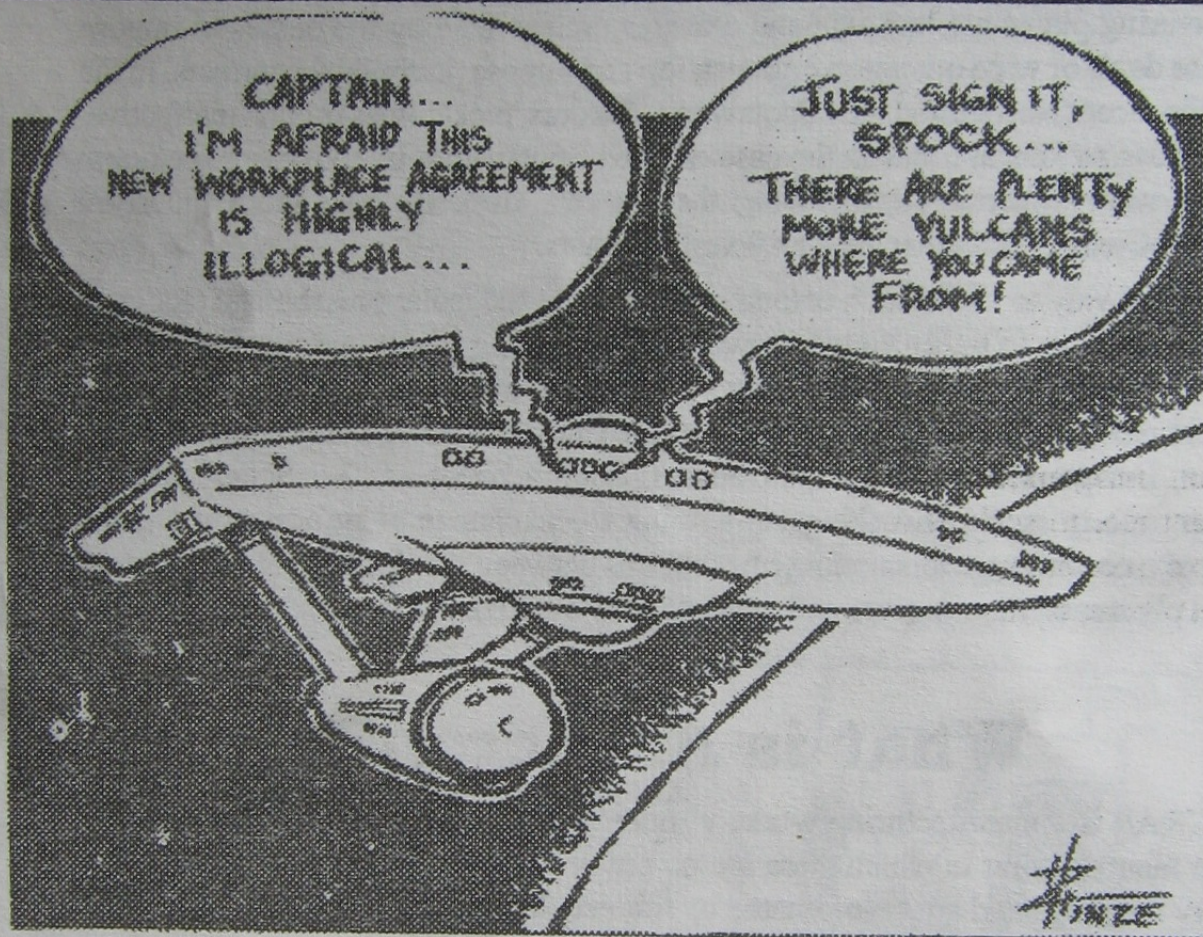


No. 5

# ALL SCRAP

April - May 1997

Manufacturing Worker's Paper



## ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

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## Editorial

# LINKS IN THE CHAIN

Particularly with the advent of the Howard Govt., looming threats to workers at many manufacturing plants are lockouts and closures orchestrated by the bosses to impose enterprise deals or wipe out union organisation and impose individual contracts. In the case of the recent Nestles and ACI Spotswood lockouts, picket lines proved ineffective. Despite mass pickets at times in the case of ACI Spotswood. In both cases the union hierarchy were effective in isolating the workers from the maximum industrial solidarity of workers in other ACI and Nestles plants.

An important way to avoid such defeats and preclude the isolation/sabotage tactics of the union bosses is to build "links" between neighbouring plants and those within the same company and industry. Such "links" particularly should take the form of regular inter plant delegate meetings to exchange information and co-ordinate common plans of action, independent of the union bosses. Such a paper as "All Scrap" has an important role in such networking via helping the exchange of information and the buildup of a common understanding of problems between the different workforces of different plants and the exposure and recall of boss's stooges who are current delegates.

## What is All Scrap?

ALL SCRAP is a manufacturing workers' paper whose aim is the creation of a new union in manufacturing in which there are no union bosses and all decisions are made at factory meetings and are co-ordinated by union delegates. Such delegates would be strictly mandated by such meetings and can be instantly recalled by them.

Such a union would be independent and opposed to reliance on political parties. It would be committed to "direct action on the job" - forms of industrial action decided upon and controlled by membership factory meetings. Such action would be aimed at stopping the rot in conditions, improving them and achieving workers control of manufacturing industry. In various workplaces such a union is called "anarcho-syndicalist", a "people's union", or a "worker controlled union".

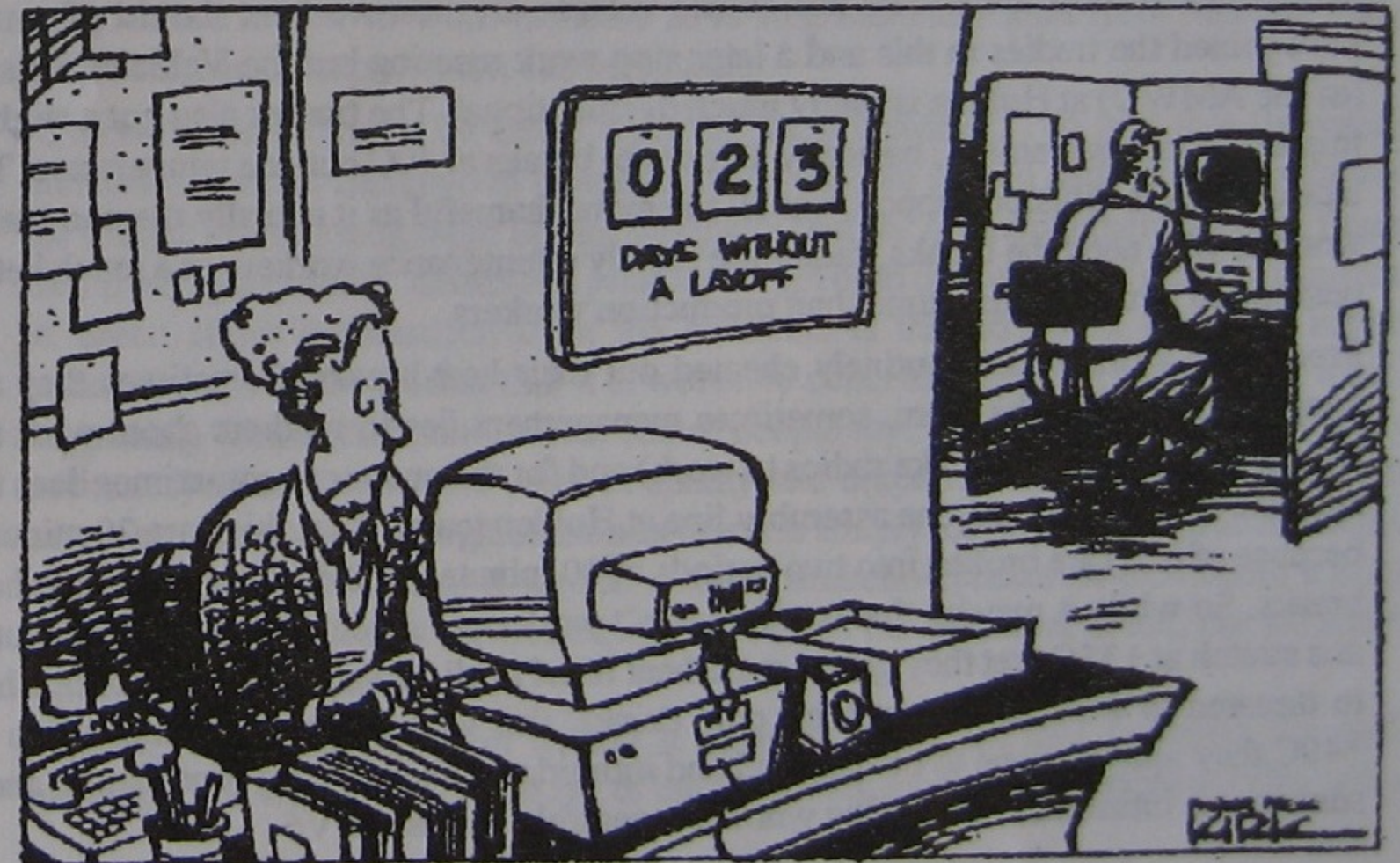
## THE NEED FOR FACTORY COMMITTEES

To assist the formation of a new union, we are committed to help building delegate factory committees along the above lines, and the federation of these committees - making voluntary agreements between factories to form a new union. Such committees would also play a central role in co-ordinating "workers' control" of production.

## THE BOSSES' UNIONS & ENTERPRISE BARGAINING/CONTRACTS

We view such unions represented in the manufacturing industry as the AMWU and the AWU-FIMEE as bosses' unions, whose union bosses through enterprise bargaining have done tremendous damage to workers through the give back of hard won conditions and cave-ins to the bosses' speed-up drive. They are likely to continue with this dirty work under the Lib's/Howard's contract system. This descent into disaster has to be stopped urgently. The new unions we have in mind will be a major step in halting that descent.

ALL SCRAP welcomes contributions in the shape of poems, songs, articles by manufacturing workers. Please send ALL SCRAP PO Box 678 Hamilton 2303 NSW and for our Victorian readers PO Box 12022 A'Beckett St. Melbourne Vic. 3000.





## HEATING UP AT HOLDEN FISHERMAN'S BEND

Factory management often seem to find the concept of heat hard to grasp, maybe because they work in air conditioned offices themselves. I've been working for the past few years at the Holden plant in Port Melbourne, so I thought I was beyond being surprised at management stupidity, but the way they are handling the current heat-wave is a reminder of what bossdom does to the brain. The so-called "heat agreement" at Holden is very modest- when the temperature outside the factory is 30C the company supplies cold drinks (that is, cordial), when the heat outside hits 35C we get rested ten minutes in the hour. Its hotter inside the factory than out, how much hotter depends where you work. Management resents this, they think (and say) that workers in Thailand etc work in the heat so why not Australian workers? Commonly supervision discourages people from taking heat breaks, but here in Melbourne we've had a string of mild summers so the issue has not in a big way come up for a few years....until this year.

Management usually pretty much sort of provides the cold drinks. They did begin by fobbing us off with a warm sugary concoction thats useless in the heat; but after a few days and a stop work meeting by the trades workers an acceptable cold drink was distributed to most areas. The non-trades vehicle division workers should of course have joined the tradies in this and a later stop work meeting but the Vehicle Division (of the AMWU) at Holden is pretty much dysfunctional. The tradies also got a slightly improved heat agreement, basically 15 minute breaks at 40C outside temperature. The lack of vehicle division support was all the more shameful as it is really the non-trades workers who need the breaks, tradies are mostly maintenance workers in a much better position to structure their time than production workers.

Production workers are routinely cheated out their heat breaks. Sometimes they are simply told not to take them, sometimes management lies to workers about what the temperature is (we don't take radios to work) and for that matter so sometimes does the shop steward; on at least one assembly line at Holden teabreaks (which are 20 minutes because of RSI) are broken into two periods of 10 minutes, and declared to also be heat breaks. So while it may be that workers don't work over much more than 50 minutes at a stretch at +35C, yet they get no extra heat relief at all. On another line workers had to threaten to walk out to get their cold drinks, this with an outside temperature of +40C, they and continue to be harassed and intimidated about taking heat breaks, and I suspect the intimidation is on the whole successful. This is the V6



**"I want to open up better lines of communication with my employees. Plant these listening devices in all the washrooms."**

assembly line, I used to work there myself. Workers on this line have cooperated with management to get a high production speed; people like to take pride in their work, and an assembler's pride is speed. On other occasions production workers have spontaneously called in sick in such numbers as to stop assembly lines from running; and in other areas again supervision can be evaded.

Union office seems to be better than the local stewards, I'm told that the vehicle division organizer assigned to Holden thought that we should have stopped work with the tradies. When I ring them up and complain that the heat agreement is being flouted they make sympathetic noises and promise to "get onto the company" etc. But a measure of union office's alienation from the members is that so far as I know I haven't persuaded one other worker that it is worth 40 cents to ring them and explain what is happening. "Union, company, all the same" people say....and no, this is not the voice of militant syndicalism but the voice of apathy and despair. In situations like at Holden, where such grass roots organisation as exists is simply too weak, I see little alternative to working with the union. If we had a strong anarcho-syndicalist movement it might be different. Admittedly we can expect little from the reformist union, but we should make sure we get that little.

Although I am a production worker it happens that I am able to attend the tradie meetings, and was present at the last of the stop-work meetings mentioned above, where



the tradies voted to accept a slightly improved heat agreement. There was a motion from the floor that workers should walk off at 40C and claim at least half pay. The tradie organizers present made light of this suggestion, one even sank to suggesting that we should pull our heads in because of the Howard government, but all the same it nearly got up. Afterwards I found out that

the official policy of the AMWU on heat is that we should knock off at 38C on full pay! The breach between trades and production workers is one of the long running problems at Holden; so it was another good sign that numbers of tradies made it clear that production workers were welcome at tradie meetings with or without the support of the Vehicle Division. So, a few good signs but not really enough.

Jeremy

## STOP PRESS

On the hottest day the temperature near the roof was 63C, whilst on the floor it was n the 50C's. I spoke to a very well informed doctor on the heat issue. His opinion was that the company position on the heat issue was appalling. He considered that management's major concern was the effect of excessive heat on computer equipment in the factory, rather than the health hazard presented to workers by the heat. The doctor didn't consider the heat levels in the factory were harmful to healthy people, without significant health defects. However, many workers on the line do have significant health problems. The people in the foundry section suffered very little from the heat wave, as their bodies were acimatised to high levels of heat due to physiological changes in their bodies such as the reduced amount of water in their urine. The doctor considered that during the heat wave conditions, it was essential to have 15 minute breaks every hour and for the remaining 45 minutes, it was ridiculous to consider a normal pace of work.

During the heat wave a score of AMWU members on the docks walked off the job over the heat issue, despite threats of the sack. As a result of this direct action, the AMWU officials have promised to wage a campaign on the heat issue. The promised campaign seems to be a cynical gesture by the officials, as summer is ending. 15 years ago, a campaign on the issue was also promised by the officials and nothing was ever done.



"I knew I had a problem when they punched me in with a stopwatch instead of a timeclock." Carol Simpson

# BOSS PROVOCATION AT FRIGRITE MELB.

All Scrap: What's been happening at the plant?

Frigrite Worker: In 1996, a new enterprise deal was made at the plant. Through this deal we were able to improve some conditions in exchange for insignificant conditions losses. The improvements included: a 6% rise immediately in August 1996 and another rise of 6% in August this year, 10 days family leave. The deal also included an agreement on disciplinary procedures. In the case of a mild offense, verbal and written 1st and 2nd warnings are given followed by termination. In the case of serious offences, a 1st and final warning is followed by termination.

Lately the bosses have been engaging in very provocative behaviour against workers, particularly shop stewards, disregarding the agreement about disciplinary procedures.

All Scrap: What exactly has been happening?

FW: In recent weeks, a woman who works in the office was obliged to go home on stress leave stemming from the harassment of a very arrogant manager. Subsequently, a mass meeting was held in the plant, and a decision was made for workers not to speak to this manager. Normally he stays in his office. Lately however he has come out on the floor and approached various workers attempting to provoke them. One steward was drawn into a verbal confrontation with this particular manager.

On the basis of the minor offence of alleged unseemly language which is not even mentioned in the EBA document, he was issued with a first and final warning. Subsequently, a further mass meeting was held which issued management with our own "first and final warning" and that should management proceed with this provocative behaviour, forms of direct action would be considered.

All Scrap: What is the bosses' motivation behind this provocative behaviour?

FW: A theory has been presented that management is pursuing a strategy to destroy union organisation at the plant. By means of provoking industrial action, it is seeking to create the basis for closing the plant due to unprofitability. The company will then be taken over by the banks - the workforce will be sacked and then re-employed on the basis of individual contracts. Stewards and militants will of course not be re-employed.

All Scrap: What else has been happening?

FW: on 9/11/95, we have drawn up a claim for redundancy, which we are still pursuing with management. It includes 10 weeks notice, 10 weeks for every year of service, all sick leave paid out, prorata long service paid in full after 5 years service, all members 35 to 45 a \$2000 payment, all members 46 years to 65+, a \$5000 payment, all



counselling, financial, etc, paid by the company, references to all employees, no black listing of any members by any companies organisation.

## ALTONA PETRO-CHEMICAL COMPLEX NEWS

All Scrap: What's been happening at the complex?

Petro Chemical Complex Worker: The bosses have set up TQM self managed teams where supervisory duties have been devolved to operators, and have become part of their normal work. The members of the teams have been given the illusion that they have a say in the work process, when they haven't. Through these teams workers are also being manipulated into finding short cuts or different ways to do work, enabling management to abolish more jobs.

All Scrap: What's happening on the health and safety front?

PCCW: The bosses constantly put off spending money to eliminate the health hazards of equipment. An example is th bulk bag machine, whose operation contributes to low back pain amongst workers.

All Scrap: What has been the general management strategy over the years?

PCCW: Whilst we have retained the 35 hour week which we won many years ago, the bosses have relentlessly reduced the workforce particularly via the deployment of more sophisticated technology. When I first started work at the complex many years ago, there was a special railway station due to the size of the workforce. However, with constant redundancies and job destruction, the workforce has been reduced to a fraction of its initial size and the railway station has been closed.

## INGHAM'S NEWS

All Scrap: What's been happening at Inghams?

Ingham's Worker: There has been a continuing staff shortage at the plant, causing a speedup in our work. Whilst there is constant maintenance problems with the equipment. due to the maintenance fitter leaving the job and not being replaced. Neglect of maintenance of equipment, has been a continuing problem at the plant. Under the new management, maintenance such as in the case of the trollies is being neglected, due to no one being qualified to do it. As a result of these factors personal injuries to workers have increased.

All Scrap: What have been other consequences of the speedup?

IW: The speedup recently caused one worker to resign. In another incident one lady who worked in the enclosed cool room on her own, approached the Secretary in the office, for help due to the speed up. The secretary told that there was none and if she wants some, she should leave.

All Scrap: What other factors have contributed to the high rate of accidents at the plant?

IW: Contributing to the soaring accident/injury rate has been the recent resignation of the safety officer from the company. No replacement has been employed. Contributing to his resignation, was that he had taken one day off without a medical certificate. The next day he returned to work, he was harassed by management, although he had been on the job for many years.

All Scrap: What is the general attitude toward safety in the plant?

IW: At the safety meeting, there is no communal discussion of safety issues. Only the union rep discusses these issues with management. A negative way of working exists - waiting until something happens.

All Scrap: What else has been happening?

IW: We are also being exposed to chloride fumes, which is causing workers to become ill.





# HEAT HAZARD

We all know how uncomfortable it is to work in a hot plant. Heat, though, is not only uncomfortable; it is dangerous and can be deadly. Thousands of workers are injured or killed each year, most by the increased accidents working on hot jobs will bring, others by the heat itself.

Your body will try to adjust to hot surroundings, but it takes four to six days before its temperature-regulating system becomes really effective. During the first few days, however, your body's response is a rise in temperature --a fever. This leads to an increase in pulse rate that can put a strain on your heart.

Your body's adjustment to heat is not permanent. If you're off work for a week, it might take your body one or two days to readjust. Three weeks off pretty much guarantees that you will have to start adjusting all over when you go back to work.

Your body tries to adjust to heat by changes in blood circulation, and in the amount and composition of your sweat. First, the small blood vessels near the skin increase in size. This allows the heat in the blood to pass through the skin and into the air. This also increases the workload on the heart. The higher workload is partially taken care of by a reduction in the size of the blood vessels to the liver, stomach, and intestines. Once the body has adjusted to the heat, the changes in circulation are balanced so that the workload on the heart is just about normal.

Your body loses heat mostly by the evaporation of sweat. A rise in the skin temperature causes sweating before there is an increase in body temperature. But, if your body is not adjusted to the heat, some of your sweat glands are not producing sweat, and those that are produce sweat with a higher concentration of salt. They may even produce too much sweat in some parts of your body, drenching your skin and clothes so much that none of the sweat can evaporate. Again, once your body has adjusted, the volume and salt concentration of the sweat are balanced so that the skin is cooled without losing too much water or salt.

There are several different reactions to heat, depending on temperature, humidity, how hard the work is, and how your body reacts to heat.

**HEAT FATIGUE:** Heat fatigue is a mainly emotional reaction to working in heat. When you are suffering from heat fatigue, you won't be able to do as much work as you normally can, and you won't work as well. You may make more mistakes, and have more accidents or near misses than usual. You may be irritable with your friends, family, and fellow workers. If the fatigue is not relieved by rest, it gets worse.

**HEAT EXHAUSTION:** Heat exhaustion is a little more serious than heat fatigue. It can happen without a rise in body temperature, and with only moderate exposure to heat. Your blood pressure and pulse rate drop, and you feel tired, dizzy, and nauseated. Your skin becomes moist, clammy, and cold, and your complexion becomes pale or blueish. You may feel chilly. You should lie down in a cool place.

**HEAT SHOCK:**Heat shock is more serious. This is caused by a loss of water and/or salt from inefficient sweating. The symptoms are weakness, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, headache, stomach cramps, moist clammy skin, weak pulse, low blood pressure, small amounts of dark concentrated urine in water depletion type, large amounts of clear urine in salt depletion type. You should rest in a cool place, and drink salted liquids or the salt tablets and water. Hospitalization may be needed for severe cases.

**HEAT CRAMPS:** These are painful muscle spasms, in the arms, legs, and/or abdomen caused by drinking water without replacing the salt lost by sweat. This may not affect you until after work. You should drink salted liquids, or take salt tablets. Hospitalization may be needed in severe cases.

**HEAT STROKE:** Heat stroke is the most serious effect of heat. It is caused by the body being unable to sweat enough to cool itself. A person with heat stroke has a high temperature (106 degrees or above) and hot, dry, flushed skin. He or she may become delirious, go into convulsions, or become unconscious. This is most likely to happen





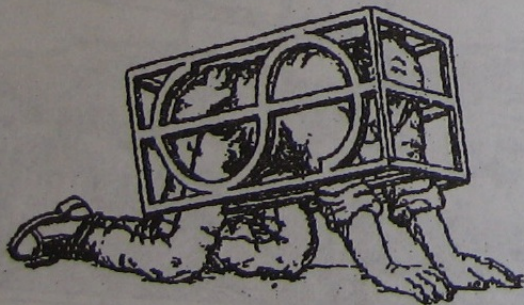
to people who are overweight, have heart or circulatory disease, or drink heavily. Heat stroke can easily be fatal. If you see someone with heat stroke, begin first aid immediately. Take the victim to a cool place and soak the clothes with water or a mixture of rubbing alcohol and water. The victim should then be taken to a hospital.

There are a number of ways of dealing with heat on the job. The best solution is to eliminate or cut down on the heat itself. Some ways of doing this are as follows:

- (1) Air conditioning the entire shop is probably the best way. It is not cheap, but it is possible.
- (2) Ventilation: Some fans, especially powerful ones that can move the air through the entire plant, can make a lot of difference. They work even better if the air is blown through a water spray to Cool it.
- (3) Insulation: Heat sources like furnaces, boilers, torches, and so on can be insulated to keep the heat away from the workers.
- (4) Dehumidifiers: If the humidity is cut down, even without lowering the temperature, you will feel more comfortable. Good maintenance of steam lines also makes a big difference.

If you can't get the job cooled down, then you need to change working conditions same. New workers should be given at least a week to get used to working in the heat. Water, salt tablets, and frequent breaks in a cool dry area should be provided by the company. Workers on especially hot jobs (like furnace and boiler maintenance) should have protective clothing.

No company is going to give you anything it doesn't have to. Through a good union you can put pressure on your boss to cool down the job and/or change--the working conditions. If you don't have a union, or your union won't work for you, there are some things you and your fellow workers can do on your own. Slow downs and mass water breaks have worked before. Or you might want to all take a 15 or 20 minute break in some nice cool air conditioned office, like the boss's. You can probably think of some other things that might work. Be creative.



## Memo From Ian Edwards to Ken Milburn at Capral Medical Centre, Granville

### Re: HEALTH & SAFETY

Workers' mental and physical health is not Capral's responsibility. It's the workers! And so is safety.

Our primary interest is to SATISFY OUR CUSTOMERS! To do this, we have to drive hard on quality not just product quality but on SERVICE as well. The way we service our customers, not only our external customers but also internal customers requires a quality attitude and to LIFT PRODUCTION QUOTAS. There is no

room for compromise. We must achieve higher levels of profitability!

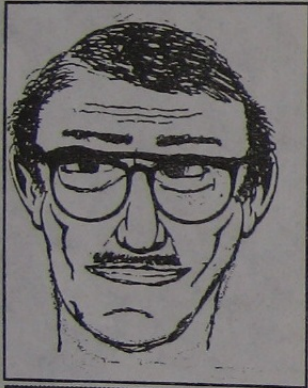


**Ian Edwards**

*Ian Edwards*  
Ian Edwards  
Managing Director



**WANTED**  
**FOR CRIMES**  
**AGAINST**  
**CAPRAL WORKERS**



**Peter Sharp**



**Glen Chuter**

**REWARD:**  
**\$50**

**CAPRAL GRANVILLE**

All Scrap: What's been happening lately regarding Karl's anti racial discrimination and harassment case against the company?

Capral Worker: Lately a number of delegates at Capral and the AWU-FIMEE organiser Rob Wilkie have sold Karl out as a result of pressure from Capral and AWU-FIMEE bosses. The senior delegate at Capral Granville Joe Bollocino has back pedalled regarding his initial support for Karl under pressure from Wilkie. Originally Wilkie had promised help for Karl in his case. Karl was advised by Wilkie to attend a meeting at the union office. To attend this meeting he had to do without food. When he got there, Wilkie told him that he had to use the union solicitor and do things our way or you are out alone. The union was unwilling to pay for any independent legal assistance. The AWU-FIMEE and Wilkie have continued to sit on this case for two years now and do nothing. Whilst Micallef, one of the key bosses' stooges in the plant and the delegate of the paint section, has destroyed evidence in the platesaw section vital to Karl's case. Karl recently spoke about his case to some officials of other unions and was told the AWU-FIMEE officials are traitors and criminals for their sellout.





# ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM means anarchist unionism. This is as opposed to trade unionism. We advocate all workers in one industry to be in one union so as to remove artificial divisions amongst workers. Such a union must be fully organised and controlled by the membership.

To achieve this we want a union organised along the following lines:

1. That no person employed by the union earn more than the average income of the membership;
2. That spokespeople have no executive power - all decisions are made by the membership affected;
3. Spokespeople are only to act as delegates elected by the membership to carry out decisions made by the membership;

4. That a mechanism be instituted for the instant recall of spokespeople/delegates who break the above rules.

5. That all positions within the union be held as a limited tenure, i.e., two years (unless no one else stands).

6. There is to be no body of full time paid officials. All loss of earnings are to be paid by the union to the extent of the lost wages.

7. That a programme of decentralised decision making be implemented within the union structure, so that we won't need full time paid positions.

Only in this way can we see a democratic, united, fighting organisation be created which will stand up for the rights of workers and their families against all governments, political parties and all bosses.

