

In Memory of
JIM HEALY



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Sydney.*

October, 1961.

(To the memory of Jim Healy)

—W. J. Brown

Wherever men, with fighting heart,
Stand firm for freedom's cause . . .
Wherever men, with toil-steeled hands,
Defy a rich man's laws . . .
Wherever men join a union march
To fight for a family's need . . .
Wherever a militant voice cries "peace",
You will find this man's great creed.

Communist, fighter
Lover of life,
Champion of noble aims . . .
A name that will shine
Ever honored
With his Party's greatest names.

When you think of a man
Calm, gentle, steel-strong —
A man who could weld men
To beat back a wrong —
A man whose deeds
Whirls of time
Shall not dim —
This man we'll remember
Forever —
Big Jim.

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Funeral Oration *by L. L. Sharkey*

(General Secretary of Communist Party of Australia)

WE meet on this sad and mournful occasion to pay our respects and tributes to the memory of a truly great son of the working class, a famed leader of our great trade union movement, a model leader of the Communist Party.

He was a man widely respected by people of differing political standpoints from his own—our dear departed friend and comrade, Jim Healy.

Born into a working-class family in Manchester, a great industrial city, at a time when wages were low (his father earned 19/6 a week), Jim learned in childhood and youth of the poverty, hard life and the ceaseless struggle of the working-class to improve its lot.

In his earliest youth, Jim Healy began to participate in this struggle which indeed became his future life's work.

Then came the first World War, and Private James Healy fought in many of the most terrible battles of that conflict in which seas of human blood were shed.

Severely wounded, Jim was discharged from the British Army.

UNEMPLOYED

Back in the industrial army and at a time of wide-spread unemployment, Jim, like his father before him, who migrated from Ireland to industrial Britain, in order to seek employment and in search of at least a minimum of economic security for his family — Jim brought his family to our fair land.

But the working-class struggle was also being waged in Australia and Jim Healy stood shoulder to shoulder with the workers in their economic and political struggles and because of his outstanding talents and abilities, his

wise counsel, honesty of purpose and courageous leadership, he became an outstanding figure in the labor movement of this country, and of the international labor movement.

Came the economic crisis and depression of the thirties and, on the basis of his experiences, he questioned the existing order of things and sought an answer.

He found that in socialism, in a new social order, and so joined the ranks of the Communist Party in 1935, becoming a member of the leading organs, one of its most prominent figures, leading spokesmen and fighters for world peace and socialism.

GRIEVOUS BLOW

It is indeed a grievous blow to our Party that never again will we have the benefit of his wise counsel, his unflinching courage, his cheerful and lovable presence.

I am sure the membership of the Union which he so ably led, his colleagues of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and in the trade union movement generally, and all of those who knew him share similar feelings of loss.

The Waterside Workers without doubt, will long cherish the memory of their late Federal Secretary because in the period of his leadership of their union of almost 25 years, a veritable revolution has taken place in the conditions of labor on the waterfront throughout Australia. This is a monument to his memory.

James Healy, true son of the working-class, no doubt could have had, in the eyes of some, a much different career had he placed personal interests above those of the class to which he belonged, but there was no atom of opportunism in his make-up.

He preferred to struggle for the victory of the labor movement, for the interests of all those who toil, to endeavour to bring about a more just social order and a more equitable distribution of the wealth produced by the labor of the working people.

PIG-IRON STRUGGLE

Jim Healy proved his patriotism in the pre-war struggle of waterfront workers against the export of pig-iron to

Japan, which he foresaw would be used in aggression against our country. History has more than justified this struggle.

Similarly with the ban on war materials to the Dutch colonialists for aggression against the Republic of Indonesia, a near neighbour of our country, an action which has won enduring respect and friendship for our country on the part of the Indonesian people.

Jim Healy likewise was imprisoned for his part in working-class struggles.

Such were examples of his selfless devotion to the cause of the people and the true national interests of his adopted country.

PEACE FIGHTER

Having experienced the horrors of war, Jim was an earnest fighter for peace, a member of the World Peace Council, a protagonist of peaceful co-existence, of disarmament.

Man's time upon this earth is but a brief span. All living things must die.

When our time comes what more honourable epitaph can we have than the respect and love of those with whom we lived and worked, who will say "he was an honest and courageous man, who fought and sacrificed for that which he believed to be right, who strove to make the world a better place than he had found it, who gave a lifetime of service to that which he believed to be right and just. His lifetime of service is his honourable epitaph."

By his family he will always be remembered as a loving husband and father, and on behalf of the Communist Party I extend to them our deep sympathy.

CAUSE TRIUMPHING

By the labor movement whose cause he so truly served he will be ever remembered.

His work will be carried on by new generations whom he educated and trained in the ideals of the labor movement.

The cause for which he died, the emancipation of labor, is growing in strength and is triumphing. The cause of world peace, democracy and socialism to which our dear departed comrade devoted his entire life will inevitably be victorious.

In saluting Jim Healy for the last time—

"It were heartless to deny the sadness cast by death, and the tears that drop into the open grave are tears that sully no courage nor bring to manhood aught of shame."

Farewell, dear comrade and friend, we will be forever true to the grand ideals to which you so selflessly devoted your life. New fighters will arise to carry forward your noble cause.

The Last Important Speech of Jim Healy

Made to the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of
Australia, June, 1961.

There are many problems confronting the working people of our country and the strength of our work in the trade union movement is of utmost and immediate importance. The workers generally are looking for virile leadership in defence of their basic rights and improvements in their living standards and it is our task to see that this leadership is provided for them.

Today we here in Australia are threatened by the growth of monopoly, attacks on wages and conditions, sharp decline in the economic position, increased automation and mechanisation, growing unemployment and reduced total earnings, intensified attacks on trade unions and their members by governments, employers and the Courts, renewed growth and intensification of the anti-communist crusade.

All these add up to a most serious attack upon the Australian workers, their living standards, and their trade union organisation, and it is not surprising that a very large section of the workers has shown a willingness to struggle against these onslaughts, and there can be no doubt that that feeling will grow. The situation is already created by these circumstances in which a very deep and broad unity of the Australian workers can be achieved and this is most essential.

With the growth of monopoly and the concentration and centralisation of capital, we see rising profit levels, increased productivity, speed-up, mechanisation, automation and rationalisation. All this means a strengthening of the class enemy and of the position of capital in its unceasing fight against labor.

Award wages, i.e., basic wage and margins, remain behind rising prices and consequently for the vast majority of workers, constitute less than a living wage.

The Arbitration Commission continues its refusal to restore quarterly basic wage adjustments. In recent months, two State Governments — Queensland and Tasmania — have dropped the method of quarterly adjustments which has been followed in relation to State awards and in Western Australia the State Court now makes its adjustments on the new "Consumer Index" solely because this Index at the present time shows a smaller rise in retail prices than the previously-used "C" Series Index. The result of all this is that today the system of quarterly adjustments of the basic wage, based on the Retail Price Index, used since 1923, applies only to workers covered by State Awards in N.S.W. and employees of the N.S.W. Government who are covered by Federal awards. The demands of the A.C.T.U. in relation to the basic wage and margins remain unsatisfied.

Other substantial manifestations of this formal attack on wages and working conditions include:

- (i) application to increase hours to 42 per week and more firmly freeze award rates.
- (ii) application by the meat monopolists seeking wage reductions and worsened conditions.
- (iii) attempts by employers in the furnishing trade to reduce wages and worsen award conditions.
- (iv) reduction of week-end rates in the Seamen's Award.
- (v) rejection of the miners' claim for a 35 hour week and refusal of the N.S.W. Labor Government to legislate for this.

The state of crisis in the economy and its adverse effects on workers has been well described by Comrade Campbell. However, there is the danger in this situation of a strengthening of reformist illusions and the belief that the election of a Federal Labor government will solve the problems.

Our particular task is to explain the main basic features of the present crisis, showing how this arises from factors inherent in capitalism and while avoiding running foul of the adherence of so many workers to the A.L.P., show them that not reforms but only revolutionary changes in the social order and its economic system will solve workers' problems and thus win large numbers of them to our Party and support for our policies and program.

Unemployment and reduced total earnings are two immediate effects upon workers of the economic decline.

The elimination of jobs by machines is growing at an ever-increasing pace in the industrial countries of the so-called free world. These developments are being used to further swell the profits of monopoly at the expense of the people.

In a recent survey published in the USA, it is shown that, because of automation and highly improved mechanical equipment:

- 160,000 auto workers will never go back to work in Detroit; 25% of office and clerical workers' jobs have been eliminated by electronic equipment in the past five years; 50,000 jobs have disappeared in the radio and television field; in New York alone, 40,000 lift operators have been displaced by automatics over the past 15 years; one million railway jobs have disappeared over the last 20 years; 33,000 telephone operators and 80,000 electrical machinery jobs have disappeared since 1953; in the last 10 years, employment in the brewing, liquor and soft drink trades has been reduced by 25%, and in heavy industry 12 men produce a ton of steel against 20 required previously.

- It is estimated that at least four million jobs will disappear in the United States in the next five years.

Here in Australia the same process operates. On the waterfront 4,500 jobs have disappeared over the last five years, whilst production per man employed has increased by 38%. Within the last ten years, the labor

force in the coal fields has been reduced by 8,000 miners whilst the production of coal has increased by approximately 50%. In other fields, the same process is operating although actual figures are not readily available.

The capitalists continue to complain that labor costs are the prime cost and that they control the prices of commodities supplied to the community, but in those processes where the replacement of manual labor by machine has been most marked, the prices of commodities to the community have not shown any reduction but rather have increased. The last increase of 1d. per lb. in sugar is an outstanding example of this position.

For a number of reasons the full extent of unemployment is not revealed in official figures, while short time working and increased temporary employment are not revealed at all. To further confuse the picture and belittle the extent of unemployment, the Government expresses unemployment as a percentage of what it calls the total work force. This figure of approximately 4.1 million, which includes employers, judges and the armed forces where there is no unemployment, greatly exceeds the number of wage and salary workers in civilian employment who total about 3.2 million. So that the government deliberately inflates the labor force by approximately 1 million. It is from the ranks of the civilian labor force that the unemployment army is developing.

There is some tendency even in sections of the working class movement to water down the effect of unemployment. Already it has passed the 100,000 mark and represents nearly 4% of civilian wage and salary earners, but significant features are:

- (a) unemployment has developed into a regular feature;
- (b) the total available work force tends to grow at a faster rate than the total number of persons in civilian employment, i.e. the number of people available for work is growing at a rate faster than the number of jobs being provided;

- (c) automation and mechanisation displace labor in increasing amounts.

All this raises as a sharp issue the right to work, and under this slogan we must develop the struggle against unemployment, encouraging the workers to resist dismissals and pointing in appropriate manner to the right to work guaranteed in the constitutions of the socialist countries.

We must vigorously demand that where mechanisation displaces labor, the gain made by increased production must be passed on to the people in the form of reduced prices, a shorter working week and increased leisure for recreation. At the same time we must also raise the demands for increased unemployment benefit payments, extension of these to working wives who become unemployed, exclusion from the means test of earnings of all other members of the family, increased payments for dependants, moratorium protection against debt and free medical treatment for recipients of unemployment benefits.

The economic decline has also been accompanied by reduced total earnings. Many married women have been laid off or are working only short time. Overtime earnings, incentive payments and some over award payments have also declined. The net result for workers is reduced total earnings to meet constantly rising living costs with consequent mounting debt and declining living standards. This makes necessary and possible the raising in a sharp way of the demand for a living wage for the ordinary standard hours.

Although absolute impoverishment is not as yet a mass phenomenon, there can be no doubt about the sharpened development of relative impoverishment, the need is to develop the struggle now against this natural tendency of capitalism.

Standing out clearly against this background of mounting wealth for the monopolists and declining standards for the workers, is an obviously growing willingness of workers to struggle. There have been many outstanding examples of this in recent times in respect of increased wages, workers' rights and the right to work.

Our comrades from industry report what is demonstrated by these events as a growing feature. All this emphasises our responsibility to assist in providing leadership to the workers in their struggles, not in the form of adventurous escapades, but in the form of planned action initiated after proper consultation with the workers and directed to support these main demands and as resistance to the attacks on their living standards.

INTENSIFIED ATTACKS ON UNIONS BY GOVERNMENTS

An integral part of the attacks upon workers' living standards is the attack upon their trade union organisations. These attacks have been intensified to beat back the rising wave of mass struggle. We have already said and written much about the penal provisions of various legislation directed at trade unions. Since last Congress, employers have had more frequent recourse to this legislation and in this period we have witnessed an extension of this attack to individual union officials and rank and file union members. So far as penal powers of Arbitration Acts are concerned, there is emerging from their use an indifferent, almost capricious imposition of heavy fines, frequently the maximum possible amount, and, at least in the Commonwealth sphere, the levying of legal costs on a scale greatly exceeding the amount of the fines. This is a deliberate policy pursued by employers and encouraged by the Court.

The Seamen's Union and the WWF have been heavily slugged by these methods in recent times. There are many instances of harsh penalties under this type of legislation but the most recent example — fines imposed

by the N.S.W. Industrial Commission — appears to be outstanding. These fines were imposed on a group of unions for strike actions taken by their members at B.H.P. Steelworks two and seven months' ago. The major action was in defence of victimised shop delegates.

The firm stand of the workers and their defiance of an Order to return to work, made by a single Judge during the course of the strike, compelled some manoeuvrings to get the matter heard by a Bench of three Judges and they in turn were compelled — while the men were still on strike — to order reinstatement by B.H.P. of all but one delegate. They subsequently upheld B.H.P. action in dismissing the other delegate — the main man concerned — thus completing his victimisation and in their judgment set out to ridicule the workers.

This judgment also made clear the lack of legal support for a number of essential and elementary trade union rights, especially concerning meetings on the job and shop stewards and job delegates. Now, in what is already an exercise in vindictiveness, the Commission imposes heavy fines on the unions, especially singling out those unions with a record of militancy.

But for the provocative actions of the steel monopoly, these stoppages would not have occurred. However, no penalty is imposed on the boss and the law does not provide for one. All this occurred under Labor government legislation, which was allegedly amended to provide a legal basis for the right to strike. No such right exists under any legislation in Australia and when comrade Docker recently defended the workers' right to resist injustices by strike action, he was warned that if he repeated such remarks the Judges would withdraw his right to appear for the union which he represents.

The Crimes Act has been extended and the Queensland Arbitration Act has been amended so as to create further legal prohibitions against strike action by workers. But even all this is not sufficient for some purposes of the bourgeoisie. Under the guise of granting long ser-

vice leave to waterside workers, the Menzies Government has instituted penalties against men for the crime of growing old and also a system of direct fines on individual waterside workers for industrial action or falling foul of the boss.

All this provides the basis for and imposes on us the task of developing a much more vigorous campaign in defence of trade union rights and for the repeal of all this penal legislation. At the same time this brings the workers face to face with the ugly nature of the bourgeois state and assists to develop their understanding of the class struggle. This poses for us a major task of the struggle to defend and improve living standards and democratic rights.

In Australia, we have a well-organised and basically strong trade union movement. Unlike most countries of the so-called free world, we have been able to maintain one national trade union centre, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, to which are affiliated unions of widely divergent political views. In addition to this there has been of recent times, strong trade union development in the ranks of white collar and professional workers and, because of economic pressures, there have developed much closer links between these workers and the industrial workers affiliated to the A.C.T.U.

The objects of the A.C.T.U. as set out in its Constitution call for:

"The socialisation of industry, i.e., production, distribution and exchange.

"The utilisation of the resources of Australia for the benefit of the people — ensuring full employment, with rising standards of living, real security and full cultural opportunities for all."

There are then set out the methods whereby those objectives can be attained:

"The closer organisation of the workers by:

- (a) transformation of the Australian trade union movement from the craft to an industrial basis;

- (b) grouping of unions in their respective industries;
- (c) by amalgamation of unions with a view to the establishment of one union in each industry."

Unfortunately, little if anything has yet been done to bring these methods into active operation. Craft unionism still occupies much too large a part of our industrial organisation and although we have been fortunate in maintaining one national trade union centre, we still have in Australia some 369 separate trade unions with approximately two million members. This represents approximately two-thirds of the total workers in the civilian labor force of just over three million. It is fairly obvious that the continuation of this multiplicity of small unions serves to maintain unnecessary divisions that play into the hands of the employers.

It is of the utmost importance that the objects of the A.C.T.U. as set out in its Constitution should be kept before the working class and at every possible opportunity the lesson that the problems of the workers today can only be answered by the replacement of capitalism by socialism should be emphasised.

The need to develop industrial unionism is also of paramount importance; all too often the demands of the working class in this country are stultified and sidetracked by the voice of a number of small unions whose continued existence is, in many instances, solely determined by bureaucratic officials who are more concerned with the retention of their own jobs than with the development of the trade union movement. The forces of reaction have always been able to use these small unions and their representation at conferences for the purpose of defeating the expressed views of the more industrial and better organised trade unions.

The growing attack on living standards and mounting resistance by workers is all too often hindered by the hesitancy and outright resistance to direct action by some reformist leaders. Here I am not referring to the extreme Rightwing leaders who openly oppose the workers' struggles. It occurs at various levels and is clearly discernible

in some of the branches of the A.C.T.U. and on the Executive. There is nothing new or surprising in this; it is traditional. Time will of course expose these reformist leaders to the masses but in the meantime it tends to weaken the development of struggle and for us this is the main and immediate problem.

We must differentiate between the reformist leaders and the reformist-led masses and differentiate between the various strata of the leadership. Our aim should be to encourage the best of these leaders to overcome their hesitancy and as far as possible to join in the promotion, development and leadership of the struggle. This will assist the involvement of larger numbers of workers, strengthen unity and isolate the worst sections of the reformist leaders, thus making their exposure the more certain. Our aim is the development of the broadest possible united front but not at the expense of principle. The guide is the policy of uniting with and struggling against and on this the statement of the 81 Parties is clear.

Today more than ever capitalism fears the onward march of communism. The example set by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries in the extremely short historical period of 44 years makes it crystal clear that desperate measures are needed to protect the vested interests of those who control and direct the existing system of capitalism. "Divide and conquer" has always been one of the main guiding principles of those who control the capitalist system and those who profit from the exploitation of man by man. Today the weapon of division is still very much relied on and therefore the urgent need for workers' solidarity was never so great.

With the means of communication and education in their hands, backed by the forces of the State, the capitalists have been able in most countries to sow suspicion and hate amongst the workers and thereby to maintain sufficient division to enable their continuing control. For over a century, the progressive and militant workers have been labelled "agitators", "subversive trouble makers,"

"paid agents" and "economic saboteurs", etc., and socialism has been pictured as a state in which the freedom of the individual completely disappears.

At the start of this century it was the socialists who were the outcasts, today it is the communists. More and more we see every progressive move labelled as communist in an attempt to create prejudice and hostility as a means of protecting the existing system. Here in Australia this policy has grown apace in the last 10 or 12 years. Although the attempt to make our Party illegal failed, the process of creating hatred against the Party, its leaders, and those who support a progressive program in the interests of the working class is intensified and they are constantly maligned and slandered.

More than ever we need to actively combat this vicious propaganda and to expose its intentions. More than ever it is necessary that the full truth of the success of socialism should be brought home to the workers of Australia and indeed the organisation of the working class in this country is such that we can do it.

We must come to grips with and defeat this anti-communist campaign. But great importance attaches to how we seek to do it. If we proceed to merely pose communism against anti-communism, we will proceed without allies and divide the workers. We must expose the anti-working class, anti-union position of the main leaders of this campaign and their real purpose. We must show the position of the Communists and our Party as consistently supporting the workers' demands and greater unity of our class.

In the course of this, appropriate opportunities will arise enabling us to explain our position on other questions such as peace, anti-colonialism, proletarian internationalism, anti-imperialism and socialism. In this and in all other matters we must proceed, having in mind the imperative need to constantly broaden and strengthen unity.

President Kennedy claims that the communists have a different meaning for the same words. "Free" or "Freedom" is a word much favored by Kennedy. It would be extremely difficult to find any relation between the generally accepted meaning of these words and their application by the capitalists. No freedom of association, or assembly or of travel for those who oppose monopoly capitalism. No visas for trade union officials or fraternal delegates to this Congress.

The decision of the last Trade Union Congress to promote reciprocal visits was of outstanding importance in the field of international trade union relations and world peace. Every possible pressure has been brought to bear to change or negate this decision. Pressure on some Labor Councils and the A.C.T.U. officials has had some effect. This policy dictated by United States imperialism is faithfully carried out by its stooges here. This kind of freedom must be fully exposed to the Australian workers at every opportunity so that more support can be rallied behind the Congress and trade union policy.

Finally, we must ensure the development of our work in the trade unions in a manner which enables the fight for peace to be an integral part of the trade union struggle to defend and improve living standards. The declarations of the Australian trade union movement on peace are of vital importance and every opportunity should be taken to bring them before the notice of the Australian people.

He Was A Good Mate!

By Tom Nelson

I worked with Jim Healy down in the ships' holds. He was a competent wharfie and a good mate. In our partnership of making up cargo into slings and struggling to ease the harsh and inhuman conditions on the waterfront, I learned to appreciate him and recognise his great potential as a working class leader.

The Federation was then in bad shape. Fremantle had broken away. State Rights (Anti Federal leadership) Organisations were being established throughout the Branches because of the dissatisfaction with the leadership of the General Secretary A. Turley.

In this crisis, a group of Sydney members met to find an alternate leader to Turley.

These members selected Jim Healy and thus we went into the 1937 elections with a candidate—a Communist.

The wharfies were more concerned with remedying the Federation's weakness and bad conditions than by the anti-Communist prejudices that were hurled against Healy.

He won by a good majority.

The election of Jim Healy saved the Federation from disintegration. The wharfies had discovered a trade union leader of great ability.

We were delighted at the election of Jim Healy, but we were broke, as most wharfies were in those times. We had no money to despatch our new Federation leader to Melbourne to take up his position.

Fortunately Fred Malcolm produced a precious £5 note.

This was enough for the fare and a little to help sustain Jim during his early weeks in office as the Federation was bankrupt.

At the time of his death, Jim Healy had given almost 24 years of loyal, efficient and valuable service as leader of the W.W.F. There was no busier working class leader than Jim Healy. He worked long hours daily.

It is difficult therefore to particularise on the highlights of such a tremendous career.

But I call to mind one episode during World War II.

Sea transport and cargo movement was in chaos following the fall of Singapore, the diversion of shipping to Australia and the establishment of bases for American and British forces.

I recall that John Curtin, war-time Prime Minister selected Jim Healy as one of the three men to straighten it out.

This answers the vicious slanders that Jim Healy was "un-Australian".

The Curtin Government had great confidence in Healy's honesty and ability and invited him to war Cabinet meetings.

His ability was universally recognised.

The key to his success was his reliance on facts when dealing with a matter. He had the patience to listen to detail. He would then set to work with great confidence and effect.

In this way he investigated the facts of the socialist economy in the U.S.S.R. and decided to join the Communist Party on his return to Australia in 1935.

What was his greatest achievement I am asked?

My own opinion was his great leadership of the 1954 struggle against a big conspiracy to destroy the Federation and its leadership.

The Federal Government had introduced legislation which provocatively attacked the Federation's traditional rights to recruit its union membership. It required a big decision for a union to take on a Federal Government.

"We can't defeat the Government," advised Big Jim, "but we can with our fine unity and good public support make bad legislation inoperative." And so we did.

That was a great victory for the independence of the Federation.

"He was no boss of the waterfront," declared our Sydney Branch President, Jim Young, at Jim Healy's funeral. "His power on the waterfront was wholly and solely based on the great respect and confidence we wharfies had for him."

"His methods of democratic conduct were exemplary."

With this statement I fully concur.

The Sunday Sun, 27th May, 1951, said: "he has a first class brain and his word once given has been accepted by a succession of Ministers who have never had to reproach themselves with being too trusting."

We can say with confidence that Jim Healy was an outstanding international figure commanding great respect . . . and he was incorruptible.

I spent much time travelling with him. It interested me to see those of different politics and positions who sought his company and friendship.

But never did Big Jim cease to be other than a workman in his outlook, and a Communist.