

There are as many ways of applying sabotage as moves in a game of chess. Sometimes small acts of sabotage practised by a large number of workers will make the Boss “come to light.” In some circumstances the act of a single individual would disorganise a whole plant.

Of course, the employers practise sabotage on a large scale, both on workers and on each other. Adulterating foodstuffs, “cornering” commodities; failing to tell a man, applying for a job, what the others are getting in wages so as to start him at less; secretly paying a slogger a little extra in order to get him to speed the others up; “editing,” or cooking up, news items so as to deceive the workers and the public generally; and a thousand and one other ways. The sailor Nelson committed Sabotage when he didn’t see that signal.

Cement hardens too much, or too little, to suit the designs of the man manipulating the materials; paint peels off or changes colour if the mixer is careless; it is unlucky for a tyrannical boss to walk under a ladder; class conscious farm hands, or travelling rebels, would be more careless with matches when on the property of farmers who ride into town to shoot or bludgeon strikers.

Every worker will know best how to practise sabotage in his own industry; he can get further information if required from *Industrial Unionist* and syndicalist papers and literature, but the job is the best place to study. A little theory and practice combined, during working hours, will soon turn intelligent man into an artist.

In conclusion: the Industrialist calls every worker to study the principles of this great movement – its Aim, Form and Tactics. The greater the number of workers who do this, and decide to endorse and adopt those principles, the sooner shall we enter into a social system where there shall be culture, comfort, and free use of all good things for all; a system based upon free access to, through the ownership and control of, all the means of life.

Industrial Unionism

The History of the Industrial Workers of the World in Aotearoa

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Aim, Form, and Tactics of a Workers’ Union on I.W.W. Lines

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Published by Rebel Press
P.O. Box 9263
Te Aro
Te Whanganui a Tara (Wellington)
Aotearoa (New Zealand)
Email: info@rebelpress.org.nz
Web: www.rebelpress.org.nz

ISBN: 978-0-473-12021-4

Printed on 100% recycled paper.
Hand bound with a hatred for the State infused into every page.
Set in 11/15pt Adobe Garamond Pro. Titles in Abadi MT.

Sabotage

Various definitions of sabotage have been given. An American Labour paper defines it as “the destruction of profits to gain a definite, revolutionary, economic end.” Another writer’s definition is “all those tactics, save the boycott and the strike proper, which are used by workers to wring concessions from their employers by inflicting losses on them by the stopping or slowing down of industry, turning out poor product,” etc. A simple definition is the “withdrawal of efficiency in production.” It has also been defined as “hitting the Boss in the pocket book.” A politician’s definition would no doubt be worded so as to create prejudice against its use.

The use of sabotage probably dates back from the time man first used his fellow man in exploitation. Naturally, workers at any period would seek an easy, direct method of checking their masters’ tyranny, and it is not difficult today for workers, in any occupation, to see or devise methods of applying pressure on the job. Railwaymen, suffering under a pin-pricking guerrilla attack by the employers, through their agents, will reply with guerrilla tactics. The rule book says an engine shall haul only so many tons up a given incline; that a shunter must not couple trucks by hand; that each wheel shall be carefully trapped before starting; that every passenger shall be aboard and every door closed before the whistle blows, etc. Contrary to the order of an immediate superior the men obey the higher authority – the rule book, and the system is disorganised. This has been done on a Government system.

Similar tactics have been used, with success, on a tramway system. Textile workers in Lawrence, Mass., U.S.A. reduced the general efficiency of the mills by 12 per cent.: it helped them materially in gaining their point, and the masters admitted 1000 ways cloth could be damaged without detection. The writer heard of a telegraph operator who, in “operating,” had an accident with his machine just at a time when a garbled news item (sabotaged by the Boss) should have gone through. The man, who didn’t want to scab his fellow workers in another district, didn’t get the instrument attended to as quickly as he might; the message related to a strike, and was intended to affect the morale of men on strike in another part of the country.

better conditions by direct action, and lost them again through dabbling in indirect action. American textile workers had to strike to enforce better conditions that had been “legalised” in the State Legislature. Australian workers gained, recently, an extraordinary reduction of hours by a short strike, and even a “Labour” Government dared not act against them. And now Belgium workers have been obliged to strike to attempt to obtain the Franchise!

Radical and revolutionary Labourites who support the Two-Wing Theory – often earnest enough men – will go to great trouble to explain how the workers defeat each other by organised or unconscious scabbery – by carrying scab product to the market, supplying coal, etc., to scabs, printing false reports of strikers, supplying lights to scab labour, carrying strike pickets to jail by boat, and train, and transporting police or military to the strike area, etc.; in fact, distinctly stating that the lack of industrial solidarity allows the policeman’s baton to descend and the strike to be broken; then, with simple sophistry, they will advocate sending our capable men to Parliament to hold back the police, etc.

The I.W.W. is non-Parliamentary. It advocates control of Industry by the workers in the Industries. In short, the I.W.W. aims at true political power by taking economic power out of the capitalists.

Methods

Though individual ability and fitness for any particular function is given free play, and individual initiative and individual action, such as sabotage, etc., are encouraged, the individual is not allowed to become an autocrat; every effort is made to educate the backward ones out of habit of dependence on others.

Holding that the workers are to be the future rulers of Industry, the I.W.W. aims at developing self-reliance in its members. During strikes every effort is made to distribute the actual work of conducting the fight among as many strikers as possible. A duplicate, or “under-study,” strike committee is formed, to act in case the others are jailed, and, though physical violence is usually avoided, the statute law is broken if used in the interests of the masters. When this fails, the workers go back and “operate” on the job.

The Industrial Workers of the World in Aotearoa

Peter Steiner, 2006

Between 1908 and 1913 the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) were a small organisation in New Zealand whose influence was tremendous amongst working people. By means of hundreds of propaganda meetings, thousands of pamphlets and in particular their paper, the Industrial Unionist, the Wobblies (I.W.W. members) spread their revolutionary ideas wide and far. The big strike actions of 1912/13 can be attributed to workers uniting as a class inspired by revolutionary ideas. The transient nature of workers at that time also contributed to Wobbly ideas reaching every corner of the English speaking countries within a few years. However, it also made organising difficult due to the short-lived groups. The history of the I.W.W. challenges traditional historical understandings, as historians tend to argue that, while workers lost in 1913, they were eventually victorious in 1935 with the election of the first Labour Government. This view misrepresents the I.W.W. and the revolutionary ambitions of workers who were committed to syndicalism and whose anti-parlia-

mentarian views brought them closer to anarchism than Marxist state control or social democratic reforms.

The I.W.W. was founded in June 1905 at a conference attended by 200 delegates from unions, anarchist and socialist organisations in Chicago. Among them were several New Zealanders, including New Zealand born William Trautmann who was the founding General-Secretary.¹ The participants' ideologies covered a range of left-wing philosophies and many anarchists took part in the founding convention.² The I.W.W. was formed to be a syndicalist class-struggle organisation whose goal was a socialist society where workers controlled the means of production. They rejected parliamentary politics as a means for change and chose industrial unionism to fight for the revolution. The Wobblies' aim was to organise industrially rather than by trade and to form the 'One Big Union' which covers all workers. A split occurred early on in 1908 when a group of people around Daniel DeLeon argued in favour of a combination of industrial and political action through the Socialist Labor Party. However, the vast majority were in favour of revolutionary syndicalism and maintained their opposition to parliamentary politics. In 1912, the I.W.W. had approximately 50,000 members and membership peaked in 1923 (100,000 members). While the union was able to organise many workplaces, it never managed to get the majority of workers to join.

The most striking thing about the I.W.W. in New Zealand is that it punched above its weight. Although it was only ever a small organisation, it played a significant role in the 1913 strike. The I.W.W. did not emerge out of nowhere in that year: a first branch was established as early as 1908. On 11th January 1908 "a new workers' organisation [was] trying to struggle into healthy existence at Wellington," wrote the Grey River Argus.³ At the beginning of the 20th century workers and their ideas travelled extensively between continents to look for work. I.W.W. supporters would have travelled to New Zealand as early as 1905. There were at least ten people involved with that first Wellington branch. This initial branch did not last long. Only one of the founders appears in the records of the organisation's further history in New Zealand. This is not evidence that they were not involved, simply evidence that they did not leave records behind. The exception was committee member W. Reid. In late 1913

rest of the workers during any strike which may take place before the agreement expires. The I.W.W. holds that any understanding between workers and employers is only an armistice, to be broken, when convenient, by either side. The Employing Class, as a whole, has always recognised and acted up to this. Only the workers have been foolish enough to keep to their side of contracts.

Direct Action and Parliamentarism

The true direct method of gaining political power is to develop economic power, which can only come through direct action and sound industrial organisation. Political or social change follows economic change.

The introduction of a new machine, or of a speeding-up system, which displaces many men, increases the economic power of the master because of an increase of surplus labour on the market. This economic change can be most directly met by decreasing the output – slowing down, etc. – and by shortening the hours of labour through the power of organisation.

The Politician is unwelcome in the Class Organisation of the workers because he is useless, or worse. Leaving out the arguments: that the politician seeks to lift himself to power and personal aggrandisement; that to send working men to Parliament is to remove them from the working class atmosphere into one of corruption; that the vote can only be used once every three years, etc.; the objection to parliamentarism is more fundamental.

Parliament is part of a decaying system, a bourgeois institution, a "committee of the Ruling Class;" and can never be used by workers in the interests of the workers. Every moment spent on the effort to send working men to Parliament is a moment wasted. A vote in the industrial union is a vote to *do* something ourselves; the other is a vote for someone else to try to do something. The direct action of the workers on the field of industry can compel any Capitalist Parliament to act in the interests of the workers, as has been so amply demonstrated during recent years in England, America, Australia, and elsewhere.

English strikers, using their economic power – though the latter was only partly developed – compelled a Premier to come to them, instead of their going to him. English transport strikers, in 1911, compelled the powers that be to ask permission to transport food for army horses, etc. American miners secured

preachers, writers, “moralists,” and politicians, for the purpose of deceiving the workers, the I.W.W. rejects, with contempt, the code of ethics the masters seek to impose upon us, and proposes the use of any tactics which will enable us to win. Alleged advocates of Industrial Unionism who deny this position and repudiate “Revolutionary Tactics” are preaching a spurious Industrial Unionism, and are simply helping the Master Class to impose their ideas on the workers, for, and so far as Industrial Unionism has become definitely doctrinal, Sabotage and all aggressive tactics are a part of it.

Industrial Unionism rejects the principle of time agreements; rejects Arbitration; rejects Parliamentarism, and pushes the politician into the background; it takes up an aggressive attitude towards the employers.

Arbitration and Time Agreements

The introduction of Arbitration to these colonies, and much sophistic talk of its value to the workers, have helped to blind a portion of the Working Class to the fact that the strike, in one form or another, is their chief and natural weapon. Working Class leaders who essay any coquetry with Arbitration are, if they influence any section of the workers, helping to lead the latter into a worse bog than they are in today. The I.W.W. holds that there is nothing to arbitrate about.

Apart from the evil effects of Arbitration on the workers generally – encouraging dependence on something outside themselves, taking the spine out of unionism, creating parasites in the shape of judges, lawyers, clerks, etc., opening the way to trickery on the part of union secretaries and others, in manipulating legal phraseology which the average worker has no time to unravel – arbitration is wrong fundamentally.

No court can regulate the law of supply and demand, or fix the real wages for any period. Arbitration recognises the right of the employer to a share of the product of labour, and the power of a court to decide some conditions in an industry it does not understand. Arbitration fosters division in the ranks of the workers.

Any time agreement which makes a strike a breach is nothing but a promise, on the part of the organisation which is a party to it, to scab on the



Waihi miners march, May 1912. The I.W.W. was particularly vocal in their support of the miners, calling for a general strike in solidarity and advocating a campaign of sabotage.

he wrote for the Industrial Unionist about visiting Tom Barker, the I.W.W. organiser in 1913, in a Wellington jail:

I visited Barker at Wellington jail this morning. He is in good nick, and is in a cell on his own. They brought another charge up against him, and refused bail on this second charge.⁴

The lack of continuity in membership demonstrates how transient workers were in their search for better pay and work in general.

An I.W.W. Recruiting Club was formed in Christchurch at the end of 1910 after anarchists were expelled from the Socialist Party.⁵ This group quickly merged with another to become the Local Recruiting Union in early 1911. Syd Kingsford, who in 1913 was the Christchurch contributor to the Industrial Unionist, was involved with this group and so was Wyatt E. Jones, an anarchist watchmaker.⁶ It is unclear how long this branch was active though it was probably only active for a few months. A branch was re-formed in Christchurch in August 1913 calling itself Local 2.⁷ 14 people turned up to the first meeting. Meetings were also held in September of that year with Tom Barker, who was arrested during his visit in Christchurch, and local activist Kingsford.⁸ “Local

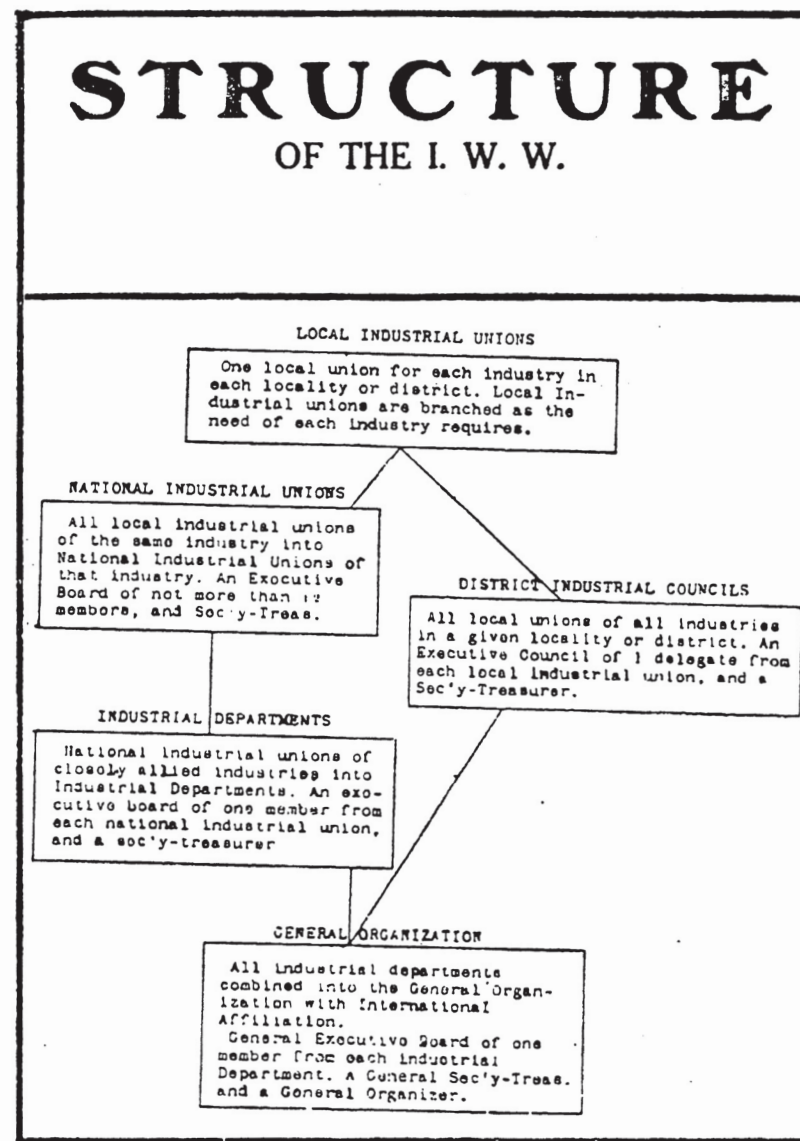


Tom Barker, accused of making "one of the most dangerous speeches in the history of the industrial trouble."

2, though small, is active," reported Kingsford in the Industrial Unionist in early November 1913.⁹ They were printing 4,000 copies of the I.W.W. preamble and sold four dozen papers at the SDP meeting and, therefore, would have spread their syndicalist ideas to many workplaces in Christchurch.

The only other branch ever established was the Auckland local, although there were preparations for groups on the West Coast and in Wellington in the Spring of 1913. The Auckland group was by far the biggest and most active. In November 1911 a group of strike experienced Canadian syndicalists arrived in Auckland.¹⁰ Among these revolu-

tionaries were John Benjamin King, A. Holdsworth and C. Blackburn. An I.W.W. club was formed in April 1912. In August Charles T. Reeve became secretary of the group. Other members at that stage included Frank Hanlon and W. Murdoch. King was involved in Waihi during the big industrial dispute there in 1912. He ran an economics class which was attended by 30 other workers. Many Wobblies went to Waihi as supporters and also visited jailed workers in Auckland. King left for Australia in August after questions were raised in parliament over his campaign for sabotage during the Waihi strike. He spread his ideas very far among unionists and workers in New Zealand through his active involvement in the 'Auckland General Labourers' Union' and his participation at the third conference of the Federation of Labour where he put a motion forward in favour of a general strike in support of the Waihi strike which failed (93 to 48 votes).¹¹ However, the Federation was re-modelled along the lines of the



eration of craft unions has often proved but another form of organised scabbery. The American Federation of Labour is a glaring example. The English workers have had their fill of federation scabbery; and the latter is by no means unknown in these colonies. Craft unions, with their existing officials and expenses, are drafted in, with the result that many groups of workers, who, were they not federated, might strike to assist their fellows, but are held back by officials who have something to lose by a general strike.

“Craft autonomy” is barred by Industrial Unionism. Plumbers, brick layers, carpenters, painters, labourers, etc., deal with the employers through an *industrial* committee composed of delegates representing each of these technical branches or divisions. This applies, of course, to all industries.

With a constitution that will throw the control of the organisation into the hands of the membership, and yet systematise, and, as far as is necessary, to promote solidarity, centralise administration without centralising power in the hands of a few individuals; with the revolutionary objective and the militant spirit dominating every action; it only remains for us to advocate and adopt the right tactics.

3. Tactics

Ethics

We have seen, in the foregoing sections, that Industrial Unionism, unlike the old Craft Unionism, is based upon the recognition of the Class War. War suggests tactics, and “tactics” is an important phase of Industrial Unionism.

Approaching the question from this viewpoint it will be easy to understand I.W.W. ethics. When war is on, the opposing parties do not trouble with nice ethics; each side wants to win, and, in order to do so, each will inflict the greatest possible amount of injury and loss upon the other, with the least possible amount of loss and injury to themselves. Neither side is concerned about the question of “Right” and “Wrong.” That is exactly the position of the I.W.W.

Knowing that the Ruling Class of today, as in all past historical epochs, have one set of “morals” for themselves and another set for the subject class – the workers; that they, the Employing Class, maintain an army of teachers,

I.W.W. accepting its syndicalist preamble and intending to form eight industrial departments, Local Unions and Industrial Councils.¹²

In late 1912, disillusioned with the Federation after the Waihi strike was lost, many revolutionaries turned away from the Socialist Party. The I.W.W. decided to launch its own paper to promote industrial unionism. By that stage there was only the Auckland branch left and on 1st February 1913 publication of the *Industrial Unionist* began, a time-consuming project. At the same time they held dozens of propaganda meetings. In May “the I.W.W. is holding four and five large meetings weekly in this district. Wednesday nights are reserved for a meeting at Wellesley Street corner. [...] The I.W.W. is in N.Z. to stay. We hope soon to have an organiser out, and to have locals in other centres.”¹³ Tram driver Tom Barker, who only the year before was the leader of the Auckland Socialist Party branch, resigned in May 1912 and joined the I.W.W. instead and was its secretary and organiser by June 1913.

The dedication to spread IWW ideas is demonstrated by the fact that the Wobblies held over 100 outdoor meetings in the first half of 1913 in Auckland.¹⁴ By August they had moved their office to a larger location.¹⁵ In the same month Barker left Auckland for a tour around the country to get more local groups off the ground and Local 2 was reformed in Christchurch. Barker held meetings in towns on the West Coast, and about his time Wellington he wrote he “had 11 propaganda meetings in 14 days. Which isn’t bad for Windy Wellington.”¹⁶ No further groups were established but hundreds of workers came in contact with Barker and other militants at propaganda meetings. There is no doubt that further groups would have been established. However, the Great Strike started and class warfare had come to the streets of New Zealand. The strike lasted for several weeks from late October until the end of November (with some workers striking until the New Year) and the government sent hundreds off ‘special’ constables to the cities to crush the strike.

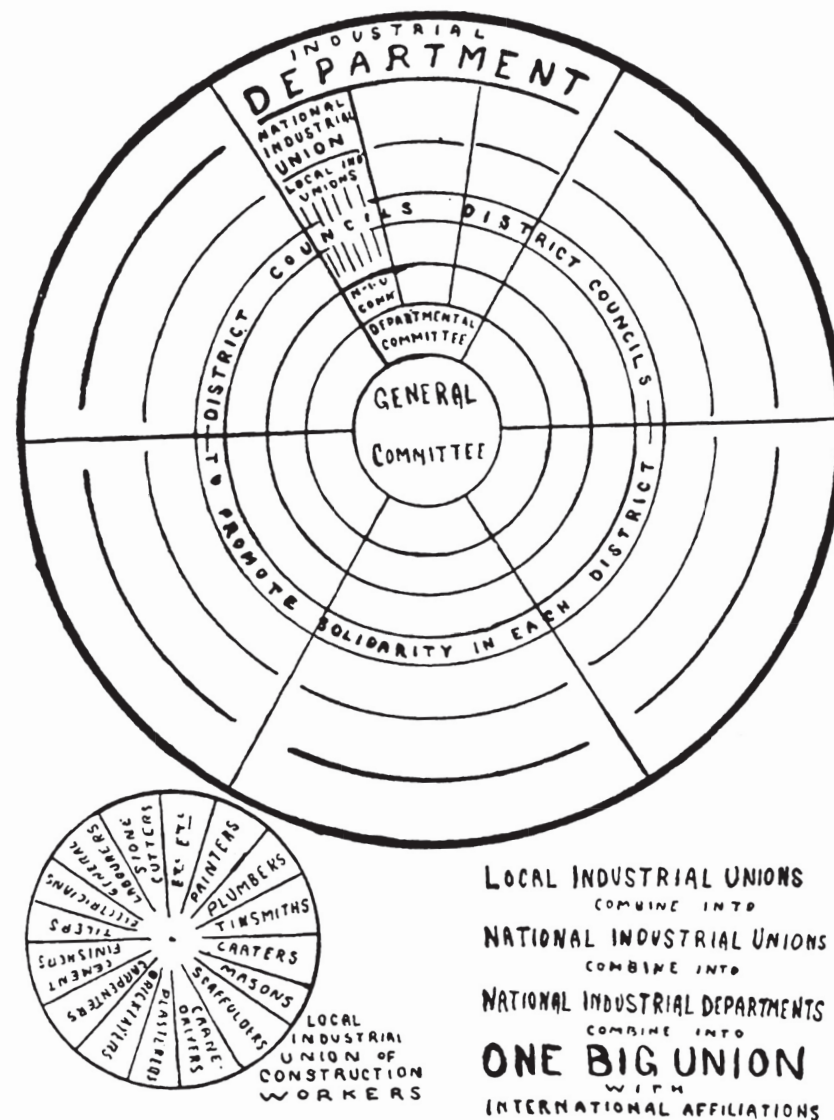
When Barker was arrested for sedition on 11th November on Queen Street during the strike, he had just finished selling 700 copies of the *Industrial Unionist*.¹⁷ With the police too preoccupied with crushing the strike, he had to make his own way to Wellington for court. In Wellington, he delivered speeches to 1000s of workers in Post Office Square but on 5th December was convicted and

sentenced to 3 months in jail. Crown Prosecutor Ostler said Barker's was "one of the most dangerous speeches made in the history of the industrial trouble and probably in New Zealand."¹⁸ Tom Barker was the most prominent member of the I.W.W. during the strike, and played an important role.

Although the public speaking work of the I.W.W. was important, the most central means of communication for political activists were newspapers and pamphlets. Members of the I.W.W. submitted articles to the paper of the Federation of Labour, the *Maoriland Worker*. This weekly publication, established in 1910, reached a circulation of 10,000 by 1913.¹⁹ Tom Barker and Frank Hanlon, who wrote articles on the Waihi strike, disliked the paper as it was full of advertisements and not supportive of industrial unionism. They wanted a paper of their own which was dedicated to syndicalist revolution and not "sporting and society sections".²⁰

In late 1912 the Auckland I.W.W. group started to raise funds for their own paper and on Saturday, 1st February 1913, the first issue of *Industrial Unionist* came off the press. Until October of that year the paper was published monthly. With the start of the strike actions in late October the paper was published almost every 3 days keeping its four page format. Circulation reached 4,000 which was an enormous achievement for a small organisation with limited funds and radical ideas. The main drivers behind the publication were the editors and keenest writers: Frank Hanlon and A. Holdsworth. These two also published their own pamphlets in 1913. 3,000 copies of Holdsworth's "Chunks of I.W.W.ism" and 1,000 copies of "Industrial Unionism" by Hanlon were sold. Other regular contributors were Tom Barker (aka 'Spanwire'), Syd Kingsford, W. Murdoch, Charles T. Reeve, Harry Melrose and Percival Bartle Short.

The *Maoriland Worker* did not, despite its name, have much to do with tangata whenua nor did they see Maori people as being oppressed by colonialist capitalism. The I.W.W. had a different approach. While there is no doubt that the organisation was made up of white men they did make an effort to reach out to Maori people. The first article in te reo Maori appeared in July 1913 titled "Ki nga Kaimahi Maori".²¹ A total of seven articles were published in the *Industrial Unionist* in Maori. Short, a painter from Johnsonville was the author



vision applies more particularly to cases where large numbers of workers are gathering together under one management.

The following diagram, borrowed from a pamphlet by Vincent St. John, and altered only in one slight detail, will serve to illustrate the method of grouping; and the circular charts, based on the I.W.W. constitution, will help to show how the whole power of the organisation, whenever a strike or lockout is on, would be brought into play, “thus making an injury to one an injury to all.”

The large circle is an outline, with one department lined in, and containing within itself three National Industrial Unions, bound together by a Departmental Convention and a Departmental Committee, and to the General Organisation by the General Convention and General Committee. The straight line subdivisions, within the National Industrial Union, represent Local Industrial Unions. The District Councils are shown welding the locals together in each district. The other departmental sections are left blank to simplify the chart. The smaller circle helps to show the make-up of a Local Industrial Union, the Building Industry being a good example.

A Local Industrial Union would manage its own affairs, elect its own officers, and send delegates to the annual or semi-annual convention of the National Industrial Union of which it would be a part; it would also have delegates on the District Council. The officers of a National Industrial Union would be elected by the membership of that Union; of a Department by the membership of that Department; of the General Organisation by the whole membership. International delegates would also be elected by the whole membership.

Mixed Locals (recruiting branches) will play an important part in carrying the message of Industrial Unionism into the centres of industry. Educational meetings are held in and out of doors; economic classes are conducted; speakers are trained, and literature sold and distributed. Some mixed locals run newspapers.

Individual Members. Wage workers in districts where no union of their industry exists, may attach themselves to the organisation.

Federation is not *Industrial Unionism*. All efforts that have been made to federate existing craft unions are not to be regretted; they were, at the time made, efforts prompted by the right feeling. But we must not stand still. A fed-

of these articles.²² He joined the Auckland I.W.W. in 1913 and was one of the committee members for the paper.

The end of the I.W.W. in New Zealand occurred at the same time as the end of the 1913 strike. There is no evidence of the I.W.W. continuing to operate after the last *Industrial Unionist* was published on 29th of November 1913. That last issue declared that the strike was going strong and workers were holding out.²³ A few days later the strike was lost and workers went back to work. After the strikers were defeated most active Wobblies left the country abruptly. Barker was convicted of sedition in the Wellington Supreme Court and sat in jail for several months before going to Australia. The Auckland group lost around 15 good members, including the ex-assistant editor and the ex-manager of the *Industrial Unionist* in October who all went overseas.²⁴ It was the lost strike and the subsequent state repression that made many Wobblies leave New Zealand. There was nothing to hold its transient members in the country anymore. With some activists in jail and others already in Australia the organisation, along with its paper, folded.

Frank Prebble writes that somebody told him “that there was an I.W.W. group active during the 51 Lockout.”²⁵ In the late 90s the I.W.W. was back in Dunedin. In 1999 two people set up a branch. The members supported the Waterfront Workers’ Union at Port Chalmers and Bluff in 2000/01 where they criticised union official Les Wells. In issue 20 of the anarchist publication ‘Thrall’ the Dunedin branch declared that “by May 1 2002 we’d like to see General Membership Branches (GMBs) and Industrial Union Branches (IUBs) functioning outside of Dunedin and to have a Regional Organising Committee for Aotearoa.”²⁶ This goal was not achieved and the Dunedin branch remained the sole group. It had around a dozen members, mainly anarchists. They published a pamphlet called “How to fire your boss.” By 2003, the group did not exist anymore. In 2004 the ‘Autonomous Workers Union’ was set up again in Dunedin by former members of the I.W.W. and others too. The AWU is a morphed but watered down version of the Dunedin I.W.W. Today, this syndicalist union has around 60 members in Dunedin. The workers of Arc Café have a collective agreement and workers at three Subways have joined the AWU.

In exploring the history and effect of the I.W.W. it is important to examine their politics. Historians have tended to put them into the general left-wing/socialist category as part of the so called 'left-wing interpretation of history.'²⁷ The I.W.W., like every other group in the 1913 strike, is shown as having its ultimate victory in the Labour government of 1935.²⁸ This misrepresents the politics and goals of the I.W.W., and down-plays the radicalism of the 1913 struggle.

Generally the I.W.W. can be described as a syndicalist organisation. Their politics were revolutionary, socialist and anti-parliamentary and their influences drew from Marxism as well as anarchism. This was controversial within the organisation; in August 1913 the I.W.W. distanced itself from anarchism describing anarchists as idealists and industrial workers as materialists. "Anarchists dislike the term 'Democracy'; the I.W.W. stands for Industrial Democracy. Some anarchists talk of reforming Society from the top, down; the I.W.W. says from the bottom, up."²⁹ Although the same article acknowledged that "I.W.'s have some ideas in common with the anarchists."³⁰

I would argue that some wobbly activists' ideas were actually very close to anarcho-syndicalism. Barker referred to Philip Josephs, a co-founder of the anarchist Freedom Group in Wellington³¹ in July 1913, as "our anarchist friend and comrade" who helped him organise his meetings.³² A three part series by E.J.B. Allen in the Industrial Unionist focussed on syndicalism in France.³³ He described the history of the First International and wrote that the split was "caused by the authoritarianism of Marx and Engels, and the disputes over the politics between Marx and Bakounine."³⁴ Bakunin was involved with the Jura Federation which was made up entirely of Anarchists. Allen refers to them as "Direct Actionists."³⁵ 'Direct Actionists' is also the term Barker uses to describe the I.W.W. in Aotearoa.³⁶ There were discussions among Wobblies on the issue of de-centralisation and "a growing section [was] in favour."³⁷ The consensus was that political ambitions were not necessary because it was powerful industrial organisations that could overthrow capitalism and at the same time form "the structure of the new society."³⁸ Harry Melrose, a worker from Waihi and regular contributor to the Industrial Unionist, finished off an article titled "Law and Order" with "Liberty for all! To Hell with Law and Authority."³⁹

An organisation which is to embrace all the industrial workers must not consist of an unwieldy mass. Industry, as carried on today, is divided into several main departments;

- Agricultural, fisheries and water products;
- Mining;
- Transportation and communication;
- Manufacturing and general production;
- Construction;
- Public service.

Each of these is again subdivided into special industries, or branches of production-as-a-whole. All are interrelated; each is dependant on the rest. It is on these lines that the I.W.W. proposes to organise.

Industrial Unionism, then, in so far as the term implies form only, means the grouping of the workers according to the industry they work in. By this method all the workers in the Building Industry, for example, would meet in one union, instead of a score or more of separate unions, such as painters,' plumbers,' scaffolders,' electricians,' structural iron workers,' etc.

The workers will group themselves into an organisation corresponding to the way Capital groups them in the carrying on of the everyday business of production. In doing this they will be "forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old." Industrial Unionism will thus be seen to be highly constructive.

One Big Union on I.W.W. lines will consist of:

Industrial Departments composed of

National Industrial Unions branched into

Local Industrial Unions made up of all actual wage workers in one industry in one district, and

District Councils composed of delegates from and for the purpose of binding together all workers of all industries in a given district.

Shop Branches of an industrial union, may be formed to enable all the workers in a particular shop, or plant to gain control over conditions directly affecting themselves. A district tramway system, a branch railway, a manufacturing establishment, a warehouse, etc. would be defined as a "shop". This pro-

The struggle between the workers and their masters is first local and national, but tends always to become international. Industrial Unionism aims at nothing less than the organisation of the workers, nationally and internationally, on class lines, for the complete ending of the Capitalist system of production for profit, and the substitution of a system of production for use.

The I.W.W. aims at this organisation of the workers, first into international industrial unions, later to be linked up and become integral parts of an international union. Its openly-declared purpose is to carry on the fight right in the industries; it advocates the strike and all other direct methods, including sabotage, etc., until all the machinery of production – that is, the earth and everything on it – shall have been wrested from the Employing Class.

2. Form

An outline of One Big Union for the workers of Australia, on similar lines to those developing in other countries, requires our immediate attention. It is of little avail to sing out “One Big Union” or “Organise Industrially” without projecting some fairly definite skeleton framework around which the units of the future organisation may cluster.

On the other hand, it would be folly to attempt to be precise about details, for Industrial Unionism is evolutionary, and adapts itself to every development in capitalistic production. As we gain experience we shall no doubt find it necessary to readjust our machinery from time to time.

The I.W.W. holds, however, that it is necessary to have the best possible form of organisation in order “to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown” – as well as to combat effectively the organisation of the Employing Class.

Apart from the increased efficiency, in conducting struggles, which is developed by the industrial form of organisation, it has a valuable psychological effect. By being thrown together into one union the members will get the habit of thinking and acting together, and the idea of separateness of interests, which is fostered by craft unionism, will be dissipated.

In conclusion, the organising of the Industrial Workers of the World contributed to the industrial actions of 1912/13 and raised the class consciousness of workers in New Zealand (and the world). We need to refrain from promulgating that the 1935 Labour Government was a direct continuation of the revolutionary period immediately before the First World War. In New Zealand, many workers were in favour of industrial unionism influenced by the I.W.W. propaganda. The combination of anti-parliamentary and socialist politics of many I.W.W. supporters brought them closer to anarchist thinking rather than Marx's ideas of proletarian dictatorship through a political party.

Footnotes

- ¹ Mark Derby, 'The case of William E. Trautmann and the role of the 'Wobblies'', in Melanie Nolan (ed.), *Revolution: The 1913 New Zealand Great Strike*, Christchurch, 2005.
- ² Salvatore Salerno, *Red November Black November – Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World*, New York, 1989, pp. 69-90.
- ³ Grey River Argus, 20th January 1908, p. 2.
- ⁴ Industrial Unionist, No. 20, 29th November 1913, p. 1.
- ⁵ Herbert Roth, Unpublished notes on the Industrial Workers of the World, p. 1.
- ⁶ Prebble, Frank, 'Troublemakers': Anarchism and Syndicalism. The early years of the Libertarian movement in Aotearoa, Libertarian Press. Available on <http://www.takver.com/history/nz/tm/index.htm> (last accessed 16th August 2006), p. 17.
- ⁷ Industrial Unionist, No. 9, 1st October 1913, p. 1.
- ⁸ Industrial Unionist, No. 9, 1st October 1913, p. 1.
- ⁹ Industrial Unionist, No. 10, 1st November 1913, p. 4.
- ¹⁰ Olssen, Erik, *The Red Feds: Revolutionary industrial unionism and the New Zealand Federation of Labour 1908-1914*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1988, p. 128.
- ¹¹ Olssen, pp. 145-6.
- ¹² Olssen, p. 144.
- ¹³ Industrial Unionist, No. 4, 1st May 1913, p. 4.
- ¹⁴ Industrial Unionist, No. 7, 1st August 1913, p. 4.
- ¹⁵ Industrial Unionist, No. 7, 1st August 1913, p. 4.
- ¹⁶ Industrial Unionist, No. 9, 1st October 1913, p. 4.
- ¹⁷ Tom Barker to Herbert Roth 28th October 1952, Alexander Turnbull Library.
- ¹⁸ Herbert Roth, 'New Zealand Wobblies', in *Here and Now*, March 1952, pp. 6-7.
- ¹⁹ Olssen p. 43.
- ²⁰ Industrial Unionist, No. 2, 1st March 1913, p. 2.
- ²¹ Industrial Unionist, No. 6, 1st July 1913, p. 4.
- ²² Tom Barker in a letter to Herbert Roth, 28th October 1952.
- ²³ Industrial Unionist, No. 20, 29th November 1913, p. 1.
- ²⁴ Industrial Unionist, No. 10, 1st November 1913, p. 4.
- ²⁵ Prebble, p. 1.
- ²⁶ The Industrial Workers of the World in Aotearoa, Thrall No. 20, July/August 2001. Available on <http://www.ainfos.ca/01/nov/ainfos00426.html> (last accessed 16th November 2006).
- ²⁷ Olssen, p. 217.
- ²⁸ Chris Trotter, 'New Zealand Class Collision – 1913, 1951, 1991: It takes to wings to fly', in *Unity*, June 2006, p. 62.
- ²⁹ Industrial Unionist, No. 7, 1st August 1913, p. 2.
- ³⁰ Industrial Unionist, No. 7, 1st August 1913, p. 2.
- ³¹ Prebble, pp. 17-18.
- ³² Industrial Unionist, No. 9, 1st October 1913, p. 4.
- ³³ Industrial Unionist, No. 4-6, 1913.
- ³⁴ Industrial Unionist, No. 4, 1st May 1913, p. 3.
- ³⁵ Industrial Unionist, No. 4, 1st May 1913, p. 3.
- ³⁶ Industrial Unionist, No. 8, 1st September 1913, p. 2.
- ³⁷ Industrial Unionist, No. 8, 1st September 1913, p. 2.
- ³⁸ Industrial Workers of the World, Preamble in a membership booklet in the author's possession, 1980.
- ³⁹ Industrial Unionist, No. 17, 18th November 1913, p. 3.

tyranny and class-rule will cease to be, and the defeated and dispossessed master class will become merged into the rest of Society. This will be accomplished by an organised working class.

"It is the historic mission of the Working Class to do away with Capitalism; the army of production must be organised ... by organising industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old." Becoming more and more conscious of this mission, the workers of the world are organising more closely, more on class lines, each year.

Realising that we, the workers, who carry on the industries and are the foundation of Society, are exploited and used by our economic masters; that the luxuries and refinements of life, which our labour makes possible, are almost monopolised by an idle few; that the avenues of escape from a life of perpetual drudgery become fewer and fewer, we naturally turn to our labour organisations as a means towards social betterment. But we find that the unionism handed down by our fathers is now ineffective, obsolete; that it has no ideal beyond "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay." In the meantime we go on being robbed.

From this we turn to politics, or rather, we are led to politics by self-seeking leaders and scheming politicians, only to discover that we are following a will-o'-the-wisp, an illusion, a mere reflection; but, as we progress, the truth dawns on us that all social relations, or institutions, or political parties, are but a reflex of the economic system that prevails; that only a militant united working class, organised on sound lines, at the point of production, and carrying the fight on *in the industries*, can bring about emancipation from wage-slavery.

New countries develop more quickly than old ones; the younger the country the more rapid its industrial evolution; Australia, though less than a century old, is quickly coming into line. Colonisation means bringing industrial methods, and legal and social institutions, ready-made into the new country.

An electric tram, a wonderful machine, a wireless telegraph, which have taken a thousand years of thought and experience to evolve, are introduced as soon as they are invented; these and other factors quicken national development. Already the trust is here, and there is no reason to doubt that the iron rule of Capitalism will bring greater oppression. Up-to-date unionism alone can meet these conditions.

mammoth concern, operated by thousands of industrial slaves, and supervised by other, but better-paid, slaves; the slow sailing ship, a stately vessel of 600 tons, has given place to the swift, giant liner; large masses of workers have been grouped together in single industrial plants and the globe has been, virtually, reduced to one-eighth its former size.

England, becoming the workshop of the world, played a leading part in this development of the world's industries; but she could not be a workshop without a world to execute for. The process of developing the world's markets meant carrying Capitalism to countries previously uncivilised; Capitalism had to be international, and now America is a greater workshop than England, and other rivals are in the field.

The extent to which Capitalism stretches its tentacles round the globe is illustrated by the fact that steel rails have been imported from China to America, the land of steel rails. No one country is independent of the rest under such a commercial system; all are bound together historically and economically; nothing short of complete disappearance into the sea can prevent Australia being drawn into the coming international revolution.

Along with this evolution of the international Capitalist Class another great class has developed – the *Proletariat*, or Working Class. Competition, the basis of the present system, is being eliminated; the small employer class is being crushed out, annihilated; the machine, and a more scientific division of labour, are robbing the artisan of his skill and his notions about “aristocracy of labour;” the middle class idea of legislating the trust out of existence is being rudely shattered, and the “unskilled” worker is learning how important he is and the power he can wield. These factors are ranging Society into two great distinctly opposite classes; the class-line is becoming clearer; a struggle is on.

“The history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggles;” certain changes in the economic foundation of Society, in a given epoch, alter the relation of a subject class to a dominant class; the subject class struggles, gains power and by a revolution becomes dominant. But the ending of the present class struggle means the end of social classes; when the Proletariat rises to power, conquers the ruling class and takes possession of the means of production, which were created by, and rightfully belong to, the Working Class,

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Industrial Unionism:

Aim, Form, and Tactics of a Workers' Union on I.W.W. Lines

Frank Hanlon, Auckland, c. 1913

The following is intended as a general outline only, of the principles of Industrial Unionism. The writer is indebted to St. John, Trautman and others. Further information, and other pamphlets, can be had on application to any branch of the I.W.W.

1. Aim

So much has been said about the superior conditions supposed to exist for the workers of the Australasian Colonies, that we find some working men repeating such phrases as "the workers paradise," etc.; yet the truth is, that conditions are much the same here, for the worker, as in most other countries.

The same situation of exploitation, of production for profit; the same unjust division of the fruits of labour, the same class-division, and the same tendencies to centralise capital and oppress the workers, exist here as elsewhere.

Revolutionary Industrial Unionism is therefore needed to uphold the interests of the Australian workers.

The present system of production – Capitalism – is international, and is the outcome of a long process of economic evolution. The ownership, by the present dominant class, of the industries of the world – the land, mines, means of transport, workshops, etc., in short, of the means of life – originated in the Old World in the middle ages.

While the preceding system, Feudalism, still lived, certain developments in the industries then existing generated the Burgher class, now known as the *Bourgeoisie*, or Capitalist class. That class expanded and increased its power with the development of the industries, until an economic revolution, reflected and consummated by social revolution, took place.

The erstwhile dominant Feudal class, defeated and decaying, was pushed to the rear, and the triumphant Capitalist class was free to develop. The implements of production, much smaller then than now, were possessed by small manufactures, etc., small individual employers, and not, as now, by combinations. Free competition held sway, and everyone, at least everyone among the "fit," had some chance to become a possessor; to rise to comparative comfort and social standing.

Even then, however, a large proportion of the workers were doomed to remain mere wage-serfs, and as the centralisation of industry has gone on, as the total amount of wealth in existence has increased, it has become more and more difficult for the worker, the producer of wealth, to secure provision against destitution, let alone climb to a position of comparative ease and security.

The development of existing industries, opening up of new ones, expanding of the markets, introduction of more and more machinery, and development of ocean and land transit and communication, have placed Capitalism on a thoroughly international basis. Capital is international, the employing class is international, the interests of the working class are international.

In about a century, the small, slow printing press has evolved into a huge, complicated machine, turning out matter at an incredible speed; the stage-coach has changed into a rapid moving train; the small workshops employing a hundred men, with the owners in personal charge, have been replaced by the