



3 April 1985

Victory for Industrial Unionism at Cockatoo Island

Make the Unions Weapons of Struggle!

Enough of Hawke! Bust the Cold War Consensus!

On the back page of this supplement we carry an interview with Neil Florrimell, a union militant and supporter of the Spartacist League. Florrimell was sacked from his job as an ironworker-rigger at Sydney's Cockatoo Island dockyards on 15 March after he refused to work with apprentices being used by the company to break a strike by the dockyard electricians. The interview details the successful fight that forced his reinstatement and defeated the company's attempts to roll back even this limited form of trade union solidarity.

This struggle, which started from one militant taking a stand against the growing erosion of basic trade union principles on the island, was taken up by the electricians and other workers and a drive launched to spread the strike to the rest of the island. On 26 March, with a hundred Cockatoo workers spilling out of the courtroom and faced with the threat of a total walkout, an Arbitration Court hearing recommended Florrimell's reinstatement. The dispute had already gone to the Labour Council. The federal government had its reporters there. This small but powerful struggle was worrying the keepers of Hawke's brittle "class peace". And it brought sharply into focus the central questions facing workers at



Militant mass picketing can forge fighting class unity against the bosses! Heroic British miners battle cops in Yorkshire last year.

Cockatoo, which in microcosm are those confronting the labour movement as a whole.

The class struggle is sharpening in this country. The Bjelke-Petersen government has declared open war on the Queensland power workers and union rights generally. But Petersen has only taken one step further Wran's union-busting threats of mass sackings hurled at the NSW train drivers earlier this year. Almost to a man the official leadership of every major union remains committed to policing the workers for Hawke's "Accord" on behalf of big business. Labor's Cold War "consensus" more and more means union busting, slashing of public services and

growing racist and social reaction — openly fuelled by Hawke's willing subservience to that union-hater and anti-communist fanatic Reagan with his global plans for nuclear war against the Soviet Union. But amongst the ranks of labour there is growing restlessness and hatred of these Labor governments. Instinctively the working class wants to fight but at every point it is blocked, lied to, and disorganised by the Labor politicians and their trade union lackeys. It's high time for some good old-fashioned class struggle to bust wide open Hawke's Cold War Accord.

The fight by Florrimell and other militants clearly touched a felt need amongst the workers to fight together for common class interests. Traditional Laborite craft unionism such as at Cockatoo divides the workers fifteen different ways and sets up the situation where the bosses continually provoke sectional strikes which never really change things. This is what feeds cynicism and anti-union rot. If the unions are to be fighting organisations of struggle they need to organise on a plant and industry level, on the basis of industrial and social power, not along craft and trade lines.

It is a disgrace that the bosses are able to force apprentices ("legally" denied the right to strike) into breaking their own tradesmen's strikes. These young workers are virtual slave labour in their early working life under the present apprenticeship set-up, a feudalistic hangover from the British labour aristocracy and the guild system. As the Cockatoo events show the bosses take full advantage of the union tops' despicable refusal to organise their own youth. It is in everyone's interests except the employers that the apprentices get full union rights and adult rates of pay. Then perhaps some of us over 21 could also have the opportunity to get some decent job skills. Nor are youth the only victims of this craftist arrogance. Thousands of unskilled, mainly migrant women, are left unorganised in sweatshop conditions, including in the metal industry, the province of the "left-wing" AMFSU. The women of the British miners' community demonstrated what outstanding class fighters women can be. Women, youth, migrants are the first victims of capitalist austerity. These oppressed

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Cockatoo militants battle cops, Canberra 2 May 1984. Union tops channelled anger over layoffs into chauvinist pleas to Labor government.

**Interview with Cockatoo
Island Militant ... page 4**

Weapons of Struggle...

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layers are the first driven into unemployment and it is the youth who are sent to be butchered in capitalism's rapacious wars. They all must be mobilised in united working-class struggle.

Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!

When Bjelke-Petersen sacked a thousand line-servicemen, mass picketing to shut down the power stations could have quickly smashed his anti-union power play. Even the power station operators' bans drove the situation to a near-general strike before ACTU chief Bill Kelty, acting as Hawke's agent, stabbed this fight in the back by teaming up with the Brisbane Trades Hall bureaucrats to have the power bans lifted. Now the ACTU tops are covering their treachery by running a token campaign of fund-raising and protest actions, being careful not to disrupt Hawke's "consensus" with the South Africa-loving racist pig who runs Queensland. Trade and craft divisions exploited by the cowardly union bureaucracy are the reason that Queensland power workers are still at work while a thousand of their union brothers are sacked and Petersen is ramming through his Thatcher-like anti-union laws. The British miners showed the way to break through this crap — powerful mass picket lines to shut down production.

The picket line is a powerful weapon in the workers' arsenal. Mass picket lines can rally the hesitant, organise the strikers for action, defend the workers against scabs and cops and extend the strike to other factories and work sites ("flying pickets"). Once a picket line goes up it demands that every worker take a side with the strikers. *Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!* Such tactics, based on a determination to win battles and to forge a fighting class unity across craft and trade lines, are central to the struggle to transform the unions into fighting organisations.

The union bureaucrats fear such

"The SL put forward a strategy for winning" — Derbyshire miners' strike militant, Dick Hall.

For a revolutionary perspective on the British miners' strike read *Workers Hammer*, paper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

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class-struggle tactics like the plague. Most of them think the only place for "class struggle" is in the Arbitration Court, and of course parliament. The supposed "neutrality" of Arbitration is about as big a lie as the myth of the partnership between capital and labour that underpins Hawke's "consensus". The bosses' "rules" and courts are a losing game. It was militant class struggle that got Neil's job back and that has been behind any significant reforms the working class has ever won. The union tops hate militant class struggle because it throws the workers up against the bosses' state, exposing their reactionary role and shattering the illusion that the capitalist state can be "reformed" in the workers interest. The desperate need to turn the unions around, to organise and fight, means a political struggle against these union bureaucrats, and building a new leadership based on a revolutionary program in the unions. The starting point for this struggle is the complete independence of the unions from the capitalist state. As the Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in 1940:

"The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

— "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay"

Under the dictates of intensified capitalist austerity and Reagan's anti-Soviet war plans Hawke has brought the "gang of four" NCC-Grouper unions back into the Victorian ALP. In NSW these anti-communist diehards stayed in the Labor Party, like the Ironworkers' Laurie Short, and these types still dominate the NSW union and ALP bureaucracy today. The connection here is simple and stark. Anti-communism is anti-union and anti-working class. The only "union" that Hawke's allies like Reagan and Thatcher in the "free world democracies" have any time for is the Pope's Solidarnosc movement in Poland, a favourite of Santamaria's NCC as well. They only hail "militancy" when it is a counterrevolutionary movement aimed at overthrowing a workers state. Defence of the Soviet Union — the

social gains of the first and most powerful workers state which remain in spite of its Stalinist degeneration — is integrally linked to defence of the workers unions and social progress.

As Neil Flormirell points out, the labour bureaucracy spreads protectionist, nationalist poison, not least in the "defence" industries. Their patriotic fervour not only protects Australian capitalists while saving not a single job, it fuels racist divisions both between workers in Australia and overseas (eg Japan), and between the different races and nationalities of the Australian working class, preparing the workers to be cannon fodder for imperialist war. The main enemy is at home — the Australian bosses and their government. Workers from the Putilov munitions factory in Petrograd (now Leningrad), also a "defence" industry, played a great role in the 1917 Russian Revolution. And workers from the same factory had a big part in the defence of Leningrad against German fascism in the Second World War. But they had something to fight for, not like propping up Australian capitalism.

The fight to turn the unions into weapons of struggle must be a struggle to drive Hawke and his Cold War CIA-lovers out of the labour movement. To successfully carry through this struggle means splitting Labor's base from its bourgeois leaders on the road to a mass revolutionary workers party. A new leadership is needed that can mobilise the working class and all the oppressed around demands that address their felt needs and point the way towards workers' rule. It must fight for jobs for all through a shorter working week without loss of pay, counter inflation with regular full cost-of-living adjustments to wages, champion the cause of the oppressed youth, women and migrants and build a fighting class unity of all workers. For the working class the struggle against the threat of nuclear war and the economic crisis must become a struggle for workers power, a workers republic of Australia which will be part of a socialist Asia. *Australasian Spartacist* is a Marxist newspaper, published by the Spartacist League, which as part of an international Trotskyist movement, the international Spartacist tendency, is fighting to build such a revolutionary party. ■

Interview...

Continued from page four

Solidarnosc as anti-socialist. So getting back to the main issue, the question of mobilising the working class in strike action in their own interests, as opposed to the strategy of relying on arbitration and the Labor government, makes the difference between whether the working class wins or loses.

ASp: The FIA tops seem to have a pretty consistent policy of working against the interests of their own membership and those of the workers generally.

Flormirell: Well, as you know the FIA tops spend most of their time and our dues money fronting for the government attacks against the BLF and publicising Hawke and Reagan's favorite union, Polish Solidarnosc. In this fight, while they initially said they backed me, they attempted to bury the fight in Arbitration. In fact during the Arbitration Court hearing the organiser from the FIA denounced me before this bosses' court for committing what he called a morally indefensible act in going against the majority of my union. In the quarterly branch meeting of the FIA that evening I put forward a motion to thank the electricians whose strike had won my reinstatement and to point out the need for all the unions on Cockatoo Island to take up the fight to organise the apprentices. My motion was suppressed using the Harvard School of Business rules that these types are trained in. And at this same meeting the FIA tops reaffirmed their support for ANZUS and the Cold War which conditions their opposition to all workers struggles. They even squashed an attempt by the men to discipline a gang of scabs that broke one of our strikes last year. Myself and others called for them to be blackballed and I was threatened by management for distributing copies of Jack London's famous condemnation of scabbing, a statement printed by the strikers of the South Wales Area of the NUM.

Of course all this goes back to the anti-communist witchhunting in the Ironworkers in the 1950s when the Groupers got control of the union. They got busy helping Menzies and the Liberals go after the workers

Postal Militants Rally to British Miners' Struggle

During the twelve months of the British miners' strike, workers around the world looked to them in real solidarity and saw their fight as an important battle. Today with the defeat of the strike it must be stressed that though defeated and bloodied, the NUM is not broken. Every worker in the world should be proud of the way the miners marched back, solemn but determined, aware that it was not a march of victory but of orderly retreat, to muster their forces for the future to carry on the fight.

The Spartacist League here established a modest fund campaign — the Aid to Striking British Miners' Families Fund — to raise money for the miners, to be forwarded via the Partisan Defence Committee's (PDC) campaign. The PDC is a class-struggle, anti-sectarian legal defence organisation in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League/US.

Collecting money here for the miners indicated the depth of solidarity felt by workers for this heroic struggle. A highlight came from

postal workers in Melbourne. The 25 February general meeting of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union (APTU) voted unanimously for a motion calling on the union to immediately send \$2,000 directly to the striking British miners and their families. The proposed motion, initiated by union militants who support the Spartacist League, had been endorsed by over 80 union members from numerous sections of the union including the mainly immigrant mail officers, drivers and line-servicemen, and from the postal officers. Mover of the motion, Peter Waterhouse from the transport section, told the meeting: "The British miners are fighting for all of us, their courage and determination to win should be seen as a lesson to the unions in Australia." Later in the meeting State Secretary David Bowler announced that an immediate state executive meeting would be polled to ensure the money was sent immediately, and then within days it was reported that the executive had raised the amount to \$3,000 in

obvious recognition of the wide support shown for the miners by APTU members. A further motion passed by the general meeting also called for the union to start a fund raising campaign.

APTU members had already donated a sum of \$225.85 in shop floor collections for the PDC Aid to Striking British Miners' Families Fund. There have been numerous stories, from collections at work sites, to street sales, to campuses, of people pulling out their wallet the minute they heard the words "British miner's strike", glad of the opportunity to donate something. There were instances in the postal collection where people approached had already been lined up by friends, and others sought out our supporters so they could donate something; as well, people who refused to donate anything were jeered at and looked on with scorn. To date, a total of \$2117.50 has been collected nationally for the fund, and we take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed for their solidarity with this historic class battle. ■

Hail Lankan Women Workers' Struggle!

A special meeting of the women garment workers of Magnum Garments Limited was organised last month to see our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka hand over to their union, the All Ceylon Commercial & Industrial Workers Union, the funds collected in Australia in support of their strike last year. The text of a speech given to the meeting by a representative of the international Spartacist tendency is reprinted below.

It is a very great honour for me to speak to you today. I would like to explain why this is so, and why the international Spartacist tendency thinks your struggles are very important.

I'm sorry that we could not bring to you this money we have collected when you were still on strike, when you most needed it. I'm sure, however, you will find a good use for it. I have been told that the Magnum management is refusing to pay you bonuses. Perhaps this money can be used to help in these new fights. The Apparel Garment workers are on strike, perhaps it could be used to support their struggle.

The money was collected by our Australian comrades. According to the standards of living in Australia this 13,000 rupees is not a large amount, but it is a gesture of how important they think your struggles are. The capitalists in Australia try to encourage white racist attitudes. But Australia is part of Asia. Our comrades in Australia know that they must build links with the workers of Asia if they wish to get rid of Australian imperialism.

As internationalists we believe that we must support all the true struggles of the workers and oppressed everywhere in the world. We do not say that because a strike is not in our country we will not support it. We do not say that because a strike is not led by our party we will ignore it. Today our

American, German and French comrades have been working very hard to support the British miners' strike.

The miners have been on strike for ten months. Now it is one of the coldest winters for thirty years. President JR's friend, Mrs Thatcher is using police violence, scabs, the law courts and starvation to try and beat the miners. The trade union bureaucrats and the top leaders of the



About 100 mainly women workers at Magnum Garments in Sri Lanka met to accept strike support funds collected by the Spartacist League/ANZ.

Labour Party have tried to sabotage the strike and have refused to bring out the other powerful forces of the working class on strike with the miners to defend jobs and get rid of Mrs Thatcher.

Our American comrades have collected thousands of dollars for the miners. The money the miners receive goes into a special bank account to run the strike and support the miners families. It does not go to the union's general funds for normal administration costs and officials' wages. But the miners do not just need financial support, they also need a program to win. That is what our British comrades fight for when they demand "All out with the miners".

Yes, we believe in international working class solidarity. It was British imperialism that was the great master of "divide and rule", of turning one community against another in its empire. Now the Sri Lankan and other capitalist ruling classes use the same tactics. But communalism and racism divide the working class against each other and diverts it from the real enemy, capitalism. It is the same

backward. Yes it is true that women have special problems and burdens. But I cannot accept these excuses. I know that women workers can and must be in the vanguard of the struggle.

British imperialism made super profits from the tea plantations. Now the Sri Lankan capitalists share these profits. But still the plantation workers live and work in terrible conditions. Now the capitalists also want to make fat profits from the workers of the Free Trade Zone and textile industry. They make you a slave until you are a human wreck and then they throw you on the rubbish dump. It is the Tamil women of the plantations and the young women in factories like Magnum who are the real heart of the working class in Sri Lanka. There can be no bright socialist future in Sri Lanka unless you take your place in the forefront of the struggle. Don't listen to those men who tell you that you can and must only follow behind. I know you can be the best fighters and leaders just like Trotsky said.

As I said we will support your struggles. We have big differences with the comrades of the LSSP. I read yesterday that an LSSP leader said capitalism is to blame for all the troubles in society. This is true, but how can you fight capitalism when you join in governments with capitalist parties which oppress workers and even become minister of finance and taxation.

No, if we want to free ourselves from exploitation and oppression, if we want to build a society that is fit for ourselves and our children to live in we cannot do it in alliance with the capitalists. We must sweep capitalism into the rubbish dump. We must build working class unity — in Sri Lanka, in Asia, in the world.

Thank you very much for letting me speak to you. Workers of the world unite! ■

movement, and their people still control the FIA. But there have also been militant traditions in the Ironworkers. For example the Balmain shipyard workers' strike during the Second World War. Nick Origlass and the Trotskyists who were active FIA militants played a leading role in that struggle. They didn't stop the fight just because the bosses and their labour lieutenants were screaming for "sacrifices".

ASp: What happened at the Arbitration Court and why did it recommend your reinstatement?

Florrimell: As I said it was no thanks to the FIA. The real thing that decided it was the determination of the electricians to stand by me. Approximately a hundred of them turned up at the court to show their support and the court knew that there was massive sentiment throughout various unions on the island in support of the stand I'd taken so that metal workers official Pat Johnson had to make the point to the court that every unionist on the island stood by what I had done and if it didn't reinstate me there'd be big industrial trouble. So in some ways the court had no choice but to reinstate me in order to head off what could have been a big explosion on the island. Indicative of the growing ferment was a mass meeting on the island called by the shop committee only one hour before the court was to meet. Neither I nor the electricians were told about the meeting (to either attend or to put our case), the meeting was poorly organ-

ised and from all accounts it turned into a platform for various FIAers to defend their rotten position. Even so the meeting almost voted to go out in solidarity with me and the electricians.

ASp: You referred earlier on to the importance of the unions fighting independently of the bosses and the government in the workers' interest. What's the attitude towards the Labor government on the island?

Florrimell: In 1982 there was massive enthusiasm for the election of Hawke. There were slogans all around the island "Give Bob the Job" and there were many illusions that the workers could win something out of a Labor government. Two years and several hundred layoffs later things have changed dramatically. Before the last election the shop committee put an advertisement in the *Telegraph* calling upon all workers to refuse to vote Labor, reflecting the deep disillusionment in the ALP on the island. The only problem was that it didn't put forward an alternative to the Labor Party — the need to construct a revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government.

ASp: This was a small but important victory, something of a turnaround in the situation. What are the prospects for struggle on the island now?

Florrimell: Well, there's been a lot of pessimism on the island, the basis for which was largely laid by the campaign by the union officials against the layoffs last year which channelled the workers will to fight into a strategy of

capitalists and UNP government that attacks you which also attacks the Tamil people, denying them their rights. JR's friend, Ronald Reagan, the man who wants to get his imperialist hands on Trincomalee harbour as part of his preparations for nuclear war with the Soviet Union, uses racism to divide white workers against black workers in the United States. JR and the capitalists are trying the same trick here. I ask you not to be fooled.

The great Russian revolutionary leader, Leon Trotsky, once said that when they are aroused there will be no better fighters for communism than the women of Asia. I hear people say that women in Sri Lanka are not interested in politics, that they are

pressuring the Labor government to grant the company a contract for another naval ship. This was lining the workers up in the interests of the bosses and their war drive and was more of the same protectionist bullshit pushed by the union bureaucracy that pits Australian workers against foreign workers, lining them up to protect the profits of their own bosses. This is a deadend strategy. And it only fuels incidents like when a few racist workers approached a delegate to call for a meeting to expel Filipino workers from the island in 1983. Right now we're facing 400 layoffs, starting in about six weeks. And what this strike did was point the way forward in terms of a program that can win: to organise the apprentices; to build an industrial union; to have no reliance on the bosses' Arbitration Court. And there is the question of picket lines which some of us were talking about. There isn't much of tradition of picketing in Australia, but it cuts right against craftism and the arbitration system. Picket lines are to shut a place down solid. They are a weapon of real class struggle. And next time we should follow the British miners example and set up solid picket lines. Apprentices, other crafts, other unions, scabs — nobody should cross a picket line. And to fight the layoffs we need demands like 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to spread around the available work. With a program like that we'd have the fighting strength and unity to occupy the island and put it to the government

and the company that they will not have their ships, their submarines, or their island until they come up with jobs. And such an occupation would be a battle cry to thousands of workers throughout Sydney and all over Australia who've been eating shit for years from both the Hawke and the Wran Labor governments, to the wharfies, to the seamen, to the government and public transport workers and many, many more. ■

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Sacked FIA Militant Reinstated

Cockatoo Is. Workers Beat Company Attack!

ASp photo



Interview

ASp: Congratulations on your reinstatement victory at Cockatoo. Can you go through some of the background to the struggle that just took place?

Florrymell: Well, the company's use of apprentices as a strike-breaking force has been a contentious issue on the island for years. My section of the FIA [Federated Ironworkers Association] (it's divided into three sections on the island) has had on its books for a long time that we refuse to work with apprentices when they're being used to scab on striking tradesmen. However, after years of general erosion of union conditions and consciousness on the island this was recently reversed. I called a meeting of ironworkers about six weeks ago to affirm the policy of not working with the apprentices. But it was voted down 35 to 53. This time when the electricians went out on strike over grossly inadequate ventilation on the subs, I decided to stand and fight this. So I refused to work with the apprentices who were being used to strikebreak and was then stood down. My section of the FIA met and the majority refused to defend me. The company took this as a green light to further attack union conditions, and sacked me two days later, telling me to pick up my pay, pack my stuff and get off the island. As soon as the electricians heard of my sacking, they said they wouldn't go back until I was reinstated.

ASp: So the management probably expected to get away with this provocation and instead they got a fight. How did you go about it?

Florrymell: Well, immediately I was sacked I started lobbying other unionists on the island and in particular talked to striking elec-

tricians. At the electricians' 18 March strike meeting I intervened to point out they should not stand alone, that this was a fight for basic union solidarity. I said that it posed the question of organising the apprentices to undercut the way the company has continually pitted one union against another and broken their strikes, that the need to set up picket lines to defend the strike was posed, as was the need to forge one industrial union on the island. One of the electricians put a motion at the next meeting that took up these questions and called for extending strike action, particularly for the FIA to reverse their stand and come out with the electricians. Some electricians started talking about setting up picket lines. But the motion was deferred to the next meeting so I decided with some electricians and ironworkers to tell the other workers this by distributing a statement to the island.

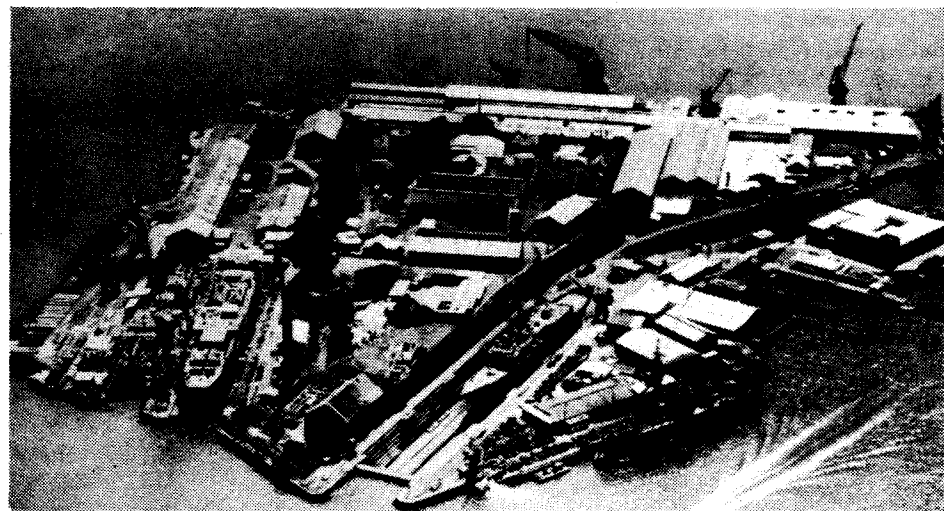
ASp: And what was the response?

Florrymell: The response was pretty overwhelming. Several electricians, fitters, and ironworkers volunteered to hand out the statement and many more volunteered to put their name to it. In a few days we had collected close to 40 names. We had several apprentices who were very enthusiastic about it, and several unionists after reading it and talking to us about it were quite incensed that their delegates had not called any meeting about it. We got support from the assistant secretary of the Garden Island Shop Committee who said that such a thing would never be allowed to happen at Garden Island. We got endorsement from state and federal officials of the Painters & Dockers. The P&D delegate at Cockatoo took a bunch of leaflets and distributed them on the island. Workers at John Fairfax's talked about taking up a collection for the strike. Overall our stand tapped a very deep-felt need



Asp photo

Neil Florrymell and electricians celebrate their victory.



Cockatoo Island dockyard in Sydney Harbour. Neil Florrymell (top).

for one industrial union on the island and received support from workers in quite a number of different unions, showing that the issue cut across the usual craftist divisions.

ASp: You're a supporter of Australasian Spartacist. How did your political perspectives affect what you did in this situation?

Florrymell: Well, in a small way the experience of this struggle shows that the working class's real strength lies in its independent mobilisation in strike action against the bosses. The strategy I pursued in conjunction with some militant electricians was to win this strike by broadening it, by fighting this fight on the basis of the objective interests of all the workers there. By contrast most of the delegates, including shop committee convenor Bill Haggerty, who has been a longtime supporter of the Socialist Labour League [SLL], sat on their

hands and waited for the Arbitration hearing. The Communist Party supports a group called the Rank and File Ironworkers, one of whose members, Max Callaghan, is a delegate for the shipyard section of the FIA. The CPA were architects of Hawke's Accord, so it's probably not surprising that Callaghan even refused to sign the statement we'd issued. Then there's the SLL's *Workers News* which is sold on the island. They wrote an initial report on the dispute but nothing at all about its victory. Instead they printed a sinister slander piece about the Spartacist League in the US claiming they supported white racist vigilantism and were evolving "toward fascism". Just slanderous garbage. Certainly the British miners have no time for this group after the way they set up Arthur Scargill for a Cold War witchhunt at the 1983 Trades Union Congress. He had just rightly denounced the Polish

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STATEMENT TO COCKATOO ISLAND WORKERS

On 13 March Neil Florrymell was stood down and then later sacked from his job as an ironworker-rigger for refusing to work with the electricians' apprentices during the current ETU strike over safety and air-conditioning facilities on the submarines. The apprentices are being used by the company to break the electricians' strike.

The defence of Neil Florrymell and the defeat of this attack on elementary union solidarity is in the interests of every worker at Cockatoo. For too long the company has used apprentices to set one group of workers up against another and to break their strikes. It is the unions' responsibility to organise the apprentices -- full union rights and full union responsibilities. Otherwise the present situation where the company uses the apprentices against any union action on the island will continue. The ironworkers meetings that decided to allow ironworkers to work with the apprentices doing struck work, and then refused to defend brother Florrymell after he was stood down are a green light for the company to increase its attacks and should be reversed immediately. Cockatoo ironworkers should join the electricians on strike to decisively defeat this attack. A motion to this effect was submitted to the last electricians' meeting and will be considered at the next meeting.

Only the company's interests are served when effective industrial action is undercut, setting up one group of workers against another, including both electricians and ironworkers when they have been on strike. We must guard against any attempts to set one union up against others. Poaching jobs from the FIA is poison. Genuine working class unity can only be achieved through building on the electricians' action and extending it. Unless that fighting industrial unity is forged we will not have a hope in hell of properly confronting and fighting the company retrenchments that continue to threaten union members on this island.

We firmly believe that this fight can be won, and that industrial unionism here at Cockatoo Island can be established as the weapon for all our battles against the company. The electricians should not be allowed to stand alone in this fight. Strike action to defeat this company attack needs to be extended now, and right across the island if need be.

A statement for industrial unity! 41 unionists put their names to this statement: 9 ETU members, 6 FIAers, 6 P&D members (including a delegate), 1 painter's union member, 4 federal & state officials of the FSPDU & the assistant secretary of Garden Is's Combined Unions Shop Committee.