

Unions Say: War is not the Alternative

"Australians for peace - I salute you!
The ACTU strongly opposes a unilateral declaration and Australian involvement in a war on Iraq.

The ACTU condemns terrorist acts wherever they occur - such monstrous acts take human lives and cannot be accepted but war is not the answer.

The threat of a pre-emptive strike by the USA, seemingly supported by the Australian Government, contravenes international law, is a threat to world peace and must be resisted by the UN Security Council.

To hear Robert Hill call for reform of international law to "legalise" pre-emptive strikes as an act of perceived self defence was shocking: to hear this morning our Prime Minister endorse this call is to back a new era of lawlessness, threaten global security and flirt recklessly with basic human rights, is simply unacceptable.

People ask me why the unions would get involved in this debate. The answer is simple - it is working men and women and their children who bear the brutal brunt of war. Economies are destroyed, jobs are lost and families dislocated, wounded and killed.

Peace has always been a union issue. We know that nearly fifty percent of the population of Iraq is under 14 years and up to a million families are already displaced. Save the Children Fund reports that there is widespread suffering with malnourishment endemic. This is the leftover from the previous war and any attack will further exacerbate an already desperate humanitarian crisis.

Dictators who oppress their people exist in too many nations but war is not the answer, war is not the solution.

The real solution is disarmament and an end to the development of all weapons of mass destruction as a first step to global

The ACTU is strongly opposed to the development of weapons of mass destruction whether by Iraq or any other country.

UN mandated international inspection of any country stockpiling weapons of mass destruction - chemical, biological or nuclear - whether Iraq, USA, North Korea, Russia or any other nation would significantly contribute to global peace and security. This should be the call of leadership from our Government if it were genuinely dedicated to global peace and security.

The ACTU is deeply concerned that the unrelenting talk of war is drowning out talk of solutions for peace. Your presence here today begins to turn that around.

Even Peter Gration, former defence chief, advises against a war on Iraq. He counsels that little has changed to generate such urgency and could actually "see the Muslim world united against the West and the threat from international terrorism worsened". No authority can claim there is a link between Bali and Baghdad.

I would like to finish with a call for all political leaders to avoid incitement of a climate of suspicion and fear in Australia and to promote increased understanding of the diversity of Australian religious faiths, including Islam.

Our message is a simple one: Muslim men and women - you are welcome here! Australian unions, join with the large number of individuals, community organisations and religious communities here today to plead with all political leaders to oppose a war on Iraq. Terrorism must be stamped out but war is not the answer".

Speech by ACTU President Sharan Burrow at an Anti-war Rally. Sydney Town

Peace is Union Business

blue mountains
BMUC inc
unions council

Joe Hill

By Alfred Hayes

Music by Earl Robinson, ©1938 by Bob Miller, Inc.

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
Alive as you or me
Says I, But Joe, you're ten years dead
I never died, says he
I never died, says he

In Salt Lake, Joe, says I to him
Him satnding by my bed
They framed you on a murder charge
Says Joe, But I ain't dead
Says Joe, But I ain't dead

The copper bosses killed you, Joe
They shot you, Joe, says I
Takes more than guns to kill a man
Says Joe, I didn't die
Says Joe, I didn't die

And standing there as big as life
And smiling with his eyes
Joe says, What they forgot to kill
Went on to organize
Went on to organize

Joe Hill ain't dead, he says to me
Joe Hill ain't never died
Where working men are out on strike
Joe Hill is at their side
Joe Hill is at their side

From San Diego up to Maine
In every mine and mill
Where workers strike and organize
Says he, You'll find Joe Hill
Says he, You'll find Joe Hill

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
Alive as you or me
Says I, But Joe, you're ten years dead
I never died, says he
I never died, says he



Images used courtesy of the estate of Mrs. P. Counihan

WAS WAR FOR THOSE WHO WANT IT

By Don Henderson ©Don Henderson 1978

Chorus

Let the manufacturers man the guns they make.
Put the politician's own dear life at stake.
Sabre rattlers send to battle, generals to the fore.
Was war for those who want it, they would want an end to war.

The men who build the planes and make the tanks,
are neutral and get payment in Swiss francs.
While the rich on both sides prosper, the poor will kill the poor.
Was war for those who want it, they would want an end to war.

The men who run the land are overjoyed.
Here's their chance to cull the unemployed;
and they'll face no elections while the killer cannons roar.
Was war for those who want it, they would want an end to war.

The patriotic zealots cannot wait
They're out there waving flags and preaching hate.
While the boys they send are dying, safe at home recruiting more.
Was war for those who want it, they would want an end to war.

The generals play at charge and counter charge.
Bombing raid, artillery barrage;
while far behind the front line of their deadly game, keep score.
Was war for those who want it, they would want an end to war.

FOUR STRONG WOMEN

By Maurie Mulheron ©Maurie Mulheron 1996

Chorus:

It took a hammer, an act of love
To turn that jet Hawk into a dove
It took some courage, it took some strength
To stop that fighter from dealing death

You sang of justice, you rang the bell
You drove your hammer through Timor's hell
You won your freedom but you won more
You stopped a death plane from making war

Into the hangar, into the plane
Now use your hammer to stop the pain
There's steady breathing as your work starts

Four strong women with hammers high
Beating ploughshares for a peaceful sky
They know the struggle, they know the cause
Whoever profits keeps making wars

And its one, two, three, what are we fighting for?
Most know it's the same old scam,
Wag the dog at ol' Saddam.

And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates.
Well, we've got no time to wonder why,
whoopee, we're all gonna die

So come on all you mothers throughout the land,
pack your boys off to old Baghdad.
Come on you fathers don't hesitate,
send your girls too before their wedding date.
Be the first ones on the block to have your kids come home in a box.

And its one, two, three, What are we fighting for?
The clueless just don't give a damn,
about the oil in Afghanistan.

And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates.
Well, Rockefeller says the population's too high
and half of us need to die.

So come on all of you dumbed down men,
the son of a Bush needs your help again.
He's got us in a terrible jam,
ousting daddy's partner old Saddam.
So don't roll up your sleeves for any shots in your arm,
it's just smarter to stay on the farm.

No War On Iraq: Labor Council of NSW

Working families are invited to raise their voice for peace by opposing Australian involvement in unilateral action against Iraq.

The Australian union movement has long supported the cause of peace and the use of diplomacy and discussion through the international community to resolve conflict between nations.

The Labor Council of NSW does not believe any nation has the right to decide 'regime change' of any other nation by external force.

Labor Council, therefore, supports unequivocally the calls in Australia and the wider international community that there be no military action taken against Iraq by the United States or any other country without the backing of a specific United Nations security council resolution.

In addition, we call upon Iraq to fully and unconditionally cooperate with the United Nations resolutions and to allow the resumption of weapons inspections.

The Iraqi War Song

(or Feel Like I'm Smelling a Rat Rag)
A song by Country Bumpkin and the Hogs©2002

Give me an S! S!
Give me a C! C!
Give me an A! A!
Give me an M! M!
What's that spell? Scam!
What's that spell? Scam!
What's that spell? Scam!

Come on all of you dumbed down men,
that son of a Bush needs your help again.
He's got himself in a terrorist jam,
when daddy sent chemicals off to old Saddam.
So roll up your sleeves for vaccines in your arm,
they don't tell you that they're doin' you harm

And its one, two, three, what are we fighting for?
Most know it's the same old scam,
next stop is old Baghdad.

And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates.
Well, we've got no mind to question why,
whoopee, we're all gonna die

Now prepare yourselves generals for the big blast,
India and Pakistan are heating up fast.
Why you should go out and kill Afghans is
cause the only good Taliban is one that's dead.
They say that global peace can only be won,
when they blast us all to kingdom come

And its one, two, three, what are we fighting for?
The clueless just don't give a damn,
where the hell is Pakistan?

And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates
With Prozac minds we don't care to know why,
whoopee, we're all gonna die.

Now come on Wall Street don't be slow,
why man this is war so go, go, go.
There's plenty of big fortunes to be made,
by supplying the Chinese with tools of the trade.
Just hope and pray that if they start the bombing,



Demonstrator
Counihan 1978

Peat Bog Soldiers

©1964 Stormking Music Inc.

Far and wide as the eye can wander
Heath and bog are everywhere
Not a bird sings out to cheer us
Oaks are standing, gaunt and bare

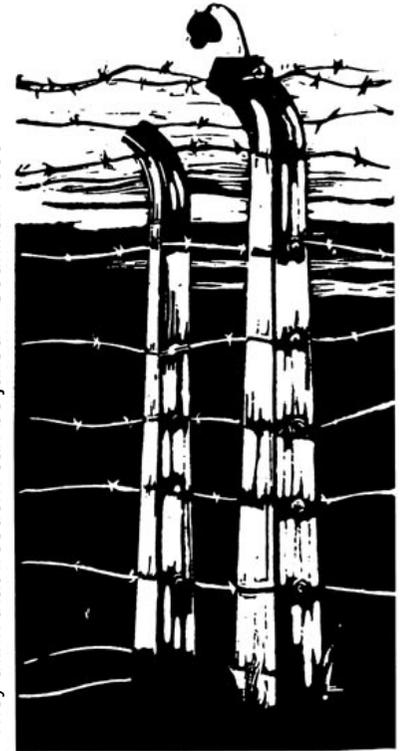
Chorus
We are the peatbog soldiers
We're marching with our spades
To the bog

Up and down the guards are pacing
No one, no one can go through
Flight would mean a sure death facing
Guns and barbed wire greet our view

Chorus
We are the peatbog soldiers
We're marching with our spades
To the bog

But for us there is no complaining
Winter will in time be past
One day we shall cry rejoicing
"Homeland dear, you're mine at last!"

Chorus
Then will the peatbog soldiers
March no more with spades
To the bog



They think that freedom can be jailed
Counihan 1950

This song was written by Johann Esser, a miner, and Wolfgang Langhaff, an actor, both prisoners in the Nazi concentration camp Borgermoor near Papenburg. It was written in August 1933 and was sung to the famous composer Hanns Eisler in London in January 1935. Eisler made sure that the song echoed rapidly around the world as part of the international struggle

Solidarity Forever

By Ralph Chaplin

When the union's inspiration
Through the workers' blood shall run
There can be no power greater
Anywhere beneath the sun
Yet what force on earth is weaker
Than the feeble strength of one
For the Union makes us strong

Chorus
Solidarity forever, solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the Union makes us strong

They have taken untold millions
That they never toiled to earn
But without our brain and muscle
Not a single wheel can turn
We can break their haughty power
Gain our freedom when we learn
That the Union makes us strong

In our hands is placed a power
Greater than their hoarded gold
Greater than the might of armies
Magnified a thousandfold
We can bring to birth a new world
From the ashes of the old
For the Union makes us strong

Notes
Ralph Chaplin was a poet, artist,
writer and organiser for the IWW.
He wrote this song in 1915 just
six months before his fellow IWW
songwriter Joe Hill was executed.



We are many, they are few
Counihan 1950

P.E.A.C.E.

By Ken Stewart©Ken Stewart 2003

P. E. A. C. E. Oh! Oh! Oh!
P. E. A. C. E. Oh! Oh! Oh!

How are you come by? Where do you live?
How will we know you if you never exist?
Leaders of the world say you're a good idea!
Then they go and leave us to live in fear!

Chorus
P. E. A. C. E. Oh! Oh! Oh!
P. E. A. C. E. Oh! Oh! Oh!

Well you have to learn to forgive and forget!
Understand each other and always respect!
Responsibilities to our fellow man! (and Woman)
Isn't that what they call "God's great plan!"

Chorus
P. E. A. C. E. Oh! Oh! Oh!
P. E. A. C. E. Oh! Oh! Oh!
P. E. A. C. E.
P. E. A. C. E.

How are you come by? Where do you live?
How will we know you if you never exist?
Everybody says you're a great idea!
Will someone tell me when we're gonna see you around here!

Chorus
P. E. A. C. E. Oh! Oh! Oh!
P. E. A. C. E. Oh! Oh! Oh!
P. E. A. C. E.
P. E. A. C. E.
P. E. A. It's E -Z (easy)

THE H-BOMBS THUNDER

By John Brunner ©John Brunner 1958
Tune: The Miners Lifeguard

Don't you hear the H-bombs' thunder
Echo like the crack of doom?
While they rend the skies asunder
Fall-out makes the earth a tomb;
Do you want your homes to tumble,
Rise in smoke towards the sky?
Will you let your cities crumble,
Will you see your children die?

Chorus
Men and women, stand together.
Do not heed the men of war.
Make your minds up now or never,
Ban the bomb for evermore.

Tell the leaders of the nations
Make the whole wide world take heed:
Poison from the radiations
Strikes at every race and creed.
Must you put mankind in danger,
Murder folk in distant lands?
Will you bring death to a stranger,
Have his blood upon your hands?

Shall we lay the world in ruin?
Only you can make the choice.
Stnp and think of what you're doing.
Join the march and raise your voice.
Time is short; we must be speedy.
We can see the hungry filled,
House the homeless, help the needy.
Shall we blast, or shall we build ?

BOONAROO

By Don Henderson ©Don Henderson 1968

Chorus
Oh, who will man the Boonaroo?
Who will sail her, be the crew,
sailing on the Boonaroo?

Is there food and is there store
to feed the hungry, clothe the poor?
In this world their number isn't few.
In her cargo would you find
any way for one mankind,
sailing on the Boonaroo.

Is there bandage by the reel?
Is there medicine to heal?
Christ knows, there's healing work to do.
In her cargo would you find
any way for one mankind,
sailing on the Boonaroo?

Would the hull be filled
with material to build,
perhaps a bridge for a world that's split in two?
In her cargo would you find
any way for one mankind,
sailing on the Boonaroo?

Or jam packed in the hold
is there grief and death untold
and asked "Why?" have to answer true.
In her cargo would you find
any way for one mankind,
sailing on the Boonaroo?

CROW ON THE CRADLE

By Sydney Carter ©Sydney Carter 1959

The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn
Now is the time for a child to be born
He'll cry for the moon and laugh at the sun
If he's a boy, he'll carry a gun
Sang the crow on the cradle

If it should happen that our baby's a girl
Never you mind if her hair doesn't curl
Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes
And a bomber above her wherever she goes
Sang the crow on the cradle

Rockaby baby the dark and the light
Somebody's baby is born for a fight
Rockaby baby, the white and the black
Somebody's baby is not coming back
Sang the crow on the cradle

Your mammy and pappy, they'll scrape and they'll save
Build you a coffin and dig you a grave
Hushaby little one, why do you weep
We've got a toy that will put you to sleep
Sang the crow on the cradle

Bring me a gun and I'll shoot that bird dead
That's what your mammy and pappy once said
Crow on the cradle, oh what should I do
That is a thing that I leave to you

Step by Step

Words from a 19th century Mining Union rulebook

Step by step the longest march
Can be won can be won
Many stones can form an arch
Singly none singly none
And by union what we will
Can be accomplished still
Drops of water turn a mill

John Brunner, a well known science fiction writer, wrote H-Bombs Thunder at the time of the Aldermaston Marches in Britain. A whole new generation of peace activists was born, and this song became the anthem, along with a whole swag of new songs demanding the banning of nuclear weapons.

One of Australia's most respected songwriters, Don Henderson, wrote Boonaroo, one of a many peace songs from the Vietnam War period in the 1960s.

In March 2 1967 The Australian carried this report: "A Navy crew took control of the Vietnam supply ship Boonaroo last night on orders from the Federal Government. The takeover followed the refusal of merchant seamen to sail her to Vietnam with a war cargo of bombs and detonators".

BLACK ARMBAND

By John Hospodaryk ©2002 John Hospodaryk

Hey there Johnny this song it is for you
It's not behind the razor wire hidden from our view
That's why I'm wearing a black armband
A black armband to demonstrate my stand
White picket financial security
Leafy suburban nuclear family
The benefits of a growing economy
Middle class utopia where the market's so free
But I got a better term for all this inequity
It's not incentivisation Menzies nor prosperity
Not back to the future to 1953
It's myopia which means that you can barely see

Balacava guards rottweillers and alsatians
Such is the face of your industrial relations
Anti-union tyranny right across the nation
On the waterfront and down the mines you're proud of your creation
You've got the gaul to call it reforms in the workplace
When waging war on workers is a retrograde disgrace
You want us cap in hand to crawl you're smug and mean and base
You want our rights and hard earned gains to sink without a trace

And hey now Peter this song's aiming at you too
You're mean of spirit you and all your crew
And that's why I'm wearing a black armband
A black armband to demonstrate my stand
A hundred and twenty years of public education
Is being destroyed by your discrimination
In favour of the rich or some denomination
You call that a fair go it's an abomination
There's now freedom of choice in our schooling so you say
Who do you think you are fooling when most of us can't pay
Then if funding the elite with our taxes is OK
Then this nation will fall like a dingo stricken prey

And hey there Johnny this song it is for you
I see rack and ruin in all the things you do
You can tell 'cause I'm wearing a black arm band
For all those stolen generations you can't understand
Well here's your report card you dont get many marks
On greenhouse emissions and logging national parks
At reconciliation you've chained up all our hearts
You score a zero just a naught you get a buggery of arts

Of liberty equality fraternity I didn't know
Ownership of shares is democracy the way to go
But on a privatised planet I guess it must be so
Where any soul is bought and sold your marks are very low

Well I know what you stand for will shrivel up and die
We'll throw it overboard and that wont be a lie
But until that day I wear a black armband
In mourning for what you are doing right across the land
But until that day I wear a black armband
In mourning for what you are doing right across this
right across this right across this right across this land

A great war-time leader you may aspire to be
A little digger with a big sword and a swag of enemies
With a piddly number of fire trucks to defend the ACT
While for a dirty war out in Iraq, fourteen FA-18s
You may fool a lot of people with your blun'dring talk of war
And blocking refugees and terrorists at our back door
But as George W.'s lap dog, you threat'n my country more
My fam'ly's now a target, you've made us insecure

The Hammer Song

By Lee Hays and Pete Seeger ©1962 Ludlow Music Inc

If I had a hammer
I'd hammer in the morning
I'd hammer in the evening ...
all over this land,
I'd hammer out danger
I'd hammer out a warning
I'd hammer out love between
My brothers and my sisters
All over this land.

If I had a bell
I'd ring it in the morning
I'd ring it in the evening ...
all over this land,
I'd ring out danger
I'd ring out a warning
I'd ring out love between
My brothers and my sisters

If I had a song
I'd sing it in the morning
I'd sing it in the evening ...
all over this world,
I'd sing out danger
I'd sing out a warning
I'd sing out love between
My brothers and my sisters
All over this land.

Now I've got a hammer
And I've got a bell
And I've got a song to sing ...
all over this land,
It's a hammer of justice
It's a bell of freedom
It's a song about love between
My brothers and my sisters
All over this land.