TOM BARKER AND THE I.W.W.

Recorded, edited and with an introduction

by

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Frontispiece - Tom Barker, 1965.

PREFACE

This is Tom Barker's story, essentially as he told it to me. In converting it from spoken to written form I have made some re-arrangements, summarised portions and reluctantly omitted parts which journey too far from Australia and New Zealand. For the editing I have been able to use Tom Barker's articles, manuscripts and papers which he made available to me. So this narrative is Tom Barker's, and most of it is in his spoken words.

Dr. R.A. Gollan of the Australian National University first drew my attention to Tom Barker. Dr. I.A.H. Turner of Monash University provided material from his thesis on Industrial Labor and Politics which helped me formulate questions about the Industrial Workers of the World.

- E.C. FRY.

INTRODUCTION

Tom Barker was seventy six when I met him. That was in London, in 1963, in his cramped rooms in Kentish Town, on a grey autumn day when the mist softened the rows of old apartment houses. He lived in one of these, indistinguishable from thousands: a heavy door, a dim entrance with linoleum on the floor, shabby Victorian fittings, the smell of cooking, a common staircase to his landing, a couple of rooms there. Here he and his Polish born wife, who had been a ballet dancer, had made a home which was crowded with memories and busy with activities.

He was a slim man, slightly built, his movements quick and his mind alert. He brushed age aside, for his life was too busy to bother with it. He was absorbed in his work as a Councillor of St. Pancras Borough, where he had been Mayor a few years previously. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to these unpaid duties. Housing, hospitals, schools, playgrounds, anything to do with the welfare of the people of his district had his attention, both in detail and as a contribution towards national needs. He still found time for many other interests, especially in music and drama and in the company of young people whose freshness and enthusiasm he shared. He corresponded with friends in every continent and read the books and journals which they sent him in many languages. His life was full.

Age had marked him benignly. He was immediately recognisable from his photograph as a youth, in the uniform of the 8th. Hussars. It showed his sensitive features, inquiring eyes and the quiet determination of an intelligent, well-mannered, but independent, lad. Now his restless hands shook a little. His white hair was thinning. The lines of his puckish face gathered to the corners of his eyes as he quizzically reviewed the past. His brow wrinkled when he searched his memory for a name. Yet he told his story as vigorously as he had lived it.

With the wisdom of age he appraised his experiences calmly, without malice towards his jailers and persecutors, nor towards those who prospered in the labour movement by choosing easier paths. The former he saw as less free than he, as prisoners of their circumstances. For the latter he had some contempt, tempered by the understanding of a responsible man who knows how affairs are run and how slow changes can be. He looked back on a human comedy, not a life of tragedy, despite the passion, struggle and self sacrifice. The humour of it all constantly showed in his smile, chuckle and joyous laughter. He told his story without bitterness or recriminations. He had instinctively and systematically rejected every shibboleth of society, sustained by idealism and by the gay disdain of a fighter who knows he was born to fight, no matter what the odds against him. He had seen some of his hopes achieved and others disappointed. This he accepted.

Fifty years before Tom Barker had been a leader of the Industrial Workers of the World in New Zealand and Australia. In 1909 he arrived in New Zealand as a young English migrant. Soon he was Secretary of the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Socialist Party and then an organiser for the I.W.W. in dramatic industrial struggles. When he was forced to leave New Zealand, early in 1914, he moved to Sydney. Here he quickly became the driving force in the Australian I.W.W. as editor, organiser and spokesman. In the crucial years of 1916 and 1917 the I.W.W. in Australia attained its greatest influence under Tom Barker's inspiration. Jail sentences for his activities culminated in his deportation to South America in 1918. He was little more than thirty when all this lay behind him.

From South America, where he organised trade unions, he went to Europe and the Soviet Union as an international labour leader. For five years in the 1920's he

was responsible for the major work of recruiting American technicians to assist Soviet industrial development. Later he travelled to many parts of the world before settling in London.

Tom Barker's story is a drama of people. It is full of memories of the men he knew and worked with, some great and powerful then or later, but no higher in his esteem for that reason than scores of humble comrades. Although it is a personal account it is entirely without vanity. He told what happened around him, never saying or believing that it happened solely because of him. His philosophy of society and of changes in it looked for deeper causes than single persons. He saw himself and his companions as expressing and developing certain social forces and thereby influencing events.

This outlook, as much as the lapse of time, enabled him to speak objectively about himself and tolerantly about his opponents. All his youthful experiences had led him to the I.W.W. He gave himself to that movement and never regretted doing so. Yet he recognised that the I.W.W. was only a stage in working class thought and action. He moved on from it when its part was played, for he never lived in the past. He retained an abiding conviction that the working class must rely fundamentally on the strength of its industrial organisations to defend and advance its interests.

Back in his beloved St. Pancras Tom Barker's picture as a former Lord Mayor hung with the others in the Town Hall, the only Mayor who declined to wear the robes of office. He spoke proudly of the two freemen of the borough whom St. Pancras had honoured, George Bernard Shaw and Krishna Menon, both former Councillors. Here he would continue to work for his people. He had no regrets for a hard life which had left him poor. He had laboured for the betterment of mankind. He had sought nothing for himself.

AN I.W.W. SONG

BUMP ME INTO PARLIAMENT

(Air: 'Yankee Doodle')

Come listen, all kind friends of mine,
I want to move a motion,
To make an El Dorado here
I've got a bonzer notion.

Chorus:
Bump me into Parliament,
Bounce me any way,
Bang me into Parliament,
On next election day.

Some wealthy friends I know
Declare I am most clever,
While some may talk for an hour or so
Why, I can talk for ever.

(Australian version)
I know the Arbitration Act
As a sailor knows his riggin's,
So if you want a small advance,
I'll talk to Justice Higgins.

(N.Z. version)
I know the Arbitration Act
As a weaver knows his spindle
So if you want a small advance
I'll talk to Justice Tyndall.

Oh, yes, I am a Lib-Lab man
And I believe in revolution;
The quickest way to bring it on
Is talking constitution.

To keep the cost of living down
A law I straight would utter,
A hundred loaves a trey I'd sell,
With a penny a ton for butter.

They say that kids are getting scarce,
I believe there's something in it;
By extra laws I'll incubate
A million kids a minute.

I've read my Bible ten times through,
And Jesus justifies me,
The man who does not vote for me,
By Christ he crucifies me.

So bump them into Parliament,
Bounce 'em any way,
Bung 'em into Parliament,
Don't let the Court decay.

Bill Casey

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TOM BARKER'S STORY

My name is Tom Barker and I was born in England in Westmorland, in the Lake District. My father was a farm labourer who married a farmer's daughter. I was born on 3rd June, 1887, which makes me seventy six years old now. My childhood was spent under rather difficult circumstances, for families were big in those days and wages were small. My mother contrived to look after us. The first three children died and I was the eldest of the six that lived. Now one is dead and the rest are scattered all over the world.

The first thing I did really in earning my living was to work for a farmer, an old lady who had a small farm. I got nothing a week. I had to do not only the bits of farm work but also to go to school half time and do a certain amount of housework - I was a skivvy, in short. I was fed all right, but I was bossed around considerably. I remember once when there was only one good apple tree in the orchard and I was up it picking the apples, which I found were very good to eat. I was very fond of whistling in those days, I did a lot of whistling and singing. Next thing I heard a voice at the bottom of the tree saying, "Stop thee eating up there and start with thee whistling!." She didn't want me to eat the apples!

Then I got a job with another farmer. He was a driver and he paid me one and six a week. I think I was more there because he had a nice daughter than anything else. Like many men I got into the habit early in life of hanging round where the beauty was. He drove me very hard, considering he paid me hardly anything. One morning he sent me into a turnip field to dig turnips. Now the turnips were frozen in the ground and it was very difficult for me to pull them up; I had to kick them with my clogs to shift them and when you got hold of the tops they slipped through your hands. I thought to myself, "This is a hell of a life. Why do I put up with it?" I heard the local train coming down the line - the field was right alongside the railway line and only about forty or fifty yards from the station. I had enough money to pay for a ticket to Liverpool and I had an address there, so I got on the train and went to Liverpool in my clogs. I disappeared entirely. I left the chopper in one of the turnips and that farmer didn't know for years afterwards what happened to his hired hand.

I was about fifteen years old when I ran away to Liverpool. I knew there was a milk house there of which I had the address. The people had come from my own area and at that time in Liverpool it was common to keep cows in the city and sell the milk right from the cow. The cowkeeper used to distribute his milk and sell it in his little shop. He was a very nice person and so was his wife. They engaged me at six bob a week to be the general runaround in this cow house and deliver milk. At that time, it will give you some idea of conditions in Liverpool, it was quite common for a farthing's worth of milk to be sold; not merely bought and sold, but carried to the house, too. At the end of the week you would collect a penny three farthings for seven farthings' worth of milk. This was in the poorest part of Liverpool.

My six bob a week was a big rise in wages and I had nothing to worry about on the food side, for the missus was a good cook and a North Countrywoman from my own area. I got around Liverpool. I was a curious bloke, digging into everything: going to football matches where they stamped your hand at half time if you wanted to go out, and to the gaffs, that is, to the Hippodrome. I remember seeing Harry Lauder there and even Charlie Chaplin in his early days, and many of the great comedians and actors of those days. I also prowled around the courts when I had time and one thing I remember very clearly was a man named Kensit, who was a sectarian Protestant leader, being killed by someone throwing a brick. The police picked up a fellow named John McKeever. He was

an Irish boy. At that time Liverpool was split in two by sectarianism and battle royals took place on St. Patrick's day and various other days. They carried these grudges into the football matches: Liverpool was strongly Protestant and Everton was strongly Catholic, which continues in a subdued way today. On the night when this boy was on trial in St. George's Hall the whole of the front was taken up by a gigantic crowd of people yelling their heads off on behalf of John. The jury ultimately brought in a verdict of "Not Guilty." Well, the Irish went to town that night. John got off and they never caught the actual killer of this man Kensit. I noticed some curious things at that time in Liverpool - unemployed getting together and people leading them up the garden telling them fairy stories. I got very interested in life around the Docks. In short, I was a nosey sort of bloke. I wanted to be in on everything that was going on - so far as six bob would allow me!

Then I got the Army bug in my head and thought I would like to be a horse soldier. It was a very strong feeling with me, but I was young. One day I told the boss I was going to join the Army. He said, "You're a fool. It will never do you any good". So I went down near St. George's Hall, where there was a recruiting centre. I wanted to join the 16th Lancers. I wanted to be all dressed up, you know. When I went into this recruiting place the doctor ran the ropes over me. There was a bath there, you were supposed to take a bath before the doctor saw you, but I have never seen, in all my life, such a filthy bath. Nobody ever dare put his toe into the blinking thing. You had to be nineteen years old. I said that I was nineteen years and one month, whereas I was only seventeen years and five months. The doctor tumbled to me and turned me down. That didn't stop me. Next day I went out to Seaforth, about ten miles from Liverpool, where there was another recruiting centre. They would not put me into the regiment I fancied: they put me into the 8th Hussars. The 8th Hussars was an Irish cavalry regiment then lying in Aldershot, so a few days later I came by train to London, went to Aldershot and became a Hussar.

Life in the Army was very tough in those days. You had no time to yourself between drilling on the square, learning equitation, the training and riding of horses, and looking after your horse. Then at night when I had finished everything, I used to go to school. In the first year I got a second class certificate of education and in the second year I got the Army's first class certificate of education. I was the only person in the regiment during those years who took a first class certificate, although I never really had anything more than half time schooling. I had acquired a good deal of knowledge and I was rather lucky in my examination.

By this time we had shifted to Colchester and I had passed out in all my drills and everything. Having a good knowledge of horses from the farm, they made me into a trainer of remounts. We used to put these young horses through their paces to make them into cavalry horses. That's quite a problem because you have to teach horses not to gallop when everybody else is galloping; they have to be taught to stand by the roadside when others are going past, and trained for field actions and gallops and charges and things like that. That was one of my jobs, with other men, training these young horses.

Life in the regiment itself was quite simple and easy, for it was an Irish regiment and discipline was not very strict. It was easy going. I got along well with the soldiers, who were a very mixed bag. Soon after I got my first class certificate of education I could not be held back and they gave me a lance stripe. That meant I had to do a lot more work for maybe two bob a week more. I was a Lance Jack. But I could say, in a way, that if I had been able to stay in the Army and had had ambitions to rise I certainly could have done so by virtue of my education, which I had acquired really without the benefit of schooling.

But unfortunately, or fortunately, as you may estimate it, I went down with an attack of scarlet fever and had to go to hospital. This was a little Army Isolation

Hospital outside Colchester. I found one of the nurses there very attractive indeed. Her name was Nancy Lee and she was to my mind in those days a very luscious looking girl. She was a bit older than I was but I was probably a little older than my years anyhow - precocious in that sense. We fell in love with each other and later on, when I went back to the barracks, we used to see one another quite often. Sometimes, against all the regulations and in deadly peril, I used to go over back fences to the hospital and she would make coffee for me and we'd sit and do what they do, you know, and honestly if I had been caught I would have been put in the can and she would have got the sack, because it was an infectious hospital. Anyway, it went along all right. A little while later I began to get troubles around the heart and they decided that the scarlet fever and rheumatic fever had affected my heart so that I had a tremor. I came before a Medical Board who passed me out, discharged me with a good character as medically unfit for further service. This was in 1909 when I had almost three years' service.

That brought me back to Liverpool again and things weren't good at Liverpool at that time. It has always been a hard city, I think. It is probably the toughest city in this country, tougher than Glasgow, certainly a lot tougher than London was in those days. I got a job on the tramways. There was no union and wages were five pence an hour for the first year for a conductor and we worked a ten hour day, but not ten straight hours. You had to work that ten hours in anything up to four shifts, sometimes starting at seven and finishing at midnight; that's how you got your day in. The only fares were pennies and tuppences and nobody ever had any silver. When you had done a trip with a full load of people you would be weighed down by pennies. I remember once I was working from the Smithdown Road depot on the tram to Pier Head and I had seventy five passengers and they all paid tuppence and when I came to cash up I had only one threepenny bit, all the rest was in coppers. That was a sign of the poverty.

In the meantime one of my sisters had gone to New Zealand. When my mother died in 1897 the family split up. We three boys stuck together for a while, two sisters went to their uncles and one to a grandmother. Then one boy went to a grandfather. One of the uncles went to New Zealand and took my sister Jenny with him. She is still living in Auckland. I didn't see any future for myself in Liverpool. When I was on the trams the conditions were so hard that I thought we ought to establish a union to rectify things. This thing got plainly into my head. So, like the goof I was, I wrote a letter to one of the evening papers, I think it was the Liverpool Echo. I wrote this letter making a proposal in view of the conditions that it was time we formed a union. Then I looked day after day for this letter to appear, but it never did. It didn't work. They weren't going to stand for anything like that in Liverpool. That was in the days before the big dock strike and before the coming of Tom Mann and the other people who put Liverpool on the map a few years later. There was virtually no unionism in Liverpool at all then.

We were harassed a good deal by inspectors who would get on a tram and if they found anything wrong or if they found a fare had not been collected, they would give you a blister. It meant you had to go down to the head office in Hatton Garden and take the whole day off explaining how you missed this fare. That cut seriously into whatever little money you had to come. So I got the idea of going to New Zealand and my second brother, Bob, who was working on a farm, agreed to go with me to Auckland to join my sister and the family she was with. We had actually booked to go, I think about ten days later. I was still on the trams and when we were coming to Upper Parliament Street there was an inspector called Johnson who was a real nark. He made nothing but trouble and he got on the tram. He went around and, certainly without the slightest error, he found I had not collected a fare. So he came to the back. He said, "Conductor, you're going down to explain in a couple of days why you didn't collect that fare". I said to him, "That's what you think". He said, "What do you mean, that's what I think?" I said, "I'm not going down there". He said, "You're not! Do you know that you'll get fired?" I took the bag

and bellpunch and stuck it over his head. I said, "You take the bloody thing. I'm going to New Zealand next week and you can go to hell and so can the trams too!" So I left him with the tram and I never even went to collect my wages because I was on my way to New Zealand. That was the way I left Liverpool.

We went to New Zealand and when we arrived at Wellington the Immigration Officer looked me over, put his hand on my shoulder and said, "You've been in the service?" I agreed. He said, "What were you in?" I said, "I was in the 8th Hussars". "Well," he said, "You know, you are the very man we are looking for in this brand new country of ours". That set me up quite a deal. We went up to Auckland on the main trunk line which had been opened a few months before. Life was very different there but jobs were still hard to get even in Auckland at that time. That was in 1909. Auckland had only been founded about seventy years before; it was just, you might say, a colonial backwater, although it was the biggest town in New Zealand. It was a beautifully situated city, standing between the Hauraki Gulf and Manukau Harbour. I liked the place. We lived out in Ponsonby in wooden houses with outside toilets that the night soil man cleared once a week.

After trying a job with a milkhouse and hurting myself going down the steps in the dark, I finally got a job with the trams in Auckland. They were electric trams and owned by Americans. That was the day from which you can say my part in the labour movement began. The first thing that I had always in my mind there was the necessity for unions and for means of protecting the working people against their employers. I had two or three weeks' training and learning the different routes and saw there were many problems in Auckland on the trams, that is to say, there were no glass fronts, there were no air brakes, there were a lot of shortcomings on what was quite a hilly town. The work required a tremendous amount of strength. I was sent to the Ponsonby Depot which wasn't far from home. The first thing I did was to join the Union when the Union Secretary came around. His name was Arthur Rosser. He had one eye. He was a big, fat bloke and they called him, at least the driver I settled down with used to call him, "The Artful Josser". I paid my first union dues and since that day, I think in November 1909, I have been a trade unionist. I was with my trade union branch yesterday which was 23rd November, 1963. I happened to mention in the course of the debate that I had been a trade union member in the various countries wherever I had been for the last fifty four years, which is quite a long time in anybody's life.

I became very active in the trade union, attending all the meetings and taking quite a left wing stand. Of course, I wasn't indocrinated in anything. You could say I was in favour of the business system but I thought it could be improved a bit. I wouldn't say I was religious but I hadn't got to the stage where I could be called an agnostic either. It took me time to wean myself away from religion. As I said before, I was very nosey, I wanted to know everything that was going on, and I found people were holding meetings on socialism and religion and one or two more things. I found there was a branch of the New Zealand Socialist Party in Auckland and it wasn't long before they made me Secretary. This was about 1910 and it did happen during the time I was Secretary of the Party that we moved pretty quickly forward. At that time Auckland, being so far away from the world, had very little entertainment. People had to make their own interests and so, for the time and place, Auckland was a very active place politically.

I was made Secretary of the Socialist Party which was an advanced party in the sense that it had Marxist ideas. We had a paid lecturer from Australia, Harry Scott Bennett. Harry had been a member of parliament in Victoria as a socialist. He had come to New Zealand, I don't know just why, and we used to take John Fuller's opera house at the bottom of Wellesley Street for £5 every Sunday night for him to lecture and I think the theatre probably held about fifteen hundred people. We rented the Federal Hall, which was an old gospel hall at the other end of Wellesley Street near Hobson Street, and that cost

us a fiver a week. We paid Scott £5 a week, so our outgoings were about £18 or £20 a week which meant that we had a very active party. The way we found the money was largely with these meetings that Scott addressed - we got very good collections. We used to sell vast quantities of American literature from the I.W.W. and Socialist Party, from the Kerr Company, that we brought in. People used to buy the stuff because there was a certain amount of unemployment in those days and New Zealanders, like Australians, are very generous with their money; they are not so mean and ha'penny counting as the Englishmen are at home, although that's changed a bit.

We used to hold meetings on Sunday at the Queen's Wharf and get quite big crowds there. Our chairman was a brewery worker who was from Victoria and had been a miner there. His name was Michael Joseph Savage. He was a gypsy - looking chap who was very knowledgeable on financial matters although he was only a labourer in the brewery. He was in a sense very advanced in things that could be said to be outside the fields of propaganda. The vice-chairman, he had arrived in New Zealand only a few weeks before, had some experience in England. He was born in a cottage in Invernesshire; he was a pawky Scotsman, with about two teeth in front and his name was Peter Fraser. Peter was a very quiet fellow. He spoke in broad Scots and he was a man who was deeply read and had spoken quite a lot in Hyde Park when he was in London.

My life in Auckland with the Socialist Party was very active. I enjoyed it vastly because Scott Bennett was already giving economic classes which I used to attend. On one occasion, I remember, we had to wait a long time for Scott to come and when he did come he wandered in and went up to the lectern where he gave his talks and then put his arms around it and fell flat on his back. The trouble was that Scott was suffering from that famous Australian complaint of being boozed. He did a lot for promoting Marxian education. We studied Value, Price and Profit, Wage Labour and Capital, we had Dietzen, we had Ernest Untermann, and Bebel's Woman and virtually the whole gamut of socialist education at that time, mainly printed by the C.H.Kerr Company. I acquired myself a considerable library including the first volume of Capital and most of the socialist classics published by Kerr. Strange to say there was very little that came from Britian. The influence of the United States was much more evident at that time in New Zealand, probably because it was closer. We read The Appeal to Reason, a rather reformist four sheet journal which came out of Kansas; and now and then the New York Call, I think.

There was always a constant flow of people from the West Coast North American ports to New Zealand, some of them going to Australia, sometimes stopping over, and there was a bigger flow of education and that kind of thing from the Pacific than there was from Britian. I can say that at that time the New Zealand Socialist Party, which ultimately became the New Zealand Labour Party, was very advanced as a political organisation in so far as we really went to town in giving people a good Marxist education. I don't know in my experience since, wherever I have been, where this kind of education was so consistently and regularly done as it was in Auckland in those days. Scott Bennett was a man who was a master not merely of economics and Marxist philosophy but also of comparative religion too, and his talks on religion in the Opera House were larger and more complete, let us say, than the ones on Marxist education. As I said before, we made most of our money from these Sunday night lectures by Scott. Sometimes we had to have pickets out to keep the crowd in order. They wanted to get in and the place would be packed.

I must not forget that my beautiful nurse had decided to come to New Zealand to join me and we would get married. In due time I paid the fares for her and a friend and they came over and she went to stay with a friend of mine for a while. By this time she was a State Registered Nurse, the top of her profession, but somehow or other, due to my new, wild, hectic life, she thought I had changed and it all went quietly by the board and we parted on quite good terms. She opened a nursing home of her own. Being

young, we had grown away from one another and I had really got so deeply immersed in other things that they became first consideration with me. Women didn't matter very much then and I thought very little about them. My time was taken up between my duties on the trams, the Union and the Socialist Party.

At that time the industrial movement was coming up very strongly in New Zealand and we had a monthly paper called The Maoriland Worker printed in Wellington. It had a bright red cover and it was a most attractive journal. Soon I got the job of doing the Auckland Notes and I used to do a page every issue under the name of "Spanwire", which was the name I used in connection with my tramway work. The Federation of Labour was largely based on the miners, especially in the South Island, the coalminers and gold miners, and the organiser was a bloke named Bob Semple, who was an Australian. He was a hard-hitting fellow, an expert tunneller who had lost about three fingers on one hand. He was very lean and he used to crack one hand into the other with tremendous force when he was making a point. Bob was to be a Cabinet Minister many years later, Minister of Public Works in the New Zealand Labour Government. The fact was that this Socialist Party was the forerunner of the New Zealand Labour Party, there is no doubt at all about that, and the people who came up through Auckland as far as the political side was concerned were people who came to power, like Fraser and Joe Savage, who were both, of course Prime Ministers later on.

During that period, too, Harry Holland came across from Australia, where he was born. Harry was one of the great gladiators of the working class movement. He already had a built up reputation. He had been sentenced to two years at Albury for his part in the Broken Hill strike. He was active in the Socialist Party when he went to Wellington. He was anti-militatist and far to the left. Although he was a cripple he had a wonderful speaking voice and an immense range of knowledge. He was almost religious in his devotion to working class principles. Later he was busy in the Waihi strike and I was with him in the Terrace jail at Wellington in the 1913 strike. Harry was a very great man in every way. We were close friends until his death.

My socialist education was advancing. There was a strong feeling at that time that power reposed on the industrial field and that if anything was going to be done in New Zealand it would have to be done by the industrial working class because the political set-up was such that they could not get very far with the two existing parties. There was a bye-election in Auckland about 1912 and we decided to run Joe Savage on his first election campaign as a straight Socialist candidate and to our surprise he polled fifteen hundred votes which, in small electorates, as they were at that time, was a tremendous gain. He went very far and that was the first time I took the public platform, speaking for him in Newton.

Meantime, the I.W.W. had entered New Zealand. There was always a free run of I.W.W. people from San Francisco and Vancouver to Sydney backwards and forwards and they had already established themselves in Australia. There were two wings in the I.W.W. There was the old Daniel De Leon wing and afterwards there was the Chicago group which became headed by Big Bill Haywood. He was also one of my close friends until his death. The propaganda was coming over and it fell on fertile ground as far as I was concerned because I began to think I wasn't politically minded enough, since I didn't have a parliamentary mind and I never have had one. I don't know whether it is a shortcoming or not but certainly if I had had a parliamentary mind I wouldn't be here today talking into this microphone. I would either be planted in a cemetery in New Zealand or Australia or I might be a Cabinet Minister or something like that, because there couldn't have been anything less for me in my then state of activity. I left the Socialist Party - they had to find a new Secretary - but I maintained my friendship with the people in it. I joined the I.W.W. and I was very active with them, holding meetings.

Amongst the people who came over from America was a fellow named

George Hardy. He came across from Vancouver to Auckland to find work there. George was married, with a wife and two children. He soon went to work on the railways in Poverty Bay, then got the urge to go back to Canada. He came to Auckland and stayed for a while waiting for his boat, and we had him on the platform. Like myself, he was an interminable talker when he got on a platform - he never knew when to get down. We had a fair amount in common: he was a Yorkshire man, with a broad Yorkshire accent; he had served with the 14th Hussars at a time when I was in the 8th Hussars. He was a short burly bloke with such a tremendous moustache you would think it came out of an opera or something like that. George went back to Vancouver where he was in the Teamsters' Union and became the General Secretary of the I.W.W. in Chicago. I met him a good deal later in London and we went to various parts of the world together, both having credentials to attend conferences. He is living right here in London now. Anyway, I joined the I.W.W..

I joined the I.W.W. because I supported industrial unionism. New Zealand, like many places, had mostly craft unions, many of which had their origin in this country, like the A.E.U.. At that time, except for the miners, you could say they were largely craft unions and the I.W.W. philosophy was one union on one job. That's what appealed to me strongly. In order to get the best out of the power you have, you must be united. We haven't even got it in this country yet; we have craft unionism hanging on and no real effort to put an end to it, although there is a good deal of latent solidarity which largely gets over these problems. That was the idea which got hold of me and once I got an idea I went forward with it. The I.W.W. members apparently thought a lot more of me than I knew, for in 1913 when we had a meeting in Auckland they asked me if I would go out organising for them. I had just got the sack off the trams because I did not take the tram home one night. So I decided to go out when they asked me. I was only twenty six years old and I was game for anything. That was in 1913.

Let me go back for a moment before that because in the middle of 1912 a big strike broke out in the North Island. The gold miners of Waihi struck against the mining company, one of the richest in New Zealand. This strike had an important effect on the industrial movement in New Zealand because the strike went on for many weeks, the police were brought in and there was much violence. I went to Waihi myself and was there when riots and fighting were going on, until finally the police got the upper hand. Over eighty of the men were arrested and put in Mt.Eden prison. One man was killed, I think his name was Timothy Evans. The unions brought his body to Auckland for a funeral because it was the largest place and they wanted to get the maximum out of the propaganda side. I am sure it was the biggest industrial procession ever held in New Zealand. Literally the whole of the working class in Auckland marched that day and I marched with them to the cemetery behind the remains of this miner who had been killed in the troubles. Eventually the men went back to work. This had a profound effect upon the attitude of the New Zealand worker towards the police and the government and the authorities generally. It stands out in my mind as the first industrial battle in which I played a part although I was not living in Waihi at the time.

Reverting to 1913, I first went to Wellington organising for the I.W.W. I held meetings around the docks and at the railway workshops and in the Post Office Square. We put out propaganda, we made a lot of contacts, a branch was established. After that I went to Christchurch and Lyttleton and there I spent about a month. I was arrested there for selling literature without a permit and I was fined ten shillings but I never paid the fine and was never collected for it. We held meetings and we formed a branch there. At that time a lot of feeling was building up against the Arbitration Act in New Zealand because it was possible for an employer to get a batch of men together under the Arbitration Act and let them constitute themselves into a trade union, I think only ten men were necessary. Then the employers could make an agreement with that small batch of men and could apply

it to the whole of the industry. This had been done in the mines in the South Island and it was raising a tremendous feeling against the Arbitration and Conciliation Act. This built up later to New Zealand's biggest strike.

This spirit was growing when I went across to the west coast of the South Island which as far as industry is concerned is all coal and gold mining. I went around on foot from one mining camp to another, sometimes up three thousand feet hillsides and trudging along tramway tracks to get to the mines at Denniston, Millerton, Blackball, the Queen Elizabeth Mine at Runanga, and others. These mines were pretty busy then because a lot of their coal went direct either from Greymouth or Westport to Australia. The west coast was very isolated and probably would not be populated at all if it wasn't for the mines, especially the gold mines in the old days. They had largely folded up although there was still some alluvial mining around Reefton and Waiuta and places like that. I remember one night going for a meeting out at a place called Quarryworkers. It was about six miles from Westport and there was a little railway to carry the stone into Westport. To get there you had to go on a pumper on the railway, two men pushing themselves along; it was very hard work. You have the ocean on one side, the mountains on the other, and this night there were forest fires all around. At Cape Foulwind there is an immense lighthouse and this gigantic light turns slowly around in a tremendous arc. I remember coming back on that old pumper, sweating tears, and at the side of us were these forest fires, all burning, and smouldering and smoking and spluttering. Every now and then this gigantic flash came right round on top of us and went away. It was one of the most eerie experiences of my life, that night on the pumper, getting back into Westport. But that's only by the way. We did a lot of work amongst the quarry workers there and amongst the lighthouse keepers too.

I decided it was time to go back to Wellington because things were happening on the industrial front. There had been a lock out on the wharves there and no sooner had I arrived than the shipwrights went on strike. This was the light which started off the greatest conflagration which the New Zealand people ever had. We knew at once that other workers would be drawn in and meetings were held quickly by dock workers, seamen and various other bodies in Wellington. There were obviously signs of support elsewhere. I met some of my fellow workers and we decided that next morning at six o'clock, the normal time when the dock workers were coming to work, we would hold a meeting in the Post Office Square which was right in the centre of the city and had been the traditional place for street meetings. That morning we started and in no time at all much of New Zealand was tied up by the spread of strikes.

A strike committee was formed in Wellington. They called me in and asked me if I would take charge of meetings which they wanted to go on continuously in the Post Office Square and I undertook to do this. By relays of speakers, by I.W.W. songs which were catching on, we kept these meetings going continuously and at the same time we did not neglect the organising of the pickets and the various groups for seeing that there was no scabbery and getting the best results from the stoppage. Most of the active leaders from outside Wellington were staying in the Arcadia Hotel in Ghuznee Street, which was kept by a Swede called Otto England. We used to hold our committee meetings there. We were so packed that we slept on the floor at night. Otto was a real good proletarian, for he put up with a lot of nuisance from us. Amongst us at that time was Peter Fraser who also slept on the floor. I was fortunate. I had a bed for some special reason, I don't know why. Possibly because I wasn't going to be a future Prime Minister.

In a day or two, due to the shortage of police, the authorities called for volunteers from the farmers to come to town to act as Special Constables and out of that arose one or two incidents that figure vividly in my mind. The road into Wellington has steep gorges on one side and the sea on the other side. The road was fenced off from the sea by barbed wire. At night time when we got word from cyclists that the farmers were

coming we would stretch this barbed wire across the road then get up on the hillsides and pry big stones down on them. Not being accustomed to this kind of treatment, the farmers would make a dash for it and land up in the barbed wire, in many cases getting badly cut.

The farmers nevertheless got into town, where they were quartered in the big compound which the Post and Telegraph Department used for storing equipment. Here the cockies were fixed up with tents and their horses were picketed out. We decided to raid them. The wall was made of inverted railway sleepers and it wasn't difficult for us to help one another over this fence into the middle of the compound where these fellows were dossing in their tents. Of course, when we came over the fence with a Maori war cry they woke up suddenly, thinking the end of the world had come, and it darn near had, too. They rushed for their horses. These horses were farm animals, not cavalry mounts: they were more used to ploughing. The men scrambled on board these prads and they all decided to make for the gate at the one time. The gate space was limited and they were numerous, so when they were going through the gate they jammed and pulled one another down. By the time they had scrambled through the gate they were half frightened to death. When they got out into the road some railway shop men who were on strike had helped themselves to nuts and bolts from the railway shop and scattered these nuts and bolts amongst the horses. We learned a few tactics about handling mounted police because apart from spreading marbles and such on the surface of the road, we also had a method of using ropes by which men passed a rope underneath the horses's legs and yanked the horses down. It was a very difficult time for anybody on the government side who had a horse.

I remember being stuck up, I think it was in Willis Street, by a man with a gun, but he shook so much that he was a bigger danger to himself than he was to me.

We were holding strike meetings in the Basin Reserve, which anyone who follows New Zealand football will know. People like Peter Fraser and Bob Semple and others were taking their place on the platform. The police were there with their notebooks and quite unknown to us at the time, they were planning to charge us with some kind of serious offence for what we said. I don't remember what I said but I do remember what I got out of it.

News came from Auckland that they wanted me to go back there because the general strike had stopped all the daily papers in the city. We had a monthly called the Industrial Unionist and it was decided to bring this out three times a week. I had to go there to help with it. We printed anything we could gather from American papers and Stop Press news about the strike. When we got an edition out we went down on the streets and sold it, the next day we went on the booze and the following day got the next edition out. It was a catch as catch can business. I learned more about newspapers and emergencies on the press than I could have got anywhere else.

Everyone was buying the paper. I remember being in Queen Street, the main street of Auckland, one afternoon, and I had sold over seven hundred copies of the paper. I was absolutely weighed down with coppers. I could hardly move and I had them stacked along the side of the street. I was just completing the sale of my last paper when along came a policeman who asked me, quite courteously, to go to the Police Station with him. He didn't know why I was wanted. At the Police Court the Magistrate was sitting and he told me I was charged with sedition in Wellington during the time of the meetings in Post Office Square. Because the authorities weren't sure how to deal with it they had charged me for the same words three times, once under the Justices of the Peace Act, once under the Crimes Act and again under another Act. In fact, the government was as lost on some of these things as we were. It was all brand new to them. I think I was the first person in New Zealand to be charged with sedition.

The Magistrate said I would have to appear, I think in about four days, in Wellington. He told the police to put me in the cells then escort me to Wellington in time

for the hearing. But the police objected that being shorthanded and every policeman being needed on the strike in Auckland, they couldn't possibly spare anyone. So the Magistrate turned to me and said, "Look, Mr. Barker, if we let you go, on your word of honour, will you take yourself to Wellington?" And that's just what happened.

I went on this trip to Wellington with Joe Savage. He was going down to participate in the strike and so the two of us set out by train. The railways were working at this time although all other industries were pretty well flat. When we were near Wellington, I think at a place called Otaki, we saw a crowd on the station and found that the Governor-General himself was to board the train. He and his entourage got on the train and when we came to Wellington a gigantic crowd was waiting. We thought they were there to welcome the Governor-General, but they weren't waiting for the Governor-General at all - they were waiting for us! When we got off the train we found that they had brought a horse coach; they took the two horses out, got ropes and towed Joe Savage and myself into the Post Office Square where we had to make another harangue to the audience. This great crowd rather flattered us when we saw they were waiting for us and that nobody cared a continental about the Governor-General.

The following day I had to go and surrender myself in court. When I got there I couldn't get into the court because it was surrounded by farmers and police. They were all standing around because they were afraid of the strikers marching on it, and I had a devil of a job to satisfy them, having no escort, that I was wanted in the court. I had no papers to prove it, mind you, because the papers had been sent by post from Auckland. After a while and nearly being crushed to death, I contrived to get myself into court where I was committed to the Terrace Jail up on the hill, to be tried later. When I had to be taken up to the jail another of these horse cabs was waiting for me and this time I had an escort. He was a policeman with a bandage around one eye. This was one of the police who got slapped in the Post and Telegraph store earlier, but they were so hard up for police that they had to use the ones with only one eye. When I saw this fellow I was scared stiff that he would recognise me as one of the fellows who had gone over the top in the scramble, because we sat facing one another in the cab. Fortunately, he didn't recognise me, or if he did he kept it to himself. He probably had enough trouble on his shoulders anyway.

This old time jail was built of wood and some corrugated iron. There was a case before we came in, they said, of a man doing a life sentence for murder who got out by using a can opener. That's what they said about it and it might have been true. They brought me to a cell which had been washed out; it was quite wet. I went inside. I thought, "I'm landed here at last". I sat down. As I said before, I've got an incorrigible habit of whistling and warbling and I started to warble an I.W.W. song. Soon there was a terrific banging and "Quit that in the cooler", or something like that. The screw opened the door and said, "Pack that up, mate, or you'll be in serious trouble. This is not a place where you can sing, I can tell you". And it wasn't. After a while he took me to the hospital cell to get some food. When I got in there who should I find but Peter Fraser, Bob Semple, a dock worker named George Bailey, Harry Holland, with his limp, and Tom Young, the Secretary of the Seamen's Union. The six of us were in. Three of us lived in cells but Peter, Harry Holland and Bob Semple stayed permanently in the hospital cell. During the day we were all together there and we told stories to one another and had our food there, which mostly came from outside anyway. We had quite a nice time, you might say. We were treated as honoured guests.

The strike had developed to such an extent that it was affecting the home boats. There was a great import and export business from New Zealand to Britain and it wasn't long before the seamen on the ships started to go on strike. Some of them were arrested. They were brought to the jail and there wasn't much room in the cells so they were camping in the alleyways of the jail itself and you could hardly move on account of

these fellows dossing on the bare boards. There were cases, I understand, of the men refusing to work on the ship and the captain getting other men to take the ship out, then, when they got outside the three mile limit, charging the crew with mutiny. That can be a very serious offence.

We used to get visits from all kinds of people and on Sunday night the Waterside Workers' band used to come and play outside the walls. They used to play "The Red Flag" and "The Internationale" and I.W.W. songs. Most of our food was brought into us from the outside through the unions or through the strike committee. We weren't taking any harm really except that we were out of the battle. Of course a lot of things happened in the jail which would make amusing reading but I am not touching upon those now. In the meantime, we were all taken down to court, they sorted out the legal side, and I think they dealt with us under the Justices of the Peace Act. I don't see myself how it was possible to deal with a crime like sedition under the ordinary processes of a police court. It should have been a matter for a higher jurisdiction. As I said before, they were very ham-handed and mixed up themselves about this and as the strike was beginning to taper off, they decided that we should be admitted to bonds and released whenever the bonds could be found. I was unlucky because I was less known than the others and for some strange reason the authorities put a higher valuation on me. The bonds they wanted for the others were something like £1000 at the most whereas mine was £1500. By the time Christmas came around - I had been arrested in November - I think most of them were out except George Bailey. At Christmas I was to have meal brought in from outside. This came from a pub nearby and I expected, of course, roast duck and plum-pudding and all the trimmings but I got rather a shock when I found it was nothing more than tripe and onions. That was the oddest Christmas Dinner I have ever had and I can tell you, I have never eaten tripe and onions since. I have gone off it completely. I can't say that I didn't enjoy it but it wasn't anything like what I was expecting.

In January a shoe merchant in Upper Queen Street, Auckland, who was liberal minded and well off, agreed to take up two of my bonds of £500. The other one was my own. Ultimately I was released. The strike had pretty well closed down then and I went back to Auckland but I didn't go out of action, although I was actually under bond to keep the peace for twelve months. I attended meetings. I don't say I did a great deal but George Higgins, the shoe merchant, lived near where the meetings were held. He knew what was going on and he began to get worried about his bonds. He said, "Look, Tom. I'm afraid very much they're going to pull you in on something else and my bonds will be gone. I don't want to pass you back to the authorities or put you back in again. I want to give you a chance of closing down or doing something about it. But I'm getting really worried about this money I have put up on you". I told him I would give him an answer the next day and went home to sort it out. This was about February, 1914. I got the idea that I'd go across to Sydney. Once I got out of New Zealand I would be out of the way and whatever happened to me couldn't affect my bondsman or anybody else.

I got a ticket on the "Maheno" and sailed for Sydney. That was going to be a new country for me but you have to appreciate that there was a great coming and going of people between New Zealand and Australia although they were about four days apart by boat. Shearers, miners and skilled tradesmen went from one country to the other, particularly single men and married men who had forgotten where their wives were. Down below, lying on the bottom of the ship, you would find dozens and dozens of these men who went across for three or four pounds. It was said then that the people who travelled first class were second class and the people who travelled third class were no class at all. That could be said of me when I landed in Sydney.

I soon found the I.W.W. headquarters in Sydney, an old gospel hall at 330 Castlereagh Street. They were producing Direct Action, quite a lively monthly paper, like the one we left in Auckland which died out when the strike was over. It wasn't long before

I got into harness there doing various jobs. We had ambitions for a weekly and we wanted to get hold of a press of some kind so that we could print our own paper on our own premises. We found an old Wharfedale printing machine. I think it was probably built about 1840 or 1850. It was a very faithfull hardworking old press. Every copy had to go through twice, for it was a flat press. The problem was buying it. It cost about £80 and there wasn't anything like that in the kitty; but one of our fellows, Jack Hamilton, had some money saved up which he advanced and so we got our printing press.

Now that we had a weekly paper we decided that we had to crack the restrictions on Sydney Domain. At that time you weren't allowed to sell anything of a printed character in the Domain. It was just as restricted in that way as Hyde Park is today in London. We decided that we would establish our right to sell the paper in the Domain. That meant having our names taken, it meant going to court, a fine and a prison sentence if you didn't pay the fine. We wouldn't pay fines on principle; we always took it out in the nick. That was the rule of the I.W.W. in those days, you never paid a fine. At the first meeting my name was taken with about half a dozen others. Some of these were men who had just come into town and were gone and they didn't catch up with them at all. They didn't even go to court. I went to court. I think my fine was ten shillings and costs, or seven days. I didn't pay the fine and in due course they came and collected me and I went to Long Bay to do the seven days, which wasn't much, although the jail was hard enough, God knows!

The paper we sold was at that time edited by an Irishman from Galway called Tom Glynn. Tom had worked on the trams in Sydney. He was a down to earth Marxian Irishman, if you can imagine what that means. He had been in the South African police when there was a rebellion, I think, in part of Cape Colony and the police were directed in searching the woods and thickets to shoot on sight. That was the order. Glynn refused. In one case a boy was there; he refused to shoot anybody and he was arrested for not carrying out his duties as a policeman and was sentenced to prison and discharged from the South African police. He played a part, and a considerable part, in the big strike, I think it was in 1912, in Johannesburg. He was the editor and he had a magnificent fluid style of provocative writing. He had a great flow of English and could reduce things to their essentials. He was a man with a very logical mind. He could really hammer stuff in through Direct Action. It became, in my opinion, one of the most formidable newspapers that have been published. I have been editor of it, too. I mean formidable compared with the general run of socialist papers at that time. There were one or two around, they were as different as chalk and cheese. Perhaps that is what made the authorities take more notice of us than they did of the Socialist Party.

We decided, although I had done my time, that we would make an issue of this trying to prevent us selling the paper in the Sydney Domain. The first occasion was this. We went to Macquarie Street to see the Minister, Flowers. We got into the office all right. Two cabinet ministers were there and Flowers said to us, "How are you fellows getting on at Newcastle?" We said, "We're not from Newcastle. We are from the I.W.W." We found that when we got upstairs he thought we were a delegation from the miners in Newcastle. So we were ushered promptly by the attendants down into the street. That didn't satisfy us. We waited a while, saw the miners go in and come out, and went in the Domain to sit down and think it out. We discovered that there was a ladder up to the Minister's window. Some work had been going on, the men had gone away for lunch and this ladder was standing right up into the office. We didn't know what the chances were but Glynn went up first, I went up second and we appeared at the window. You ought to have seen the faces of those two cabinet ministers, standing there with their cigars and the whisky on the table. Flowers wanted to prevent us coming in but we told him straight out that we wanted this prohibition on selling papers in the Domain stopped. We wanted our rights established permanently. He was going to ring for the police and do one thing

or another until Glynn said, "Look, Flowers, I knew you a few years ago when you had the seat out of your pants. You were the leader of the unemployed then. Today you're a cabinet minister. Now you come down to earth, I'll tell you what, if you don't put an end to this business of stopping us selling our papers, we'll have ten thousand unemployed down to these offices in a couple of days." That brought Mr. Flowers to time and he allowed us in at the window and we had a big wrangle. He wouldn't let us have any whisky, but finally he said he would go into it.

That wasn't the end of it, because a few days later the Political Labour Leagues of New South Wales were holding their annual conference. All the cabinet ministers were there, including Holman, the Premier, David Robert Hall, who was Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, and a whole crowd I have forgotten, just the same as the people of New South Wales have forgotten them. It was in the Oddfellows Hall in Elizabeth Street, I think. Our plan was that some speaker from the body of the Hall should raise this matter and at that moment our fellows should barricade the outside doors and put the light switches out. I was sitting at the back, for a number of us had gone into the public part of the hall. The question was raised, D.R. Hall began to make a statement about it, then, at that moment the light switches were pulled out and the barricade boards were put across the doors so that nobody could get out, and the place was in darkness. Well, there was pandemonium inside the hall. Somebody got up in the dark and suggested they send for the police, so a resolution was carried that the Premier himself, Holman, should go and fetch the police. He was just as helpless as any baby, even if he was Premier of the State. They broke a window and made a big shout and finally the police came and released the whole lot of us. Out of these various battles we established the right to sell the paper in the Sydney Domain and cleared every other body for the same thing. That was the real gain we made for the freedom of the press in the State of New South Wales.

Direct Action had a circulation of about fifteen thousand in the big days. It was such a circulation that it kept the old Wharfedale going day and night. As there was a Chinese laundryman on the other side of us just behind the fence near the press, we used to get a lot of black looks and hard words and swearing in Chinese. The paper had to come out. I remember once, we had got everything ready for the meeting in the Sydney Domain on Sunday, all the papers published and everything, and a few days before I took about two thousand copies of Direct Action to a meeting at Bulli. It was an outdoor meeting and it was washed out by rain, so we were left with the two thousand papers. On Sunday morning the coppers raided our headquarters - they usually came on a Sunday - and seized everything in the place. To the astonishment of the police we had Direct Action on sale as usual in the Domain on Sunday afternoon, because the two thousand copies had been brought back from Bulli. The police never knew how it happened.

Whenever there was a liberty to be fought for, we'd go to the bat with it. It wasn't always easy to establish the freedom of speech. The police and the authorities would make it very difficult. They'd want you to get permits and that kind of thing before you could hold a meeting. We jealously maintained freedom of meeting and where it wasn't established, we went to town to get it. One of these cases just after the beginning of the war was the free speech fight at Port Pirie in South Australia. There were a lot of construction workers and a lot of men from Broken Hill in the town. The local authorities, when we held meetings, decided that the best way to cure the disease was to put the men in jail. I forget the number of men who were arrested but it was almost enough to stuff Port Pirie Jail. When they got into that jail these fellows, being well organised, turned it upside-down. They made it such a misery for the staff of the jail and for the authorities that they were only too glad to get rid of them. There was no more trouble about public speaking in Port Pirie. Soon after another free speech battle started in Newcastle and a large number of our fellows were put inside the Maitland Prison. They had been fined but

they wouldn't pay the fines. They went in and they turned the Maitland jail upside-down, so the authorities were not getting any change out of the men in jail.

In Sydney for a while the police started to arrest men for speaking. We adopted all kinds of ways of counteracting this. We would start a meeting somewhere and then when the police were gathering around, we'd pack up and clear off to some other place that was already planned. By keeping the police running around, they never knew where we were going to be next. They got very tired of that. I remember on one occasion we had a wagon with a horse in it and a speaker sitting on a chair on the back of the wagon and everybody marching behind as we went along the street. That put the authorities in a spot because they couldn't say that the crowd was blocking the street or anything like that, which was their usual excuse for stopping these meetings. Anyway, we pretty well established the principle of freedom of speech.

The authorities got tired of trying to fight us. They knew we were determined. They knew the jails would be packed with men. To a lot of men it wasn't much different being in jail or being out, because there was a lot of unemployment at that time. They enjoyed it, really. They knew they wouldn't be in there for long. That's what created for our organisation, the I.W.W., a reputation of being a general nuisance to the prison authorities and to the police. It got in such a way that when they did get a batch of us into prison - I'm not talking about the ordinary rank and file but about the men who were in the leadership - their job was to split us up and send us as far away from one another as possible, to make us innocuous by distance from one another. This happened in my own case as well as in others.

Amongst our characters was a fellow named Stanley West. He was an Englishman with a cultured accent, presumed to have been educated at Oxford. He had a flair for rhyming. He wrote a playlet, or an opera bouffe, a parody of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol", and called it "The Ballad of Maitland Gaol". It lasted about fortyfive minutes and we produced it in the Concordia Hall in Elizabeth Street. I know I played the part of a prison warder in it, which was something exceptional for me; my name was "Warder Stoneage". It had voices over here and voices over there and warders running around trying to catch you. It was notorious that while our fellows were in Maitland Gaol they set things on fire and whenever the warder siad, "Right turn", they all went left and did everything back to front. That was part of the game. This opera bouffe was a great success. The whole script of it appeared in one of the issues of Direct Action.

There had been two I.W.W. bodies. The Detroit I.W.W. was mainly political, following the teaching of Daniel de Leon, who had an industrial union in his mind on the industrial field and a political party on the political field, like the Socialist Labour Party at that time. One or two people in Sydney plodded on keeping up the ideas of the Detroit body. We were based upon the Chicago Direct Action group, which stood for direct action and industrial unionism rather than politics as the basis for working class action. We might be said to be non-political, at the mildest, or anti-political, because we never had any use for politicians, and I can say this has stayed with me pretty well all my life. I feel now, seeing what's happening in Australia and New Zealand on the political field, that the working people, if they're going to get anywhere, have to depend almost entirely upon industrial organisations.

I must revert to a short time before the war, to May Day, 1914. There was a premonition in the air that something was building up between Germany and Britain and there was a strong anti-militarist movement in the United States at that time. A writer called Kirkpatrick wrote a famous book called, War, What For?. It was a compilation of material against war and we used to bring hundreds, I'd say thousands, of these over from the United States and sell them at half a crown a copy. We sold them in the Domain where we had established the right to sell literature and amongst my documents I still have a photograph of that meeting which we held on the first of May in Sydney Domain. By this

time we had a magnificent banner with "Industrial Workers of the World" and then the world underneath, that is, the I.W.W. badge, and then underneath that "Workers of the World, Unite". It was a beautiful red banner which cost a considerable amount of money even with the work done by our own people. In this photograph the banner stands at the back. On the platform is Donald Grant, who got fifteen years in 1916, part of that over myself and what I'd done. The photograph shows many of the characters of that period, including myself. I am holding Direct Action in my hand and on a stool in front of the speaker stands a big pile of War, What For? at half a crown. I can say without any doubt at all that this book played a tremendous part in the fight against conscription. I am sure that the work we did made all the difference to the Australian workers and the Australian people generally when the question of conscription came up in 1916 and 1917. There is no doubt at all in my mind, if it hadn't been for the presence of our organisation and what we did in those days, the history of Australia might have been vastly different as far as the war itself was concerned.

The photograph shows our American connections. Our organisation had its origin in America, was based there and largely got its ideas from America. What went on in America was of considerably more interest to us industrially than what was happening in Britian or Europe. We faced towards the United States. At that time there was a great strike of silk workers in the town of Paterson New Jersey, where Elizabeth Gurley Flynn made her reputation. In this strike a cartoon or motif was used that appealed to me very strongly. It was the picture of an industrial worker rising over the top of a great factory. It impressed me because that was the idea in my mind: that the worker should be over the factory. He should be the boss. He should be dictating policy. He shouldn't be just a worker down below, but he should be the over-riding person when it came to what the factory was doing and what it should do. This attracted my attention so much as I edited a particular issue of Direct Action that I decided to have it right on the front page. One of our fellows who was good with a chisel cut it out from linoleum. This May Day photograph shows the industrial worker arising over the factory, under the paper's title of Direct Action. This idea was to stay with me for a very much longer time than my life in Australia because some years later, when I became interested far away in Siberia in the organisation of industry there, I utilised this particular figure or sign as a badge for the organisation, and it stayed that way and still remains as evidence of how we felt about the industrial workers being the masters of the industry in which they work.

This photograph tells most by the people in it. I see amongst them men who did long terms in prison later on in the fight against conscription and other things that went on in Australia in the hurly-burly of the war. It was an extraordinary time to live in. I am always grateful for the experiences I had because I learned so much from them and I think that in a way, too, the Australians themselves learned much. Of course, these things don't last for ever, but they do create an atmosphere at the time that can make for success, even when the whole forces of government are against you. It must be remembered that many times the governments, both the Federal government and the government of New South Wales, were really very worried about whether we might not have sufficient power to turn them out or to break them up and even, in a sense, to become masters in our own turn. It never came to that, but I can assure you from my experience of those days that they were worried people indeed. The way they put men into prison, the way they framed witnesses and the way they deported people to various parts of the world showed that they were very worried, especially when, to their great astonishment, the two referenda about conscription went against them and they found that in spite of all the power they had and all the wealth behind them, they couldn't get away with it.

Membership of the I.W.W. was denied to anybody but wage workers. The preamble of the I.W.W. started with the memorable Marxian precept that the working class and the employing class have nothing in common. The organisation was masculine. To a

great extent they were of the migratory type. We had the Home Guard, from Sydney, but most of the members worked in the country, came into Sydney from time to time, took out their card, and would take a bundle of papers and sell them wherever they went. Often they worked as miners until the shearing season came, then went up to North Queensland, started to shear and followed the sun until they got down to Victoria, which was quite a long time. They would come to Sydney to spend their money and see the lassies, then start and do the same again. The same applied to gold miners from the West. They'd come over and perhaps go to Broken Hill. Broken Hill was a strong I.W.W. town. In North Queensland from Cloncurry to the copper belt the bulk of working people were indoctrinated or associated with the I.W.W. philosophy.

We had very few women members, although one of our strongest supporters was May, May Hewitt I think, who was barmaid at the "First and Last". That's at Circular Quay, the first pub arriving at Sydney and the last leaving. She married Jock Wilson afterwards. She married him in Long Bay jail when he was under order for deportation, before he was deported to Britain - that was luck I never had myself. They lived here for a long period until they went back to Western Australia, from which May came. She was one of the outstanding heroines, I would say, of that period in the work she did at a time when very few women were gathered into our organisation.

The I.W.W. never became in any sense an industrial union. We were really an outside influence on the unions through their membership. Our ideas were propounded and made to stick at the branch meetings of the unions and our influence there was very considerable indeed. There wasn't any campaign against us by the craft unions. They tolerated us, I think because we spoke a language that was plainer than they spoke themselves. We were always down to earth and we didn't go in for woolly ideas of waiting till Christmas. We wanted everything that could be done to be done as quickly as possible and the weight brought to bear on the employers.

As an example, some shearers went on strike in North Queensland. I forget how much they wanted a hundred, but the squatters wouldn't come through, so the men decided to wait. They didn't have any money, naturally enough, coming back to start the season; they were all dead broke. They camped on the banks of a river near a road bridge and got in touch with us in Sydney. We took collections on the following Sunday in the Sydney Domain and we sent dozens and dozens of pounds to them so these fellows could buy themselves flour and keep alive until the squatters came to time. They won, through us finding the money on the Sydney Domain to keep them on strike. That was just one of the incidents that occurred during those days, in which we played a part in all matters affecting working class interests, always going directly to it rather than taking the long way round that the politicians have, and getting results much quicker.

We were a very loose organisation. You had to be a wage worker to be a member and any wage worker could join. We had our business meetings of course. We didn't have a paid organiser anywhere. Some people who came in from the Socialist Party might have been paid, but virtually everything was done by voluntary, unpaid effort. There were no strap hangers or people who were living on the organisation. I think I was about the only person who was full time and the little I got out of it was hardly comparable with what else I got for it.

One important question always comes up when you are dealing with an organisation: where does its money come from? In the first place, most of the work in the organisation was done voluntarily. My own total income, although I was working full time, was thirty shillings a week, and I never took any more than that. My breakfast was tea and toast, which used to cost threepence at that time, and my lunch was prepared for me by a sweet girl over in Elizabeth Street, who had an eating place, and that didn't cost me much. I lived very simply, as most of us did at that time. Our main income came from literature sales in the Sydney Domain, sales of Direct Action, Solidarity and Industrial

Worker from America, The Industrial Unionist and various other journals, and War, What For? by Kirkpatrick. We had a hand-cart at that time; we used to call it our "machine-gun carriage". We would bring all our literature to the Domain on the hand-cart and cart away the money. We had quite a job counting it when we got back to the office. I have a distinct recollection of taking £100 away on each of six successive Sundays from sales of literature and the collection. Contributions made by our members were generous, for the time and place; we had a lot of support in the country from fellows who sent in money.

We were doing our own printing and publishing, the price of paper was reasonable and, even on a journal that sold at a penny at that time, you could make a profit if you were doing most of the work yourself. The only things we were really paying for were the linotype and the paper. Inside the office we always had a big heap of paper waiting to be used and the printing press was in a little alcove at the back - this flat Wharfedale machine that I spoke about before, and which itself hadn't finished its history. It is probably doing some government work even today, perhaps somewhere in Macquarie Street, because it was seized afterwards by the authorities. We were not law-abiding and considerate enough to register the damn thing, so they seized it as an un-registered press after three or four years of not realising this.

That was how we got our funds. It didn't alter the fact that a great number of our most reliable workers always found enough money for beer. Their famous hang-out was Mrs. MacDonald's bar in Elizabeth Street, not far from the office. That was the place where many of the things were cooked up while most of the people were in a state of semi-intoxication. I was one of the lucky ones, for I didn't care much for drink, but I liked to go and listen to what was going on, when I had time.

I would like to give you an idea of the way our headquarters at 330 Castlereagh Street worked. The address disappeared later when the tunnel was put through from Central Station to the Harbour. Although it was not large, we held big meetings upstairs on Sunday nights. During the week it was a busy place indeed. As far as the printing went, when I came on to Direct Action I had a little knowledge of press work from New Zealand. Now the jobs of setting up the formes for the paper itself and planning it, as well as running the machine, all became part of my life. I learned that side of working class activity, of how to produce a paper, everything except the linotype, which was done outside. The moment the paper was ready it had to be packed and posted. In those days postage was very cheap, quite a number of pounds for a penny, so we used to send enormous quantities of these bulk deliveries through the Post Office. During the week material was coming in from various parts of the country and when there wasn't sufficient I had to make it up or draw on some other journals or papers. It kept me very busy, especially as the papers had to catch the posts and boats going to Western Australia and Queensland. The papers had to get away in good time so that they could be used by the organisation for meetings in, let us say, places like Broken Hill or Kalgoorlie.

Direct Action was a very good name for the paper. For some of the time Tom Glynn edited it. It wasn't long before the authorities got curious about who was editing the paper, and they couldn't decide whether it was Tom Barker, Tom Glynn, or who it was. We got the idea that we'd make it a little more difficult, so we put on the paper: "Editor: Mr. A. Block". For this A. Block we got a block of wood and a dingy old top hat that somebody had inherited. We put the hat on this block of wood and kept it behind the door in the editorial room and if anybody came wanting to see the Editor, we took him in and said, "Allow us to introduce you to the Editor, Mr. A. Block". When the detectives came round they got very mixed up. Some were annoyed about it and some thought that it was a bit of a joke. As it happened, it probably made the difference between Tom Glynn getting a long jail sentence and me getting it. He got it, because on one occasion they came round to collect him. They decided, after they'd had a talk, that I was the fellow they wanted and took me away. I got a short sentence - well, it wasn't too short, it was

a year - but things happened when I was in prison that got Glynn ten years later on. I thought I was taking the load off a married man, but I was not doing him any good, because he was to serve a sentence all the way from 1916 until 1920 when he was released with the other men by Justice Ewing of the Royal Commission.

Of course, all the work wasn't inside the room. All kinds of movements and strikes were going on outside. There were troubles in Broken Hill; there was a great build-up of I.W.W. sentiment in North Queensland, from Cairns and Townsville to Cloncurry. The engines and box cars on the railways were carrying our slogans. The same thing applied in Sydney Harbour, where we had a big following amongst the ship repairers and painters. When they were painting the side of a ship they would first draw "I.W.W." in very big letters on it, and then they would start on the outside and work gradually towards this, so that during the whole of the time anybody coming into the Harbour of passing would see these enormous letters on the side of the ship, waiting to be painted in. One night at Central Station I saw an engine come in from the shops groomed ready for going out on the road, and the way it had been done reflected light on the side so that you could distinctly see the letters "I.W.W." shining on the engine. We used all kinds of methods like that in order to make the organisation well-known through the country.

We had the I.W.W. song-book and songs like "Casey Jones" and others of that nature, including many parodies on topical favourites. These had a tremendous effect and we used to have some really good singing at our meetings. In some ways we were like the Salvation Army. As a matter of fact, we usually picked up the Salvation Army crowd when they had finished and marched away from Goulburn Street to their headquarters. We were waiting behind the girls with the poke bonnets and, once they'd given the big drum a bang and set off to go, we'd take over, put up our platform and carry on with the philosophy of the working class as we saw it.

Many of our songs were of American origin. A very famous one was about Joe Hill. He was alleged to have committed a murder and was executed in Utah and cremated. There is a story about this - I may as well get it off my chest - although it came later because at that time we had moved into another old gospel hall in Sussex Street. After Joe had been executed, one Saturday morning, to my astonishment, I got a parcel from the I.W.W. organisation at Salt Lake City containing a portion of the ashes of Joe Hill. We decide that we would have a ceremonial depositing of the ashes on the following Sunday in the garden near the Domain, so that we could say that we had Joe planted firmly in Australia. The plan would have worked except for one thing - about two hours afterwards the police raided us. We were all thrown out, the police went through the place and took away Joe Hill's ashes. I didn't know this until they cleared the place. They had the habit of coming in, seizing the place and throwing you out for two or three days. They were searching for all kinds of things, they thought we had fire dope there, they were looking for incriminating material, for letters and that kind of thing, because we were using the theory of sabotage as a method of upsetting the industrial machinery at that time. We made a great display of this, and they were anxious to pin any type of action that could be called sabotage on to us. They would come in and raid the place, leave a couple of ticks in possession, ransack the place from top to bottom and then, two or three days later, they'd see me down the street and say, "Well, you can go and take over again, Barker", and I would move back. When I returned I found that Joe Hill's ashes had gone, so I went to Central Police Station and asked the Chief about them. "Oh", he said, "you're too late. I threw them on the back of the fire". So that was the end of Joe Hill's ashes. They went at the back of the fire in police headquarters. But that didn't cut down the status of Joe Hill in our minds.

We had a remarkable bunch of characters around the organisation, including some very strange and peculiar characters. We had a member who was a ship's painter by trade, but he was always out of work. He came from Dundee in Scotland, so we used to

call him "Dundee". He used to play the piano in the hall; work wasn't very plentiful and he wasn't very anxious for it, but sometimes he used to get hungry. One day when he was walking along Sussex Street he saw a digger asleep on a doorstep. The digger might have been a bank manager or something when he was a civilian, for he had taken out all his money and counted it up in piles on the doorstep, beside him. Dundee, who hadn't had a meal the previous day, was in a terrible condition as to what to do about it. He knew that if he didn't do something, some person would come along and get the lot, for the digger was too drunk to waken. When I came into the hall later Dundee was looking quite fresh, so I asked him if he had been eating. He said he had had a very good meal and told me the story. "I found this money" he said, "with thirty five shillings counted up in silver and coppers. I thought, shall I leave it there for some bum to knock off, shall I take the lot or shall I be kind-hearted? So I split the thing two ways: I took half for services and I put the other half back in his pocket".

I remember after I had done my seven days in 1914 for selling literature in the Domain a fellow I had known in New Zealand drifted into the hall. He used to talk about wage plugs so much that we always called him "Wage Plug Jones". The police hadn't worried much about picking us up, they hadn't picked the Wage Plug up yet, so he was sitting in the hall chewing gum, as he usually was. Then a great big fellow blew in from Western Australia. I think he was a policeman at one time, so we got an idea. Quite unbeknown to Jones we briefed this fellow to act like a copper and come and collect Jones to take him to the police station to do his seven days. It worked perfectly. He came in and said, "Sir, excuse me, have you got a man named Jones here?" "There he is over there," we said, and Jones looked as if he would murder the whole lot of us. This big bloke took him up the road, but when they got as far as Mark Foy's store he didn't know what to do about him. So he says: "Look, do you mind waiting here a few minutes? I've got to pick up another bloke and I may as well take you both in together." So Jones agreed to wait until the copper came back to collect him. The big bloke just went round the block, came back and sat down in the hall. Jones waited and waited for half an hour and then he came to the conclusion that something had gone wrong. When he returned to the hall, who should he see sitting in his chair playing cards but the bloke who had pinched him. Life wasn't all a serious struggle. We had our humorous moment too.

When I was in Broken Hill my room mate was a German called Fritz Georgie. The authorities wanted him very badly because they reckoned he had spy connections with the Central Powers. They would intern any Germans at that time and they used to say that our foreign-born members were spies. Fritz came from Hamburg, where he had lived largely on blackmail. He was a tremendously powerful fellow. When he came to Broken Hill he changed his name and worked in the mines there. It took them years to catch up with him. He was a good comrade in every sense, whatever he had been in Germany, and, as was stated in some of the books on the I.W.W. case, the staunchness of Fritz Georgie saved quite a lot of people from going to prison in Sydney.

I went to Broken Hill in 1916 to speak after our twelve men had been tried for sedition and conspiracy to commit arson. I addressed many meetings there. A short time afterwards, when I was in jail myself, Holman, the Premier, went to Broken Hill on a propaganda tour for the Labor Party. The miners surrounded his train and demanded to know, "How about that bloke Barker?" Holman said that my case had nothing to do with him because I had been imprisoned by the Federal government. The miners said they didn't care what government it was, but Holman wasn't going to speak there until Barker got out of jail. He couldn't even get off the train; he had to stay on it and go back to Adelaide.

The Mayor of Broken Hill before that had been the famous Jabez Wright. He was a short fellow who never wore a collar or tie and he was the local undertaker. When Lord Denman, the Governor-General, made a State visit to Broken Hill with the New South Wales Lancers, Jabez was in a pickle. He'd never had a Governor-General there before

and he didn't know what to do. He was very cynical and hostile to authority in any case. He got some of his boon companions in the boozer to work out a programme, so the result was that when the Governor-General's train came in next morning the Mayor of Broken Hill, Mr. Jabez Wright, was waiting to welcome him, clad in a suit of brand new pyjamas. He came down in the hearse. The Governor-General rather relished this idea. He thought it was something unique and typically Australian, but Lady Denman was snooty and very annoyed about it. In welcoming the Governor-General Jabez said, "Well, the orders are given. Orders, Governor-General, that when you come into any pub they set them up for you, and that's at my expense." For the procession down the main street Jabez rode in his hearse behind the escort of New South Wales Lancers, all spruced up specially for the occasion, and ahead of the Governor-General. That's the way Lord Denman came on a State visit to Broken Hill.

When I was there, a by-election was being held for one of the two Broken Hill seats in the New South Wales Parliament. Jabez was the member for one seat and the candidate for the by-election was a miner called Jack (Percy) Brookfield, who did a lot later for the release of the I.W.W. twelve. At this meeting the Chairman was making his opening remarks and Jabez was standing at the side, about to raise a big pint of beer, right off the ice, to his lips, when the Chairman said, "The next speaker will be Mr. Jabez Wright". Everybody looked at Jabez, he didn't get more than a swallow of the beer, and there was nothing else for it than to get up on the platform. This is what Jabez said: "Fellow citizens, I come here to speak for Jack Brookfield, whom we want to have elected to be the next member for the Sturt seat. Now, I'm what they call a concluding speaker, and I'm going to conclude by asking you again to vote for Jack on election day". Then he got down and went back to the beer.

I should tell you a story about another character; perhaps this story has never been spilled before. A fellow called James Wilson, a seaman from Liverpool and a great drunk, used to come into our Castlereagh Street Headquarters to sleep it off. James, or "Paddy" as we called him, used to sleep in the room where the paper was kept, sometimes on the top of the paper itself. While the trouble with the soldiers from Liverpool camp was on in Sydney, a certain Greek restaurant keeper was murdered, in Goulburn or Bathurst Street. Somebody got into his shop going after money and he got in the way. This was at night time. They were looking for the murderer all over the place. Now on that particular night Paddy was fast asleep, dead drunk, on the top of this pile of paper in the corner. A few months later Paddy got hold of some of those crooked five pound notes that were floating around, he was picked up and got ten years for it. While he was doing his time in jail he suddenly got to hate the whole thing, decided it wasn't worth it, so, like a nut, gave himself up for this murder. It's an absolute impossibility that he could have been in the shop with the Greek that night. I'm positive about that, but, of course, the police don't care how they get you. The moment he started to talk like that they fixed him, and he was executed for it, hanged in the jail.

Question. It has been said that these five pound notes were forged by the I.W.W. in order to undermine the currency. Was that so?

No, No. I mean, we had plenty of things on our plate without being interested in breaking up the social order through five pound notes. No; but it did happen that one or two of our active members were in on this, and the thing was going on secretly before anyone knew about it. I knew nothing about it when it was in the wind. The actual man who did the printing was not a member of the I.W.W.; he was a printer who used to do our linotype for us. They managed to get hold of the authentic paper from somewhere. It was a connived job, somehow or other, to get the watermarked paper from some bank or place like that and he was able to do it through his job as a printer. I think Fred Morgan was one of the men who were mixed up in it. He was very active with us. Of course, when they started to look for him he cleared, and nobody ever knew what happened to Fred.

He got away, and probably got down to South America somewhere. Then there were the softies who took hold of thse notes when they got a chance and started to put them around. They had some very good ones and they had some very poor ones, and the mistake they made was to put the bad ones out and keep the good ones at home. But it wasn't an I.W.W. thing.

I must come to the poster that is said to have made me famous in Australian war-time history. I was charged with the publishing and the printing of this anti-war poster. I produced it myself. I set it up with the type that we had and I printed it myself. It read as follows:

TO ARMS!!!
Capitalists, Parsons, Politicians,
Landlords, Newspaper Editors, and
Other stay-at-home Patriots.
YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU IN THE TRENCHES!!
WORKERS,
FOLLOW YOUR MASTERS!!

It wasn't long put up on the hoardings round Sydney before the police were sent to scratch it off, and we had the sight of a police sergeant going round scraping them off walls and a bloke waiting on the corner with some more ready to post them up the moment he'd gone on to the next one. The police had the thankless job of getting these posters down. This was in 1915, I think it was about May, and it was before the Defence Department were very strong on fighting the war in Australia, so they weren't yet going to start to make a noise about it. At the same time I'd printed a number of small stickers without putting a printer's imprint on them. They decided, since they were sloshing me on the poster, that they'd get me on the others also. They brought me into Court in September of that year. The magistrate wasn't a man of any great reputation. He was regarded quite favourably, I understand, in a certain number of disorderly houses and, some years previously, one of the madams in these establishments had got the idea he was so good and kind, such a friend to the ladies of the profession, that they decided to make a public presentation to him. That almost got him the sack, but, after all, it's Australia I'm talking about and not the highly moral land of Britian. In any event, the magistrate fined me £50 or six months for the poster and £20 or three months for the stickers. This meant that I was going to do time. It would only be six months because the two sentences were concurrent.

After getting legal advice on this matter, I lodged an appeal in the next court. About a month later I came up in the little court in the middle of Macquarie Street, just near the entrance to the park, and it was discovered that the sentences were ultra vires. What happened was that when the war came on the States all undertook their own parts in it, but, as time went by, the Federal Government got tired of this sectional business and so they took over the whole of the legislation that had to deal with the war. It just happened, very luckily for me, that on the day previous to me getting my sentence from the Magistrate in the Central Police Court, the Federal government had taken over these powers. Therefore, at the moment when I was sentenced in New South Wales by the New South Wales' authority, the Federal government had the power, and the sentences were dismissed as being ultra vires. I got out of that one by the kindness of the Federal government. It was just an accident.

The war was moving on and a tremendous number of Australian lads were going for patriotic reasons and adventure in the armies to the Middle East and France, and getting knocked about considerably, too. They found that the old Australian method of fighting with bottles wasn't quite the same thing as fighting with bayonets and rifles. That came to a head later with the first conscription issue. A fair number of Australian lads didn't mind serving and doing the drill but they weren't intent upon going to fight, and so when the draft was due to go they used to just clear off, get into civvies and go over to

Queensland or South Australia and join again as a brand new soldier. Some of these fellows had been soldiers in every State but had never got as far as the battlefield. They might have been called the wise ones. Australians, having rather odd sentiments on these matters, did that kind of thing. In the first few months of the war, when the soldiers were going away from Sydney they were brought from Liverpool camp to Central Station, then they'd march down Elizabeth Street to Circular Quay, with the bands playing. That worked all right for a while. But some of these fellows had been caught unawares, so, by and by, what did they do? They used to have everything ready to unhitch and, as they went down marching, they'd just drop the rifle and the bundle on their back, cut into the nearest pub and clear through it. This became a real scandal, and finally daylight marches were stopped. First they shut the pubs and posted a tremendous army of regimental police there. Then they decided to march them away at night.

I think it can be said that our influence on the Australian army at that time was, in a sense, quite considerable, apart from what we did on the industrial front, because it was natural enough that men who had been influenced by the I.W.W. would join and, when accommodation and food and that kind of thing got bad, their minds would revert to "direct action" as a means of rectifying it. In Liverpool camp there was a famous break-out, when thousands of the soldiers decided they had had enough of the lousy food and the discipline. They went to Liverpool station and stopped the Melbourne Express by standing on the line. They chased everybody off the train and compelled the engine-driver to take the whole gang, in the train and on top of the train, into Central Station. Then they went to town in a big way. They were particularly interested in breaking up the Greek places because there was trouble about the Greek position in the war. They really ruled Sydney for about three days. I remember being in Bathurst Street, not far from Anthony Hordern's store, when about six of these big diggers were standing around a nice, pleasant business man. They had him in a corner and one bloke spoke to him, "Now, look, you, aren't we going to fight for you?" The man said, "Yes, yes, yes". "Well," the digger said, "What are you going to do about it? Dip into your pockets, son!" That's a fact. I used to get round the streets and observe what was going on among these fellows that were on the ramp, and they were really knocking coppers about; they were breaking places open; they were raiding the pubs. They certainly had possession of Sydney for a good three days, and it took a long while before they caught up with them.

Early this year I took part in a controversy in the British Telegraph about this. When news of the discussion reached Sydney, up rises a mighty man who comes to denounce me for saying such things, spreading scandal about a great army in which he fought himself. "Of course", he said, "there was trouble up at Liverpool camp. As a matter of fact a number of us did decide that the food was too bad to be stood, so we just went down into Sydney quietly for a decent meal". He didn't mention how long this meal took to get! The claim was also made by one correspondent that nothing very much happened to the leaders. That wasn't true. When I was in Parramatta jail later I ran into one of these fellows there: he was doing ten years for being mixed up in it.

Under the voluntary system, before conscription was mooted, the Army wouldn't take anyone who said he was a member of the I.W.W. Maybe a man's boss would tell him he had to join up or get a clearance from the Army. If a fellow wanted to get a discharge before he started, he went up, flashed his I.W.W. card in front of the recruiting officer and he was out for good. We had to stop taking members for a long time because we knew a lot of them only wanted the card to get out of the Army.

Just prior to the first conscription referendum the government, Hughes and Pearce and the rest of the gang, were cocksure that they were going to get away with conscription. They'd promised it and they were certain they could deliver it, so they'd already called a lot of the lads up in advance. They used to dress these lads in blue dungarees and they were called the "Hugheseliers". The day before the conscription vote

- I remember this very vividly and plainly - I was in Wentworth Avenue at the bottom of Elizabeth Street when a battalion of these kids came along. Whatever they were there for, they weren't carrying out orders. They started to shout, "Vote No, No, No." In short, it had just the opposite effect to what Hughes intended because, once they got out on the road there, they became, like Australians are, very vocal and they let everybody know that they were against conscription and that they didn't want to go to fight. This army streaming down Wentworth Avenue, and all these lads bellowing at the top of their voices, "Vote No, No, No," will never fade in my memory.

Great crowds used to come to our anti-conscription meetings, up to a sixth of the population of Sydney gathered around and trying to hear the speakers. We got on well with the Irish workers, who have always been a substantial part of the population in Australia, first or second or even third generation Irish descended. They were enormously proud of themselves and Archbishop Mannix was, in a way, sympathetic to us. I mean, we had a common fight on our hands. Although nobody could be wider apart than the I.W.W. and the Archbishop on matters ecclesiastical, it did happen that the Archbishop felt profoundly that this wasn't the kind of war in which Irishmen should engage, still less be forced to engage. So we regarded him somehow as one of our superior fathers. We might not have followed him to heaven, but we certainly weren't going to deny him his right as a partner in the battle.

We had a good cartoonist at the time, Syd Nicholls. He was a young fellow who could get a bright idea. A little while before, the prospectus for the new war loan had appeared, pointing out that this was a good investment, because the interest was far higher than in normal times. So Sid got this idea. He made a cartoon of a gigantic field-gun with a soldier crucified on it and top hatted persons collecting his dripping blood in bowls. Underneath it we put this piece from the prospectus of the new war loan. Nobody thought anything about it. It was just one of the things we were publishing and nothing happened for a couple of months. Then, in a training camp in Western Australia, an officer came upon this and started a big song about it. I was brought to Court under the War Precautions Act of the Federal government and convicted of "prejudicing recruiting". They didn't make any mistake. They kept me tied up and when I came before the beak he fined me £100 or twelve months. Of course, I refused to pay the fine and my appeal was dismissed. I had to go to jail.

This sentence of mine was for a newpaper offence. It doesn't occur often in Australia that men are sent to prison for something they've printed in a newspaper. In the main, it didn't happen at that time, because there was a censorship in the first place. We didn't always give our stuff to the censor in time, or we didn't shove everything in front of him. Maybe the blocks hadn't been made, and sometimes the censor would cut out parts and we would rewrite them. But we never really had any serious trouble with the censor, because, once we'd pulled the proofs, they had to go out to get his stamp on them before we could use them. This meant we had to use a lot of double meanings. The probability is that there may have been somebody in the censor's office who wasn't entirely against us - put it that way - because you could never tell in Australia at that time where your friends were.

I could tell some humorous and odd stories about Parramatta jail, for I got to know more about the penal system in Australia through Parramatta than most people. It was a dingy old jail of the colonial days, used for previously convicted criminals with long sentences. The prisoners included murderers, forgers, garotters and hold-up men. The cells were dark, cold and lonely. We were allowed nothing to read. There was a resident "football team" amongst the warders. They used to take prisoners into the downstairs cell and boot them into insensibility, so they were called the "football team". One fellow there, Black Jack, they never could subdue. He could stand up to them and he was doing, I think, a life sentence. He was a man they'd got tired of trying to cow. He just

wouldn't wear it.

One of the warders, Charlie Keys, he was engineer-cum-warder in the jail, actually, used to smuggle in Direct Action to me. He had come to hate the life and wanted to toss it all in, but he stayed on to help me. The day after I was released he threw off his uniform, told them what he thought of them and came down to our headquarters in Sydney to join the I.W.W. It was a great pleasure to me to hand him his card.

I only served three months of that sentence. When I was jailed, a campaign to "Set Barker free" started and gained a lot of support. They used to bring out Direct Action with just those words on the front page, and there was a tremendous noise about me. At the same time the authorities themselves were thinking about something else which was bigger than I was - the trial of the Twelve. My feeling is that, when they released me at that time, they made it appear that the campaign and the agitation was done to intimidate the government, and this is a phase that they brought a few months later at the trial of the Twelve. It appeared that they had been compelled to release me by force majeure, and that the I.W.W. had done this, and they brought this forward as one of the factors in the trial. They released me not because they loved me. They released me to take the steam out of things for a little while, but all the time they were concocting the biggest scheme which they had in mind.

The arrests of the I.W.W. Twelve started in September, 1916, a month before the first conscription referendum. They were charged with treason and then tried for sedition and conspiracy to commit arson, and to get me released from jail by unlawful means. There was a habit then in various countries, when they had troubles of a similar kind, always to pick on twelve. Twelve was the sacred number. In any event, they were short of one man to make up the team, so to speak, so they picked up an innocent New Zealander named Tom Moore who had no more to do with it than anything under the sun. He got ten years. They just picked him up so they would have the round dozen. That was the type of justice they were handing out at the time. They wanted the twelve and they just took you in and, of course, when you came in front of a beak like Mr. Justice Pring you were gone.

Donald Grant, later a Senator, was pinched because he made a speech in the Sydney Domain when I was in prison saying, "For every day Barker is in jail, it will cost the capitalist ten thousand pounds". He got fifteen years-fifteen years for fifteen words, as Harry Boote of The Worker put it. And warehouses and big places did go up in fire. It was very easy for anyone who got in with the staff. After all, there was nothing new about fire dope. It was just a mixture of phosphorus and calcium di-sulphide. It was a well-known method of making fire, wrapping these components together in a wet rag and then, by and by, when it dried out, the phosphorus set up spontaneous combustion. There was no secret about it. It had a long history behind it in Ireland, where they called it "Fenian fire". It had been used in Australia by shearers over many generations to get rid of faulty accommodation. If the owner wouldn't put in decent buildings and sleeping quarters, when the boys left to go on to the next station they took some of this stuff, rolled it up in wet newspaper or cloth, and about two days after they had gone something happened. When they came back next year there were brand new buildings waiting for them. That was a method of cajoling the cocky into doing what the law required him to do.

We had many little groups working amongst us who were doing various things, and those things were deadly secret and they kept them to themselves, so that you might be God Almighty in the organisation, but you wouldn't know half a dozen things that were going on. There was a chemist, Scully, who ratted on the I.W.W., who made the mixture. Others, there was no doubt at all about it, had some knowledge of it and had some of it, but they were never caught with it, so in law there was no evidence against them. The point is this: the police never did catch anyone actually with the stuff. They certainly had it themselves in the Police Department, and I believe the thing occured

exactly as Mr. Justice Ewing found when he examined it.

The police were naturally born lazy, they were always hopelessly out of touch with everything, so if they couldn't find evidence they had to make it. Planting stuff on men is common and the police are always in a strong position to do that. I met Joe Fagan, one of the Twelve, when I came back to Australia in the 1930's and he told me what happened when he was arrested. Joe was a Russian and he'd been in the United States. He lived at Kings Cross. When the police came to collect him that night he didn't know that he was on for fifteen years. They searched him, took something out of his pockets, a packet of fire dope, and said, "What's this you've got on you?" Joe said, "You know what it is. You bloody well put it there yourselves". And so they had, Joe told me.

They were released in 1920 after Mr. Justice Ewing's Royal Commission. Of course, I was far away from Australia at that time. We should never forget the tremendous work done in this connection by Harry Boote of The Worker. His efforts for these men were absolutely magnificent. He was one of the finest men I've ever met, and I was always a great friend of his until his death. Then Jack Brookfield held out for the release of the men before he would put the Storey government into power - he was Independent Labor. Jack was a very direct and splendid type of man.

In those days I was always in danger of being picked up by the police, as most of us were, and we got to know a good deal about the police and their habits. There was nothing much in the New South Wales police force during my stay in Sydney that impressed me. I thought some of them were a lot of heels, and that might be a pleasant way of talking about them. If you went into the jails, as I did, you heard the professional criminals talking about the police and, naturally, you don't expect criminals who are in constant trouble with the police to have a good word for them, but you did learn some of the methods the police adopted. In our own case of the I.W.W., they were very much at sea. We were so different in our ways and habits that they were never quite sure whether they were going to get anywhere with us. Of course, if they got orders to pick us up, they did, and we were always very cautious, from experience, about them planting anything on us. As a matter of fact, that's not entirely unknown here in London.

The State authorities got very busy in the early days of the war. They used to come down on our headquarters and close it up, and then you had to get out of it for several days until they'd finished raiding the place. But there's one thing you could hand to the New South Wales police - they were the laziest lot of so-and-so's I've ever known. They'd get into a place and, honestly, they couldn't even find the telephone, if there was one. We had one case that stands out. When we moved from Castlereagh Street to the old hall in Sussex Street that had been used for regulating the lives of girls who went on the streets, we set up one part as an office. We decided we must have a secret place to keep our files so we pulled out the fireplace in the office and put it on castors and then we dug a great big hole out in the back with plenty of room. When everything was done we put our files and stuff in there and then pushed the old frame of the stove back into place, and put a fire in it on a cold day as you would do anywhere. Well, on three occasions the police were in charge of that place, and they never even discovered that way of keeping our files secret.

I remember, just taking an example, when I lived in a room at the back of Hyde Park, on the edge of the Loo. I had only a small room with very little in it, for I only came home to sleep. I was busy in the organisation rooms or out somewhere all day. One night Mrs. Job, that was the name of the people, told me that her cousin from the country would be using the extra bed in my room that night. When I got in this fellow was asleep, and he had a couple of dozen eggs under the bed that he'd brought down from the country. By and by there was a knock on the door. A big sergeant and another copper had come to question me and search the place. They found nothing on me; I was always fairly

clever at that. The fellow in the other bed woke up in a terrible stew. He didn't know what had happened. They they picked on him and started to question him. Mrs. Job came upstairs and explained who he was. They still searched him and found the eggs. I'll never forget the old sergeant. "What have you got under there?" he said. "Eggs", the fellow replied. "Open them up. Open them up. They might be bombs, might be bombs". This was about three o'clock in the morning.

When the authorities decided that we hadn't registered our press, they came down to the hall in Sussex Street to seize it. They pushed us all outside the hall and went in to take the old Wharfedale press I've spoken about. It was a considerable piece of old scrap iron. It was built away back in the days of heavy industry. It was heavy, and they didn't know much about it, so they got on with it very slowly. A couple of detective sergeants were in charge. One of them, Sergeant Leary, we knew very well and the type of specimen he was. He got a bright idea. Our fellows were all standing around so he told them to go downstairs and lend the police a hand in getting the press up. One of our fellows, I am not sure of his name, I think it was Callaghan and he came from Western Australia, just looked at the Sergeant, who was in plain clothes, and said, "You're a big, lazy bastard, aren't you? You don't seem to be doing much". He launched out and he hit Sergeant Leary on the chin, and it took about twenty minutes before Sergeant Leary came to. Callaghan got three months for that. It was a very great pleasure to me to see that big bum lying there senseless on the pavement.

A police sergeant, a plain clothes man, came to all our meetings in the Sydney Domain to take shorthand notes. His name was Mackay. He was destined afterwards to become the Commissioner of Police for New South Wales. There's one thing I am going to say about the top ranks of the police department in Sydney: you'd never see any more shiny backsides than you'd see on the top numbers at the police headquarters; and he had as shiny a backside as any of them through sitting and not doing anything. If you showed signs of any activity at all, they'd send you out to Temora or Wagga Wagga or somewhere North or somewhere West, but they'd get you away from Sydney. Mackay wasn't an ordinary street copper. He'd come in for the gravy. Being a shorthand writer, at a time like that he was fully occupied with getting hold of evidence. It was some of his evidence that sent Donald Grant to jail for speeches in the Sydney Domain. He was really, as far as the speaking side was concerned, the key man, and he was always there with his notebook. How far his notebook was true to fact it's very difficult to say, because pieces were picked out, as they always are in these cases, and used out of context.

I can tell you, not from my own experience, another story about Mackay. When we were deported in 1918 to Chile by the Federal Government, there were three more people from Britain with me. One of these was a fellow called Mick Smith. He was a Jewish bloke, whose original name was Isidore Isserman. He came from the East End and, having been trained as a boxer, was very hefty with his fists, if he had to be. After he'd been sentenced he was in the cell by himself at the Central Police Station in Sydney when Sergeant Mackay walked in. "Oh", he said, "Smith, I was looking for you for a long time. I've got you now". He grabbed hold of Mick by the shoulder and hauled up with his right fist. He had Mick against the wall. When he hit at poor Mick's head, Mick had already dodged. Mackay crashed his fist into the wall and put himself off duty for a couple of weeks. So that was a sample of the future up and coming Commissioner, as Mick told it to me.

It is a curious thing that when I arrived back in London from South America in 1920 to carry on a campaign for the release of the twelve men, it wasn't long before a very distinguished police officer turned up at Scotland Yard for a course. Who should he be but the one-time Sergeant Mackay! He'd come over to be trained in the Scotland Yard tradition. We were both in London at the same time. I didn't learn this until afterwards but this is where he came to get that super-intelligence that was going to fit him to be the

Commissioner of Police for New South Wales.

When the I.W.W. was declared an unlawful association, it brought some problems in our work. The biggest was about the paper, because one of the things that we lost, and it was a very serious loss, was the right to use the post. It became a criminal offence to post a copy of Direct Action. To overcome that, on nights when the paper was ready, we had to seal and stamp every one separately, then the men would go out all over the place and put them through the post boxes. As a matter of fact, it's said that the paper was better delivered in the time when it was illegal than it was before, because people took a pride in getting it and a pride in posting it, and the postmen were largely on our side. A good deal of our stuff went to places like Goulburn by train or by boat to Western Australia, so it didn't come into the postal system. We just made them up into rail parcels to go that way. They didn't get much change out of us. The paper kept alive but hanging over our heads all the time was the fact that the press had never been registered, so that eventually it was seized.

We kept functioning after we had been declared illegal. They didn't take the offices away from us; once we'd paid our rent we were safe there. We did carry on but, of course, we became very much more the subjects of supervision and that kind of thing. They'd given us so long to get out of the organisation so the time inevitably came when they began to pick us up. They aimed at the top first, picked us up and charged us and deported anyone who was born outside the country, which happened in my case and many other cases. They didn't always send you to the country you belonged to, but they sent you to some country which had no immigration laws, and that's how you came to be dumped on some foreign shore. Many, many dozens of men were picked up for that. But the great mass of the people got by. They didn't get looked for or taken, and the authorities had already experienced the problem of having too many I.W.W.'s in the one jail. We didn't go into hiding. I don't think we ever thought much about what we should do if we were declared illegal. We expected it to come and we just waited until it did come and then carried on despite it. In that sense, it didn't cut into our activities at all.

In the middle of 1917 the law against the I.W.W. was tightened up. The rail strike started in New South Wales at the beginning of August and it led on to a really big strike. Soon the government was picking us up and putting us behind bars. Of course, Hughes was going to have another crack at conscription later in the year, and he wanted us out of the way for that.

I was sentenced in August, I think. About ten of us were sentenced that day, to six months and then deportation. Some of the men went to Long Bay jail for distribution, but two of us were selected to go, of all places, to Albury jail. They didn't tell us anything about it, or even put us into prison clothes. They just put us into a wagon of some kind and took us to Central Station. An engine was standing there with only one railway carriage. We had two prison warders with us and we had the whole train, just this engine and one coach, all to ourselves to Albury. During the time we were on the road we never passed any movement of traffic or train at all, for the rail strike was on, but they laid on a Special for us to go to the town of Albury.

Albury wasn't a bad prison. Smaller prisons are usually better than big ones; the discipline is easier and the food is better. Mind you, it was pretty grim at first. We slept on coir matting on the concrete floor and the warders were a mixed bag. I remember their nicknames of the Bird, the Ghost, and so on. Every evening when I was locked in my cell I would do my exercise - five steps diagonally across the cell was all you could take. I would swing my arms and exercise and practise my public speaking. You would go mad if you didn't do something like this. I used to recite everything I could remember: Omar Khayam, Hamlet's soliloquy, Ingersoll's oration on Napoleon, Edwin Markham's Man with the Hoe, Edgar Allen Poe's The Bells, Henry Lawson, and anything I could call to mind. I got hold of a dog-eared French primer and studied French from it. It

was helpful later with my Spanish in South America.

After a while I was put on working around the jail, which was much better. I found a friendly warder who used to do me small favours with food and smuggle in newspapers and Direct Action. I got to know the other prisoners and used to have some fun with them. It wasn't too bad. They weren't going to let me out, though. When my six months' sentence expired they just held me for deportation, so I was in jail until the middle of 1918. Harry Holland had been jailed at Albury eight years previously, for his part in the Broken Hill strike. My cell was the same one as Tom Mann had been held in, when he was awaiting trial there with Harry Holland. Tom was acquitted that time.

In November of 1917 the Governor of the jail called me in to ask me who these Bolsheviks were. They'd just had the October revolution in Russia and he thought I was a bloke who might know. I'd never heard of Lenin or Trotsky but I had organised meetings in Sydney in support of the February revolution, so I was able to tell him something about the struggles of the Russian people.

When my time was up they held me for deportation and the British authorities wouldn't take me. I suppose they had enough trouble of their own at that time. That's how they came to send me to Chile, which didn't have any immigration law. I was sent to Long Bay jail in Sydney and eight of us were taken straight from the jail to Newcastle and put on a ship for Valparaiso. I was not to see Australia again for many years.

QUESTION. You have mentioned many people whom you knew in New Zealand and Australia. Could you tell us about any others?

I would like to tell you about Monty Miller. He was one of our star speakers in the latter days, when we were illegal, and he didn't fail on anything. He'd been arrested himself in Perth and then he came east to campaign for the release of the Twelve and to speak for the I.W.W. He was about eighty five at the time. After he was released from jail the Hughes government cut off his old age pension. He came from Tasmania originally and had been a carpenter, working at his trade until very late in life. He must have been quite an up and coming lad when he fought at the Eureka Stockade. He knew that he was in a special position. He knew that nobody could take away the honour and glory that belonged to him by virtue of the fact that he was one of the few survivors - there must have been only about two or three at that time - of Eureka. Everybody was aware that Monty had been at Eureka. They remembered very little about Eureka by that time but they knew it was a glorious episode in the history of their country and that it made the difference whether Australia was going to remain a colony or whether it was going to find a nature and a character of its own. It was, in its way, a most tremendous event in Australian history. In our work we always tried to give the people the idea that, although you're part of an international world, a world of big things, you could have your own special organisation and way of expressing yourself.

Although Monty was an old man when the I.W.W. reached Australia, he understood and adopted its ideas. It was stuff that, in a sense, had been forming in his own mind. In the same way, when I was in Liverpool working on the trams and conditions were hard and bad, I had the feeling that a trade union might be a good way of doing something about it, but I didn't realise until I got to New Zealand what it could do and what it embodied. I am sure that Monty was always looking forward. He was very fond of Emerson as a guide - I'm not an Emersonian myself - but that didn't stop him taking up ideas that came along after Emerson, for he was a studious man. He was able. His hands were strong. He had his droopy moustache. He was tall. He was like a prophet, you might say, like one of the Old Testament prophets, standing in the wilderness, but not alone in the wilderness. People were coming up to him and meeting him. He was always surrounded by lots of young people, to whom he was perfectly attuned, and that's not easy, not only for old people, to be in tune with the generation that's coming and to be able to talk to them.

I consider Tom Mann to be the greatest English leader we've had in this century. There's nobody like Tom anywhere in my recollection: his capacity for working class organisation; his method of taking his coat off and addressing a vast crowd. When you remember the work that he did after he came back from Australia in the great strikes that took place around Liverpool and throughout the country, I think his name should be surrounded in glory. He was in New Zealand as well as Australia and he left his mark wherever he went. Mrs. Mann was also a very great woman, a great helper to him in those days. I've got numbers of letters from Tom when he was General Secretary of The Amalgamated Engineering Union. When I was organising Kuzbass I was insistent that, as far as the British side was concerned, Tom Mann should be a member of the Committee. I have a photograph of him coming out of the Kemerovo mine dressed in oil skins. I think this was about 1923 or 1924. It's a very good picture and it's one that I treasure, The last time I saw him was at the Savoy Hotel. Peter Fraser was over from New Zealand, and, whenever Peter came when he was Prime Minister, he always invited us to his receptions, so there was Tom Mann. That was the last time I saw Tom alive. Tom was well into the eighties then. I remember chatting to him and saying, "Well, Tom, you're looking very well" "You may think I look well," he said, "but I can tell you straight, I don't care if the Recording Angel gets me tomorrow morning. I'm just tired of life. I've had all I can take". Those are the last words he said to me.

The influence of the I.W.W. spread far in those days. Some months ago I had a letter from Ken Baxter, who is the General Secretary of the New Zealand Federation of Labour, which I knew when it was called the "Red Fed" in the time of Bob Semple. I found that he was born somewhere around Dunedin, took up printing, setting type, and then was in the general strike of 1913, but at that time he was only a lad. He must be a good ten years or more younger than I am. I got in touch with him some months ago because the fiftieth anniversary of the general strike was coming and I wrote to the Secretary - I didn't know who he was even - to see if they were going to do anything to celebrate this important event in the history of the industrial movement in New Zealand. I got back a long letter from Ken Baxter who, to my astonishment, recited the names of the men of that time and the meetings he went to. He told how later he came to our offices in Sussex Street, Sydney. He came to a meeting and saw me, a fellow named Tom Barker, and asked how he could join the I.W.W. I asked him what was his trade and when he replied that he was a printer I told him that he qualified. So he got his I.W.W. card from me. He remembers that distinctly and he says so. It shows how these things stuck in the minds of people and how far the ideas of the I.W.W. reached, because Ken Baxter was actually at that time a waiter-printer on one of the Trans-Pacific boats. He was a printer during the day doing the menus and that kind of thing and a waiter also. He followed that and was in the Seamen's Union in Britain and America. Then he went back to New Zealand and came to the top through the New Zealand Seamen's Union. Today he is General Secretary of the New Zealand Federation of Labour and he's plying me with stuff, with their bulletins and everything, as they come out, so that we're on very good terms. I didn't know where he was or who he was any more than he knew where I was, until I wrote him that letter.

I remember Bill Mckell as a young fellow from our Sussex Street days. He was a boilermaker by trade. He lived with his mother at Redfern. He was an active member of the labour movement even then. Afterwards he went into politics, became the member for Redfern in the State legislature and then studied law and became a barrister. I met him again when I came back to Australia in 1931. He was Minister of Justice then. We had lunch together and we had a very happy time discussing things that had gone on in the early days. Later he became Governor-General, the second Australian-born Governor-General, and I've had letters from him since. My memories of Billy have always been very, very good ones; he is a first class Australian in every sense.

Bob Heffron, the present Premier of New South Wales, is a New Zealander whom I knew during the Waihi gold miners' strike. He was a member of the New Zealand Socialist Party. I was sorry that when he was in London a little while ago I missed meeting him. Although I see very little of him, we've been in touch by letter. My memories of Bob are very good. There's one thing I'm sure of, he won't do New South Wales any harm. I am very pleased to see him Premier, for he is a fine man.

The I.W.W. could be said to have come about in a time when it was absolutely essential. That was a time of great unemployment, backward industry and vast movements of working people, especially single men. Migratory people looked for support when they came to a new place and if they found an I.W.W. branch they knew they were amongst friends, and that created a solidarity of spirit that was something more than words. It was the fact that wherever there was an I.W.W. branch, you could go there for friendship and help and also to get on to a job. This was shown in the case of the eight of us who were deported to Chile in 1918. When we came into port at Valparaiso we weren't going to leave the ship at first, because we didn't want to be landed there. We had a police escort on board but we were down below in the hold. We were looking over the side of the ship as she lay out in the bay, and who should come in a boat with a boatman but Julius Muhlberg. He was one of our fellows, an Estonian who had been a frequenter of Sydney Domain and had been deported to Chile earlier. He was looking up at us. He called out to me, "Hello, Tom. They've landed you over here?" I said, "Yes". "Well, what are you waiting for?" So I said, "We've decided we're going to go on to the end of the line and back to Britain, or whatever it is." "Oh," he says, "to hell with that. Come off. You're amongst friends here." At that time he happened to be working on a Chilean barge. He was a very expert carpenter. I've still got some of his handiwork at home. He was really a great man in every sense. He worked all over the world on all kinds of ships and there wasn't anything in the woodwork line, even to the building of Chinese pagodas, which he did on film sets in New York, that he couldn't put his hand to. Julius told us to get our stuff down on to his boat and come ashore. When he said it, I knew it was all right.

We landed at the wharf, alongside the Intendenzia, that is the Governor's house for the province of Valparaiso, because it is a federal republic, and there were no police or anybody to see us. We just walked ashore, as if we were going from one side of Botany Bay to the other. Julius had been on this barge, he had gone somewhere to get some laundry done, and a fellow he knew told him that some Australians had arrived in the bay. So he came out, and who should he see leaning over the rail but Tom Barker, as well as the other fellows.

The I.W.W. (Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo) at that time controlled the whole waterfront of Valparaiso. The port workers and stevedores and the fishermen were members of the I.W.W. They got beds for us, fixed us accommodation in the Union Hall, which was up on the hillside, and we didn't have to worry about the cost of anything. They provided us with money to buy coffee and bread, and then, at lunch time, the Secretary himself - his name was Juan Chamorro - came to welcome us. He'd been a artificer in the Chilean Navy, and he was now a butcher with a stall in the market, which was just below. Conditions were such in Chile then, that carrying arms was no problem and no crime, and, as people were always supposed to be gunning for Chamorro, on his bench where he kept his meat two loaded revolvers were always laid out. If anybody came after him, he'd have got them first. Chamorro used to have us for dinner each night, and he was a wonderful friend. On the first Sunday after we landed there was such a noise about it that the union of the port workers, affiliated to the I.W.W., threw a party for us, a picnic at the back of the hill. I remember walking up those hills - they were very steep, as they are in that part of South America - with a donkey climbing in front of me. He bore

two barrels of wine, one slung on each side of him, and under each arm I carried a live chicken. They were going to be the sacrifice. We had a marvellous time, I never knew how Chileans could dance so wonderfully on broken glass and rock. They were absolutely splendid people.

After a while the Chilean government decided they ought to have an immigration law, so they grabbed us and dumped us over the border into the Argentine. The Argentine authorities were waiting for us. They put us straight into jail, but they didn't keep us there long. Julius Muhlberg and I got to Buenos Aires and started to organise the foreign-going seamen in the port, who were in a sad mess at that time. Many men were on the beach, and kept on the beach, with the recruiting of crews entirely in the hands of shanghai-ers, shipping masters, as they called themselves. Men could be kept starving for months and months, sleeping in box-cars, sleeping out on the docks.

The Boca is the well-known dock area of Buenos Aires. The word is Spanish - its just "mouth". It's the mouth of the main harbour, and, if you belong to the Boca, you live in the Boca, you work in the Boca, you're a Bocarense. It's such a place that the Argentine government, when they were calling men up on the conscription scheme for the Army, would never take anyone from the Boca. If you came from the Boca they would not enlist you in the Army. The place had a bad name as far as the government was concerned. You weren't allowed by law to carry revolvers or knives but as a matter of fact everybody did carry them; they were law-abiding to the extent that they didn't use them very much.

At that time the union set-up in Buenos Aires was largely syndicalist and they were always spoiling for a fight. The Transport Federation had wonderful methods in the way it handled job disputes. Some of the executive, who weren't at work, were always present to deal with any affair that might arise. You could always depend upon them if you had any troubles of your own. If our Seamen's Union wanted to tie a ship up, all you had to do was to go round to one of the four branches of the port workers there. They were a great help to us in the building of the union of foreign-going seamen.

Our rules were: all ships must have their crews signed on three days before they left port, that is, three days before they completed loading; the crews must be signed on, not at the consulates, but in the union hall; and we had a right to tell the skipper whom he took. He had to have a very serious complaint against a man if he didn't take him, because our rules were that the man who had been longest ashore got the first job, if he wanted it.

In 1920 I was asked to represent the Argentine Labour Federation, the Transport Federation, the port workers of Buenos Aires and my own union at a trade union conference in Oslo, or Christiana, as it was then. The Federation was a syndicalist organisation and I had credentials for these three hundred thousands members. I'd shipped as crew before, so Julius Muhlberg and I put ourselves down for the crew of the "Vela", from Bergen, to go to this conference. I went to see the skipper and said, "Well, skipper, you'll be having two noble hands this time. Muhlberg and myself are signing on as A.B.'s on your ship. He said, "Oh, no." "Barker", he said, "I'll take anybody you give me, anybody you like, but I'm not going to take you or your mate." I said, "But you've got to take us," "No," he said, "I'm damned if I will. I'll go to Stockholm Charlie and get a crew". I said, "You won't get a crew from Stockholm Charlie." He was a shanghai-er we'd busted up, you see. The three days had already run, so we went to the port workers' union where about ten of the executive were discussing something. You'd sit at the back, and then the Chairman would say, "I see delegates from the Ultramar (overseas, as they called us). Have you anything to tell us, friends?" We told them that the captain of the "Vela" in Dock 2 had refused to take two members of the crew and we wanted them to stop the ship until he came to time. They immediately sent a delegate and called the port workers off. In about four hours the mate was at our union hall, ready to sign us on. So I

got to Norway for this trade union conference.

In Buenos Aires they were very advanced in working class philosophy: the men didn't mind going on strike. Why? Because they wouldn't start until they were paid for all the time they weren't working. That was just a sign of how unions worked in that part of the world. They weren't what you'd call politically conscious, but industrially they were right on top of their job. They dealt with things as they came up and they won on things. When I used to go along the docks sometimes, these fellows would recognise me, and they'd say to me, "Para este barco, companero secretario?" (Do you want to stop this ship, comrade secretary?) And they'd sit on the string, and laugh. That was the way things were done in Buenos Aires, which wasn't very civilised in the Australian or the Anglo-Saxon manner; but, for people who didn't have a vote and didn't know a politician anyhow, it was a very effective way of getting something done.

From Norway I went to a conference in Berlin of the Freie Arbeiterunion Deutschland (F.A.U.D.). That was the syndicalist organisation and inclined to anarchy. I went on to the Soviet as a delegate from the Argentine Labour Federation. Then I was invited to attent the international communist conference in Moscow in the same year. I attended that on my credentials, although I wasn't a communist. We were received by everybody on equal terms and treated just as well as if we had been indoctrinated communists from our own country. They didn't regard things in a narrow party line at all.

They welcomed us as practical people. At that time most of the Communist Party members had come in from the political side. They were interested in the political campaign but, as far as industry went, many of them were intellectuals or people who had very little industrial experience. The problem that was confronting the Soviet people, and nobody appreciated it more than Lenin, was: we've won the revolution; now we've got to make it work. I remember going to a meeting of the Soviet Miners' Union. The Chairman of the Union was Tom Sergayeff, or Artem. Tom had been a political prisoner in Siberia under the Tsar. He escaped into China, came to Australia and worked in Brisbane. I met him for a short while in Queensland. A lot of people from outside played a very important part after the revolution, and even in the revolution itself. Tom had gone back in 1917, after the February revolution, to the Ukraine where he came from, and, being a miner by trade, he became Chairman of the Miners' Union. He was a rough, tough fellow with a bald head. I was a guest at their annual conference and when I was invited to speak I put things to them along the following lines: "The question that stands now is: you have the mines now; they belong to you: they've been nationalised. But what are you going to do with them? They've been flooded; they're full of water; their top hamper is in a nasty condition; the civil war has gone over them. You've got a tremendous problem. The problem is no longer a question of getting them. You've got them, but what are you going to do about putting them into shape and making them into what social property ought to be?" That was the line I took at the conference. It was reported in the miners' journal at the time.

A few days after the conference Tom was killed in a train accident, visiting a new power station with quite a number of other people from this conference. It was a coincidence that I was the lucky man out, because I was due to go with them and then a telephone call had come through from Leningrad, where they wanted me to go and speak at a meeting of seamen. So, reluctantly, I had to turn down this visit to the new power station. Bertha, my wife, and I went to Leningrad, Petrograd as it then was. That was not very long after the Kronstadt affair.

I became interested in the Kuzbass project. This was the plan to create the Autonomous Industrial Republic of the Kuzbass, far beyond the Urals, in Siberia, by bringing in skilled workers from America and other places. Borodin was one of the men responsible for it. He'd had a lot of American experience and he was for quite a long time the eye, the observer, for Lenin direct in Germany. He used to come to Moscow to report

what was going on there; that was the time of the Kapp Putsch when things were very mixed up in Germany. Lenin trusted him enormously. I believe he later went to China.

Lenin was even more interested in and excited about this project than we were. In his own ideas he was always looking into the future and he was a great man for visualising the problems that the Soviet Union would have to go through. It was not merely a question of industrial development. It was the future enemies of the country that had to be considered and planned far in advance and bases built up against them. Many of these ideas came up in discussion with him. I think his interest in us and the project was equally as great as our interest in him. At that time he had a tremendous number of observers out in the farthest parts of the country. They were men really special to that particular part, men he knew and could trust, and they would come back and tell him what was going on. We would have to take our turn, but one time I remember he was due to address a meeting of the Communist International and he couldn't turn up, because he was in close consultation with us. At that time he regarded it as more important to get the details of this plan for Siberia worked out. He was always on the end of the telephone to Borodin, who was helping us. We would be staying at the Lux Hotel and when we got word that he'd like to see us at a certain time we would go down and be admitted without any formality at all.

Lenin insisted that we come directly under the Council of Labour and Defence This was an authority that went over the economic organs and most of the other commissariats of the Russian Federated Republic then. Lenin himself was chairman of it. It was an organisation with over-riding power, and we came directly under its guidance so that we would be free from any bureaucratic controls at lower level and would have every chance of building this industrial area.

We used to call Lenin "the old man". We never said "Lenin", we just said "the old man". That was the way we discussed him. It was the familiar. In Russian it's "starik". In fact, as a person, he wasn't really old, but it means "the tops", the chief, the man who is really on the job.

I will never forget him. When I think of him I think of that old cap of his, tossed on top of a book case or lying somewhere around the room. He always had it, except in winter when he had to wear a fur hat. In summer he would always wear this old working class cap. I can believe that when he was leaving Geneva for Russia he got half way down the road to the station and then discovered he'd forgotten this cap; so he had to go back for it and they had to hold the train while the old man got his cap. He was a man of medium size, entirely without affectation. He dealt with a tremendous number of telephone calls and visitors. When he was sitting he would cross his knees over one another and fiddle with his pen, writing, writing round and round to come to a corner somewhere.

When we had settled the plans for Kuzbass it was decided that I should go to the United States with H.S. Calvert to establish offices, buy equipment and find men. I told them that I had been refused a visa to enter the United States previously, so I would have to go there illegally. Then the question came up of whether I was expected to join the Communist Party. I told them that would go against my grain, because some of the I.W.W. ideas did not agree with some of the Communist ideas. They took this matter to Lenin and he decided that if Barker wanted to remain a non-party person that would suit them very well. He said that after all there were two Communist Parties in the United States fighting each other, so Barker and Calvert would get caught up in one or the other and the best thing to do was to leave them free. It showed that Lenin himself at that time thought there was a place for the non-party member. Of course, that was the way we had grown up and the way our education had come to us. It was, you might say, a survival of the supreme contempt we had for politicians, in the main. It wasn't held against us. I remember that when we had completed things and allocated tasks we had a celebration

dinner in the Lux Hotel in Moscow and Borodin came to me and said something like: "Well, Tom, I think that of all the people who have come over here and that I've met and advised, you are the likeliest bloke that ever came to us." I am not saying this to glorify myself, but to show how we were treated. He was immensely proud of what we had started.

Bertha and I reached London on Guy Fawkes' Day, 1921, and it was a foggy and stinking and lousy a day as I can remember in this country. We stayed with Bertha's sister at Earl's Court. We got to Canada and we were in New York for Christmas Day. I spent most of my time in the United States then until about April, 1926. We established our office in New York early in 1922. On our committee we had: Clair Killen, an electrician from Detroit; Tom Reese, an ironfounder from Granite City; Roger Baldwin, who was Secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union, and who, I believe, is alive today; P. Pascal Cosgrove, who organised the shoe workers and had been in Moscow at the same time as us; and Edgar Owen from Detroit, a Communist Party organiser. Some of these men were members of the Communist Party, from one side or the other; but we non-affiliated people had the power when it came to the point, for if one side didn't back us up the other did.

I had the longest stay of all the people sent to the United States, because the control of it in New York gradually came on to my shoulders with Cal (Calvert) and some of the other committee members getting out and some changes in Moscow. They really asked me to carry it on, you see. I still had guidance from some of these members of the Committee. By this time we had offices with the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia, but they were largely engaged in taking people for farming purposes and bringing tractors into South Russia to cultivate vast stretches of farmland there, to get some food for the next winter. Afterwards Yasha Gaulus, who was Secretary of the Technical Aid Society, came to Kuzbass himself. I believe, but I am not quite certain, that later he went back to the United States because he was a citizen and became a leader of the Party there. He had been a member of the Communist Party in Russia since the earliest days, from about 1905, when he was virtually a boy, I think in White Russia. He was a very fine fellow. At any rate, that was the time we spent in the United States.

In the United States I did a good deal of travelling and a multiplicity of jobs. We recruited well over four hundred technicians and skilled men, mine bosses and people of that description. As it happens a little while ago I heard from one of these fellows, Frank Grund. He was an American citizen in New York at that time; he didn't have a great deal of skill, but he was very eager and keen. We sent him over; we felt he'd be useful there. Only last year I got a letter from Frank at Kemerovo in Siberia, which was the headquarters of our organisation, to say he was still there, after forty odd years, and that he was in charge of the brickmaking industry in the district. That shows how some of them stayed. We didn't have the money to pay on skill. People had to go over there for the experience, because they felt there was a job to do. They weren't held by time. The period was two years or more. Then they got their fare money back to the States, or wherever they wanted to go. One of our chief sources of people in the United States at the beginning was the Finns. They were hardworking, well adapted to the Siberian climate and many of them were communists.

The main problem wasn't the technicians. We needed engineers, especially chemical and mining engineers. A chemical plant had been built at Kemerovo by a French consortium before the war, and never operated. For the time and place it was quite a good plant and we needed a man with high chemical qualifications to run it. We also badly wanted engineers with steep pitched coal mining experience. The great majority of coal seams in the world are either on the level or undulating, but in the big coal deposits of the Kuzbass at Kemerovo the seams literally stand on their ends, and the least you'll get there is a slope of one in three, or something like that. This means that the ordinary methods of mining have to be abandoned; you have to use short wall systems of bringing

the coal down. The first engineer we sent over was Halford Pearson from Toledo, Ohio. We paid him, as far as I can remember five thousand dollars a year, which was a fair amount of money in those days. Pearson was a man with that type of experience. I still have one of his brochures, reprinted by The Coal Age in the United States about 1925. After he had done his time and a bit more he came back to the States. He was tremendously enthusiastic about the future of it, but he came back for family reasons. The next fellow we sent was Jack Powell from West Virginia. There are only two areas in the North American continent where you get this type of coal seam. One is in the State of Washington and the other, I think, is in Canada, but they are very small. It was vital to increase coal production. Engines on the Trans-Siberian were still burning wood, with all that coal under the ground there, and you can't have a more wasteful way of pushing an engine along than stoking it with wood. At that time coal was a revolutionary thing in parts of this tremendous country.

When I went back to the Soviet Union in 1926 I stayed for about six months, travelling all over the place. Things were changing and a new generation had arisen. The colony was changing too, and many of the colonists had moved on. I began to look for something else to do.

Later I worked for the Soviet petroleum organisation when we were trying to sell Soviet oil on the world markets. I was based in London, but the job took me to many parts of the world, including Australia again. For the last twenty five years I have been more or less settled in London and mainly concerned with affairs in Britain. But that's another story.