

Brief Bibliography of the Industrial Workers of the World in Australia 1914-1919##

The Industrial Workers of the World was an American Marxist institution established in Australia early in the 20th century with the message of replacing the existing industrial system of various unions with one big union to better fight the class war against the 'boss class'. The IWW refused to support the World War in 1914 through its anti-militarism, declaring the war to be of no concern to the working class and must be left to the propertied class to fight. The following outline is a brief bibliography of the IWW compiled by Frank Cain.

The most comprehensive bibliographic source for the IWW in Australia, and its campaign against the Great War, is contained in its newspaper, *Direct Action*, published in the IWW rooms in Sussex Street, Sydney between February 1914 and its closure on 18 August 1917. That abrupt ending resulted from the IWW's suppression as an anti-war organisation under the Commonwealth's Unlawful Associations Act and the seizure of the press and lead-type by the NSW police acting under the Commonwealth's wartime powers. A bound copy of those editions remains in the State Library of NSW, but it is more readily available in Trove (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/title/507>). *Direct Action* is a valued source to researchers for the reports from its American ideological counterparts and IWW news from correspondents in the Australian capitals. The US-influenced ideology of the IWW is fully expressed through the paper's columns.

Direct Action was the primary source for the earliest academic thesis on the IWW, written by Peter Rushton (Peter J. Rushton, 'The Workers of the World in Sydney, 1913-1917: a study in revolutionary ideology and practice', Master of Arts thesis, University of Sydney, 1969) from which he drew the material for two articles on the IWW (P.J. Rushton, 'The revolutionary ideology of the Industrial Workers of the World in

Australia', *Historical Studies*, 15, 59. October 1972, pp.424-46; and 'The trial of the Sydney Twelve: the original charge', *Labour History*, 25, November 1973, pp. 53-57)

The first academic book published on the IWW was Professor Ian Turner's book, *Sydney's Burning* (Ian Alexander Turner, [Sydney's Burning](#), ANU Press, Canberra, 1967, and later Alpha Books, 1969, pp. 264) which focuses on the arrest of the 'Sydney Twelve' on 10 October 1915 and their prosecution on false evidence of conspiracy to commit arson and the resulting public pressure in Sydney to obtain their early release from jail. A new source Turner was able to use was the NSW Police papers collected together in a Special Bundle by the Archives Authority of NSW (*NSW Police Department Special Bundle, Papers Concerning the International [sic] Workers of the World*: Boxes 7/5543; 7/5588; 7/5590-93; 7/5595-98;7/6720; A17952, Archives Authority of New South Wales). These were supplemented by material Turner had used in writing his earlier book, *Industrial Labour and Politics* published in 1965 (Ian Alexander Turner, [Industrial Labour and Politics: The Dynamics of the Labour Movement in Eastern Australia, 1900-1921](#), ANU Press, Canberra, 1965, pp. 272). These two sources, plus releases through the Australian Archives of postal censorship and surveillance reports, were used in the publication of later books on the IWW, including this writer's 1993 book ([Frank Cain, The Wobblies at War: A History of the IWW and the Great War in Australia](#), Spectrum Publications, Richmond, 1993, pp. 300, to be re-published by Australian Scholarly Publications Melbourne 2017).

The strength of the IWW lay in its dedicated leadership, consisting of a group of unemployed and foot-loose Marxists who had wound up in Sydney from abroad. They were self-skilled in writing and public speaking and held anti-militarist convictions. The personal account of one leader, Tom Barker, who retired to London, was published by the ANU historian, Eric Fry, for gratis distribution. (E.C. Fry, [Tom Barker and the IWW](#), private print, Canberra, 1965). A further analysis of five of

these leaders was published in 2011 by this writer ([‘Biography and Ideology in the Industrial Workers of the World in Australia 1911-1922: A brief Review’](#), in *Labour History and its People*, Melanie Nolan (ed) ASSLH, Canberra, 2011, pp. 231-243.

The latest and most extensive book on the IWW was published in 1995 by Professor Verity Nancy Burgmann of the University of Melbourne exceeding 250,000 words and including an extensive bibliography running to fifteen pages (Verity Burgmann, [‘*Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia*](#), Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1995). Verity had worked for some years in researching and publishing on the rise of socialist bodies in the various Australian colonies providing the historical passage to her extensive work on the IWW. (Verity Burgmann, [‘*In our time’: Socialism and the Rise of Labor, 1885-1905*](#), Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985, pp. 235, 1985).