

Direct Action

Paper of the Industrial Workers of the World—Australia > No. 172 > Autumn 2000 > One Dollar > "Don't Moan, Organise!"

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LYING AWAKE AT NIGHT THINKING ABOUT OFFICE-SUPPLIES PILFERAGE
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PERFECTING THE GRUFF SNORT OF CONTEMPT

WHY DO THOSE LAZY BUNCH OF THIEVING LITTLE LIARS DESPISE ME SO?

THE FINE ART OF THE MEANINGLESS MEMO
ADVANCED SEETHING
Mastering the 3 Basic Moods:
✓ SOUR
✓ LOUSY
✓ FURIOUS
FLIRTING POINTLESSLY WITH THAT CUTE LITTLE NUMBER IN RECEPTION
A TENSE OFFICE IS A PRODUCTIVE OFFICE

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "RAISES COME FASTER TO THOSE WHO DON'T ASK FOR THEM."
FINDING SOMETHING WRONG WITH EVERY JOB YOUR WORKERS DO



if we were born to take orders from bosses, why were we born with brains?

Direct Action

No. 172 Autumn 2000
PO Box 78 Bellingen NSW 2454
www.iww.org.au/da/

IWW Directory

REGIONAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

PO Box 152
BIRDWOOD SA 5234
roc@iww.org.au
www.iww.org.au

GMB - General Membership Branch
IU - Industrial Union

Queensland

Brisbane GMB
c/o Solidarity Infoshop
264 Barry Pde
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gmb@brisbane.iww.org.au
www.iww.org.au/brisbane
Delegate: Steve Birmingham
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Delegate: Will Kemp
will@iww.org.au

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Northern Territory

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South Australia

Adelaide
PO Box 152, Birdwood SA 5234

Tasmania

Hobart
Contact vic ROC or Bill Bartlett
Bracknell
Bill Bartlett
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billbartlett@iww.org.au

Victoria

Melbourne GMB
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melbourne@iww.org.au
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Delegate: Margaret Creagh
margaret@iww.org.au
IU620 Education Branch
www.iww.org.au/melbourne/iu620
iu620@melbourne.iww.org.au

Free Indonesia

Contact: Zelda Da
zd@xchange.anarki.net

Western Australia

Perth
PO Box 1629, Morley WA 6943
benav@one.net.au
Albany
Delegate: Mike Payne
PO Box 5325, Albany WA 6332

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE EMPLOYING CLASS HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON. There can be no peace as 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 unite 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 centre 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 to 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 interests 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 days' wage for a fair days' 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 at any time (ie. not merely at the end of their term of office). 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 (see directory).

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:
Occupation:
Phone:
Email:

Membership includes a subscription to *Direct Action*

Letters to the Editor

Just checked out the online Direct Action...great work! In my mind it's just what a Wobbly paper should be. Do you have any arrangements for North American Wobs to subscribe to the paper version?

In solidarity,
Chris, X342939 Tennessee.

Eds note- Yep, send \$15 in Australian Dollars payable to Direct Action to: Direct Action PO Box 78 Bellingen 2454 NSW Australia.

Please always send me Direct Action. I loved the Labor MP pushing the worker away. (Cover of DA 169 -Ed) Perhaps with guidance I could write you something.... I always dismissed all these New Age cures like Aromatherapy as crap but

I've change my mind. I took the kids on a tour of the old BHP at Newcastle before it shut. When I was there I was remembering the old place and what it was like when I was an Unknown Political Prisoner there myself. I took a good hard snort of the blast furnace, and you know I've felt better ever since!

Red Mic

Mic, you shouldn't have any problems with writing for Direct Action, you tell a really good story and we can always use more of them! -Ed.

I see in Melbourne our comrades from the Melbourne Anarcho-Syndicalist Group are seeking affiliation with the International Workers Association. The IWA held it's first Congress in Berlin in 1922 and since

then has largely developed from the experience of French and Spanish Syndicalist traditions. Like ourselves the IWA shares the principles of Revolutionary Unionism. The most apparent distinction between us, as I understand it, is the IWW's a-political position on leaving political and religious matters to individual members as they see fit, whereas the IWA is specifically a Syndicalist Union. In my opinion, while it's our loss that the IWA didn't affiliate with us, the presence here in Australia of such a kindred organisation as the IWA ought nonetheless be applauded and welcomed.

Peter, X347952

Direct Action is written and produced by members of the IWW after working hours.

From the Editors' Desk

IPICKED UP a bloke, hitching south out of Coff's. He had nothing but these two fruit juice drinks. He just sat there in my car hanging onto these two juices. I couldn't work it out. We got talking. He said he had nothing else in the whole world. Just these two juices. The Salvo's had given them to him, he said. He thought it was a joke. I heard his story. Who knows what was true, what was made up. He's sitting in my car and he's got these two fruit juices. Thats all he's got. Been sleeping under the bridge, Coff's Creek. A guy had just died sleeping there, he said. He decided it was time to get out, time to get to Sydney, he said. He could find a refuge there. Went to the Salvo's for help, they gave him these two juices. He wound the window down and threw the juices to buggery. I smiled at that. I laughed at that. I knew why he did that. Because it was a bloody joke. He mentioned White Power. I saw the Swastika tattooed on his arm. But you couldn't be scared of him. I mean he's going down. The bottom of nowhere. He's lost. I let him off at my turnoff. I gave him \$10. I mean

what could you do? What could you bloody do?? This guys got nothing and night's coming down. It's hundreds of miles to Sydney, and this guys got nothing. And I was flush - I still had a few dollars left from doing the shop. But really, it is no bloody joke. We are seeing the rise of Fascist belief among the homeless, among those with nothing to lose. The rise of racism, the hatred of blacks. When right now the blacks have got about the same as all the rest of the poor. About two-fifths of buggier all. But among the poor, the desperate working class, there is no hatred of the rich. No sense of class. No us and them.

There was a time it was different.

There was a time the homeless drifters were como's. Reds. And before that, in years back, the drifters were wobbles. Members of the Industrial Workers of the World. The travelling organiser, nothing in his hands but a red card, owning nothing. Dreaming of a better world. Organising for revolution with nothing to loose. On the track from shearing shed to mill, up to



the cane fields and into the city. Our union in it's glory days was built by the itinerant worker, the poorest of the poor. In the sheds, on the docks and down in the mines, the talk was of one big union. Of a world to win.

It's time we got the finger out, fellow workers!!

Homelessness is as bad now as during the Great Depression. In

the 98-99 year crises accomadation services put up 136,000 people. 45,000 were kids. They turned away 40,000 families because there was no space left. Refugees are underfunded, refugees are stretched to the limit. 40,000 families were turned away, were out sleeping on the streets. They reckon that for ever one person in a refuge, there is one more person sleeping out. Sleeping out on the streets. It's a bloody joke. It's time we got the finger out, fellow workers. There is a world to win.

Thanks to Ben for doing the layout on this *Direct Action*, number 172, for Autumn 2000. Thanks to our writers, our distributors and to our hard working mailout and collating crew. Special thanks to Peter for organising the mailout of our last paper. Thanks to IBM who has done bulk writing this edition-the forest story is a beauty. What are the Forestry Unions doing - you gotta ask.

In this edition we have a short story from Phil Doyle, "Factory". It's not an easy story, there's no simple moral, but give it a go. Here's a clue-it's about alienation. Being separated and isolated, alone, not belonging. And the rich, the ruling class, they just love it when working people feel this way. They love it when we feel this alienation, this isolation, when our community is destroyed. Because the rich know that classism is the core of working class strength.

Here at *Direct Action* we are still in shock over the headkick given to community when South Sydney got the boot from the National League. Phil Doyle takes up the story in this edition.

We also have reports and stories from members of the IWW world-wide. The IWW is an International Union and the story is the same right around the world, casualisation and a working class too shit-scared to say boo. But a working class looking for hope. Looking for a future. Looking for a world to win.

Wal Larkin
Editor, *Direct Action*.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Painters Wildcat Over Safety At Jeep Plant

JANUARY 18: Approximately 20 painters and other plant shop workers conducted a work stoppage over a safety issue at a Toledo, Ohio, USA Jeep plant paint shop. The wildcat action shut down the entire paint shop, idling nearly 150 production workers.

While the painters resumed work around 9pm (having commenced the action around 4.30 that afternoon), as soon as the company could demonstrate that all fire safety systems were in operation, the four-hour work stoppage created a bottleneck and caused workers in the trim shop and final assembly to be sent home early due to a lack of cars being fed from the paint shop.

At issue was the fire safety and alarm system. At about 4.30 a fireball about the size of a beach ball erupted in full view of 4 or 5 painters. The fireball was caused by a jeep door that was left just a bit too far open, so that an electric arc was sent from the high voltage electrostatic systems to the car door. This

continued electrical arcing ignited the atomised paint fan, causing the fireball. The fire safety systems and sensors were either not engaged or not operational. In effect, the line kept moving and only a breaker system, which was triggered by the voltage drop from the lectric arc, caused the paint lines to be shut off, cutting off fuel to the fireball. No alarms went off. No fire extinguishing systems were set off. The painters immediately shut down their jobs and sat down.

Managements' logic for bypassing fire extinguishing systems and fire alarm systems was that a small fire could cause the paint shop to be evacuated, causing disruptions to the restarting of production. Also, dropping large volumes of water of the fire would have meant the ruin of the cars inside the automated zones, so the company did not engage the fire systems in order to keep production running smoothly, even if a small fire erupted. The problem this time was that the fireball was seen by workers on the produc-

tion line (it was not hidden behind a wall or floor panels).

The dispute was the third in a series of clashes between workers who want the safety systems engaged at all times, and management desires to keep production running, even through a fire! One worker told management angrily, "this is strike three, you're OUT!" and the workers all refused to work until management was willing to demonstrate to the workers that the fire systems were engaged and operational.

Management tried to restart production in one of the two paint booths with management personnel. However, their incompetence almost caused major damage to the paint systems. Furthermore, the managers did not even know if hand guns were working properly (most were not, possibly due to sabotage or being set at the wrong settings). Management tried to intimidate the painters, threatening to fire anyone who refused to work and threatening the United Auto Workers union steward with the sack if he did

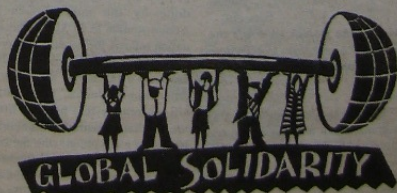
not order the painters to return to work. Three managers went to every painter individually, informing them that they would be fired if they did not return to work within two minutes. None obeyed the order and the paint shop was shut down, except for a few incompetent management clowns who tried to paint in one of the two paint booths. One worker informed management that they had better start firing people if they wanted to go home at a decent hour because "there are a lot of motherfuckers to fire tonight." Others said that it was better to lose your job than lose your life.

By 8pm it was obvious that management was losing the bat-

tle and a fire specialist was called in to test and verify that the fire safety and alarm systems were both engaged and operational. By 9pm the painters went back to their jobs. None were disciplined.

A three-foot midget (twenty workers) just kicked a seventy-foot giant (DaimlerChrysler) right in the balls and got away with it. Right now management heads are rolling, but the workers are feeling an enormous sense of power. The wildcat was disciplined, well-organised and serious. These boys had their shit wired tight.

Anarcho-Syndicalist Review #28
<http://flag.blackened.net/asr>



The Industrial Workers of the World Around the World

Poland

For the first time in history the IWW has a presence in Poland. The union now has membership branches in Warsaw and Krakow with other members spread across the country. Polish IWW members work in the computer industry, in newspapers, (ALSO ship construction, post, health service) as cleaners and are among the unemployed. IWW literature began to appear in Poland in 1986/87 and a couple of Poles who were interested in Syndicalism also found the IWW on the internet. With help from wobblies in England and the US, Polish members were able to put in place a Regional Organising Committee within 18 months (started in 1998), allowing a fair degree of local autonomy within the IWW.

Although the IWW in Poland is small they are quite active. They have taken to the time-honoured wobbly practice of putting up stickers, 'silent agitators' on trams, busses and in public places. Their stickers deal with a wide range of issues: wages in Poland are low with over 13% unemployment and there have been huge redundancies in recent years. Casualisation has been used in Poland in the same way it has been used all over the world, to create a working class desperate to hang onto their jobs, and afraid to rock the boat. And so matter how bad things may seem here in Australia, in Poland the situation is very much worse. Overseas news and workers concerns seem remote in Poland, because of the poor conditions. To a Polish worker reading of workers struggle overseas it's simple, "they are still getting 10 times more money than I am."

The Polish IWW has put out 2 editions of their newspaper "Direct Action". (Direct Action is a favourite wobbly name for a newspaper, by the way, as it pretty well sums up what our union is on about in just two words). The union has picketed a telemarketing company in Warsaw attracting a fair bit of media attention. And in latest news an IWW member has been sacked for organising on a local newspaper. He will be going to the Polish Labour Court over the sacking.

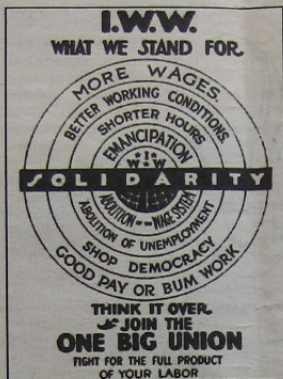
Unionism in Poland has changed since the days when Solidarity rose in the shipyards to challenge an authoritarian state with real rank and file unionism. The story of Solidarity itself is typical; today Solidarity is a political party and is hardly seen as a union at all, and doesn't that sound like the same old story...

Hurbert

We wish the Polish IWW all the best, and we urge them to grow into a fighting union and to get stuck in!

Canada

Canada is a country as big as Australia, and it also has a long and active wobbly tradition. The IWW in Canada has 4 General Membership Branches, in Toronto, Winnipeg, Victoria and in



Edmonton. Members in Toronto, one of Canada's biggest cities, are active in anti-poverty groups and on refugee issues. As Canada welcomes a lot of refugees there are issues of racism, immigration laws, and accommodation. Toronto members work in a variety of jobs including film and TV, in Public Service, the Infotech industries and as teachers. They also have members among the unemployed, and there is one full time parent.

The Toronto IWW is planning to develop email resources for members as well as a web site. They also hope to form job branches and Industrial Union branches. In Winnipeg wobblies had been organising workers at a food co-op, and after a long process got the union accredited, won a vote at the jobsite and went into contract negotiations. The site was a groovy food co-op catering to lefties, but when it was unionised the board of directors closed the place down. Never trust a boss, no matter how caring and groovy! Winnipeg was also the site of the recent IWW General Assembly, the first time in our Unions history a General Assembly has been held outside the USA.

Edmonton and Victoria both have large IWW branches dealing with job related issues. There are also quite a few IWW members spread around Canada, outside the major branches. There has been talk of forming a Regional Organising Committee in Canada to give Canadian wobblies autonomy within the IWW, but there is also feeling on the Canadian West Coast that close contact should be kept with fellow wobblies on the US west coast. At the moment administration of Canadian IWW affairs is being done by the unions' General Administration in the USA. This situation reflects the general history of Canadian unionism, with Canadian workers often being members of 'International Unions', based in the US. In reality this has too often meant that Canada has become a branch of a US union, with the concerns of the US union dominating. The story of the coal miners of Cape Breton and a strike in the 1920s still leaves a lingering bitterness in

Canada.

These miners were members of the United Mine Workers of America, a union based in the USA, and the head office stopped the strike very much against the wishes of the Canadian miners. Head office would actually not permit the Cape Breton miners to strike. There is a history of Canadian workers breaking from US unions to form their own unions, Canadian unions can often be more progressive than unions in the US, and they sometimes make more gains for their membership. Canada

has a different culture, different laws. There is also what is known as Canadian Social Unionism, the idea that union concerns are wider than just the workplace. This is the belief that workers are part of the wider community, they have families, and the affairs of the wider community are therefore legitimate union concerns.

This is well illustrated by Bob White, a past president of the Canadian Auto Workers, and of the Canadian Labour Congress, who supported the peace movement and was active on social issues and issues of international solidarity. He was also concerned for equality for women workers, and for people of colour.

The info in this story comes from my talking with Joe from Toronto. Hope I got it right Joe - ed

A Quick History of the South African IWW

The South African Industrial Workers of the World was established in 1911, and grew out of an organisation called the South African Industrial Workers Union.

The General Secretary of this union was Tom Glynn, a motorman on the Johannesburg Tramways. The Tramways became IWW after a successful one day strike showed the strength of organising industry wide. The subsequent summary dismissal of strike leaders Glynn and Glendon sparked off a second strike of Industrial Unionists which failed. The Johannesburg council set out to break the union, called in the police, banned public meetings and ran the trams with scabs under police protection. Glynn was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment for inciting a strike but won an appeal against the conviction.

The IWW in South Africa was closely associated with the radical paper the "Voice of Labour," and organised mainly among unskilled poor whites and among groups like bookmakers. Andrew Dunbar was a Natal railway worker, originally from Scotland, who led several thousand men out on strike in 1909. He went on to become a General

Secretary of the IWW in South Africa. The IWW in SA launched several strikes but seems to have collapsed about 1913.

About 1917-8 the Industrial Workers of Africa was formed, and this was initially called the IWW. This was the first black trade union in South African history.

Also of interest is the Durban Indian Workers Industrial Union formed by Gordon Lee along the lines of the IWW. It organised among printing, tobacco, laundry and dock workers.

Tom Glynn is a name well known in Australian wobbly history as he was later to become the first editor of our Australian paper 'Direct Action'. He appears to have been active in radical journalism in South Africa as well, (perhaps with the "Voice of Labour"?). He was later jailed as one of the framed-up "Twelve", and served a lengthy jail sentence. Tom Glynn died from illness contracted in his time in Long Bay, and is buried in Sydney's Botany Cemetery.

Wal Larkin

Information in this quick history comes from 'Class and Colour in South Africa' by Jack and Ray Simons - thanks to our wobbly historian Mike for finding this.

I have also referred to Verity Burgeman's 'Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The IWW in Australia'. If anyone has more of the South African IWW story please get in touch with Direct Action because there is clearly a lot more to this story. What we'd really love is a photo of the early days in SA, or even directions of how to find one.

Working life in South Africa

The strongest thing at work at the moment is the amazing level of fear. People are so shit-scared of losing their jobs that they are not willing to 'rock the boat' as this will possibly mean the loss of their jobs. There are more and more retrenchments taking place and unemployment is growing with over 500,000 jobs lost since 1994. Obviously organising is very difficult to say the least! Although we have a very recent history of militant unionism in South Africa most of my friends, and workers I have spoken to are completely disillusioned with the present state of the unions.

I can give a personal example of this disillusionment. Before we decided to relaunch the Industrial Workers of the World we tried to join the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union, (SACTWU)- an affiliate of COSATU. After meeting with organisers from SACTWU at their offices it was arranged that an organiser would come round to talk to the rest of the people at my work. However after 2 months no-one had come so I went back to them and again we made arrangements for someone to come around. Again nothing happened. This was after I had personally taken membership forms and hand-

ed them out to all my fellow workers. The unions have become so passive that it has really disillusioned many working people- all the better for us I reckon as more and more workers are going to be looking around for a better, more militant union that will meet their needs.

The old COSATU unions which were by far the most militant unions are now locked in an alliance with the African National Conference (ANC) and the South African Communist Party called the Tripartite alliance. Since the ANC is now the government all anger is being generated away from mass action and people are told to let "our comrades in government" solve the problems. The struggle has been diverted away from the class struggle against capitalism into a struggle purely against Apartheid. Now that this has been achieved, at least on paper, the role of unions has become pretty reactionary. It is the usual story of political parties using our class to get themselves into power and then turning on the old and/or selling us out. Most of the old militant unionists now hold well paid positions in government or have joined management (using the skills they have gained from being involved within the Union) or have joined better paying Non-Government organisations. The unions are what I suppose we would call "business unions" with a lot of paid officials who are unnecessary. Because of this, the job of unionist has pretty much come to be seen as just another job with wage levels that increase as you go higher up the hierarchy. This compares with the 1980s when the lowest paid organiser was paid pretty much the same as the regional Secretary of the union.

However there are strong undercurrents of resentment at grassroots level, which is perfect for rebuilding the IWW and why we thought that it would be the organisation that would best suit our needs as we move into the next millennium. I forgot to mention that one of the biggest problems we're facing at the moment is mass casualisation. There are strong labour laws and rights won during the struggle against Apartheid, but the bosses are getting round these by hiring workers as casuals. Being a casual deprives workers of their rights and builds a climate of insecurity where workers are too scared to resist their exploitation as they can be fired without any layoff pay. Also, the bosses use this as a justification to pay casuals less than the rest of us. My friends at work who are casuals get approximately two thirds of what the rest of us who are labelled full-time are getting. I have friends who are labelled casual even though they have been working here 2 or 3 years!

Shane Freeman / IWW
P.O. Box 18969 Dalbridge, Durban
4014 South Africa

Unreal Expectations!

TEN MILLION dollars!!! To the Kerry Packers of this world it's petty cash. To a terminally unemployed person it's a dream, usually in the form of a lottery ticket win.

For poor unfortunates in any number of "developing" nations it is probably beyond all comprehension. However for the Hungarian Government \$10 million is the price of compensation that they are hoping to get from the Australian owned mining corporation that flooded their country with deadly cyanide. The effects on the river ecosystem were pretty evident on our tele screens, with one local describing it as the death of their

river. With the death of the river comes the death of livelihoods for the people fishing the once clean river. The extent of the damage done to Hungary's ecosystem is something that we'll never know. We'll never be told.

One can only wonder the price Australia would place on compensation if a Hungarian company had poisoned the Murray-Darling basin in a similar fashion. The price of compensation would probably be closer to \$10 billion! The reason for such disparity stems from the economic value the capitalists place on our rivers, our homes and our lives. An Hungarian river isn't worth an Australian river, but it's probably worth two

African rivers.

So while Australia's wealthy are off overseas exploiting environment and labour alike, their corporate criminal cousins are at home doing likewise. Little Johnny Howard's brother embarrassed the prime minister by doing no more than enacting government policy on industrial relations. Howards corporation folded before paying out it's entitlements, ironically worth about \$10 million. For the workers it was heartbreaking, not only were they facing unemployment but they were out of pocket. I'm sure none of the Howard clan is ever out of pocket!

First world workers and developing countries alike are getting

short-changed by our global corporate masters. Maybe we are short changing ourselves. For the Hungarian government \$10 million seems a 'realistic' figure to ask for compensation but why be realistic? The sooner we abandon 'realism' in dealing with the capitalists, the sooner they'll stop walking all over us.

Many people say to me that my union the Industrial Workers of the World is too utopian and unrealistic. But I want to know how expecting a fair go from the system we have now, where judge and jury are both owned by the boss, is being realistic?

The IWW's platform of solidarity around what working and

under-class people have in common seems the ideal way to build a truly democratic grass roots movement that is capable of providing an alternative to the currently unchallenged capitalist order.

Surely the wealthy have shown us their intentions themselves. Our wellbeing hasn't featured in their plans. They are simultaneously eroding wages, rolling back welfare and sacking thousands, while throwing extravagant parties for themselves such as the Olympics. If we don't rate a mention in their plans, neither should they in ours!

Grant

We Come Here to Work, Not to Die!

NBODY expects to go to work to die yet annual workplace deaths exceed those from road accidents and heroin overdoses. With workplaces' claiming over 3000 lives a year in Australia suffering is at epidemic proportions yet the issue remains buried and despite what the Workplace adverts may suggest employers go largely unpunished. We are only into the second months of the year and already, at time of writing, 9 people have died in what are termed "workplace accidents". However this term is misleading since the majority of fatalities are not accidents and could have been easily avoided.

If someone walked into a workplace and shot an employee

dead the police and media would be all over the joint and the place would be shut down as a crime scene. In the theory the police would then crawl over the place collecting evidence and hunt down those responsible who, if convicted, would spend some years in prison. However if someone fails to provide the proper safety measures for their workers and kills someone as a result the police merely show up, fill out a form and pass it onto Workcover who two or three years down the track may fine the company anything up to \$70 000. The workplace is not sealed off, allowing evidence to be tampered with, and the other workers present are often forced to continue working that day under the same

conditions that just killed their workmate. Workcover's track record of dealing with the families of deceased workers is woeful with few options for counselling, poor compensation and cases dragged out for years on end. Of course on top of all this is the fact the worker and family rights to sue employers through common law provisions were wrecked by the Kennel government's reforms.

Despite this horrific situation there is some hope. In eight, Construction Unions have forced the issue with the current and last state government by undertaking strikes when union members are killed on sites. Other sites where deaths have occurred have seen unofficial walk offs and strike

action. The Bracks Government also came to power recently on the back of promises to restore workers rights to sue employers and to implement "Industrial Manslaughter" charges that would see employers treated in the same way as drunk drivers who kill.

Since politician's promises are not worth the air they use up its down to all of us to put the pressure on to see they are kept and that the legislation is not full of the usual loopholes corporate lawyers love.

At the grassroots level families and friends of deceased workers have formed a self help organisation called Industrial Deaths Support and Advocacy Inc that hassles Workcover, employers and the state government as well as

providing counselling, support and advice to realtives of the deceased. IDSA are also involved in educating people in the workplace to deter cowboy attitudes. The group is funded through union and community donations and has a book out called "Till death Do Us Part" which opens the window on ten families who have lost loved ones to employer greed.

IDSA can be contacted at P.O. Box 3095, Broadmeadow, 3047, have a website at www.idsa.com.au and can be phoned at (03) 9309 4453.

Telstra Calling - You're Fired!

EARLY March (08/03/2K) saw the Board & Senior Management at Australia's primary telecommunication provider Telstra announce a \$2.1 billion profit for the first six months of the 1999/2000 financial year. Rather than using these massive profits to ensure rural services and lower the cost of calls, the Board & Senior Management have instead chosen to restructure the company, increase spending overseas in countries that already have decent telecommunication networks. (USA, UK, Singapore, etc.), beef up Senior Executive perks & bonuses and shed 16,000 jobs.

These job cuts tie in with the Federal Government's continuing push to fully privatise the company to make it more lucrative to other transnational corporations in a time of global mergers & acquisitions of anything e- or dot.com. Over the past decade numerous sections of Telstra have been shut

down and replaced with casual, contract and outsourced labour. At the same time, retrenchments and new technology have seen management demands on workers increase, particularly amongst the predominantly female staffed call centres.

Telstra is made up of several branches and current restructuring will see it sell off further chunks of itself. First to go will be the construction section, Network Design & Construction (NDC), which amongst other tasks is responsible for laying new cables throughout the country. This has resulted in the planned sell off of 6,000 personnel to private enterprise. Another two branches will also go with the loss of a further 10,000 workers.

It remains to be seen exactly which branches will be cut and according to an IWW member working at Telstra this uncertainty has not done wonders for worker morale. All in all one in every

three Telstra employees will be out of a job by the end of 2000/2001 financial year. Whilst many of the workers will receive retrenchment packages, Telstra's move towards using casual, contract and outsourced labour, increasing workloads and privatising services is part of a Federal Government backed offensive seeking to lower wages and destroy employment security and union membership.

The leadership of the unions which cover many Telstra workers, the Commonwealth Public Services Union (CPSU) and the Communications Electrical Plumbing Union (CEPU), unfortunately not known for their militancy, are under pressure from an unhappy grassroots membership to take action over the decisions of Telstra's Senior Management. They have organised some recent lunchtime meetings and issued a statement declaring that "Telstra staff declare that from 12 noon on

Thursday 30th of March 2000 they are taking control of the company and have ordered the immediate dismissal of all Senior Executive Managers. Staff will now perform all day-to-day management functions until new appointments are made". Whether

this will result in direct action and worker control remains to be seen, but our contacts think that indirect inaction is more likely.

In the meantime the CPSU/CEPU have also produced a sticker directing people to call 1800 800 437 and let Telstra management know that they oppose job cuts and the inevitable downgrading of services that will follow. This number is normally pasted on Telstra vehicles and used for complaints

about workers' driving. Our contacts assure us that messages pass from manager to manager very quickly and usually result in the petty harassment of rank and file drivers so let's put the number to a more positive use.



"So long, partner!"

Taking a Stand in the Shipyard Revisited

In the last Direct Action we gave you a story of shipyard organising from IWW workers on the Ohio River. The men are fighting for safe working conditions, they will not work in the rain with high voltage welding..... Now read on!

IARRIVED at work Monday morning pre-dawn. A heavy, cold rain was falling. A hundred or so men filled the breakroom, most sitting on benches, all waiting for the weekly "safety meeting." After several minutes the five foremen walked through and took their places at the head of the room. They went through a list of changes in the yard including no breaks, reduced lunch time, monitored time in the heatshacks (a little metal hut for warming up), and no getting off any charge for any reason.

Most importantly, they stressed the fact that we were completely out of line about disobeying orders before and taking breaks, and they were fed up with our insubordination. Things had changed, as of that moment, they said. One fellow in the back pointed out the door and said, "We can't go out and work in this, at least not until it lightens up a bit."

One of the foremen, with his hands on his hips, told him to sit down and informed him that we'll do whatever we're told if we wanted to keep our jobs. He looked at the other foremen standing beside him and

they simultaneously ordered us all out into the freezing rain to work.

No one moved. Another foreman shouted, "Let's go to work!" No one moved. The first foreman shouted through clenched teeth, "Didn't you guys hear the man? Get out there!" And all the foremen began pounding on the metal tops of the nearest bench with their hardhats, shouting at us.

One man moved. It was fellow worker McConahay who stood up and yelled, "I'm a member of the IWW and I don't have to do a Goddamned thing!" The foremen were jerking their heads around as Fellow Workers told them, "Yeah, we're Wobblies, you can suck on this!" A guy named Harvey screamed, "Ain't nobody going nowhere, especially out in that shit and get their ass fried!" Guys began walking through the lunchroom,

shouting, laughing, and hitting tables. The foremen left the building, the meeting had broken down.

The whole thing happened very quickly. I had been sitting in the back, stretching, trying to ignore what I thought was going to be a boot on my fellow workers' necks and on my own. The moment FW McConahay yelled at the foremen, I began calculating what to do when they hauled him out. Now we all gathered at my table in the back.

A foreman shouted, "Let's go to work!" No one moved. The first foreman shouted through clenched teeth, "Didn't you guys hear the man? Get out there!" One man moved. It was fellow worker McConahay who stood up and yelled, "I'm a member of the IWW and I don't have to do a Goddamned thing!"

In a half-hour or so, Fellow Worker Paul Knight came through the door and took a seat at the table. He told us they had shut down the pipe gang's work too and that no one over there had complied with orders

either. "I got them stirred up," he said, "I told them this is how a wobbly would do it."

After another half hour or so a foreman entered the break room and asked if anyone there was going to go to work. One guy yelled back, "Hell no! It's still raining like a mother, and I'm playing cards!"

They sent us all home two hours after the "Safety Meeting" started. The Fellow Workers and some Fellow Workers-to-be went to FW McConahay's house and had an informal meeting of IUB 320.

That was a hell of a day, and I'm not ashamed to admit that that morning, and in the retelling, my eyes get wet. I thought I was going to go through to watch our dignity get flushed; instead we got stronger. Two days later, on Wednesday, the line foreman (the guy who's

it seems). It was the yard's nastiest foreman (our foreman), the line foreman, the union steward, FW Brown, an old guy named Mack and yours truly. Somehow I wound up as the spokesman.

The line foreman tried to talk us down at first, but our case was pretty straightforward. Our foreman lied all along the way, but I threatened to bring in paperwork to prove him wrong. Eventually, and strangely, the line foreman agreed that we had been wronged and gave us backup and a guarantee to pay us for upgrades in the future. Now all of the other workers that have been denied their pay are coming forward.

All in all, it was a great week, but I am still concerned about the next move. What just happened felt fucking fantastic, and it was a victory but they'll be back. They're bigger than us too, and better equipped and accustomed to causing pain in others. We got to keep our heads through the good and the bad, I guess.

Holding strong for the moment... Solidarity.
Terry Nikolai Tapp

above all the foremen) called for a steward on our grievance. The union steward thought it would be some time before we got our hearing, but apparently our work protest caused a little problem (not much, but enough

Direct Action Gets the Goods in Indonesia

During February members of Front Anti Fasis (F.A.F) and Persatuan Skinhead Anti Fasis (P.S.A.F) engaged in direct action at PT Matahari Sentosa I, Bandung, Indonesia, and won!

PT MATAHARI SENTOSA I is an export zipper factory at Bandung, Indonesia.

Like all factories in this capitalist world, the workers of the factory always placed on the bad position. That's all what the workers receive when they work in the PT Matahari Sentosa I. Low wages, bad working condition, no freedom to organize, military intervention, sexual harassment, and another problems. So, after all of it, the workers choose to fight back, demand their basic rights.

February 3rd, 2000 - February 9th, 2000 - The First Strike

About 300 workers from the factory organized a total strike at the factory for over one week. Nobody worked, and there was no production at all. On February 8th, 350 workers went to DPRD I (a local council) to ask the council to set up a meeting between the factory owner, the workers and the council themselves. The council promised that the meeting would be held on Saturday, February 12th. Because they're already knew that the council always lie to them, the workers didn't believe what the council said. So, they planned to organize a demonstration to DPR / MPR (state parliamentary) in Jakarta.

February 10th, 2000 - February 12th, 2000 - Complaints To Parliament

At the time before the workers went to Jakarta, the factory owner intimidated workers and threaten to sack them who still continued the strike. But it didn't make the workers gave up to the boss: around 350 workers went to Jakarta. When they went to Jakarta, lot of anarchist, punks and redskins (from F.A.F. and P.S.A.F) joined them. We all went with 3 buses,

straight to DPR / MPR building.

As soon as we arrived at the building, we were set up speeches, spoke out our demands and asked to meet the parliamentarians. After around two hours waited outside, in front of the building, the parliamentarians agreed to let us in. So we all went inside.

We accepted by Komisi VI (a sub-parliamentarians from some of political parties such as PDI-P, PKB, PPP and the other were from SPSP - a right wing worker union which legalized by the state and of course, they always protect the boss interest). The parliamentary agreed to set up a meeting, and the workers asked them to called the factory boss, to come to Jakarta as soon as possible. But, the boss who (of course) didn't want the meeting hanging, pushed Komisi VI to held the meeting on Monday. But, Komisi VI obeyed all the boss interest. So, Komisi VI said that there were will be a meeting on Monday, February 14th. The workers also said that they want the meeting held in February 11th, so we choosed to stay there. But the parliamentary didn't give what the workers want.

The workers conditions was really bad, some of them was ill, lot of another was really tired after all of the strike before. So we all choosed to go back to Bandung until Monday and continued the strike. After we all arrived in Bandung, 300 workers came back to DPRD I to asked what the council promised to us. But the council didn't give what they promised before. And



they called a troop of military to bring us out brutally. Received the violent actions, we chose to left the scene and marched to one of the university. At the university, we set up a spontaneous meeting to plan when we organized the next action. In this meeting, also build a new worker union named Serikat Pekerja Buruh Matahari or S.P.B.M. (Matahari workers union).

February 14th, 2000: Parliament betrayed us (again).

Because a lot of us really tired and hard to found the bus that would took us to Jakarta, only 70 workers who still went to Jakarta and some of F.A.F. and P.S.A.F. When we arrived in the DPR / MPR, we accepted again by Komisi VI. And we met with the factory boss at the meeting. After a long and boring time that we spent in the meeting, the result was bad for us. The parliamentary and the boss asked the workers to go back to work or all of us will be sacked. The parliamentary never stand on our side like what they always do, ignore the people demands.

It was the worst story for us. Some of the women collapsed because of tired and the deep disappointed. When the parliamentarians seen the collapse women, they still didn't do anything to

help. They let us alone there and asked us to left the building or the military forces will kick us out. So, we left the building along with our collapsed comrades. Tired, disappointed and really angry, at bus, we planned to occupy the factory on the next day until we reached out our demands.

February 15th, 2000 : The Occupation

As soon as we arrived in Bandung, we started to organized the occupy action. We called our comrades as much as we can to join our action that will start in the morning. On the morning, over 500 workers along with more anarchist, punks and redskins from F.A.F. and P.S.A.F. occupied the factory since 5:00 AM.

Several punks and redskins closed the factory's front door and stayed there to prepare if the military forces would attack us. They invited everyone who passed by to join the occupy and show some solidarity. A lot of leaflets about our demands handing out around the factory and more and more people join the action. A lot of speeches and political educations were set up on the factory. We all sang together, set up discussions, shared our activities, our culture, our ideas, our vision, and our ideologies.

11:00 AM, a truck full of heavy armed military troops came down and surrounded the factory along with a lot of plain-clothes military agents. They also hired a lot of thugs to attack us. We tried so hard to defend the action.

Until the night, we still have to defend from the hired thugs and the plain-clothes military agents who tried to go inside.

February 16th, 2000 : At Last, The Victory!

On the morning, the boss came to our guards and asked us if he can came inside. We let him in.

He told us that he agreed to set up a discussion with the workers. So, we chose 15 workers as our representatives to talk about our demands. The discussion set up in the small room inside the factory, and some of the heavy armed military troops surrounded the room.

During the discussion, we received more brutally intimidation from the hired thugs. They tried to attack us harder than yesterday. Some of us who doesn't look like a worker (i.e. punks) said if we didn't leave the factory, they would arrest us and label us as a provocateur. We didn't want to leave the factory, this was a worker's struggle, a people struggle, and this was all one struggle. No differences between labor, punk, peasant, redskin, or any other profession, as long as we received same oppression, we all should fight as a same team. So, nobody left the factory.

On the defend line, a woman attacked by a hired thug with his motorcycles. The thug kicked her once, but one of our guards saved her before the thug attacked her again.

Several hours later, the boss and our 15 comrades came out from the discussion room. And one of our comrades called us all to listen the final result. He read out the result loudly and we all greeted it with a song, a revolutionary worker struggle song.

After we cheered each other, happy, we celebrated it with a spontaneous march along the streets. We spread out the victory to everyone we met on the street. We marched until a night came down. We were all tired, a lot of us got hurt, but at last we were all happy, we were win this battle.

Our victory was just a small victory. We still have to fight the system that oppressed us day by day. We can win, only if we stand together, hand in hand, to fight back and take back our life.

Solidarity is our strength. Workers unite can never be defeated.



Davos - A Personal Account

On January 29, echoing the massive anti-World Trade Organisation demonstrations in Seattle, protesters disrupted the meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. In this article one participant describes what happened.

AS THERE has been little feedback from the Davos demonstration against the WEF (World Economic Forum), heres my personal detailed account of a pretty inspiring event.

I came down to Davos with 3 other friends from Germany. We decided only at the last minute that we wanted to be there. I knew about the World Economic Forum and that Davos was somewhere up the Alps mountains in the East of Switzerland.

This years demonstration was the 3rd demonstration organised against the WEF, the meeting of the 2000 self proclaimed world leaders in business and politics. This year, the WEF had a special significance, since it was the one after Seattle and we know that TNCs and industrialised governments are still keen on opening more markets, do further trade liberalisation and finding new ways of capital accumulation as a (temporary) solution to the overproduction crisis. Even Bill Clinton made it to the WEF to try and convince the world business community of the necessity to go ahead with the Millennium Round, he'd never been in Davos before.

The anti-WTO co-ordination in Switzerland cleverly used the media to announce their demonstration. As a matter of fact the demo was prohibited for Saturday 29th, which was the day Billy Boy was coming. The reaction of the anti-WTO co-ordination was clear: no compromise, we'll hold the demo on Saturday 29th no matter what.

The mobilisation was surprising. Many people crossed half Europe to make it to the Swiss Alps. We ended up being 1300 people, from France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy...probably more.

People gathered at the train station and as they outnumbered the police forces, they simply broke through the

police barriers, marching towards the conference centre.

The mood was good, kind of euphoric. The demo was fluid, not divided too much into blocks, it had a nice diversity of people and statements in French, English, Italian and German were totally natural for everybody. It had a clear internationalist character. Peoples banners and shouts were very diverse also including anti-fascist, free Mumia, against corporate rule, solidarity with the people in Ecuador, TNCs won't rule the world, anti-capitalists and the usual ones personifying social relations into evil capitalists and TNCs.

The 3rd police barrier was the one preventing the demo to come too close to the conference centre. The demo wasn't able to breakthrough here. Most of the people walked back.

The small group which stayed did not succeed in getting Schwab out and were penalised with pepper spray and rubber bullets. This was of course filmed by all the press and it was one of the pictures that made it to most newspapers. A friend of mine said "nothing politicises more than a police truncheon".

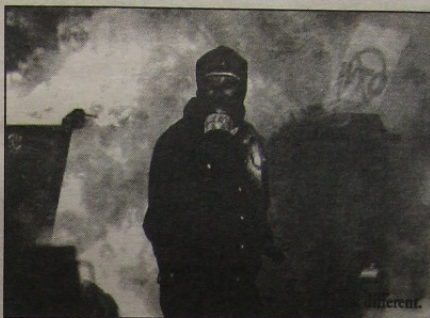
The rest of the demo walked back towards on of the hotel where WEF participants were staying. On the way McDonalds windows were trashed in front of the cameras and the police, who clearly had an order of not intervening. A beautiful moment was when a few people torn down one of these huge McDonalds ads saying "think global - eat local". It was just such a provocation that it was enthusiastically torn apart by the crowd and the tissue set on fire. The big smoke cloud resulting out of this fire went straight into the windows of the hotel. People joked the ghost of Davos was exercised, and things like that.

The crowd remained in front of

that hotel for quite a while. Several statements were made in different languages. An amazing thing was that a representative of Ya Basta Milan had phone contact to Milan announced that the 20 000 people protesting against the Via Corelli (detention centre where people are inhumanly tortured before being sent back to their countries) had managed to penetrate. "This is a victory thanks to the only struggle of the people," he said. A statement from the people in Ecuador was read out loud. Our resistance is more transnational than ever.

As the police was not doing anything, some people that were keen on making property damage and hassling the police helped themselves. Flags were torn down from the hotel and burned (the US and the EU flag of course).

The press coverage especially in the Swiss German boulevard press was mostly dominated by the pictures of Bill Clinton and a bleeding policeman. There was not one single picture of a banner. The articles reported only about the number of people, the temperature, the broken windows, the time, the street we walked and of course nothing about what kind of illegitimate bastards these self proclaimed world leaders are, nothing about peo-



ple contesting further trade liberalisation and capitalism or about Ecuador or Mumia Abu Jamal...ignored of course.

Several people that had come a long way to Davos stayed overnight at the Reithalle Bern, which is a huge squatted autonomous centre.

The Reithalle was a good opportunity to have more in depth exchange with people. Something that became clear to me after talking to several people, is that Seattle marked the end of a period. The idea of Peoples Global

Action was launched around the idea to focus on the WTO and "free trade." This chapter is over now. Most people by now are aware that this is simply not enough. The discourse is easily recuperated by the NGO reformist community which goes hand in hand with the governments that playing the trick of so-called "dialogue with civil society". Almost everybody agreed that we need to extend our discourse and analysis if we don't want to end up contributing to the stabilisation and modernisation capitalism. The WTO and "free trade" are nothing but expressions of underlying social relations in which we are all involved and which need to be examined, understood and tackled. If we don't manage to formulate what we stand for, our protest will be easily recuperated and incorporated in the capitalist development.

The spirit and mood was cool, we all felt exhausted but inspired. I came back from Switzerland with the feeling of having closed a chapter and curious about the next steps we will be taking.

Luciano Freiburg, Germany 2.2.00
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Cotton Bosses Cover Up Third World Conditions in NSW

SEASONAL workers employed at Tandou Farm, a cotton chipping plantation located at Menindee NSW, are literally living and working in third world conditions.

These workers, employed through Menindee Rural Services (MRS) drawing from nationwide agency Employment National, are being housed in derelict caravans and showering in contaminated water. The camp where the workers take up residence during the chipping season is operated by MRS. Each man or woman is charged \$36 a week to live in caravans or \$24 to live in tents. These caravans are in such appalling shape that if one were to attempt to tow them away they would simply fall to pieces (stoves, taps etc. rarely work). The tents often amount to no more than some plastic sheeting and a swag on the earth. Even a Kombi van, broken down and with the windows painted black, is home to a young

couple who are charged the same rate as for the caravans. Dormitories are offered to some seasonal workers but are so overcrowded and in such an appalling state that many prefer the 'camp'.

Add to this an extremely squalid and unsanitary water supply. Located near the camp is a still water billboard in which the camp's waste drains, and then according to union sources, "from the same billboard water is pumped back into the camp for the abolition and laundry block. Workers are effectively showering in recycled effluent."

This shocking situation was exposed by the Shearers' and Rural Workers' Union (SRWU). According to General Secretary John Morgan, the SRWU has been receiving complaints about the camp at Tandou Farm since the union's formation but had, "considered these reports to be wildly exaggerated, but on investigation I was shocked at what I found". Not only are the living conditions criminal,

but the workers are also being scammed when it comes to wages. Pay rates at Tandou are \$13 an hour for weekdays and a ridiculous flat rate of just \$15 an hour on weekends for very physically demanding, outdoor work. This has come about through a deal struck between Tandou management and the Australian Workers Union (AWU) who were called in to help suffocate the SRWU's organising in the camp. Award penalty rates were traded for a mere 35c increase in the normal hourly rate and thus workers gained \$14 a week on normal time and lost \$121.72 on weekends. The AWU benefited from this by way of company forwarded union dues. One AWU organiser even claimed, "As the industry goes, it's probably the best example of conditions for workers that I have seen" (Sydney Morning Herald 11/12/00).

Meals at the camp are provided by the company kitchen at \$15 a day. Workers say these meals are totally inadequate and liken them to

hospital food. Often they are forced to supplement their diet with food from the company shop. Prices at the shop are a blatant rip off, for example a can of baked beans cost \$1.50 and a litre of petrol \$1. One worker told a reporter, "We worked it out and they get half our pay back through the shop each week" (The Sydney-Morning Herald 11/12/99).

There has also been many other complaints about the camp including the employment of illegal immigrants who are less likely to complain about conditions and are thus easily exploited.

Of course the Tandou bosses and MRS management deny there is anything unsanitary or unfair about the camp claiming that the SRWU is trying to incite a 'media beat-up'.

SRWU organisers, fighting local police harassment, are determined to clean up this, "sleazy, money grubbing operation that blatantly exploits the vast pool of unemployed". At a time when politicians are launching an attack

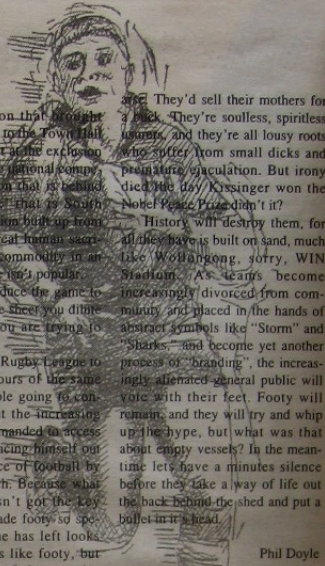
on 'job snobs', employment sharks such as Employment National and MRS are shipping the unemployed off to pay for the privilege of working in filth. The SRWU has brought this situation to the attention of Federal and State politicians (ALP), relevant health authorities and the media. By February 2000 the current workers will have left the camp but next season the call will go out for more workers for Tandou/MRS. John Morgan says, "I do not care if I do not sell one union ticket. I do not care if I'm dragged off to jail. I will see this disgusting mess cleaned up."

For more information contact the SRWU on (03) 5336 3796.

Lincoln

Note - Unless otherwise stated, all quotes from Jon Morgan's letter to Tony Lawler, Federal Member for Parkes 18/12/99.

Rabbitoh Shooting



Phil Doyle

Phil played indifferent Rugby League for St-Dominics, Coburg and South Adelaide. Lately he has been playing Australian Football for Coonah. He is a big believer in the scathing poetry of the Barrack.

ERIC SIMMS was a Rugby League fallback who could, and would, kick field goals from anywhere on the paddock. Simms won matches through his ability with the boot. He kicked five in a match against Penrith in 1969. He was also a legendary goalkicker, but it was with the more difficult drop-kick field goal that his ability approached the freakish. So extraordinary was his ability that they changed the rules.

A field goal used to be worth two points. In the late sixties Souths was the dominant team in the Sydney metropolitan competition. They finished first or runners up from every year but one from 1965-71. A lot of this success was on the back of a mobile forward pack, and the boot of Simms, E. So they changed the rules. A field goal was reduced to one point, and a more brutal form of the game became fashionable in the early seventies. Manly, Tommy Bishop's young Cronulla and Jack Gibson's star-studded Eastern Suburbs team became the pace setters, and Souths, after having their talent raided by other clubs, began to be "thereabouts" team through the seventies.

Souths and Wests were two

nurseries for football in the seventies that were plundered by the wealthier clubs, notably Manly - but also Easts with the cheque books of the Goanna, Kerry Packer, and used car salesman Nick Politis. The club has produced no less than 60 Australian players. The South Sydney Junior competition was said to be stronger than the Sydney Second Division in the sixties. Even in recent years with Souths, and inner city football, said to be in decline the club performed strongly in the club based junior competitions such as the Jersey Flegg, the SG Ball Cup and the like.

Let's look at the numbers: Souths have won 20 First Grade Premierships, five more than the next best, St. George. On top of that they've been runners up 13 times. They have won or been runners up in more than a third of all competition's played!

But all this amounts to nothing if the game is to be measured solely on the basis as a return on a financial investment. But is that what the game is about? Or are the rules being changed on Souths again?

When George Piggins was asked about the figure of \$8

Million turnover that was required under the NRL criteria to remain in the competition he remarked that, "we have a Salary Cap of \$3 Million. What else are we supposed to spend the other \$5 Million on? You can only have so many trainers!" On another occasion he was being interviewed by ABC Radio and he told the story of when an accountant was looking at the balanced books at the South Sydney Rugby League Club. The accountant asked George, in his position as president of the club, where the profit margin was. George replied "What profit? This is a way of life!"

And this where the Bean counters in Murdoch's Rugby League have missed the point. Sport isn't like Ice Cream, or Pies, or some other seasonal product. It's a major selling point is passion. There are over 2000 open age games of Rugby League going on in Sydney on any given winter's afternoon. Why don't those games attract the crowds that watch the NRL? Because those clubs do not attract the passionate support that the NRL clubs have in Sydney. That's what Rugby League is selling, passion.

And you can't put a price on

passion.

It was passion that brought 30,000 people out to the Town Hall last year in protest at the exclusion of Souths from the national competition. It is passion that is behind the éway of life that is South Sydney. It is passion that has made decades of very real human sacrifice. It is a rare commodity in an age when sacrifice isn't popular.

And if you reduce the game to a financial balance sheet you dilute the very thing you are trying to "sell."

If you reduce Rugby League to 14 different flavours of the same product, are people going to continue to shell out the increasing prices that are demanded to access it? Murdoch is pricing himself out of the marketplace of football by charging too much. Because what he is selling hasn't got the key ingredient that made footy so special. And what he has left looks like footy, smells like footy, but it's just a bunch of show ponies doing what you can see for free in the park on a Sunday arvo.

And the irony is that Rupert, Lachlan and their clever little dicks can't see this point, primarily because they wouldn't know what passion was if it bit them on the

side. They'd sell their mothers for a tick. They're soulless, spiritless humans, and they're all lousy roots who suffer from small dicks and premature ejaculation. But irony didn't help Dr. Krsinger won the Nobel Peace Prize didn't it?

History will destroy them, for all they have built on sand, much like Wollongong, sorry, WIN Stadium. As's tears become increasingly divorced from community and placed in the hands of abstract symbols like "Storm" and "Sharks", and become yet another process of "branding", the increasingly alienated general public will vote with their feet. Footy will remain, and they will try and whip up the hype, but what was that about empty vessels? In the meantime lets have a minutes silence before they take a way of life out the back behind the shed and put a bullet in it's head.

Squatting in Sydney

SQUATTING is a form of direct action that involves people taking over empty and disused properties to provide themselves with housing and challenge the existing system of rental and land ownership. In the 1970s numerous squatters in Sydney joined together with unionists and others to deny property developers the right to destroy low cost inner city housing and heritage sites. Through the 1980s and 1990s squatting in Sydney began to recede under pressure from inner city yuppiesification. The looming Olympics has unleashed a wave of property speculation that has forced rents through the roof, increased homelessness and transformed whole areas of Sydney into expensive tourist playgrounds.

These developments have not gone totally unopposed and recently a new squatters group, the Sydney Housing Action Coalition (SHAC), has begun to promote squatting once again as a means of resistance to the Olympics mega machine. One member of the group, Gavin, spoke to Direct Action in February.

DIRECT ACTION: Have long have you personally been squatting for?

Gavin: About two years. The place we were renting was sold and we were given 30 days to get out. I was not looking forward to searching around for months for a place I could afford when we came across a couple of empty buildings and thought "why not squat it". The building we ended going into was owned by Shell and was a giant old warehouse built around 1901. Shell had bought it about 5 years ago. They have plans to knock it down and turn it into a service station and MacDonalds, but its

still going to sit empty for a few years before they do anything with it. We moved in February 1999 and were there until 1st February 2000. It was a great building.

DIRECT ACTION: Shell didn't hassle you during these period?

Gavin: We had the locks changed on us in November last year. We figured it was Shell so we got some stuff out and waited and then nothing happened so we changed the locks back.

DIRECT ACTION: What happened when they evicted you?

Gavin: They were pretty well organised that time. They had workers with welders and materials to secure the building, a locksmith, a Shell property manager and a Shell media relations person who was filming the event. We didn't have much of a chance to resist (laughter). They wanted to secure the building that day and have us come back "at our convenience" to get our stuff out. We tried to negotiate and get some extra time. I got the property manager away to have a little talk with him. I said "We've got a negative media campaign against Shell ready to run" and tried to threaten them a bit with that, but he just said "We've got our own media people as well and are quite prepared for that. You've got 24 hours under constant guard to get your stuff out." So we went a little time and we got some press releases out, got a few people along the next day, dragged our stuff out into the street and had a little tea party out the front. He had a little tea party out the front and had a little tea party out the street. They got wind of this and ordered the shell guards to close the place early and put out press releases saying we were living in unsanitary conditions and tried

to draw on the stereotype of the shit smeared grotty squatter. All the same I think it went well. We got some people from the Tenants Union, from the Greens and other to talk about what's effecting squatters and other people in Sydney who can't afford housing.

DIRECT ACTION: What's happened since the eviction?

Gavin: Before the eviction I think there were a lot of people who figured there were no squats left in Sydney and we changed that by getting some stories in the media. We've been giving out our contact details and quite a few people have contacted us who can't afford to live in this city any more. The group I'm involved with, as soon as we find one squat we try to line up another. Within two days of being evicted we'd moved into another place not very far away. This one is owned by the local council and is basically a whole block. We've been there about four weeks now and we keep filling these buildings up. Every second day someone's calling wanting to move into the squats so it's getting bigger.

DIRECT ACTION: Are there many empty council properties left in Sydney?

Gavin: Most of the unused council housing stock in Sydney has been sold to developers, but we've been lucky. They've got plans to turn this into some pretty swish apartments which is happening throughout most of Sydney at the moment, but we figure it won't be happening for some time and we'll make it hell for them anyway.

DIRECT ACTION: What are the laws that govern squatting in NSW?

Gavin: Up until 1970 it was like it is in England. A civil matter rather

than a criminal one - they'd have to go to court and get a possession order and so forth to evict squatters. After 1970 criminal trespass laws under the Enclosed Land Protection Act were passed. These made it an offence to enter and remain on enclosed lands without the owner's consent. If you are given directions to leave and you don't you are liable to face charges. These laws were fast tracked with minimum fuss. Both the Labour and Liberal parties supported it.

DIRECT ACTION: How do the laws work in practice?

Gavin: As long as there is no evidence that you entered the place and as long as everyone is ambiguous as to how you got in and there's no tools lying about then you're really not liable for anything until the owner comes along. At that point if you don't leave then you can face criminal trespass charges. No one I know has actually been charged with them. Usually they just want to get you out as fast as possible, but there is the threat of time wasted in court, a criminal record, etc. There's no real chance of getting that law repealed I think (laughter).

DIRECT ACTION: I heard that there are also people squatting down towards Wollongong?

Gavin: Yeah, basically the situation is that there was a guy who was busted on tax fraud who left the country and isn't coming back. He was a bit of a real estate shark and owned a bunch of properties that have been sitting there empty for about four and a half years. There are two pieces of land that people are squatting on in caravans and tents and there is one building that's squatted as well. If the rates aren't paid within five years then the council can compulsorily acquire

properties by law so now they're pretty keen to get their hands on these places. They've been putting some pressure on the squatters to get out using every little by law they can think of because if they can get the squatters off then they're looking at a bit of a windfall. They'll auction it off and probably buy it themselves since according to the Act council members are able to purchase such properties.

DIRECT ACTION: What's coming up for the next few months with SHAC?

Gavin: We've got the website up and are always trying to get in touch with more people to encourage squatting and to create links with other people who are already doing it. There's quite a few people squatting in Sydney, but there's only a small proportion who want to talk about it with other squatters due to fear from the criminal justice laws. More specifically we're still settling into our new places and we hope to get more and more people in there. We already have three squats next to each other and soon we'll have five or six so that hopefully in the lead up to the Olympics we'll have a space where activists and others can come. The buildings we've got are right next to the city and are in the Ultimo/Broadway area of Sydney. We're organising to get a free café going one day a week. We're going to set one of the squats up as a media centre as well.

SHAC have a guide to squatting at <http://shac.jumprealstate.com> and can be contacted via that address.

Anti-Green Violence: Unions and the Economy to Blame?

Anti-environmentalist violence has broken out recently in the native timber industry in Victoria and Western Australia. The following article traces the roots of these attacks.

Over the past 25 years forest blockades have been a regular feature of Australian rural life highlighting the often intractable differences between those who log our native forests and those who aim to save them. Tensions at forest protests are naturally high and the past year has seen an appreciable rise in the use of violence against environmentalists. Much of this violence has been fuelled by the myth that greens rather than employers are responsible for the decline in the native timber industry.

Following last year's decision by the Western Australian State Government to lower the rate of logging a protest camp was attacked by balaclava clad men wielding baseball bats. In the Gippsland region environmentalists alleged that a NSW woodchip mill operator encouraged workers to attack them by promising to pay any court costs they might face as a result. The Victorian Otways saw a number of incidents during a union blockade of protestors including one that saw an eco tour operator hospitalised after being knocked unconscious with an axe.

Despite these warning signs no one was prepared for the ferocity of the events that took place in the Victorian Gippsland region on Monday 21st February. Police have charged loggers over an incident during which 50 men and their sons converged in the middle of the night on a long standing protest camp destroying \$30 000 worth of property and assaulting the four camp residents. Shortly after the initial attack another incident occurred in which a car containing an independent cameraman and conservationists was overturned injuring those inside. People were made to sit in a ditch, hit with iron bars and men and women were threatened with rape. An ambulance was called to the site at 1:30am, one man was hospitalised and seven others also attended hospital. According to Goongerah Environment Centre (GEOC) spokesperson Shelly Nundra freaked out police called local townspeople at 2:00am warning them that a "convoy of utes was heading our way, and that we should be ready to evacuate our homes."

These incidents followed a contentious protest earlier that day which saw allegations of thrown punches from both sides after local Aboriginal elders from the Krautunglung and Bidawal tribes halted work and served eviction papers on forestry workers. Krautunglung elder Robbie Thorpe was reported as telling Department of Natural Resources and the Environment (DNRE) officers "You didn't plant these old growth forests, you got no right to harvest them. They were here before white people arrived." Following the camp attack he stated "Violence of this kind has been used to suppress and control this land for the last 200 years. Such a violent backlash shows just how

threatening our assertion of sovereignty is to some in the timber industry. We will not be intimidated."

The economic climate within which these attacks have occurred is one of despair and decline. According to the Federal Government's Resource Assessment Commission (RAC), native forests have seen a 40% increase in the rate of logging in the past 30 years matched by a 40% decrease in the number of jobs available. Some of these losses can be attributed to the introduction of new technology and speed-ups in the workplace, but most of it stems from a concurrent 230% increase in the rate of woodchipping.

The overwhelming majority of the trees taken out of our native forests are woodchipped for export, not turned into higher value furniture or building materials. It takes 3 to 4 workers to operate a saw mill facility, but only one person seven seconds to push a tree down a chipper belt making woodchips a poor job creator. As well as this, regeneration failure in forests cleared for woodchips is as high as 80% providing little or no resource security.

Poor forest management has seen Australian companies recently lose valuable contracts as European firms are increasingly demanding that suppliers meet the standards set by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The FSC is an international body founded by a combine of chain stores and environmentalists who, tired of environmental abusers making false claims, decided to establish a verifiable international standard of sustainability. Thus far neither the Federal nor various state governments have allowed their forestry practices to be examined by the FSC. Coming on top of these lost contracts the national industry has recently experienced a drop of up to 21% in the value of woodchip exports.

Victorian timber communities were hit by a further shock in January this year when the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) announced that hundreds of jobs could be lost following their discovery that, as conservationists had long been warning, they had overestimated the remaining areas of forest available for logging. This has challenged long held industry and union assumptions that current forestry practices are economically and environmentally sustainable. It has also threatened the future of the state's woodchip export industry by throwing State and Commonwealth government discussions over Regional Forest Agreements (RFA), the contracts that set the rate of logging,

into disarray.

Industry job losses have come at a time when greens have generally been losing ground and the level of logging has risen. Western Australia has proved the only exception with the state government revising its RFA last year after members of the local elite forced a split in Liberal and National Party ranks. A new party called Liberals For The Forests was formed and the intervention of power brokers such as fashion designer Liz Davenport, former AMA president Dr Keith Woolard and 93 year old Liberal party co-founder Dame Rachel Cleland saw the Court government capitulate to green demands. In August they agreed to immediately halt logging in the decimated state Kari forests and to lower logging rates from 175 000 cubic metres a year to 50 000 by 2003.

Job losses were quick in coming, but the majority were already in the pipeline with employers happily leaping in to take full advantage of state funded retrenchment packages. The first pulp mill to close its doors was one that had already been in receivership for months. Even the ultra right

despite the fact that these same employers had recently sacked hundreds of workers in NSW. Then secretary of the NSW CFMEU Forestry Division Gavin Hillier publicly condemned Borl as "the worst employers as far as wages and conditions are concerned in NSW," but failed to organise a blockade of the company's offices and factories.

Former employees of the Tasmanian Burnie chip mill have in the past bucked the established order and deserve credit for being one of the only workplaces to fight off employer attacks in the early 1990s. However the recent closing of the plant due to decreased exports drew a limp response from the union leadership. Complaints from the Secretary of the Tasmanian CFMEU Forestry Division that a cartel of timber companies are preventing investment in sustainable alternatives are welcome, but statements alone will carry little weight with employers.

With more than one in twenty forestry workers (67 out of every 100) across Australia annually falling victim to workplace injuries the timber industry rates amongst the top three national offenders. Yet whilst the Construction Division of the Victorian CFMEU has taken a lead in shutting down and picketing building sites over health and safety issues the Forestry Division has opted to picket greens. Blockaded sites account for a minute percentage of workplaces and the Forestry Division has failed to provide solid evidence linking injuries to green non violent direct action. All of which would tend to suggest that greens are being targeted for reasons other than health and safety.

The Victorian Forestry Division's recent calls for sustainability also ring hollow in light of its failure to take action over the Federal Government's cancellation of funds to help the timber industry restructure away from woodchipping. When unions continually ignore employer abuses, but leap to mobilise against green concerns it is really so surprising that the rank and file follow suit with action at the ground level?

This is not to say that the response from many of the peak Conservation bodies has been particularly encouraging either. Whilst some grass roots greens have (largely unsuccessfully) attempted to generate dialogue with rank and file timber workers mainstream groups have generally left them out of the picture. Unsurprisingly lobbyists on salaries of \$50,000 or more have proved deaf to complaints that their favourite alternative employer, the tourism industry, is largely casualised and anti union. When W.A. employers used the revised RFA as an excuse to shut down woodchips greens were caught out by their failure to put together solid alternatives and they

would do well to avoid this happening again.

Many green groups have also gotten into bed with economic nationalists in calling for free trade principles to be applied to the timber industry. Whilst the level of government subsidies provided to woodchipping are obscene, allowing native forests to be sold for as little as 9 cents a tonne, the call should be for subsidies to be redirected towards the sustainable alternatives that currently suffer from unfair competition. Many industries such as solar power and recycled paper fail to attract commercial investment because they are unlikely to generate large profits. Governments have already used the myth of the level playing field in order to knock off subsidies to these and other sustainable industries and greens should avoid further playing into their hands.

Whilst the overall picture is gloomy, alternatives to the current mess do exist. Much of Australia's needs for furniture and building products are already being met through plantations which employ almost half of Australia's forestry workers. Both Victoria and Tasmania have fledgling hemp industries which, with enough support, could easily fulfil much of Australia's paper needs in a cheap and renewable manner. Demand for recycled paper has dropped off since the 1980s, largely thanks to the withdrawal of subsidies and consequent price rises, but could easily be re-activated.

On the activist front there are some healthy signs as well. Some green groups such as the Wombat Forest Society continue to work hard at generating alliances with workers and drawing up plans for alternative employment. In Victoria a coalition of green unionists called Earthworker has helped a variety of unions to pioneer environmentally sustainable work practices and worked to dispel the false dichotomy of "jobs versus environment." More initiatives along these lines are required.

In the end concerns over the mismanagement of our forests naturally go beyond just the effects on those at the point of production. After all the environment is an issue that affects the health and well being of all people and the planet they exist on. As with so many issues long term solutions to our problems will only be found in the creation of a society which equitably shares decision making power and resources. We should keep this in mind regardless of the particular tactics we use in the fight to create economic and environmental sustainability.

Article by IBM. The author would like it known that he is a member of the IWW, but that his views do not necessarily reflect those of it or any other organisation.



w i n g
Conservation Minister Wilson Tuckey was forced to admit that companies were using the reforms as an "excuse to rationalise their workforce and blame it on the (revised) RFA." All the same greens found themselves being made scapegoats and within weeks a forest camp was attacked.

The particular union culture that exists both at leadership and rank and file levels in the timber industry has a lot to blame for the current state of affairs. Whilst timber unions have never advocated violence and have been strident in condemning the recent outbreaks they also have a track record of employing militant action against environmentalists whilst playing pussyfoot with employers. When W.A. mill bosses laid workers in the late 1980s and slashed wages due to declining (but still healthy) profits the union response was to organise an anti green march led by racist politician Graeme Campbell. In the mid 1990s unions joined with employers in blockading state and federal parliaments to oppose green legislation

"Who Eats of the Pope..."

PARTICIPATION in the politics of the bourgeois states has not brought the labour movement a hairs' breadth closer to Socialism, but, thanks to this method, Socialism has almost been completely crushed and condemned to insignificance. The ancient proverb: "Who eats of the pope, dies of him," has held true in this content also, who eats of the state is ruined by it. Participation in parliamentary politics has affected the Socialist labour movement like an insidious poison. It destroyed the belief in the necessity of constructive Socialist activity and, worst of all, the impulse to self-help, by inoculating people with the ruinous delusion that salvation always comes from above.

Thus, in place of the creative Socialism of the old International, there developed a sort of substitute product which has nothing in common with real Socialism but the name. Socialism steadily lost its character of a cultural ideal, which was to prepare the peoples for the dissolution of capitalist society, and, therefore, could not let itself be halted by the artificial frontiers of the national states. In the minds of the leaders of this new phase of the Socialist movement the interests of the national state were blended more and more with the alleged aims of their party, until at last they became unable to distinguish any definite boundaries between them. So inevitably the labour movement was

gradually incorporated in the equipment of the national state and restored to this equilibrium which it had actually lost before.

It would be a mistake to find in this strange about-face an international betrayal by the leaders, as has so often been done. The truth is that we have to do here with a gradual assimilation to the modes of thought of capitalist society, which is a condition of the practical activities of the labour parties of today, and which necessarily affects the intellectual attitude of their political leaders. These very parties which had once set out to conquer Socialism saw themselves compelled by the iron logic of conditions to sacrifice their Socialist convictions bit by bit to the national policies of the state. They became, without the majority of their adherents ever becoming aware of it, political lightning rods for the security of the capitalist social order. The political power which they had wanted to conquer had gradually conquered their Socialism until there was scarcely anything left of it.

Parliamentarianism, which quickly attained a dominating position in the labour parties of the different countries, lured a lot of bourgeois minds and career-hungry politicians into the Socialist camp, and this helped to accelerate the internal decay of original Socialist principles. Thus Socialism in the course of time lost its creative initiative and became an ordinary reform movement which lacked any element of greatness. People were content with successes at the polls, and no longer attributed any importance to social upbuilding and constructive education of the workers for this end. The conse-



"The sleep of reason produces monsters."

- Francisco Goya 1746-1828

"The lancehead of the labour movement is ... not the political party but the trade union, toughened by daily combat and permeated by Socialist spirit. Only in the realm of economy are the workers able to display their fu! social strength, for it is their activity as producers which holds together the whole social structure, and guarantees the existence of society at all."

quences of this disastrous neglect of one of the weightiest problems, one of decisive importance for the realisation of Socialism, were revealed in their full scope when after the World War, a revolutionary situation arose in many of the countries of Europe. The collapse of the old system had, in several states, put into the hands of the Socialists the power they had striven for so long and pointed to as the first prerequisite for the realisation of Socialism. In Russia the seizure of power by the left wing of state Socialism, in the form of Bolshevism paved the way, not for a Socialist society, but for the most primitive type of bureaucratic state capitalism and a reversion to the political absolutism which was long ago abolished in most countries by bourgeois revolutions. In Germany, however, where the moderate wing in the form of Social Democracy attained to power, Socialism, in its long years of absorption in routine parliamentary tasks, had become so bogged down that it was no longer capable of any creative act whatsoever. Even a bourgeois democratic sheet like the *Frankfurter Zeitung* felt obliged to confirm that "the history of European peoples has not previously produced a revolution that has been so poor in creative ideas and so weak in revolutionary energy."

But that was not all: not only

was political Socialism in no position to undertake any kind of constructive effort in the direction of Socialism, it did not even possess the moral strength to hold on to the achievements of bourgeois Democracy and Liberalism, and surrendered the country without resistance to Fascism, which smashed the entire labour movement to bits with one blow. It had become so deeply immersed in the bourgeois state that it had lost all sense of constructive Socialist action and felt itself tied to the barren routine of everyday practical politics as a galley-slave was chained to his bench.

Modern Anarcho-Syndicalism is the direct reaction against the concepts and methods of political Socialism, a reaction which even before the war had already made itself manifest in the strong upsurge of the Syndicalist labour movement in France, Italy, and other countries, not to speak of Spain, where the great majority of the organised workers had always remained faithful to the doctrines of the First International.

The term "workers' syndicate" meant in France merely a trade union organisation of producers for the immediate betterment of their economic and social status. But the rise of Anarcho-Syndicalism gave this original meaning a much wider and deeper import. Just as the part, is, so to speak, the unified organisation for

definite political effort within the modern constitutional state, and seeks to maintain the bourgeois order in one form or another, so, according to the Syndicalist view, the trade union, the syndicate, is the unified organisation of labour and has for its purpose the defence of the interests of the producers within existing society and the preparing for and the practical carrying out of the reconstruction of social life after the pattern of Socialism. It has, therefore, a double purpose: 1. As the fighting organisation of the workers against the employers to enforce the demands of the workers for the safeguarding and raising of their standard of living; 2. As the school for the intellectual training of the workers to make them acquainted with the technical management of production and economic life in general so that when a revolutionary situation arises they will be capable of taking the socio-economic organism into their own hands and remarking it according to Socialist principles.

Anarcho-Syndicalists are of the opinion that political parties, even when they bear a socialist name, are not fitted to perform either of these two tasks. The mere fact that, even in those countries where political Socialism commanded powerful organisations and had millions of voters behind it, the workers had never been able to dispense with trade unions because legislation offered them no protection in their struggle for daily bread, testifies to this. It frequently happened that in just these sections of the country where the Socialist parties were strongest the wages of workers were lowest and the conditions of labour worst. That was the case, for example, in the northern industrial districts of France, where Socialists were in the majority in numerous city administrations, and in Saxony and Silesia, where throughout its existence German Social Democracy had been able to show a large following.

Governments and parliaments seldom decide on economic or social reforms on their own initiative, and where this has happened thus far the alleged improvements have always remained a dead letter in the vast waste of laws. Thus the modest attempts of the English parliament in the early period of big industry, when the legislators, frightened by the horrible effects of the exploitation of children, at last resolved on some trifling ameliorations', for a long time had almost no effect. On the one hand they ran afoul of the lack of understanding of the workers themselves, on the other they were sabotaged outright by the employers. It was much the same with the well-known law which the Italian government enacted in the middle 90's to forbid women who were compelled to toil in the sulphur mines in Sicily from taking their children down into the mines with them. This law also remained a dead letter, because these unfortunate women were so poorly paid that they were obliged to disregard the law. Only a considerable time later, when these working women had succeeded in organising, and thus forcing up their standard of

living, did the evil disappear of itself. There are plenty of similar instances in the history of every country.

But even the legal authorisation of a reform is no guarantee of its permanence unless there exist outside of parliament militant masses who are ready to defend it against every attack. Thus the English factory owners, despite the enactment of the ten-hour law in 1848, shortly afterward availed themselves of an industrial crisis to compel workers to toil for eleven or even twelve hours. When the factory inspectors took legal proceedings against individual employers on this account, the accused were not only acquitted, the Government hinted to the inspectors that they were not to insist on the letter of the law, so that the workers were obliged, after economic conditions had revived somewhat, to make the fight for the ten-hour day all over again on their own resources. Among the few economic improvements which the November Revolution of 1918 brought to the German workers, the eight-hour day was the most important. But it was snatched back from the workers by the employers in most industries, despite the fact that it was in the statutes, actually anchored legally in the Weimar Constitution itself.

But if political parties are absolutely incapable of making the slightest contribution to the improvement of the standard of living of the workers within present day society, they are far less capable to carry on the organic upbuilding of a Socialist community or even to pave the way for it, since they utterly lack every practical requirement for such an achievement. Russia and Germany have given quite sufficient proof of this.

The lancehead of the labour movement is, therefore, not the political party but the trade union, toughened by daily combat and permeated by Socialist spirit. Only in the realm of economy are the workers able to display their full social strength, for it is their activity as producers which holds together the whole social structure, and guarantees the existence of society at all. In any other field they are fighting on alien soil and wasting their strength in hopeless struggles which bring them not an iota nearer to the goal of their desires. In the field of parliamentary politics the worker is like the giant Antaeus of the Greek legend, whom Hercules was able to strangle after he took his feet off the earth who was his mother. Only as producer and creator of social wealth does she become aware of her strength; in solidary union with her fellows she creates in the trade union the invincible phalanx which can withstand any assault, if it is aflame with the spirit of freedom and animated by the ideal of social justice.

The passage above comes from "Anarcho-Syndicalism", by Rudolf Rocker, available for free download from the web at

<<http://flag.blackened.net/huelgaast/index.htm>>

GLADIATORS
by Andy Irvine

I'll tell you all a story that perhaps you do not know
It happened in Australia quite some time ago
I'll tell you of Tom Barker from
Westmoreland he came
From an early age he knew that he was
born to Fan in the Flames
Many in their youth and prime they left
their own backyard
Back before the First World War when
times were very hard
By boat and train and road they came tired
legs and blistered feet
And they wound up here in Sydney on
Castlereagh Street.

CHORUS
Gladiators of the Working Class, heroes of mine
Who travelled down this dark road long
before my time
Your actions and the words you spoke are
shining in my mind
As I'm blowing down this old dusty road.

Tom Glynn and Peter Larkin they came
from Erin's Shore
There was Jack Hamilton and JB King,
Charlie Reeve and many more
And Donald Grant I see him still in the
Sydney Domain
Where Sunday after Sunday thousands
thrilled as he proclaimed
'O the men who made this Empire they
made it for the few

"Who feast upon the profits of the labours
that we do
And now they want the working man to
fight for them as well
"Let those who own this Empire go and
fight for it themselves."

Prime Minister Billy Hughes the "Little
Digger" sod
He was elected by the workers and he
thought that he was God
Says he for the mines in Broken Hill and
the Queensland shearing sheds
We'll introduce Conscription and get rid of
all these Reds
O Billy was astonished when the
Referendum failed
He rounded up the Wobblies and he filled
up all his jails
With all the wealth and all his might he
made a pretty show
But he couldn't get away with it when the
People voted NO.

A cartoon in the Wobby paper it had it cut
and dried
It showed the rich man raking in the loot
and the soldier crucified
And the editor he was thrown in jail and
the working folks agreed
That they'd kick up bloody murder till they
saw Tom Barker freed.
And the Sydney Twelve stood trial when
some buildings were burned down.
And the evidence it was stitched up by
Detectives for the Crown
And the brainless brutal jury found them
guilty with a leer
And the Judge says I'll be lenient and give

you ten to fifteen years.

Tom Barker was deported to Chile was
sent away
When he promptly organised the docks in
Valparaiso Bay
And he wound up in London where the
people made him Mayor
And upon St Pancras Town Hall he raised
the Red Flag there
He sneaked back into Sydney in the year
of '32
And he watched the Anzac Day parade
and his prophesies come true
For these Heroes in their shabby clothes
who fought hard the Hun and Turk
Had come home to find that all they'd won
was a lifetime of no work.

CHORUS
Gladiators of the Working Class, Heroes
of mine
If we only had Tom Barker here in all his
youth and prime
His actions and the words he spoke are
shining in my mind
As I'm blowing down this old dusty road.

I stood at the foot of your grave Tom
Glynn here in Botany Bay
In the shadow of Long Bay jail where they
locked you all away
And I made a vow to your memory as I
stood on your burial ground
That I'd write this song and I'd sing it in
your native Galway town.

**KITCHENHAND
KITCHENHAND**
(to the tune of Soldier
Soldier)
by Steve London

Kitchenhand, kitchenhand,
won't you work for me, with
your apron, cap and cloth?
No, Head Chef, I cannot
work for you for I have no
head for my mop.
So off she went to her main
supplier and got him one of
the very best.
And the kitchenhand was
well pleased.

Kitchenhand, kitchenhand,
won't you work for me, with
your apron, cap and cloth?
No, Head Chef, I cannot
work for you, for I have no
teatowels that are dry.
So off she went to her hidden
stash and got him one of
the very, very best.
And the kitchenhand was
well pleased.

Kitchenhand, kitchenhand,
won't you work for me, with
your apron, cap and cloth?
No, Head Chef, I cannot
work for you, for I have no
pay from last week.
So off she went to the restu-

rants' till and got him cash
of the very, very best.
And the kitchenhand was
well pleased.

Kitchenhand, kitchenhand,
won't you work for me, with
your apron, cap and cloth?
No, Head Chef, I cannot
work for you, for I haven't
had a scrap of food.
So off she went to her
gleaming bench and burnt
him some of the very, very
best.
And the kitchenhand was
well pleased.

Kitchenhand, kitchenhand,
won't you work for me, with
your apron, cap and cloth?
No, Head Chef, I cannot
work for you, for I have no
workers right to sue.
So off she went to Steve
Bracks office and failed
though she did her very,
very best.
So the kitchenhand joined
the Union.

FACTORY
by Phil Doyle

The arklights turned night into
day at the milk factory!
'The milk factory!' Thought
Jerry. 'What a stupid fucking name.
As if this factory makes milk. Cows
make milk. Milchwol! Achtung!'
Jerry stamped his feet against the
cold, 2am, wide awake, smoking,
waiting for the last possible moment
to go in.

Then inside. Hi, Jerry. G'day
Jerry. Hi. G'day. How the fuck are ya?
Was this morning. Sarcasm. G'day
sarcasm.

'Yeah. Thanks Jerry. 'Fucking
warm. Dickhead.'
Then it's milk cartons. Twenty-
six to a crate. Flying off the line. They
work like bees. Filling crates. People
drink a lot of milk. Everyone wants
their milk for breakfast. Gotta have
their milk. Everyone wants their milk
and nobody wants a cow.

'What a fucking joke.' Thinks
Jerry. He's looking at the short fat
foreman.
'He loves this place.' Says Jerry
to himself. 'Absolutely loves it, proba-
bly more than his wife, or his kids.
Imagine being that for forty years.
Jerry shudders, he is not feeling the
cold.'

Crate. Filled. Stacked. Crate.
Filled. Stacked. Crate. Filled. Stacked.
The mind drifts off. Jerry's on one
line. Next to him are Roscoe and Pat
lines are dairy milk, but Roscoe line
gets the skim milk. 1 Litre. 2 Litre.
600ml. A pint.
That's a pint. Once were glass
bottles. Cream on the top. Gone.
Cartons now. 1 Litre. 2 Litre. 600mls.
Danny carts the crates to the dock
where the fat foreman, a Slav called
Miro, checks the consignments of the
Miklo's who come banging and
yelling and arguing and in a hurry like

all men who work piece work.
'They think they've got a busi-
ness.' Thinks Jerry. 'But they're just
fucking scabby slaves. What fucking
arseholes. You! That's how they
address anyone. You! Think they're
kings,shit when they're just over their
heads in debt and too fucking stupid to
realise that they're just working them-
selves into an early grave. Fuck that.'
'Miro's hangin' about. What does
he want?'

'Pull your finger out Jezza!
Jerry figures he's going as fast as he
can and the anger makes him red-
den.

Your an arsehole Miro. 'Thinks
Jerry. 'A dumb fat arsehole. I hope
you choke on your own shit.'
Crate. Filled. Stacked. Crate.
Filled. Stacked. Crate.
It's flying now.

Miklo's arguing with Miro. Miro
telling them to get fucked. Miklo's
arguing with Miklo's. The noise of the
trucks. Crates and doors and packag-
ing machines clattering. Guys on the
line yelling for more crates.
Crate. Filled. Stacked. Crate.
Filled. Stacked.

'Pull your fucking finger out
Jezza!
'Miro fuck ya.' Thinks Jerry. 'Just
one more time mate. Just one more
time and I'll wrap this crate around
your neck mate.'

But there's no time for that.
'More crates Danny!' Cries Jerry.
Crate. Filled. Stacked.
'Fucking hurry up Danny.' Thinks
Jerry. 'Crate!
Filled.
'Where the fuck... Ah, here he
is.'

shit. Eight dollars fifty an hour.
'-What experience have you got?
Asked the CES guy. Jerry mumbles.
'-What?' Says the CES guy, loud-
ly. You'll have to speak up mate.
Jerry is red and angry shaking
-Just give us the address fuck ya.
CES guy stares stupid amidst the
draining lamches bureaucracy. Then
he punches up the job reference num-
ber on the screen.

'-Andrews Road. What's your
CES reference number? Do you have
it on your?
'-My what?
'-What's your name then?
'-What's it to you?
'-I have to give your reference. And
in future leave the cards on the board.
Just bring the reference number.'

'-Ahh, get fucked. Says Jerry, and
he turns and pushes some old blobbe
out of the way as he stomps through
the doors of the CES.
'-Fucking whackers.' He thinks.
'No wonder there's so many cunts on
the dole with packerheads like that
getting people work. Couldn't find his
arsehole with a map that prick
Andrews road, across past the station.
He reads the sign. Milk Factory
Production Worker.

'-In here about the job. Says Jerry
guy hosing down the loading dock
at the back of the factory.
'-Go around there, there's an
office.' Says the guy with the hose.
Ask for Mike specific.
Jerry goes. Mr. Ivanov's in shirt
and suit.

'-Great. Thanks Jerry.
'-You afraid of hard work?
'-No.
'-I'm not afraid of you.'
Crate. Filled. Stacked. Crate.
Filled.

'-You play indoor cricket.
'-Funny question.
'-Sometimes.
'-O.K. You start tomorrow.
Stacked. Crate.

'-Game tonight. Says Danny with
his fresh crates. Comin'?
'-We'll see.
'-You always say that and you're
never there.
No shit.
Jerry throws himself into the
Filled. Stacked. Crate. Filled. Stacked.
Crate.
'-DANNNYYYY! Miro's squawk.
Filled. Stacked.
During smoko Miro came up to
Jerry and asked him why he never
came to the indoor cricket. There was
a spot on the team for him and for
the last six weeks they'd played a man
short. They needed him to play.
They expect him to be there tonight
6.30pm. But he had a bit.

'-Mumble.
Just be there Jezza. Said Miro.
The spoons and syzings littered
by the matinee on the floor and bot-
tles of Melbourne Bitter, radio rattling
all the time. All the time. All the time.
Clock radio 6.44pm.

'-Go. Stay. Go. Stay on the go
Jerry is speaking.
Amphetawks sharp. Watching
the Channel 9 news. The wall.
Thinking. Being Stuffed.

'-Like he should be nervous. He
got the keys for the bike out of the
locker.
Packer packet. He will go. He will
have a bit more speed. He will go.
'-The Indoor Cricket. Census was in
up to the industrial and he left the
bike near the door and went in with
the clock under his arm.

'-Fists they were reverberating
spoons. Shout. The squeak of runners
on wood. A few shovelled men were
standing around chatting with their
keys and spoons bags in their hands.
No one paid him any attention when
he entered. He spots the competition
notice board. There they are. Miro's
Marauders.

'-Jesus Christ.' Thinks Jerry.
'Sport is war.'

He takes a seat in the gloom of
the sparsely populated spectator area,
in the back row. There they are in the
middle of the game. They are fielding.
Fat Miro behind the stumps. Danny.
Roscoe.
'That guy bowling.' Thinks Jerry.
'What's his name?'


'-Warden. Darren? They're getting
flogged by the look of it. What a stupid
pastime.'

The players run about in a berserk
lack of choreography. Jerry shakes his
head. 'The sheer absurdity of it leaves
him breathless. He's never seen
Indoor Cricket before. He'd be fucked
if he'd take this up.'

At the Red Cow Hotel later Jerry
is pondering this problem. He will
have to get another job. He reasons
that this is no great loss. He doesn't
mind the work, he never does, but it's
always the same thing. His work-
mates. Always the same. Work is
always ruined by the people he has to
work with. Maybe he could get a job
working by himself?

He is alone. He drains his beer.
The burman comes for the glass.
Another?
'Yeah mate, why not.'

THE END



When you have nowhere to sleep for the night
your greatest enemy is time.

If it's late in the afternoon you examine your resources.
The resources can be negative too.

The winds that rip into Melbourne off Port Phillip Bay,
straight from Antarctica,
in they come,
over the bombed out, weed strewn,
cyclone fenced off docklands, to reach everywhere.

It makes the walls and windows cold and comes in under the door
and chases you under a blanket where you're so cold all you
do is shiver yourself to sleep.

And what if you have no walls?
No door?

No blanket?

Then ... you're mad.

Life is hard on the mad.

Beating up on yourself.

Other people beating up on you.

Mad.

Late in the afternoon the mad might
think about where they are to sleep tonight.
Or as likely as not they'll go and get pissed.

Is it crazier to sleaze into the
company of madmen and strangers
and warm yourself in their desperation?


Or freeze behind a rubbish skip,

on your knees,

prostrate,

gritted teeth,

cursing?



GRAPHIC WAL LARKIN
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