

DIRECT

ORGANISATION

ACTION

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HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



IN EDUCATION



CELEBRATING
THE SECOND COMING
OF THE
INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD
IN
AUSTRALIA



FRUIT PICKERS



AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED



DIRECT ACTION
No. 170 Winter 1999
PO Box 78 Bellingen NSW 2454
www.iww.org.au/da

IWW Directory

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IU - Industrial Union

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Preamble to the IWW 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 organise 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 centring 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 organisation 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 organised, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organising industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Don't Moan, Organise!

Direct Democracy! All policy decisions of the IWW are made by referendum, not by a few big knobs in some smoky back room. Worldwide, the IWW has just one moderately-paid officer—the General Secretary-Treasurer. The 7-member General Executive Board is elected annually by the membership of the IWW. All officers are mandated and recallable. General Membership and Job Branches are autonomous; they decide bargaining and strategy for themselves.

To Join: Cut out or photocopy and complete the form below. Send it to: IWW, PO Box 152, Birdwood SA 5234, or contact your local delegate.

The IWW: An Affordable Union! For monthly income up to \$1000, \$5 dues per month * between \$1000 - \$2000, \$10 * over \$2000, \$15. Initiation fee is equal to one month's dues. You can join the IWW for as little as \$10...

IWW Membership Form

- 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 agree to study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes

NAME: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY: _____ STATE: _____ POSTCODE: _____
 OCCUPATION: _____
 PHONE: _____
 EMAIL: _____

Membership includes a subscription to *Direct Action*

We're Back!

IN this *Direct Action* we celebrate the Second Coming of the Industrial Workers of the World in Australia. We have new General Membership Branches in Melbourne and in Brisbane. This is an event!! These are the first branches of the IWW in Australia since the Big Days of the union, way back in 1917!

We have another group close to the numbers for a branch, and we are also very, very close to an Industrial Union in Education. We will tell you what that's all about in the next *Direct Action*.

There are now wobbles all over the country, and they're beginning to speak up. We have members on the factory floor, picking fruit, washing dishes and among the unemployed. We have students, machinists, carpenters

and nurses. And we'll tell you some of their stories in this *Direct Action*.

But there are still a lot of wobbles yet to take out a membership card.

You know who you are!

You are an organiser and a workplace shit-stirrer. You are inspired by the old IWW in its Glory Days, and you're fed-up with the piss-weak unionism of today. Maybe you're active in the community. Or you are acting for the environment because you will not sit idle and watch while Capitalism turns our Earth into an ash heap.

But you'd rather swim in raw sewage before you put your heart and effort into a political party. Labor, Green or "The Revolutionary Socialist Join Us

Now Party"—it's all the same. Political parties are roads to power for an elite, when only rank and file control will bring real change.

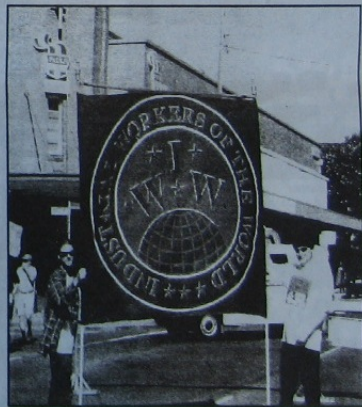
You know what needs to be done. Stop farting around. Take out a wobbly card now!!!

Big thanks to Ben for layout with this DA. Thanks to @ Press for their usual great print job, and a special welcome to a new cartoonist Salt, and to our wobbly photographers whose work appears in this edition of *Direct Action*, number 170, for Winter of '99.

see yours
Wal Larkin

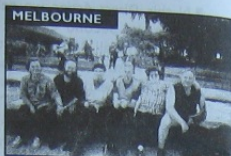
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May Day 1999

Melbourne members attended the GPO Bourke Street Mall City mid-day gathering on May 1st which was small but socially good. Signed up new members. Some of us went on to the Save Royal Park May Day rally that opposes a huge land grab in the City's biggest Parkland with its great remnant-indigenous trees and grassland. Talk of a Green Ban was made to unite the opposition and give it some teeth. Finally went on to the anti-McDonalds community picket then 50 days old which celebrated with a cake and garage sale and the best place to be all day as you could get drink and food, sit on a picket. That night Compcoll (who maintain *xchange.anarki.net* internet server used by many Melbourne wobs) had a social fund raiser; and an East Timor benefit at the Trades Hall saw a Melbourne Wob perform in a Bob Marley covers band. We picked up bread for the Food not Bombs lot and took some down to the McDonalds picket and on to Sunday's official May 2nd May Day march and rally organised by Trades



East meets west



At the GPO

Hall. This year was quietest in Melbourne for years (certainly contrasted with last years during the wharves dispute!). We did a Food not Scabs stall with cakes, biscuits from FNB and Coffee by the IWW. Literature was distributed and sold. Some interest from amongst different communities...

Darwin wobs marched—me and Shell with our wobble t-shirts on. I understand we are the only ones with an official May Day Holiday in Australia—is that right? Funny—it's a military wonderland here—with Denis Burke-Marcos as Chief Minister—former Army commander before entering politics—and his wife Annette Imelda Burke as Palmerston mayor—trying to get her new home of the Army recognised as a city so she can grab more power. We keep wondering if she and Denis moved from their recently expanded suburban 1/2 acre estate to an acre one so she'd have more room for all her shoes... Anyway, we always get a good crowd at the May Day march and rally because it's the only time that unionists get the chance to express "solidarity" openly, loudly and proudly—if somewhat superficially. They're even mumbling about taking away our Picnic Day Public Holiday now—the bastards! Up the workers! - Diana



Marching



Whose turn is it to buy beer?



In the park with the banner



Free East Timor



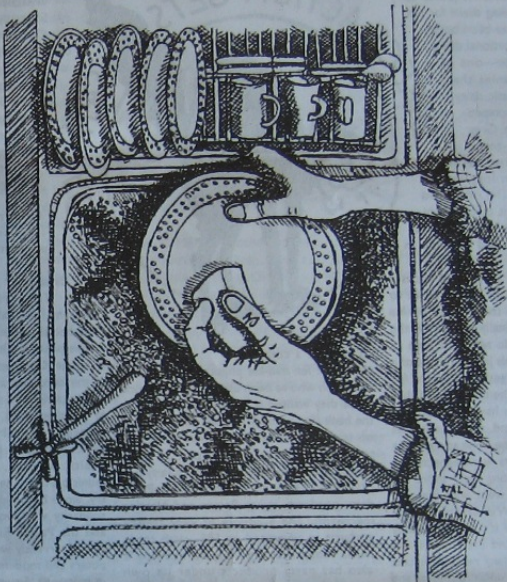
Black and red



For your safety and prosecution

MEN AND BOYS!

REVOLUTION BEGINS



IN THE SINK!

ONLY WHEN MEN TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR SHARE OF THE COOKING, THE CLEANING AND THE WASHING UP... ONLY THEN CAN THEY JOIN WITH WOMEN, AND TOGETHER BUILD A NEW WORLD!!!



Local Reports

Darwin

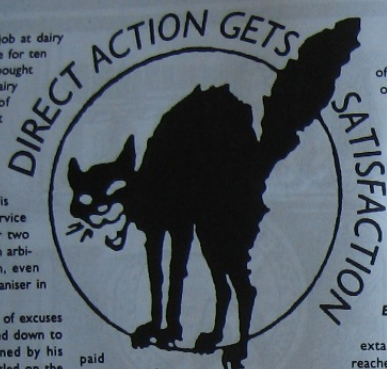
A Darwin wobbly lost his job at dairy company Pauls after being there for ten years. The company has been bought out by an Italian multinational dairy distributor—Parmalat—one of those vulture companies that prey on smaller domestic dairy companies—buy out competition and then swoop in. Greg is one of three long-term employees forced out of her/his job round about when long service entitlements fell due. The other two went quietly. Greg went through arbitration. The TWU backed him, even though it only has one paid organiser in the Territory.

The company used all sorts of excuses to sack Greg but it really boiled down to the managers feeling threatened by his union activism. They finally settled on the fact that he wouldn't do nightshift (due to living 80 kys away from his job and some of it along dirt roads—dangerous at night for sleepy shift workers). The firm claimed they didn't want to risk him having an accident (such caring people!) and, even though his job didn't even need to be done at night, the award said that 'workers were expected to work shifts'. To cut a long story short, we went to arbitration—I went with him and actually helped the TWU organise with some legal issues (knew it'd come in handy sometime) that influenced the commissioner positively. The company refused to take Greg back—even with unfair dismissal and strike action threatening. The commissioner warned the company that if a workable compromise couldn't be reached, he'd recognise that the union had good reason

to talk with its members already discussing stop work meetings' and it might not have any option but to 'take its members out'. He hoped that a bit of 'good sense' from the management would 'prevent this excessive—but necessary action'. Good stuff that!

Anyway, Greg is now unemployed—with 15 weeks pay in lieu of notice and all of his long service entitlements and holiday pay, etc. The company took overnight to reconsider and called him redundant.

So—although Greg is now 'unemployed' he came out better financially under arbitration—give or take the advantages of calling the company's bluff by having the other workers walk out (or not). He's still a bit in shock at not having a steady job (shitzy as it was) because being a full-time, 'permanent'



paid worker tends to become a comfortable habit for mid-life physically-fit working class men who've been used to getting work when they wanted it, but he's got money in the bank (for a while) and he's already going on scavenging hunts with other 'recyclers' to make a bit of dough on the side.

Just remember—the company is 'Parmalat'. As well as distributing Pauls dairy products, it has Peters and Nestles icecreams, and a couple of very trendy yoghurts as advertised on SBS—with continental names I can't recall at the moment. It also has pasta products under its own name—from Italy—that will most likely push out some Australian lines as it goes. Any harm it can be done by all good activists would not go astray.

Diana

Sydney

Sydney IWW members have been attending meetings at Sydney Trades Hall about Currawong. Currawong is a bunch of sleepy old trade union cottages nestled at the foot of the National Park, on the western shore of Pittwater. The site is opposite Palm Beach and accessible only by ferry. Currawong has been a cheap holiday for generations of Trade Unionists, a quiet, idyllic family getaway.

Trouble has come in the form of NSW Labour Council Secretary Michael Costa. This well-paid, full-time union boss has decided to hand Currawong over to the developers. In this case a bunch of Transcendental Meditationists who will build

a temple to their guru Maharishi Whatzisname. Seriously.

Our wobs actually got turned out of one meeting when a ban was put on observers, a pretty unusual event at Trades Hall. The vote on the proposal is being delayed from meeting to meeting, probably in the hope that one cold night no-one will turn-up, and the Currawong development will be pushed through.

Cheers to Sydney wobs for turning-up on behalf of unionism for union members, not unionism as a business.

Brisbane

The Brisbane GMB has been extant for nearly three months, having reached the quorum of ten during the very festive post-march celebrations on May Day this year. Our membership presently stands at thirteen, with a roving delegate currently fruit-picking (and signing up new members!) in Northern Qld. Other industries represented in the GMB include construction, telecommunication/computer operation, health services, education, hospitality, municipal/utility services and the sex industry. Since becoming a GMB, a committee in solidarity with workers in South East Asia and the Pacific Rim has been established, and is currently working on providing computers and modems to like-minded workers in Indonesia. Several Brisbane Wobblies are also involved in the setting-up of the Solidarity Bookshop (all committee members bar one are Wobs) in the basement of local community radio station 4ZZZFM (102.1 MHz). The shop is set to commence operations in August, and will provide literature on unionism, homosexual issues, women's issues, Murri/Koorie issues and left-wing politics in general, set in an internet-cafe-type atmosphere. The shop's address is Qld 264 Barry Parade, Fortitude Valley, Qld 4006, phone (07) 3252 9921. On the sub-junct of books, the Brisbane GMB have just published a book on veteran Wob Tom Barker (titled 'Tom Barker and the IWW'). Lastly, and most importantly, the Brisbane GMB of the IWW maintains that it can, without a shadow of doubt, drink any and all other 'leftist' organisations in Brisbane under the table.

Wobbly regards, Jakey Silverberg

■ MELBOURNE

Residents Against McDonalds say MAC OFF!

TWO years ago residents in the Pascoe Vale/North Western Melbourne suburbs opposed the construction of a new 107 seat, drive through tunnel for 12 cars McDonalds. This would be the 6th McDonalds in the Moreland region. McRealEstates purchased 4 houses including an historic 110 year old one (the first house built North of Bell Street). Three were demolished but the fourth became the focus of direct action to stop it being demolished. Locals occupied the house, climbed on the roof and set up a 24 hour community picket for 94 days outside #1 Sussex Street.

Coburgers not Hamburgers!

The local Council, State and Federal Politicians, Trade Union Leaders all said they backed the residents. It went to the Victorian Civil and Administration Tribunal where after 6 days of hearing the residents submissions opposing the demolition and construction of the McChuckers for reasons of traffic chaos, noise, rubbish etc.

These were all replied to by McLiars high paid Barrister, Wright. The VCAT officials appointed by the State Government of Jeff Kennett, through planning Minister McLellan intervened to overrule any opposition. The VCAT took 10 minutes to decide in favour of McEmpires.

Community not Capitalism!

The private security Corporation Advent provided guards for the site 24 hours a day to watch over the house to prevent further occupation and to protect the Redbar Excavation machinery. Redbar were paid for their machinery sitting on site and a stand-off until the VTAC hearing came in. A second fence was installed to keep protesters out.

During the 94 days banners put up the residents were vandalised, picketers cars were also attacked and one picketer had his home burgled while on the picket. The great hope was that VTAC would go the way of the residents...

Sunned the local residents looked to



guitar accompaniment powered from the back of a ute...the fence suddenly had a hole and we all walked around inside the site!

After a while we began to drift away, but as we did a 3 car smash occurred. Luckily nobody was injured but it was an ironic illustration of the increasing dangers for motorists, cyclist and pedestrians who approach the corner of Sussex & Bell Streets.

As part of organising, contact was made with the McLibel defendants and the video of their long libel trial in London shown (see <<http://www.McSpotlight.org/>>) as well as other groups and residents, eg. Torquay and Belgrave in past and your area next!

A web site <<http://taz.net.au/ram/>> holds a record of the Residents Against McDonalds effort for use of others up against the McEmpire.

Suburban Organising?

Melbourne IWW members did shifts on the picket, took part in various actions, and brought food there on a regular basis. Alas most other organisations did not come along on any regular basis and as numbers of locals dwindled with Winter weather it became an uphill battle to maintain the picket. Some people not active since opposing the Vietnam War or in past workplace struggles came together with new younger and keener protesters. However they remained isolated from mostly apathetic locals (or worse hostile pro-McJobs kids!). A jumble sale and other activities to raise funds and numbers were tried to limited success.

All in all a valiant, but failed, effort as too many people just shrugged their shoulders. "McDonalds have too much power, money, you cannot win". If the future is the continual expansion of the McEmpire then we have all got a lot of educating and organising to do. If you don't fight you lose too and some of the locals did "go down swinging" and good on 'em for giving it their best anyway.

A. Block

■ MELBOURNE

Ninety One Years of Agitation: The Melbourne IWW 1908-1999

MMELBOURNE Wobblies officially organised a General Membership Branch (GMB) in February 1999 with the arrival of their long awaited charter. This acknowledged the recent hard work put in by local members in establishing the first Melbourne branch in an estimated 71 years.¹

The first Melbourne IWW branch was organised in 1908 on the initiative of local socialists. This branch was organised along the so-called "De Leonite" line, that is adopting the preamble that contained reference to "political action". During these early days, the branch (then known as a "club") addressed regular open-air meetings and Trade Union branches around Victoria, spreading the bold new ideas of revolutionary industrial unionism to eager wage-slaves. As Verity Burgmann points out, "there was a ready audience for the message that craft unionism was obsolete, that only in industrial unionism could the real embodiment of the solidarity of labour be presented".² In fact so effective was Wobbly agitation that in 1908 Melbourne Trades Hall Council was presented with a motion asking the council to, "consider the advisability of organising along the lines of the IWW".³ Sadly, it was lost.

January 1915 marked the establishment of the Melbourne IWW proper. Local no.8 was organised in accordance with the "Chicago" model, based entirely on direct action.⁴ Having fallen out with Trades Hall, who the militant Wobblies accused of being "labor fakery" and "agents of the ruling class" for making sweet-heart deals with the bosses and selling out the workers to arbitration, the branch was refused use of an office at the Hall, eventually finding permanent residence at 197 Russell street in Melbourne's CBD. This branch was exceptionally active, routine activities included business meetings, educational classes on such topics as working class economics and public speaking, outdoor lectures at the Yarra Bank and other places which could literally pull thousands of listeners, as well as shop floor organising. One observer regarded the Melbourne Wobs as, "the best open-air speakers ever, remarkable for their clarity and wit".⁵

The Melbourne IWW continued this frenzy of working class agitation through until the late 1930s/early 1940s when popular enthusiasm began to calm down.⁶ During research for this article, the references



found stated that the last "official" Melbourne IWW branch faded out of activity in 1931, though it's very possible that there were short lived branches after this. There is no doubt that the IWW has been active in Melbourne, in one form or another, all through this century.

Now in 1999 Melbourne is once again a hotbed of Wobbly activity. Local members are organising in a number of different industries and around a wide variety of issues. The main push industrially has come from the education industry, where we are in the process of applying for a charter for an Industrial Union Branch, the restaurant industry in which the branch has a number of members who are pushing Wobbly ideas and tactics and putting them into practice, and the distribution industry, where there are members who work as street vendors selling the *Big Issue*, a current affair magazine that is sold on the streets. Street vendors have used direct action and solidarity to win a minor dispute that involved one member being told that he was not allowed to sell the *Big Issue* while wearing anti-GST, IWW and other political badges on his vest. The member concerned, accompanied by two other Wobs, confronted the boss regarding this issue and as a result is allowed to wear his badges while he sells and continues to do it daily.

Additionally, Melbourne Wobs have established a number of local initiatives

including, Food Not Seabs which is a mobile kitchen that serves food to and collects money for workers during disputes, a literature committee, an informal industrial relations committee that is researching where the IWW stands and where it can go in terms of labour laws, and a good and welfare fund which is set up to assist fellow-workers who are in need.

Other activities include solidarity with the Mirrar people of Jabluka, printing and distributing *Direct Action*, solidarity with activists in Indonesia, maintaining a web site and chat list and dual-carding in the business unions (pushing Wobbly concepts). The Branch also hopes to organise a number of future workshops for wage-slaves on topics such as, introduction to the IWW, grassroots organising and direct action, running your own unfair dismissal case and public speaking.

Currently, one member is trekking across North America, after attending the I-99 International Solidarity Conference with delegate credentials, illegally riding the trains (an old time IWW tradition), and hooking up with Wobs all over the country.

The Melbourne GMB continues to grow and agitate for working class self-emancipation. We are building a network and good reputation among other working class militants, putting into practice the motto *An Injury to One Is An Injury To All*.

Lincoln x347958

FOOTNOTES

1. Subsequently the first Australian branch since the early 1980s.
2. Burgmann, *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism*, 1995, pg. 17.
3. Burgmann, 1995, pg. 19.
4. The Chicago faction, led by Big Bill Haywood, a founding member, split from the De Leonite faction over the issue of political action and took almost the entire membership with them. The Chicago model is considered the true IWW and is that which survives today.
5. Burgmann, 1995, pg. 119.
6. This was due in part to government and employer repression and also the growing influence of the newly founded Communist Party, though what good that did the workers is unclear to me. Where is the CPA now?

■ TASMANIA

But What About the (Chocolate) Flake?

In the Tasmanian Industrial Commission Rebecca Bishop and Justin Bartlett v McDonalds Launceston Re: Alleged Unfair Dismissal

ATASMANIAN Wobbly has been representing two sacked McDonalds workers before the Tasmanian Industrial Commission. The two workers were sacked as a result of what the owner of the store described as "some indiscretions" in the early morning of October 23, 1998. Justin and another worker had been let into the premises at about 3.30 am by Rebecca, who was working the maintenance shift. The two early birds had been a bit under the weather and helped themselves to an extremely unhealthy breakfast of chicken McNuggets (and yes, they did have fries with that).

Giving evidence in the hearing, the franchise owner Steve Nicolaus complained bitterly of tens of thousands of dollars worth of product disappearing from his three McDonalds outlets in launceston every year. "Stealing is stealing, no matter how small the value of the goods involved," explained his counsel, Andrew Flood, from the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Charles Dickens eat your heart out.

However in the course of the Industrial Commission hearing Flood was forced to concede that the charges against Rebecca, who denied participating in the feast of fatty foods, rested largely on her confession to the charge of consuming a solitary chocolate Flake. Which, for those unfamiliar with Macca's fare, is a miniature version of the confectionary bar, sold as an optional extra with the standard Macca's soft serve ice cream cone.

Acting for the sacked workers IWW member Bill very early displayed his ignorance of the insides of the golden arches by pouncing on one of the employer's witnesses who had claimed that

Rebecca had eaten the Flake before the deep fryers had been turned on—"Aha!" says he. "But is there not some inconsistency in your evidence there? How could she have eaten the flake before it could have been cooked!?"

Something of a *faux pas*, Bill admits. But he got his revenge. As it turned out one of the perks of the Macca's maintenance shift workers was a free breakfast. Rebecca explained that she had "promoted" off the Flake on the register, thus complying with the regulations that her "meal" be recorded. However the employer gave evidence that this was not proper, he insisted that, since the Flake bars are not sold separately, it was quite improper for her to consume one for breakfast. Since a Flake bar, by itself, was not a discrete product, it was still stealing. (Presumably it would have been OK if she had got an ice cream with it though.)

No files on the wobbly team though, during the lunch adjournment they sent an agent back into the Macca's, who managed to convince one of the staff to sell a flake bar, which bill offered to the court as rebuttal evidence.

The opposition was flummoxed! The adjudicator, Commissioner Imlach raised his eyebrows. "What's this?" "A Flake," Bill told him, smugly, "purchased this very day from McDonalds Invermay. Evidence that Flake Bars are, indeed, sold separately."

Flood babbled, "We don't know WHERE this flake came from..." he blathered.

"Did YOU buy this?" the Commissioner queried Bill. "No, that fellow did," Bill told him, pointing to the purchasing party in the rear of the courtroom.

He muttered something, then the hearing continued, with the employers argument and summing up. Bill thought that was it, not impressed it seemed. But he was quite wrong. At the end of Andrew Flood's evidence and summary for the employer, the Commissioner suddenly pounced on him, "But what about the Flake?" he demanded. "What have you got to say about the Flake?"

You could have knocked Bill down with a feather. Flood looked rattled, he blathered something about it not being properly in evidence, the pedigree of the Flake being a matter of speculation, but he wasn't convincing, he looked a beaten man. Rumpole would have been proud of our IWW representative!

In spite of Bill's great flake triumph the decision of the industrial court has been to dismiss the case against McDonalds, but the case is going to appeal. The workers concerned are now more determined than ever to have their dismissal overturned, after sitting through one whole load of McVerbal Diabhorra! We can only encourage them!



INTERNATIONAL

Students Occupy, Proletarians Shop, Carpenters Wildcat

United Kingdom: Students Occupy Sussex University

During May students at Sussex University, UK, protesting against the expulsion of 89 students who had not paid their tuition fees, occupied their university administration building. The British government had installed a tuition fee of £1000 (approx. AUD\$3000), which many students were unable to afford.

In a statement distributed via email, the occupying students described their demands as simple:

- No present or future student shall be expelled for non-payment of tuition fees.
- No repercussions for those involved in the occupation.

The occupiers said they would stay in the administrative building, blocking the financial office until their demands were met. Similar actions had already taken place in other universities, and these actions were successful, leading to a non-expulsion policy.

Occupation web page:
<http://www.geocities.com/SolHo/Den/4331/>

France: The Unemployed Go Shopping . . . and Blockade Buses

Around Christmas 1998 the Unemployed Action Committee of the French CNT (Paris sector) organised proletarian shopping days in the towns of Clermonte Ferrand and Bethune to dramatise the situation of the excluded.

On December 24, the CNT of Bethune, the CNT of Illoise and the unemployed association (ADEPA-ACI) of St. Omer mobilised some 40 unemployed, contingent workers and syndicalists to invade the supermarket Champion and "requisition the wealth." After an hour of negotiations with the management the store agreed to give the demonstrators several shopping carts full of staples (bread, butter, meat) and some toys. He opened the doors himself and told the cashiers not to bother ringing it up, and asked the police not to interfere.

The next day the store manager started to make public statements accusing the demonstrators of being drunks and criminals for having stolen 14 shopping carts worth 7000 francs [about AUD\$230] each. In response to this attempt to criminalise the unemployed and syndicalists the CNT put out a call for a boycott of the Champion chain.

In Clermont Ferrand, on December 28, about 40 people invaded the supermarket Geant-Casino and began filling shopping carts with such items as salmon, bovine, pastries, *foie gras*—but no pizza. At the same time they circulated a leaflet entitled "Christmas of the Excluded" in which they explained the action. After a while the activists gathered together to confront the management and store security. The management offered the give the protesters some 5,000 francs worth of goods which they refused. After the local press arrived, management decided to up the offer to six full shopping carts, worth 12,442 francs [just over AUD\$4000], for fear of bad publicity. The food was distributed the next day amongst the unemployed in the centre of town as a further demonstration of what direct action can accomplish.

In another unemployed action in December, a group of unemployed in Nancy (which included members of the Anti-Unemployment Committee 54 of the CNT) occupied the unemployment bureau (ANPE) in the city centre, in an attempt to revive the movement of the previous winter. During the occupation General Assemblies were held every day to discuss the situation of the excluded and to make plans for future actions.

At one of the assemblies it was decided to contact striking bus mechanics and drivers who had been on the bricks since December 16 in defense of their claims for a 1% pay boost and better working conditions (the workers were members of the CGT and FO). CGFTE (the bus company of the Vivendi group)

refused all negotiations until the workers returned to their jobs. They obtained an objection against picketing and pickets had been attacked on several occasions by guard dogs. On December 26 the unemployed group, in agreement with the strikers, joined the picket lines at the Jarville depot and set up a blockade that lasted from 4am until 4pm. For some unknown reason the police did not interfere, despite the pleas of management. Perhaps the judge hope that the action would force the management to negotiate.

This action of the unemployed certainly helped to boost the morale of the strikers, but did not break the deadlock. Management seemed to harden its position and proceeded to denounce the unemployed and the CNT. However, in the end CGFTE caved in and granted most of the workers' demands: 1% pay hike, create 30 jobs, apply the 35-hour law, no sanctions against strikers (4 workers caught in the act of sabotaging 9 buses were annulled by the agreement). Of course, management waffled on their agreements in the days following the return to work.

This action shows that solidarity between employed and unemployed is possible.

le combat Syndicaliste, via ASR

Carpenters Wildcat in California

During June carpenters in the Bay Area, CA, USA began a wildcat strike after officials at their "business" union signed a contract for the in-progress San Francisco Airport. This contract, called a

"Project Labor Agreement," made provisions for non-union labour to be used on the site.

A rank & file carpenters web page it at:
<http://ban.iww.org/union/carpenters.html>

IWW News from Poland

The nurses demo went ok, 10,000 people turned up. IWW was invited to join the demonstration as were all unions. We were on the official list of the participating organisations and were named by the organisers in one of the speeches to the protesters.

We picketed the Parliament Building then did a sit-in for nearly 10 hours in front of the Prime Minister Office Building in Warsaw. Good thing there was some support from other industries—delegations of miners, railway workers, teachers and steelers were present.

Official unions sent small delegations, and compared to them, our little group did not look too bad at all.

We were under the red IWW banner with loudspeakers and leaflets at ready, and even though we were not agitating aggressively (unlike many political sects present at the demo) we attracted quite an interest. Partly because there was not much to do once we all sat down right in the middle of the street. So one could as well take a leaflet and read it. On Monday morning situation looks like the nurses are on the verge of winning their demands (12% pay rise + stop of job cuts), negotiations with government are in progress, we keep our fingers crossed for them.



"THERE WAS A MOOD OF PESSIMISM IN THE QUEUE..."

The Client

THE CLIENT waited. There was a queue of a dozen or so people in this office. There was a mood of pessimism in the queue. They were all clients but he was The Client. He did, however, get the impression that he was just another client. He was not an upright citizen. More of a hunched-over, do-I-have-to-go-through-all-this-again citizen. Somebody moved off the queue to the counter. All the people in the queue waited in silence.

Somebody's child, a client's child, crawled over a planter pot. The particular client who happened to have some sort of responsibility for the child was telling the child to leave the planter pot alone.

Nathan! Nathan, get away from that, y'hear?

The client being served at the counter left to take a seat in the office. Their needs, or the Agency's needs, would be attended to by someone in the next two or three hours. In the meantime the client would sit, and sit, and sit, until their matter was resolved. The Client shuffled forward. Another client had finally arrived at the counter. That client's needs were simple. They simply had to drop off a form that would mean that their fortnightly income would continue. Every fortnight that client would drop off a diary that would show the Agency that the aforementioned client had been diligently engaged in seeking employment, had been a schmuck and had been unsuccessful and therefore was entitled to an allowance from the Government for the fortnight from which the client would purchase accommodation and sustenance, etc. and refrain from engaging in crime to support their physical needs.

The Agency employee whose job it was to receive people at the counter smiled and gave the client the impression that all was well with their paperwork and the client was free to go about the world for another fortnight. At least as far as the Agency was concerned. Maybe.

That part of the counter where clients came to when they reached the head of the queue was called "Reception."

The Client watched as another client approached the Agency employee at reception. Next to Reception were



twelve counter booths where other Agency employees handled the business of those clients that could not be dealt with at reception. One booth was being used and the rest were empty. At the booth that was being used was an Agency employee and a rather distressed and agitated client.

The Client looked at the carpet. The child called Nathan had returned to the planter pot. The client who was in some way responsible for Nathan called to him again.

"Nathan, get away from that, y'hear! Come here now!" The child rather reluctantly went over to the guardian client. The responsible party continued to reprimand with the child. The tone however was less abrasive in this



instance.
 "If you don't behave, young man, you'll get a smack." The child slumped disconsolately into a moulded plastic chair, devoid of stimulus.

It was the only piece of audible communication to be heard in the office. Not that it was the only piece of communication. There were another dozen or so clients waiting in the moulded plastic chairs in the office, all deferring to each others personal space and all communicating a range of emotions with their body-language. One client looked almost asleep, another quite agitated. The client sort of responsible for Nathan appeared rather tired and harassed. Appearances can be deceiving.

That client may have been having an interesting and rewarding time pursuing a worthwhile and valuable activity. It could well be that all the clients, seated and standing, were thus engaged. If that were the case there was little evidence of it.



The Client would, if asked, express the opinion that, in fact, the opposite was true. Some clients would perhaps describe their appearance at

the office as a complete and utter waste of time. Pressed further, some may have even expressed a derogatory opinion of the Agency itself. The Client shuffled forward in the queue.

Another client sat down to wait for their name to be called at one of the booths. This process could take two minutes or two hours and that client had little indication of which would be closer.

There were now eight clients between The Client and reception. The Client examined the posters that adorned the walls of the office. If the information was useful the design would invariably be unprepossessing. The sort of thing that a client wouldn't take notice ahead of the other sort of poster. The latter would be professionally designed, attractive, and devoid of substance. It was usually promoting something totally unrelated to the Agency, or if it was related to the Agency, gave the misleading impression of efficiency or ease of access to the Agency's services.

The Client pondered the meaning of this and concluded

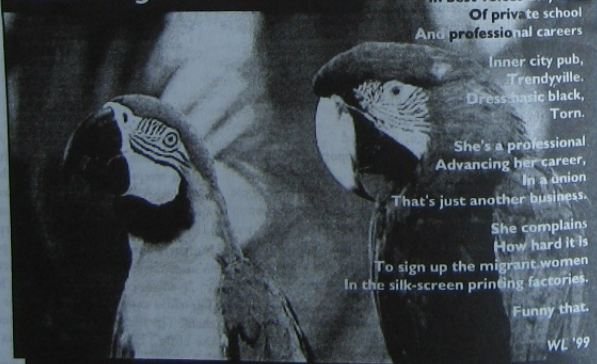


ed that the senior staff of the agency shared the qualities of that part of the body's anatomy that dealt with refuse.

They were a pack of arseholes who rarely had to deal with the consequences of their decisions. Like most "leaders" in this society,

Phil Doyle

Union Organiser



**Sits with her friend
 In privet schools they talk
 Of private school
 And professional careers**

**Inner city pub,
 Trendyville.
 Dress basic black,
 Torn.**

**She's a professional
 Advancing her career,
 In a union
 That's just another business.**

**She complains
 How hard it is
 To sign up the migrant women
 In the silk-screen printing factories.**

Funny that.

WL '99

The French Connection

So here I am in Paris: the city of love, the city of romance. Well, for some, maybe, in my case love was pretty much not on my list of things I had come to Paris for. Work was the main reason. Although I was born here I felt totally awed by the size, the smells, the architecture of the city. I made a point of seeing where I was born, in the northern suburbs of the city. What a shock that was. If you've ever seen the film *la Haine* you'd know what I mean, the film was based in that area of Paris. But I didn't feel totally out of place, although I'd left France when I was six when my family emigrated to Australia. In my new country, I never really fitted in. I was always labelled a wog, although I'd tell the kids to get it right; that I was a frog not a bloody wog. After twelve years absence I thought I'd go back to the mother country, where I would fit in and be part of the majority. What a disappointment when I found myself being called a skip, me a skip. It's lucky I didn't develop schizophrenia.

After getting lost in the city for close to half a day I finally found the address of where my friend Jean-Michel lived. Jean-Michel was an old waiter who I'd worked with in Australia. He, George, Bernard, and other older waiters had taught me the trade, especially all the little tricks that make an average waiter a good waiter. Which increases the amounts of tips that you make, and because you know that you are doing a good job you can in some cases shut up those ball-busting customers, with such one liners as; "Sir I am a waiter, not a servant." Which in France translates as, "Monsieur, the customer may be king but look what happened to the last king of France." In other words don't push it.

Jean-Michel gave me the address of a waiters' placement agency. They work a little different to the ones here. You show up in the morning when they open, take a seat amongst all the other penguins and wait to be called up to be sent to a job. If you get a bit bored waiting you can go to the local cafe next door, have a drink and catch up with all the latest industry goss. I didn't have to wait long, seeing that just like on a sinking ship he first sent out the women and young people.

My first job in Paris was at a restaurant named "La route de Beaujolais." I caught the metro there and arrived in time to be shown around and have lunch with the other staff before the midday service. The job was split shifts 12 to 3 at lunchtime then 6 to 11 at night - this 5 days a week. With the sixth day only having to do lunches. It roughly worked out to 43 hours per week for the minimum wage. Our day off being the day of the lord. We had to come in an hour before if we wanted to

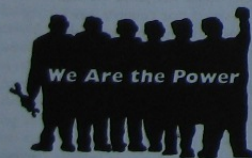


eat. I was suprised to see that all the kitchen staff were Arabic while having no Arabic dishes on the menu, just typical French dishes, coq au vin, boeuf bourguignon, etc. etc. The boss was a short balding middle aged man, who when he addressed us never spoke just yelled. He was French, born in Morocco when that country was a French protectorate and must have thought that Arabs could still be treated the same way as they were then. And because of this I was to witness something that you think only happens in films.

The dishwasher Ahmed was training a new fellow Abdel for his job. I happened to be in the kitchen when the boss walked in and started yelling, his usual way of talking to us, at Ahmed. Bad bad move, but most bosses aren't terribly bright. I must admit. I mean if you've

sacked someone you don't continue abusing them. As the abuses continued I could see Ahmed turning from white to bright red which was the last colour he turned before grabbing the closest kitchen utensil, which luckily for him and the boss wasn't a kitchen knife but a big frying pan and whacked the boss over the head with it. I was dumbfounded, not that he hit him but that he hadn't killed him. The boss was struggling to get to his feet when whacked to the tune of flowing Arabic insults another frying pan blow hit him. Just before the third blow, Abdel, who must have been in the same state I was in, reacted and restrained Ahmed. The chef came over and all three were excitedly talking in arabic. They must of convinced Ahmed he'd better leave. Which he did not before spitting on the boss who was still passed out on the kitchen floor and laying one kick in, just for good measure. As he pased me I put my hand out. He looked at me, shook it, smiled then continued on his way. After this incident all the kitchen staff became my friends. On Sunday, our day off, seeing that none of us had family in Paris we'd all meet at the local Algerian cafe where we spent all day eating couscous, drinking Algerian wine, listening to Algerian Rai music and smoking some of the best Moroccan hash. It was at one of these gatherings months after that happy incident that I've described that I enquired about Ahmed. No one had spoken about it since then. It was told that he was back in Morocco living with his family. To this I called out to the cafe owner, who was the chef, the waiter and the barman all in one, to bring us more wine. I then proposed a toast to Ahmed who will surely be nominated General when the dishwasher uprising begins.

RV



"Return to Normal" - France, May '68

You've Got to Learn To Sell Yourself

You've got to learn to sell yourself
You know that jobs are scarce
Move your misery round a bit
Always ask for less.

Always wear clean clothing
Make sure you hide the holes
Don't forget to wash behind your ears
And—have your shoes got soles?

Don't ask your boss for money
Thank his profits you're off the dot
No-one wants you to stay home hungry -
Let the market take control!

You've got to learn to sell yourself
Mass produce the land
Join the army, make munitions -
Do something we understand.

We know the market rationalises
To confuse you with the plot
Eat Hungry Jacks with your Big Mac
Rainforestburgers-with-the-lot!

Wear a bit of makeup
Black stockings will do fine
Come on, you've got a job to catch
So what if you're fifty-nine!

Go and get job-ready
Lose your dignity, you stob!
Which choice is more suitable
Starve—or get a job!

We know you're good for nothing
More ratbags on the shirk
More greenies who don't like progress
Get a haircut, and some decent work!

You say you'll do a fair day's slog
Keeping the land alive and keeping peace
Are we supposed to pay for this?
Will wonders never cease.

For this is not unemployment
You've got to learn to cheat
You've got to learn to sell yourself
If you want to eat!

You've got to learn to sell yourself
Honesty doesn't pay
You've got to lose your self—respect
To let the market have its way!

Unemployed Working Collective, Darwin

Riding a Wildcat Down

HAND over hand, pulling myself up the derrick of a 90-foot wildcat oil rig. Each hand hold sticks to the frozen ladder as the rig shakes to the wildcat beat of drilling. The East Texas winter wind cuts through you with a vengeance that has no mercy for any fool that crosses its path. Finally reaching the crown, I knock off the ice that has accumulated, only to hear the tool-pusher yell out that the feed pump has gone down. Back down the frozen ladder I go, to prime the pump that only seems to go down when I'm atop the cat's crown.

"Hey! mister pusherman, how does one take lunch on this rig?" "With one hand," he replies. 12 hours on, then 12 hours off, seven days a week, this wildcat slave worked. The cat don't stop for a damn thing, no holidays, no sick days. The wildcat never rests in its pursuit for that black gold. And the wildcat slave only has time to eat, sleep, shit and work, ain't no time or energy for much else. All this so that you good folks can drive your nice four-wheelers around. This ain't no life, the slave thinks, only a brutal means of survival.

I caught on to the wildcat in northern Mississippi after the cat hit an aquifer and the back pressure came up the hole and killed three slaves. The bossman needed replacement slaves and hired me on. We broke the cat down and hauled it off to East Texas. There we set the cat up to try again.

Most oil rigs have five stiffs per shift: a driller, two tongmen, one chainthrower and a derrick hand, who is also responsible for the pump. The man who runs the show is called the toolpusher.

The gangs of roughnecks that work oil rigs don't think much of intellectual fantasies of dream worlds, for the real world shakes them to the bone - a real world that others care not to see or think about. Have you ever given one moment of thought to what lies behind those things you spend your cash on? The roughneck,



The Industrial Workers of the World is an international union. Here is the story of an IWW member from the high plains of Texas.

the truck driver, the sailor of the merchant marine, the factory worker down on the speedup line, the farm worker out in the fields, the miner down in some deep dark hole - all the slaves who endure hardship so that you may consume. Do you ever see the blood, the pain and the sweat that paints each thing you buy? Do you think about the sweatshop workers who make the clothes you wear? Or what of child labor? Do you think about the loss of their childhood when you buy the products they make? Do you hear the cries of Mother Earth when she is raped to support a lifestyle?

Many people just don't want to know about these things. Ignorance is bliss. Others just don't give a damn, no matter what you tell them. All they care about is what they have - to hell with everyone else. Some will respond by telling you how hard their

life is. But in the reality of things, this system, which makes so many suffer, is only able to do this because we allow it.

Every person plays a part in the system of exploitation. And guilt lies in apathy and not doing anything about it. Do you really think you can escape the environmental disaster that this industrial system is creating by ignoring it? Do you realize that we humans are a part of the ecological system? And how we humans treat each other is a part of how we treat the environment. The system of exploitation treats people in the same way that it treats the rest of the ecological system.

The system likes to individualize our concerns so that we care only what happens to ourselves. It does not want you to understand that what happens to others and the rest of the ecological system has a direct



effect on each of us.

The decision whether we are willing pawns of the system, or whether we are willing to do something about it, is ours alone to make. You can become a rebel, you can resist, you can fight back; you can join with others to set things right. You may be thinking: "what difference can I make!" The answer is in the realization that resistance to the system of exploitation is built one person at a time. You are either a part of the system, or a part of the resistance. There ain't no fence to sit on, there ain't no middle ground. In understanding this, the time has come for you to ask yourself, "Which side are you on?"

From the IWW Songbook

SOLIDARITY FOREVER
(tune: John Brown's Body)

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run
There can be no power greater anywhere
beneath the sun
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one?
But the union makes us strong

CHORUS:
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
For the union makes us strong.

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his might
Is there anything left to us but to organise and fight!

For the union makes us strong.

CHORUS

It is we who plowed the prairies; built the cities where they trade;
Dug the mines and built the workshops;
endless miles of railroad laid;
Now we stand outcast and starving, 'midst the wonders we have made;
But the union makes us strong.

CHORUS

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and ours alone.
We have laid the wide foundations, built it skyward stone by stone
It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to own
While the union makes us strong.

CHORUS

Once we got the rig to East Texas, the bossman put us up in a hotel. We all thought that the company would be paying the hotel bill as they did in Mississippi. We got paid every two weeks on this job, and our payday came the day after we arrived. In the next two weeks we set up the rig and began around the clock drilling.

Come the next payday, the tool-pusher told us that the hotel had our checks and that we had to pay up our hotel bill out of them. This was a major problem for many of us because, as our money ran low, we charged our food on credit. This meant we had to pay both our food and hotel room bills at the same time.

Most of us did not have enough money in our checks to do this.

As our anger grew, out of the hotel manager's office came the sheriff and a number of his deputies. He told us that if we had a problem with this he had jail cells for all of us. Then we were told to clear up our bills and to get the hell out of his county. Since this forced us all to "quit", the boss did not have to pay us off for another two weeks, until the next payday. But he offered to advance us money out of that check to pay our bills if we agreed to leave town. Being a bit of a rebel worker, I was rather vocal about this arrangement. The porkers told me that if I

did not shut my mouth, pay my bill and get the hell out of his county, my family, which was with me, would join me in jail.

This whole scam was planned by the company to save them money. In Mississippi the company was unable to get experienced roughnecks. So they had to bring them in from the outside and put them up in a hotel. In East Texas they had two weeks to find a completely new crew. Which they were able to do. Since we did not have a contract or any written agreement, there was nothing we could do about this.

After my bill was paid up, I loaded my family and our few belongings in to our old pickup truck and we made our way down the highway. We were given an escort to the county line by one of the deputies. Once at the county line, he pulled us over and gave me a lecture about my big mouth and bad attitude. He then told us that if he ever saw us in his county again he would throw us all in jail.

Behind everything you buy, there are stories about exploited workers. My story is but one among millions that could be told. The next time you pull up for a tank of gas, remember my story, and think about all the stories still untold, that went into producing the fuel for your car. And if you are able to do this, then you have taken a step in understanding the truth about the world we live in.

Arthur J Miller

They have taken untold billions that they never toiled to earn
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn
We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn
That the union makes us strong.

CHORUS

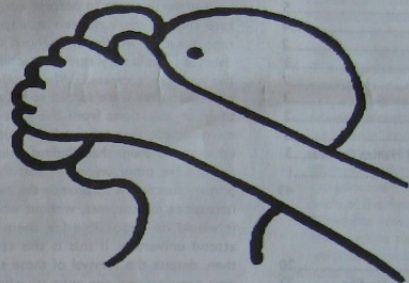
In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand-fold
We can bring to birth a new world in the ashes of the old
For the union makes us strong.

CHORUS

Written by Ralph Chaplin, IWW member, while imprisoned, January 1915.

The Commodification of Knowledge

Reforms



Chloroform

RECENTLY, the federal government proposed legislation which would, if it was approved by the senate, have introduced voluntary student unionism in Australia's universities. This would have given students choice about whether to pay an amenities fee of approximately three hundred and fifty dollars per year which is currently compulsory. The amenities fee is paid to student unions, which use it to provide services and activities for students, such as on-campus childcare, clubs and societies, legal advice, etc.

There has been vigorous opposition to the proposed legislation from various student organisations. Most have responded to this threat to their funding by pointing out that student unions are not "real" unions: rather, they function more like local councils, providing basic services for students.

Although this is the most recent political attack on tertiary education, and has been, by dint of opposition in the senate from the Democrats, put on the back-burner indefinitely, it is certainly not the first.

In 1988, the Labour government's minister for the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, introduced legislation which ended free education in Australia, with the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). Under this system, students pay a proportion of the costs incurred by the university in providing their education. Students accrue a debt as they undertake a course, which they must then repay when they are earning an amount of money which is specified by the government. This was, of course, accompanied by a cut to higher education funding, with the shortfall to be paid for by students.

This was, effectively, the beginning of the corporatisation of tertiary education. Universities began to reorganise according to the dictates of economic efficiency. Over the next ten years, the reorganisation of the structure of universities to meet increasing economic demand was to become practically constant.

In 1996, Amanda Vanstone revealed that the federal government's new budget involved drastic funding cuts to higher education. In addition, HECS payments were increased substantially, and universities were encouraged to enrol students who were capable of paying their tuition fees up-front. This system obviously favoured those who were capable of producing large amounts of money over those whose only option was to apply under HECS. The West report, commissioned by the government in

1997 and released in 1998, revealed in no uncertain terms how the value of tertiary institutions, and indeed knowledge itself, is to be judged in our society:

Given the importance of higher education to economic growth, government decisions on the level of resources to be provided for higher education should be made on the basis that the risks associated with underinvestment in higher education are greater than those of overinvestment!

Thus the value of a university, and by extension a department within a university, is to be judged in terms of its ability to relieve students of whatever funds they have managed to assemble.

The changes that have been made to universities' diversity have been nothing short of catastrophic. Figures from Monash University's

Arts Faculty alone illustrate how funding cuts have lead to staff accepting "voluntary" early retirement packages, and the reduction of students' choices²:

Staff cuts:

Anthropology.....	10
Asian Languages.....	1
Bioethics.....	1
Classics.....	2
English.....	5
Faculty.....	4
Geography.....	2
German.....	3
History.....	7
Japanese.....	3
Linguistics.....	2
Politics.....	5
Social Work and Human Services.....	3
Visual Culture.....	1
Total.....	49

Subject cuts:

Anthropology.....	20
Asian Languages & Studies.....	33
Centre for Comparative Literature & Cultural Studies.....	23
Classics & Archaeology.....	35
Comparative Societies.....	4
Drama & Theatre Studies.....	3
English.....	35
French.....	4
Geography & Environmental Science.....	3
German.....	unknown
History.....	31

Music.....	4
Philosophy.....	9
Politics.....	13
Religion & Theology.....	10
Slavic Studies.....	3
Social Work.....	3
Sociology.....	2
Visual Culture.....	6
Women's Studies & Gender Research.....	unknown

If universities are to become corporate entities, there remains an important question which, throughout the debates on voluntary student unionism, has not been addressed. When student representatives were forced to defend their organisations from the government's attack, they repeatedly responded with the claim that student unions are not like other unions, in that their primary function is to provide the basic necessities for students, without which it would be impossible for them to attend university. If this is the case, then, despite the survival of these student organisations, one must ask who is fulfilling the role of a real union for the hundreds of thousands of students at Australian universities?

Australia's institutes of higher learning have, over the past ten years, been reduced to corporate entities, changing the way they operate to conform to the economic circumstances, rather than to the social circumstances. This is not a new phenomenon, but a symptom of

the increasingly prevalent tendency to value the economic over any other concern. The story of the decline of Australia's universities represents the short-term victory of economic rationalism. The last area of human endeavour relatively free of the tyranny of market forces has collapsed. Whatever happens from here, it will take many years to transform what are now virtually business schools with pretensions into institutions supportive of critical, independent thought.

If every aspect of life continues to be judged according to financial standards, it will not be long before, as Paul Krugman points out:

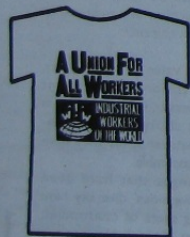
*The diminishing economic returns for academic credentials will lead to the devaluation of higher education (and a return to academia's 19th-century role as a primarily social institution for the children of the wealthy).*²

Sam

FOOTNOTES

1. Rod West, *Learning for Life*, 1998.
2. Figures quoted by Muse, Peter Moran, ed.
3. Paul Krugman, *New York Times Magazine*, 29, Sept. '96, p. 106.

Win Friends and Influence People With IWW Stuff



Impress your friends and fellow workers with your amazing dress sense and learned conversation by purchasing an IWW t-shirt and booklet from the Brisbane GMB. On the left are t-shirts (design says: IWW - A Union for All Workers, black and red on white), \$12 each. On the right is "Tom Barker and the IWW", a 48-page oral history from a former editor of Direct Action, \$3 each. Send orders to: Brisbane IWW, PO Box 5734, West End Queensland 4101. Email gmb@brisbane.iww.org.au for more information. All money received goes toward Sacking the Boss.

Tom Barker
and the
IWW



INDUSTRIAL
WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD

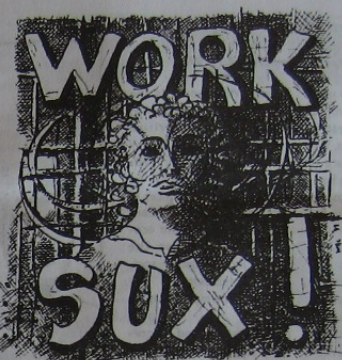


There Are Other Roads

I GOT a letter from a friend a while back and he talked about lunchroom discussions with the people he worked with. General chats about ideas like self-management, greater democracy, etc. were all OK, but people were appalled if he mentioned any of these in relation to socialism, anarchism or marxism. This led him to conclude that Gramsci¹ was correct in assuming that people don't just think that an alternative is bad, they can't believe that one exists.

This letter got me thinking how I view things in general and the IWW in particular. The IWW presents alternatives to a number of things, most obviously to trade unionism. The Preamble to our constitution is pretty clear about trade unions being unable to cope with the centreing of management into fewer hands. True to a certain extent but with some large unions taking over smaller unions and generally acting like multinational corporate raiders, perhaps its not that they can't cope but that they are not set up to do so, and are actually unwilling to do so.

So how are we different from most trade unions? First we differ in our approach to political systems. Trade unions, through their active participation are not voiceless in the political system. Far from being detached from party politics the major trade unions are in it up to their necks and believe in the power of parliament. This participation and the vast amounts of time and money they have invested in party politics gives them a vested interest in supporting a system of elected, temporary dictatorships that so often leave ordinary people in the cold. The IWW on the other hand has specific provisions in place to prevent us from becoming



ing the industrial arm of any political party and keeping "politics" out of the union. While many of our members vote in elections, this remains a personal choice and the union remains politically detached. So we can strive to make gains in the day-to-day struggle with the boss like trade unions do, but we can do so without being tainted by party politics and political considerations.

Trade unions do not attack the capitalist system. They address some of the symptoms of late 20th century capitalism (like casualisation of jobs, for instance), but do not actually address the system itself. Many trade unions have a vested interest in the maintenance of the status quo. Huge union war chests, super funds, etc., have all been invested, in order to accrue interest until the time that they are needed. These funds serve a useful short-term purpose, but they must go some way towards propping up the current economic system. As long as trade unions have millions (billions!) tied up in investments

(¹ Antonio Gramsci, Italian left-communist. Gramsci made a series of observations which came to be known as the theory of "cultural hegemony". He said that the all-pervasiveness of the mass media would lead to the ideology on which the corporately-controlled mass media is based, i.e. capitalism, would become generally accepted as "normal" on the basis of the assumption that "might makes right". Capitalism would be accepted as legitimate and correct without points would automatically be assumed to be wrong because they were not. The legitimacy of justice and equality, but its ability to command capital with which to communicate its own point of view—by facilitating the concentration of material resources in the hands of a privileged few, for instance. Gramsci was, of course, thrown in prison early on in his career. - ed's note)

they will retain this interest in perpetuating capitalism. The IWW has always been opposed to the capitalist system. We recognise that many of our woes are a result of this system. We also realise that capitalism cannot be reformed, there is no "Third Way," so we work towards the destruction of capitalism.

This reflection of society at large is partly the result of trade unions not examining the issues of power, hierarchy and status. In fact most trade unions are extremely hierarchical organisations themselves. Some have different categories of members, with only some of the dues paying members allowed to vote. Because so many trade unions represent only one particular group of workers, this system tends to promote an "us vs. them" atmosphere which does not help break down artificial barriers based on race, gender, etc.

The IWW is an anti-hierarchical organisation. All of our members have a say in what goes on and the rank and file control the union. Anyone can run for office in the union, and we do not have a class of union professionals like so many of the trade unions do.

It would be possible to go on forever about what makes us different than trade unions, but the things that set us apart here can also be applied elsewhere. Hopefully we can all take the sense of equality fostered by the union to the relationships outside the union. We should apply this sense of equality to attacking discrimination in our homes and communities. We can attack notions of hierarchy and political systems that really only serve the few. We can confront capitalism outside the workplace. By extending the basic tenets of our union we can strive to build a better world based on equality and justice.

The challenge for us does not really lie in getting thousands and millions to take out red cards, though I'm sure this will happen. The challenge, Fellow Workers, is to help other people to see that there are other roads and that together we can build a better world.

Why Economics is a Wank

"What this adds up to is \$3000 extra for your average Australian family."

- Peter Costello, Federal Treasurer, 7.30 Report, 18.12.97

COMPARATIVE advantages are used as a way of reading the multitude of economic statistics that appear in the mainstream media, political debate, and our general understanding of the nature of our society. These statistics form the basis for ideas that affect us all in our day-to-day lives.

An oft-quoted economic statistic is Average Weekly Earnings (AWE). AWE doesn't give us an idea of what's the income that exists halfway on any statistical ranking of income. That figure, the median, would at least give us an idea of what at least half the population was getting. Because of the spectacular incomes enjoyed by those at the upper echelons of the income spectrum AWE are a lot higher than what at least half of all income earners earn. The number of people earning the actual figure that is AWE are overshadowed by those who aren't.

The problem is that an impression arises that AWE is sort of what everyone is earning. The reality is that only a few people are doing well, at the expense of many who aren't. Many people are earning far less than AWE.

Another dodgy figure is Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is supposed to measure the wealth of a country, but what it does measure is the value of goods produced and services provided within a given year. As a statistic it is used to measure comparative GDP's between different years (this measures "growth"), or different countries, as a way of measuring the size of economies. It is really an accurate portrayal of the "wealth" that is enjoyed by a member of such an economy where incomes can be so different!

People are more than what they own. There is a wealth of literature and experience that indicates that there is more to life than a material existence. What we choose to do and why is wider and broader than material progress. "Growth" isn't always a recipe for personal happiness.

The concentration on the economic imperatives of life impinges upon the broader human condition. There is much compulsion that exists over individual activity due to the pressures from economic

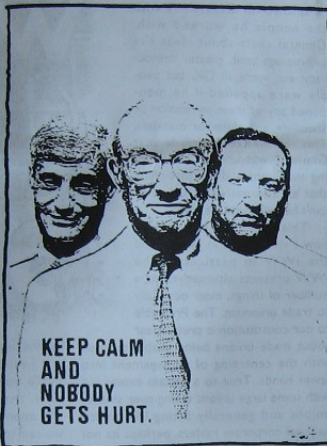
beliefs. Whether it is the laws that protect property, the way we prioritise social problems, the way land is allocated for production, or the way we distribute the resources in this society—great attention is placed on the economic, rather than the moral, intellectual or society considerations.

This compulsion is pretty serious. Philosophically and rhetorically large sections of this society are opposed to the idea of political dictatorship. If we are dictated by economic priorities then what is the point of having political "freedoms", if society merely exists as part of an economy?

We have as much right to pursue our lives and responsibilities to our social condition as the next person. This is the philosophy of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the idea of democratic freedom that the last seven generations of human beings have strived for. The idea of democracy isn't (as most people have been indoctrinated to believe) rule of the majority. Rather, it is to protect diversity and dissent. It is the right to be different.

This economic dictatorship undermines such "freedom", leaving people with little that's free but suicide and starvation if they don't want to buy into the Economic Wank. When social justice and an economic return on private investment diverge, in the eyes of the economic dictatorship the interests of the investor are superior to those of society.

Economic dictatorship is maintained by our narrow electoral system and lack of diversity in the media. This petty ignorance continues while the fruits of significant alienation continue. Is there a link between the narrow economic agenda of the political regime and the vicissitudes of suicide, drug use, depression, alienation and wasted



skills that are increasingly to be found in our society!

We are all more than a statistic. Why should we be hindered in our lives by the arbitrary arrangement of economic institutions? Why do some people have more authority in an economy than others? Are they necessarily better qualified than others? Are their genes superior to ours? Should a small elite benefit from the economic wage-slavery of the vast majority? Why are we reluctant to employ alternative methods of industry, distribution and social organisation? Why are we subject to the same laws while we live with very different social conditions?

With who do our interests lie? With the idea of the Nation! Or with others that share our predicament? With our employers? With anti-social elements such as those who burgle houses without distinguishing between poor and rich? With religion? With a region? How do we resolve our disagreements?

If the narrow economic agenda is crushing our freedom, then by asking these questions, at the very least we won't die ignorant.

Bill Payer

The ABC's of Revolutionary Unionism

SINCE 1970 there has been a great change has come over the World. A shift in "wealth" unknown previously has impoverished millions and made a handful rich beyond all previous dreams. We can see:

• Today, the world's 340 Billionaires control more wealth than the 2 BILLION poorest people. Everyday we witness starvation, environmental degradation and the destruction of human culture for what? To make a couple of thousand people rich and powerful.

• We have seen the collapse of the so-called Communist system and the start of a free market system not significantly different.

• We see the shift of industrialism to the former "socialist" countries and the "developing" world and with it the rise of sweatshop conditions and wholesale theft of resources.

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies) is a revolutionary union in continuous existence since 1905. The IWW was founded by North American rank and file workers who wanted a truly radical, democratic union. Amongst trade unionists the Wobblies are famous, and Bosses fear us. Through our democratic structure, flexible tactics, solidarity and a vision for the future, the IWW's influence has been and continues to be felt throughout the world.

And the IWW is needed even more today than in the past. We hope this introduction to our union will inspire you to join with us to create One Big Union of all workers and eliminate the scourge of Capitalism and class society once and for all.

PRINCIPLES The "Preamble"

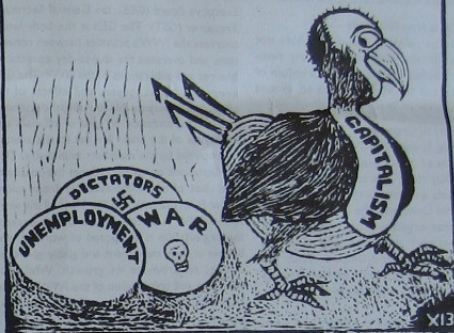
"The Preamble to the Constitution of the IWW is our basic statement of principles:

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 in life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery 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 work-

A BIRD THAT LAYS SUCH ROTTEN EGGS IS LONG OVERDUE FOR EXTINCTION



ers 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 it's 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 the 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.

To Emancipate the Working Class

The IWW believes that by acting in solidarity, in union, we are building a new world in the shell of the old. Through solidarity (and a general strike!) we will create a free world with the good things of life available for all. Yes, the IWW is

radical. It is as radical as a scientist in her laboratory, as radical as a surgeon planning the removal of a diseased growth, as radical as a teacher must be to tell the truth. It is well to note that from radicalism has flowed all that makes life better today than yesterday. As in the past, radicalism is the only force capable of leading the world out of its night of hunger, hatred and fear. We believe in the abolition of capitalism, because capitalism has created an unhappy world that poisons our dreams, our families and the world itself. All so the rich can become richer. If we create a powerful union where all are leaders, we can avoid the problems of the "communist" revolutions, where a set of communist bosses replaced the capitalist bosses only to enrich themselves.

The IWW is Non-Political

The IWW, as an organisation, is non-political and it does not interfere with political beliefs or activities of its members. It requires only that political views do not create division within the union. This rule enables workers of various political beliefs to join together without friction to advance their economic interests. The IWW concentrates on direct economic action—the strike, boycotts, job actions—because history shows that whoever holds economic power also

holds political power. The IWW believes that whatever is "given" to workers by politicians can be quickly be taken away, with interest piled on the "debt". Only that which labor wins by its own economic strength can be retained. The IWW has learned that workers can only fight and overthrow the bosses when we can all unify as a class. Instead of dividing our energies fighting each other over which party or political line will take precedence, we put our strength into fighting the bosses where it counts, in the workplace.

The IWW is Non-Religious

It has no religious bias and it does not interfere with the religious belief of any member. Such beliefs are part of the freedom of humanity and the IWW strives to extend freedom, never to lessen it.

How the IWW Organises

One Big Union: The IWW believes that workers need to organise into One Big Union (OBU) to be able to defend our common interests and control the economy.

Industrial Unionism: The IWW has always believed that organising on craft or trade basis generates divisions and rivalries between workers and unions. Thus we organise in 27 broad Industrial Unions attempting to unify workers in a particular industry.

Locally: Members of the IWW can form several types of locals. A Job Branch at one place of employment. A Industrial Union Branch for members of the same Industrial Union. A General Membership Branch for individual members of various IUs. Industrial District Councils to coordinate multiple branch activity.

Regionally: Members of the IWW in any given region can form a Regional Organising Committee (ROC). A ROC can be used to coordinate IWW activities in the region.

World-wide: The IWW is the same organisation in Sydney or Sierra Leone, Moscow or Vancouver. We have the same policies and statutes in any country. In the present world of "free trade" and multinational corporations, this is the only sensible way to organise. A cornerstone of the IWW is the belief that the rank and file must control the union and its officers, instead of being

controlled by them. No union can be rank and file which limits the freedom of its members or muzzles minorities by a host of unnecessary regulations. Therefore the IWW makes no more rules than there is genuine need for. All important questions, including the election of officials, are decided by referendum vote of the membership. Officials who fail to carry out the desire of the majority are subject to immediate recall.

International Elected positions in the IWW include members of the 7-member General Executive Board (GEB), the General Secretary-Treasurer (GST). The GEB is the body which oversees the IWW's activities between conventions and oversees the day-to-day operations, finances and publications of the IWW. The GST keeps the books, papers and effects of the office, and is responsible for official documents and correspondence. Wages of officials and employees of the union are set to the average pay received by the members in industry. This, and limitations on terms, reduces the possibility of a class of union bureaucrats from taking power from the rank and file. Most of the work in the IWW is done without charge because the organisation is composed of workers who believe in their movement and gladly give their utmost to promote its growth. While the structure and constitution of the IWW jealously protect democracy, no law devised can secure or retain democracy once the will for it is lost. The root of freedom is not law, which people can change, but people themselves.

TACTICS

Flexible Tactics

The IWW is famous for creating many new and innovative forms of striking against the boss. We believe that the key to winning for the working class is flexibility, creativity and an understanding of our own power as workers. At the heart of our beliefs is the notion that working people—the majority of humanity—have every right to control our lives and society. An IWW job action can be anything between a spontaneous walk out and a legally recognised union. While the IWW doesn't place any trust in governmental labour brokering, but we aren't fools either. We recognise we can sometimes use labor laws to protect workers from attacks by bosses. But in the long run, the IWW believes that workers should make their own decisions about what to do and how to do it in their efforts to democratise their workplace. Rather than relying on others to fight our fights for us, we believe we can and should only rely on each other. This is also known as Direct Action, and it can take many forms. It can be simple or complicated, spontaneous or planned far in advance.

The point is that we will decide our own destiny, and the way we'll get there is deciding together how to get there.

Solidarity

The needs and best interests of the working class are in opposition to the needs and best interests of the employing class. As individuals, workers might have things in common with individual bosses. In fact, what we want to do not want to seek revenge towards the capitalists, but only to put them to honest work! We, the workers, have the power to gain the things we need by working together toward our common good. This is solidarity. Our solidarity crosses all lines of race, ethnicity, gender, nation, religion, age, sexual orientation, language, education, and trade. These divisions weaken us in our common struggle for a better world. The only way to win as a class is to recognise individual differences, get over them and join together against the boss.

AN INJURY TO ONE...

We are all Leaders!

The IWW rejects "leaders" as such, for if individuals lead they can also mislead. Labour has continually been betrayed by leaders whom it trusted and followed. It will cease to be betrayed only when it accepts the leadership of ideas and not the leadership of men. As Eugene Debs, a founder of the IWW, said, "Any people who can be led into a revolution can be led out again." Yet there are people who are quick and capable in presenting ideas and in mapping tactics to fit conditions. The best of them do not wish to lead and they will not blindly follow. Such people are developed by the IWW—partly because it is a rank and file organisation, partly from the shared experience of its members, partly because working people have no lack of intelligence and initiative.

Non-Violence

Employers have always been the first to resort to force and violence and the IWW teaches only what the law affirms, that workers have the right to defend themselves against attack. During the late 1980s the world watched as the police states of Eastern Europe collapsed. Those states collapsed when people of all classes refused to participate in them. The same thing will occur when our workers refuse to participate in Capitalism. That is why violence is not necessary when united as a class, all that workers need to do is fold their arms in a General Strike to gain the world.

Membership

Membership in the IWW is based on three simple things: 1) Are you a worker who doesn't have the power to hire and fire? 2) Do you agree with the Preamble of the IWW? 3) Do you agree to educate yourself to the principles and aims of the IWW?

If you answer yes to all three of these questions, you can be a member of the IWW.

The Workers Movement in Indonesia

LOTS of attention has been paid to elections and other political changes in Indonesia despite their this far superficial nature. The student movement which has been driving force in struggle for democracy, has also had lots of attention. Less has written about emerging workers movement, which in the long run will certainly be much more important for life of ordinary Indonesians.

In Suharto's era only legal workers organisation in Indonesia was SPSP (All-Indonesian Employees Union), which was strictly controlled by government and managed by its leaders were retired army officers. During the 90's, however, two new workers organisations were born. SBSI (Indonesian Prosperous Workers Union) was an independent union centre, led by academician Mukhtar Pakpahan, which soon rose to threaten SPSP and violently imposed "peace" in workplaces.

Other new independent organisation was FPBI (Center of Indonesian Workers Struggle), which was led by Dita Sari and affiliated with left-wing People's Democratic Party.

In 1996, alarmed by raising dissent, Indonesian government cracked down on left-wing activists of PRD and FPBI, banning these organisations, and arrested Mukhtar Pakpahan, leader of SBSI. However, SBSI continued its existence and those FPBI's activists who remained free continued their work underground.

After Suharto's fall in May 1998, radical labor activists soon emerged from underground and many new radical labor groups were born in different industrial centers: KOBAR (Workers Committee for Reform Action) in Jakarta area, SBI (Indonesian Workers Solidarity) in Bandung, KRKB (Worker Community Reform Committee) in Solo, DBM (Workers Council of Medan) etc. Mukhtar Pakpahan was also released from prison and retook his position as leader of SBSI.

SBSI and FNPBI After Suharto's fall and Pakpahan's release, SBSI has been largely recognised by foreign mainstream unions and international organisations like IMF, to be the representative of Indonesian labor movement and it seems to work very closely with both AFL-CIO and even with US Embassy. Mukhtar Pakpahan and other SBSI leaders have also started a political party, PBN (National Workers Party). PBN pro-

gram calls for reconciliation between workers and employers and Pakpahan has supported IMF's demands for neoliberal reforms. All this and SBSI's bureaucratic, top-down practice has resulted in some radical activists calling SPSP and SBSI as "banana and pineapple - both yellow".

In May 1999 radical labor groups from different industrial cities of Indonesia joined together to form new national labor federation, FNPBI (National Front of Indonesian Workers Struggle). FNPBI's leader is Dita Sari (who's still in prison) and it is in some respects successor of FPBI. Like in FPBI, many organisers of FNPBI come from left-wing student circles, but FNPBI is not affiliated to any political party and it includes members from different political tendencies.

FPBI is class-struggle based union and it goes beyond pure economic matters by demanding release of all political prisoners, abolition of military's role in Indonesian politics and supporting also East Timor's right to self-determination. FNPBI's answer to economic crisis and mass unemployment is demand for 32 hour work week. It is also fighting for 100% wage increases to compensate for high inflation and raise the extremely poor living standards of Indonesian workers (average monthly wage for factory workers in Indonesia is around AUD\$40). Unions forming FNPBI are formed neither by trade or by industry, but by locality, so that all workers in same city or industrial area are united in one local union (through its branch in factory), which is affiliated in FNPBI. This form of organisation is based on understanding of need for workers unity.

Factory-level unions and spontaneous strikes

Just to speak about SPSP, SBSI and FNPBI is not sufficient however, to understand whole picture of workers struggle in Indonesia. Outside of these central unions there are many independent unions at factory-level, at least 20-30 in Jakarta area alone, and their number is also growing, as workers in factories start new unions to organise themselves. In many industrial areas spontaneous strikes, without any preceding formal organisation are also common. In fact these might be most common type of strikes in Indonesia as workers organisations still cover only very small proportion of workers.

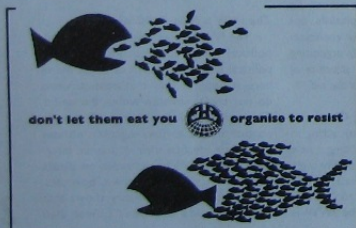
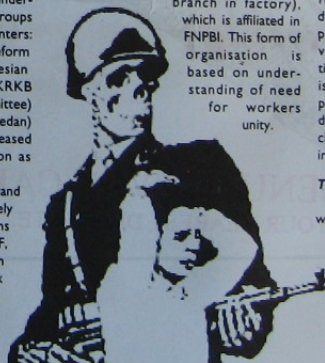
Repression continues

Despite Suharto's fall and much touted "reformasi" era, little has changed for workers in Indonesia. Social situation has actually worsened as the prices have gone up faster than wages. Even basic democratic liberties are almost non-existent for workers. Army is still intervening in negotiations between workers and capitalists and it is routinely attacking strikers, injuring and killing them. Threats, incitement of ethnic hatred and violence are common methods used by army to protect capital's interests.

All Indonesian political parties are pretty much tools of rich elite and/or small middle class, and as such have very little to offer for working class, although in grassroots level some opposition electoral candidates have made obviously groundless promises of social redistribution to get votes in June elections. Victory of opposition parties over ultra-reactionary Golkar is small step towards democracy, but it probably won't guarantee even basic democratic rights for workers. Working class has to fight for them by direct action in streets and workplaces.

The IWW and Indonesian workers

Despite hard conditions Indonesian workers movement is growing fast and showing often radical, anti-bureaucratic tendencies similar to tradition of IWW. The IWW in Australia is in the process of building communication with Indonesian labor unions and providing practical solidarity to them.



IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS,
WORRY YOUR BOSS
AND SCARE HELL OUT OF YOUR OTHER UNION



WITH A GENUINE WOB CARD!!!

CONTACT YOUR NEAREST DELEGATE...