting it and a pride in posting it, and the postmen were largely on our side. A good deal of our stuff went to places like Goulburn by train or by boat to Western Australia, so it didn't come into the postal system. We just made them up into rail parcels to do that way ..."

In the Winter of 1917, again with the support of the Labor Party the original Unlawful Associations Bill was strengthened and its loopholes effectively plugged. All members of the I.W.W. not cutting ties with the group were condemned to six months imprisonment with it left pretty much up to the individual to prove that s/he was not a member. The last edition of this first series of *Direct Action*, dated August 18, was

stolen by the state when police made their final raid the I.W.W. Hall in Sussex Street on 27 July 1917. The union responded variously to the repression with many adopting the civil disobedience tactic of proclaiming themselves true to their ideals and taking the consequences. So was this first incarnation of the I.W.W. in Australia suppressed.

Direct Action re-emerged briefly in 1921 as the organ of the Industrial Union Propaganda League a grouping that consisted of several leading Wobs leading a tortured relationship in and out of the Communist Party. Different styles of action between the Wobblies (always trying to stir the rank and file) and the political sects that coalesced to form the C.P.A. (out to capture structures) formed stumbling blocks to this co-operation.

With the end of the war came the end of the repressive legislation with which the ruling classes had silenced the I.W.W. It was reformed

in Australia although it never regained the strength or vivacity of the earlier period but maintaining itself as a thorn in the side of Labor politicians, corrupt and complacent craft union officials and the master class in most states from this time, through the depression years, until the second world war.

Direct Action re-appeared again as our mouthpiece a couple of times in the late 'twenties. Printed then in Adelaide it was not without its effect. Tony McGillik remembers that "In those times, the I.W.W. was most active. Its newspaper *Direct Action* was sold on the job, at Employment Centres, and in the Botanic Park on Sunday afternoons." This series had less resources to draw upon than its predecessor and was terminated by legal proceedings against one of its editors.

The good name of *Direct Action* was sullied between 1970 and 1990. The Socialist Workers Party, a Trotskyist grouping took up our title

Wobblies in Australia

A bit of history

Catholic Church and with it a large part of the Irish community campaigned against conscription. Conscription was narrowly defeated at referendum twice. In 1917, the government put twelve IWW members on trial charging them with incineration, burning down military storehouses in Sydney. There was another trial in Melbourne involving IWW members in counterfeiting five pound notes.

The upshot of all this was the passing the federal parliament of the Subversive Organisation Act of 1917 which proscribed a range of activities including being found to be a member of the IWW, max penalty: six months jail. Possession of a membership card was proof enough and, to press home the point, known wobblies were nicked and all given a dose of max penalty. Many wobblies simply left, others continued to organise secretly whilst joining their respective legal unions or not. Nevertheless, IWW activity continued until the 1930s, (a branch in Sydney was clandestinely

although it did not promote direct action at all. At best it only proposed action mediated by the party and at worst tried to mislead the workers to do ridiculous things such as "vote for a labor Party pledged to socialist policies" without bothering to explain much how such an (in any case pointless) exercise could be accomplished or even where such a strange creature could be found. I.W.W. members during this period were therefore forced to adopt the title *Rebel Worker* for their publication. The fellow workers concerned, feeling that their aims could better be promoted through an Anarcho Syndicalist Federation cut their ties with the I.W.W. though continued to produce *Rebel Worker*. The S.W.P. changed the title of their paper to the more trendy monica of *Left Greens* or something.

So we are back and, the working class willing, here to stay until the toilers get their dues - everything.

- Mike

organised in 1927) from then there only a few individual members left.

The last wobbly from this period, Bert Armstrong, died in 1975. This was the year when the IWW found new members amongst the younger generation creating a momentum that re-established a regional charter in Australia (ANZGOC) in 1976 which lasted until 1983 when the last remaining branch at the time, the Sydney IWW left and changed its name to *Rebel Worker* Group.

During the 1920s, the influence of IWW (or syndicalist) ideas can be seen in the CPA and the ACTU. The "Militant Minority" movement was more syndicalist in its orientation than just purely political, they organised resistance to evictions and campaign to alleviate the plight of the unemployed. The structure of the IWW (the famous wheel) was seriously debated as a proposed structure to be adopted by the ACTU. In the end, the ACTU went down the centralist path and became an adjunct of the ALP.

- Leigh

Keeping Their Dirty Laws Off Our Jobs

Sex work, whores, hookers, prostitution... in our sexually repressed society, these words instantly provoke bigoted and hypocritical reactions in a lot of people. And if the words alone produce those reactions, it's obvious that sort of reception workers themselves get from most people. These attitudes are one of the first hurdles workers have come up against in our attempts to organize our workplaces by joining a union.

There have been a number of attempts to unionise sex workers this decade, including half a dozen unsuccessful ones in Canberra and at least a couple in Melbourne. The main barriers to a successful outcome from negotiations with unions that I've been involved in were the attitudes of the officers concerned, their refusal to allow adequate representation of sex workers within the management of the union and a reluctance to work towards an award wage. The main concern of the union bosses seemed to be increasing the membership and income of the union.

Talks with delegates and officials were difficult at first, as their attitudes to us as hookers and as women got in the way of proper negotiations. They had preconceived ideas about sex workers and assumed all of us are women. When we let them know that transgender people and men have also chosen this profession we had to listen to homophobic comments.

Occupational health and safety issues were at times laughed at. For instance talking to them about ergonomics and what types of beds have been identified as unsuitable in the workplace was a complete waste of time. It was generally hard to get them to take us seriously as workers and we would obviously have had to battle for proper recognition within the union if we had any hope at all of it representing our interests in any way.

The chances of getting other sex workers to continually pay dues to an organization with those sorts of attitudes seem pretty slim - even if there was likely to be any benefit

from membership.

Whores (and I use the word deliberately, to disempower its use against us) are not really that different from other workers in most ways. We provide a safe service to another person for money or in exchange for goods or services. The fact that the service we provide is sex is only an issue because of the fucked-up, repressed nature of our society. We could be your lover, sister, brother, mother, father or grandparent. A wide variety of people work in the industry and those who fit the stereotype are a very small minority.

The majority of hookers are female, but there are significant numbers of transgender and male workers. Some of us have chosen sex work as our sole occupation, others as a second job. There are large numbers of students and single parents working in the industry.

How and where a hooker chooses to work varies. Some work in brothels, legal and illegal ones, partly depending on which state they're working in. Others work in private homes, on the street, in specific parks, at truck stops, hotels, casinos etc.

Whores have a diverse clientele and we need to be multi-skilled. We're often asked for advice, counselling and referral, safe sex and STD information, massage, fantasy acting etc. And, like most people in other professions, we're constantly updating our skills. One area of training that is currently being sought by sex workers is in meeting the needs of people with disabilities. Presently the policies of Disability Services within Health & Community Care actively encourage and endorse people who have a disability within government care to visit sex workers. These policies came out of the National Disability Service Standards and are just one example of inconsistency in government and conflicting legislation that sex work is continuously plagued with.

There is a common misconception that sex workers are victims and don't really like their job.

This nonsense is mainly propagated by evil christians who want to steal our souls! Working in the sex industry has a lot of advantages over slaving away in some lousy job for even lousier money. If you work privately, the pay can be a lot better, working conditions are suited to the individual worker and we get to choose our own hours.

Street work has added excitement of being in an environment that is buzzing with culture, and while waiting for clients there is less monotony and boredom. Cameraderie is strong between workers who look out for each other in relation to ensuring safety. However, brothels are seen to offer a safer working environment - although the money's worse and you don't have much control over hours and conditions.

We get to have a variety of sex partners and even some good sex at times! When things are going well, we can get a lot of pleasure and satisfaction from our work - and not just sexually. This fact has traditionally distressed the religious perverts who think sex should be about misery and revulsion, rather than about joy and happiness. Some of them have even gone so far as to complain that if we enjoy our work then we shouldn't get paid for it. However, I've never heard anyone say that computer programmers or carpenters who enjoy their jobs should work for nothing! Our work is physically very strenuous and we can go home at the end of the day completely exhausted.

Because we have such a wide range of clients, there tends to be a lot more scope to barter for other services. For instance, it wouldn't be hard to find a mechanic to fix the car.

On the downside, there are a few problems, most of which are related to oppressive laws regulating or banning prostitution.

There is no nationally consistent legislation and the laws in each state currently contradict each other and, in some states, put sex workers in extreme danger.

Safety is a real issue in this profession, along with isolation,

stigma and stress.

Private workers, although able to reap the benefits of a decent income, have huge problems when it comes to safety. Currently there is no legislation in Australia that will let two workers open their own business in a residential area. Under the least oppressive current state legislation, if two workers want to work together to minimise the risk of assault or murder then, like brothel workers, they are restricted to industrialised zones which are often poorly lit in the evenings. Again, safety, isolation and transport costs are an issue.

In states where the laws are all for prohibition, there are numerous crimes committed on sex workers. For example the following statistics show the incidence of violence committed on Queensland sex workers from 1993 to 1996:

Rape 61, gang rape 3, robbery 28, attempted murder 6, murder 3, abduction 1, other violence 70, repeat offences 11.

90% of these attacks were on hookers working alone, these statistics are not from the police, they are from a support service known as SQWISI in Queensland Health.

Within states with oppressive legislation, some clients are systematically targeting private workers for the specific purpose of committing offences against them. A pattern of serial rapes/assaults/robberies has emerged.

There is a significant amount of serious police harassment towards hookers under prohibition legislation.

Sex work is often undertaken outside of a normal working day, hours are invariably anti-social. Within the brothel establishments shifts have been known to start at 5pm and finish at 6am. There are times when some workers will stay a full shift, not see any clients and go home out of pocket. Operators take between 50% and 60% of the worker's wage. Tax is taken out and frequently embezzled. Workers Compensation and superannuation is often brushed aside.

Most sex worker organisations are funded by state and federal government. There are specific funding guidelines under health education, with definite restrictions on political activity. The staff

employed are controlled by management committees that may or may not have past or current sex workers involved. There are currently organisations that do not have adequate sex worker input. There are organisations that take the saviour/patronising approach. There is actually an organisation, SQWISI, in Queensland, that discriminates against sex workers. For example, they will not consider employing a current sex worker within the organisation.

accepted, even by police, as being a victimless crime - and ensure our rights as workers and civil rights as human beings are recognised in appropriate legislation.

Within the context of a legalised industry, such as the ACT, sex workers are more likely to disclose their choice of occupation, report offences committed against them to police, take their bosses and other oppressors/discriminators to court, and are definitely a lot more confident to be politically active.



There are a number of reasons why sex workers need to organise. We can't rely on sex worker organisations to look after our rights - it's obvious an organisation that won't even employ hookers is hardly likely to really care about their rights. Anyway, sex workers are the only people who can effectively fight for sex workers' rights.

We need to abolish outrageous shift conditions imposed by brothel owners and address safety issues urgently. We must ensure that superannuation, workers compensation and occupational health and safety standards are developed and implemented.

We need to take control of our own employment, abolish low self esteem and high levels of stress, police, client and operator violence & harassment and put an end to the hypocrisy and stigma we're plagued by from all sides.

We must campaign against the criminalisation of sex work - which is

After trying other unions, I've come to the conclusion that the only organisation which whores can effectively organise within is the IWW. If we're going to be taken seriously, have equal power in the running of our own union and control over organising our workplaces, if we're going to have any chance of organising transient workers in an industry which is partly illegal in some states and if we're going to get workers to pay dues and have some faith in the ability of their union to represent them, then becoming part of the IWW seems to me to be the only possibility.

I've already joined. The next step is to convince other hookers that we can all benefit from becoming members.

X347954

Photo: Australian workers at a street protest for hookers' rights in Berlin in 1994. Translation: **'Australian Prostitutes - Rights For All Whores'**

Loggers And Greenies Unite!

The other day I was hitching north out of Bangalow in northern New South Wales, on my way back to Brisbane. I've found when I'm hitching in that part of the world I almost always get picked up by really interesting people - and the ride I got that day was no exception.

Ian, who gave me a lift, was a farmer. He was born in that region, he'd spent almost all his life there and it seemed very unlikely that he'd ever permanently move very far away.

Ian grows trees - local native trees, one species only, and he wouldn't tell me exactly what they were. The fruit of the trees he grows was made into a newly-developed cream which cures skin cancer. Being a local native, it's easy to grow, doesn't suffer from any serious natural pests, and needs very little looking after. And, being a medicine, it brings in a decent profit. It's also a lot better for the environment than growing introduced species, as well as providing a positive benefit for a lot of people by helping to fix up their skin cancer with an effective natural remedy.

Ian's father and grandfather were forestry workers.

As well as discussing some interesting horticultural topics - in the car, and over a couple of beers in a pub by the river at Murwillumbah - we talked about environmental matters and the "green" movement.

When Ian first became interested in growing whatever type of trees it is he grows, his father got a permit and took him out into Whian Whian state forest to collect some seeds. While they were there, the old logger pointed out trees - now grown big - which he and his workmates had planted after they'd selectively logged the place, not long after the second world war. He also showed Ian a number of different bush food plants which were growing all around them.

Ian's interest in one native species had brought out in the old logger a depth of knowledge of the local forest which his son had never

known about until then. It was one of those kind of "lucky" chances we get now and then in life, to gain an extra insight into a person who's close to us. Ian's dad died not long after.

Anyway, we got onto discussing the "green" movement and the logging industry and, in particular, the polarization between loggers and greenies. Ian, like me, could see both sides of the story, although he tends more towards the loggers' side while I'm more of a greenie I suppose. But the discussion was useful and interesting and strengthened my conviction that we've got to change the forestry industry and the environment movement now, while we've still got some forests - and some forestry jobs - left.

The only people who gain from current unsustainable forestry practices are the rich bastards running the multinational logging companies. With their **hack, burn, take the money and run** technique, they make a quick profit destroying our forests and running down the timber industry to the point of destruction. Then they do the bolt, to another region or another country, leaving the loggers unemployed and blaming it all on the greenies.

We need timber, we need forests and we need jobs. What we don't need is multinational corporations raping our country, exploiting forestry workers and taking their profits overseas. And those profits include countless millions of dollars of taxpayers' money which is spent by state governments every year, subsidising the plunder of our forests - a kind of "dole" for rich corporations.



The loggers know and generally love the forests and depend on them for a living. It's not in their interests to destroy their own livelihood - and that of their children's and

grandchildren. But their greedy multinational parasite bludging bosses don't give a flying fuck. All they care about is the money. All the governments seem to care about is getting rid of the forests - and they're prepared to pay to have them removed!

A forestry industry run by its workers could be genuinely sustainable. A forestry industry run by and for capitalists never can be. And without the rich parasites bleeding the forests dry, a viable timber industry would only require a fraction of the amount of forest currently being destroyed by logging.

The environmental movement has to change its tack though, if this is ever going to happen. Blockading is occasionally useful and sometimes necessary, but most of the time all it does is back the forestry workers into a corner, making it harder for them to change their own industry, give the bosses someone to blame for job losses caused by **their** greed and mismanagement and leave a lot of greenies with the growing feeling that resistance is futile, as they're taken away from the forest in the back of a paddy wagon. It achieves other things, of course, but it almost never saves as much as a single tree.

Forestry workers are just as aware of environmental issues as anyone else and they're often not happy with being implicated in environmental destruction, but they don't have - or don't **feel** they have the ability to change things. If we're ever going to put a halt to unsustainable logging - without leaving even more people in rural areas on the dole - us greenies are going to have to take a different approach. We should be working **with** the loggers, against our common enemy - the thieving scum who run the timber industry and are robbing the workers, their communities and our forests.

Between us we can kick out the multinationals and put the forestry industry where it belongs - in the hands of the people who work and live there.

Interview With Fred Chase

The General Secretary-Treasurer of the IWW talks to

Lincoln Hancock x347958

falls to the first volunteer unless someone comes along with a new vision for the union.

DA: Who was nominated for GST at the '98 General Assembly?

Fred: I and Alexis Buss of Philadelphia. She's 24, has participated in some great organizing drives for the Union in the last two years, writes a column on labor law for the paper (Industrial Worker), and is a member of the General Executive Board. As far as administration goes, I think the Union will be just fine regardless of which of us gets elected for 1999.

DA: Can you give us a little personal history, i.e. age, previous occupation, time in IWW, etc.?

Fred: I'm 54. Just prior to being elected GST I was a purchasing agent for a cargo airline. Other big chunks of my working life have included 14 years as a book buyer in an IWW organized bookstore, a year on an assembly line for General Motors, 6 years as a cashier/stock clerk in a grocery store, and about a year and a half as an organizer in the '60s for an anti selective service group called the The Resistance.

DA: What made you decide to join the IWW in the first place?

Fred: In the '60s I was at a convention of Students for a Democratic Society. The Wobblies had a literature table there promoting the grape boycott by the United Farm Workers. That was my first contact. In an exchange regarding draft resistance at that convention someone mentioned that the Wobblies had been proud of being draft dodgers during World War I, taking the stand that only bosses profited from war, and only the working class fought and died. I decided I had better read up a bit on these folks who seemed to have the same attitude toward war that I did. A bit later I was looking for some work since the draft organizing only paid a stipend of \$5 a week. A friend in the Resistance was running a small press with a Wobbly shop card. I worked with him for a while, my first experience in an IWW shop.

Now in his fourth annual term as GST (General Secretary-Treasurer), Fred Chase is confident that the IWW will continue to build and expand on recent successes regardless of who is GST (Alexis Buss is also being nominated for 1999). A true militant and long time Wobbly, I managed to briefly interview Fred via E-mail. He kindly answered questions ranging from the Borders Boycott to the KKK.

Direct Action: Greetings from Australia. How is it going?

Fred Chase: Greetings bakatcha. Things are going very well for the Union.

DA: Can you tell us a little bit about what your job as GST actually involves?

Fred: It's a bureaucratic position. I am reminded by the membership from time to time that I am just a secretary, just a treasurer. I'm fond of saying I'm the only paid elected employee with, as of today, 1119 bosses. I keep the books, do data entry, put out the internal General Organization Bulletin (GOB) on a monthly basis, update member dues records and address changes, and such, compile labels for mailing the GOB and the newspaper. Beyond that I write a monthly column for the Industrial Worker, am responsible for maintaining the literature department, and put out the ballots when we have a referendum, lately once a year in November, get membership cards, buttons, and such printed and distributed to the membership. I'm also a spokesperson for the Union. So I often field calls from people seeking information about the IWW and contacts with Wobs. Sometimes I'm called upon to try to mediate disputes between members. When there's time, seldom, I straighten the office, clean toilets, whatever is most immediately needed to keep the union healthy and growing. Chief cook and bottle washer.

DA: How long have you been GST?

Fred: I'm in my fourth annual term. I've run all four times with no competition. This is a job that usually

It was very egalitarian. Shortly after that I went to prison for 2 1/2 years for destroying 20,000 selective files with 14 other draft resisters in Chicago. When I got out I got a job in a book store. When we decided to unionize the store, the Wobblies seemed like the best union to go with. It's been all down hill from there.

DA: What is the current situation in the One Big Union with regards to total membership figures, countries of operation, financial status, etc.?

Fred: Membership is presently 1118. That's up from 400 in January of 1995. There are probably as many people beyond that who consider themselves Wobblies but who haven't paid dues recently. The rate of growth is doubling annually. We presently have members in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Uganda, Russia, Mexico, and the newest Regional Organizing Committees in Italy and Poland. Another Regional Organizing Committee is likely soon in Finland.

There have also been recent contacts with workers in Chile and France who have expressed an interest in joining the IWW. Finances are tight. We've run operational deficits for at least the last 10 years, subsidized by bequests from deceased members. We are getting close to break even. The present deficit amounts to roughly 78 cents per member per month. It's long been a tenet of the IWW that the treasury of the Union is in the pockets of its members. We try to keep dues low and roughly half of the dues remain with the Branches for local organizing. I'm confident that if we were to run out of money before we reached break even that the members would dig into those pockets and provide the funds to keep us afloat.

DA: How did the 1998 General Assembly in the US go?

Fred: It was very good. 89 Wobs were there from around the U.S. and Canada. I'm told that it may have been the largest General Assembly in the Union's history, since even

Fred Chase - continued

when we reportedly had 100,000 members some 70 years ago. Assemblies were small delegate affairs. There is talk about the need to go to longer assemblies with delegates as the organizing drives and related issues we are dealing with continue to increase. The spirit was very positive. All of our members seem inspired by the growth and determined to participate in its continuance. And of course we found some time for some delightful socializing in the evenings with entertainment provided almost exclusively by Wobbly musicians and comedians.

DA: What is the situation like in the US? Does the IWW have a good presence and reputation in the workplace and broader community?

Fred: Our influence among rank-and-file workers is growing significantly wherever we have a presence. In Detroit, Wobblies have been engaged in support activities for locked out Gannett and Knight-Ridder newspaper workers for the past three years. Some of the most militant of those workers have now joined the IWW. In San Francisco Wobblies were the core group in the picket which prevented the unloading of the Neptune Jade which was carrying scab cargo from Liverpool. Last fall in Montana, some of our two carders in the Electrical Workers took 300 of their Fellow Workers off a construction site (they call it Wobbling the Job) to walk a picket line with the Teamsters at United Parcel Service. It's getting to the point at which rank-and-filers who need help with an action are beginning to call on the Wobblies because they know they can rely on us for militant support. We aren't quite so popular with the business union bureaucrats who know they can count on us to criticise them when they aren't doing right by their members.

DA: How is the Borders' affair going?

Fred: The Boycott is still in effect; but there is currently discussion within the IWW about the most effective course of action to take. In all we estimate we have cost them more than a million dollars in lost sales. But they're a rich company and that has had an insignificant

effect on their profits. Our actions against Borders did give us a sudden increase in visibility and made it clear to a lot of workers that we mean our slogans of "An injury to one is an injury to all" and "We never forget." A new Borders rarely opens without a Wobbly presence informing the customers of the store's union busting tactics. There is an effort being made to organize the workers at Borders in London. And I hear the chain is coming your way soon and can expect another warm Wobbly welcome when that happens. (see p8, -ed.)



DA: Apparently, you've been active in opposing the Klu Klux Klan in America. What is the deal with that?

Fred: The IWW was an integrated Union from its beginning in 1905. We've always welcomed women and minorities. Not surprisingly many of them have been among our most effective organizers. Racism is a tool used by the bosses to divide the working class. So long as they can keep us fighting one another, we can't unite to defeat the bosses. A worker's life doesn't end at the time clock. Any time a member of the working class is being oppressed it behooves anyone serious about working class solidarity to be there at their side. There are a few Klan groups in the states around the Great Lakes. By themselves they aren't much of a threat to anyone; but they are the tip of the iceberg. If they are permitted to spout their racist garbage unchallenged the more timid racists will soon join them. So any time the Klan shows up someone I can get to, I'm going to be there to show them they are opposed. I was proud to be asked to be one of the spokespeople invited to show Union opposition to racism when the Klan appeared in Ann Arbor in 1996. I was quoted in the local paper as saying that I sympathized with the anger and frustration of some Klan members at the way they as poor

workers were treated in capitalist society, but that bosses rather than Black working people were their real enemy. I went on to say that once they put on Klan robes, they had become traitors to their class. For that I got an unsigned letter in the mail calling me a race traitor and saying I could expect to be blown away by a shotgun stuck up my ass. I'm still here. I was back at another rally this summer when the Klan again reared its ugly head; and I'll be at the next whenever it happens.

DA: What are your views on the I-99 International Solidarity conference to be held in the US in 1999?

Fred: I'm very hopeful that it will provide an opportunity for revolutionary workers from around the world to share ideas and perhaps get over some of the infighting between revolutionary unions which detracts from our struggle with the bosses. The conference has the endorsement of the Union, but it is not an IWW project. It's the work of the Workers Solidarity Alliance, the U.S. branch of the IWA (the anarcho-syndicalist International), many of whom are also members of the IWW.

DA: Recently there has been a surge of activity in the UK, could you please tell us a little about that?

Fred: There is a pharmaceutical plant with some 300 workers there. About 100 of them to date have indicated an interest in joining the IWW. It's in the early stages of organizing, so I don't have a lot of information about it yet.

DA: Down here in Australia the IWW is just getting going again. What advice do you have for us Australian Wobblies?

Fred: One of the biggest problems the IWW has faced over the years, even worse than the repression from the bosses and governments, has been in-fighting. One of the main reasons for recent growth has been the ability of members to put aside their egos and minor differences for the sake of the Union. If you folks can keep your eyes on the prize, a world without bosses, then I am confident that the IWW in Australia will soon again be as strong as it once was.

DA: Any parting words...?

Fred: Nah, I write too much.

DA: Thankyou.

And The Sermon For Today...

Union Bosses - Fuck Them Off Before They Sell You Out!

There seems to be a widespread misconception that the wharfies won the dispute with Patrick Stevedore all those months ago. Well they didn't, they lost badly. But they weren't defeated by Patricks, they were cynically sold-out just at the point where they could have had a clear, uncompromising win.

Vast mountains of containers were banked up on the docks, support outside the industry was massive and solid and the crunch was about to come. Within a very short time Patricks would have had to admit defeat, reinstate the illegally sacked workers and swallow the fact that this time their already overinflated profits weren't going to rocket at the expense of the workers.

With a devious flourish, that reminded me of the sellout of Melbourne tramways workers in 1990, well-paid Maritime Union boss John "Chardonnay" Coombs rushed in with his bureaucratic cavalry to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. He gleefully handed the heads of workers he was supposed to be representing to his corporate bandit mate Chris Corrigan on a gold plate. His underhanded deal allowed Patricks to get rid of half their employees, and leave already overworked wharfies in a hopeless position.

At the end of January 1990, after a month-long tram stoppage in Melbourne, the trammies were also on the verge of victory. The holiday period was over and Melbourne was about to go back to work. Until that point, having all the city's trams lined up in the CBD, with the power shut off by management, had caused only minor inconvenience. A few days later it would have caused total chaos and brought Melbourne to an almost complete halt. That was the point where the government would have had to give in.

But ATMOEA (tram union) boss Lou Di Gregorio had other ideas. He wouldn't allow the trammies and their many supporters to win the fight and keep conductors. So, in the time-honoured tradition of the rich parasites who control Australian trade unions, with a sly grin he sold his members down the river. But it's time workers stopped taking this shit! What's the point of paying inflated union dues to pay the high wages of some bastard who'll sell you out as soon as you look like winning a dispute? It's no wonder Australian workers are worse off than they've been for decades with capitalist scum like them in control of our only defence against slavery and poverty.

There's only one solution - take control of your own workplace! Throw out *all* bosses - starting with union bosses! Unlike the rest of the union movement, the IWW really *is* run by its members. We've got no bosses so we never get sold-out. Running your own union might take up a bit more of your time than being part of the ineffective and unrepresentative bureaucracies, which other unions are, but the amount you'll save on dues will pay *your* wages for the few hours a month it will take. And when you're not forced to work long hours just to scrape a living you'll have the time to do it anyway!

Sack the union bosses today - they'll sell you out tomorrow!

• • •

Wal, the usual editor of *Direct Action*, is having a break this issue and I'm doing the job instead. I hope I haven't departed too far from the established style of this magazine, but I must admit to imposing a few of my ideas about format on the layout!

Thanks to everyone who's contributed to this edition. Special thanks to A-Press for their high-quality, low-cost printing job - without them, we wouldn't be able to afford to publish this paper in the quantities and format we can now.

A. Block
Acting Editor

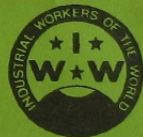
Wobbling the Web

If you've got access to the internet, you can find a lot of IWW information and history on the world-wide web. The address of the Australian IWW web site is:

<http://www.iww.org.au/australia>

From that address, you can find links to other IWW web sites, including the main directory of international IWW internet resources.

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JOE

HILL

GÄVLE, SVERIGE
 7 OKTOBER 1879
 SALT LAKE CITY, U.S.A.
 19 NOVEMBER 1915
 UNION ORGANIZER
 LABOR AGITATOR
 CARTOONIST, POET
 MUSICIAN, COMPOSER
 ITINERANT WORKER
 ARBETARSÄNGAREN

MURDERED BY THE
 JUDICIARY IN
 COLLUSION
 WITH THE MINE
 OWNERS WHO WISHED
 TO SILENCE HIS SONGS
 BUT THE SONGS ARE
 STILL BEING SUNG!
 INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

IF WE WORKERS TAKE A NOTION
 WE CAN STOP ALL SPEEDING TRAINS
 EVERY SHIP UPON THE OCEAN
 WE CAN TIE WITH MIGHTY CHAINS
 EVERY WHEEL IN THE CREATION
 EVERY MINE AND EVERY MILL
 FLEETS AND ARMIES
 OF ALL NATIONS
 WILL AT OUR COMMAND
**STAND
 STILL**

SÖRJ EJ, ORGANISERA

