A. The title of the article is not clear due to the image quality. However, it appears to discuss a topic related to MUA and May Day celebrations.

B. A section of text from an article or a letter, discussing the importance of unions and the history of May Day celebrations. The author mentions the need for solidarity and the need to celebrate workers' rights.

C. A mention of a website, www.unionsong.com, for more examples of union songs.

D. A quote by John Howard, which seems to be out of context and not clearly related to the rest of the text.
Mark Gregory

Songs and poems from the pickets

If you'd not sent the wharfies out,
Without their rightful job.
We might not have united in the way we did today.
To celebrate our victories, this merry month of May.
So call the next election and we working folk will say.
Goodbye Howard and your thieving Liberal mob.

JOHN WARNER’S SONG ‘Tribute to John Howard’ (see page 48) arrived in my e-mail, shortly after he wrote it on the Sydney May Day March. Within a few minutes it had joined a dozen other ‘MUJA Songs’ on my ‘Union Songs’ web site.

Union songs have been a special interest of mine ever since I heard Paul Robeson sing ‘Joe Hill’ when I was ten. More recently I began to build my Union Songs web site at the start of 1997, after some months of rehearsal with Bill Berry for a Blue Mountains Folk Festival union song workshop. We concentrated on Australian union songs as much as we could, an extensive seam dating back a century or so. Lawson and Paterson were there of course along with Tex Morton, Dorothy Hewett, Helen Palmer and Merv Lilley, so were the more contemporary works by folk revival songwriters like Don Henderson, Harry Robertson and many more.

In our workshop for the 1998 festival we also ‘showed off’ a brand new song that Maurie Mulheron had written, a song about the wharfies called ‘Right That Time’. By then my Union Songs web site had links to unions across the world and I was getting regular e-mail from unionists in many countries including North America, Sweden, Britain, Thailand and Malaysia.

I had been aiming to expand and internationalize my collection of songs, hoping to learn something from traditions outside the Australian, British, Irish and

Right That Time

Maurie Mulheron © 1998

They speak about it proudly, it’s now union folklore
How wharfies wouldn’t load any pig-iron for war
Japan was a threat so they walked off the job
They wouldn’t help the fascists for old Pig-iron Bob
They were right that time and they’re right again now
But the strength of one isn’t much of a power
So united they stand against all odds
Fighting for us all against the little tin gods

Indonesia’s young and fighting to be free
But the Dutch had different plans for their former colony
When the people rose up with freedom on their lips
The wharfies stopped loading any Dutch bound ships

Korea was in trouble, overrun by the Yanks
Wharfies told to load rifles, guns and tanks
Why get involved in this bloody civil war?
We’re not gonna ship any weapons any more!

Pig-iron Bob’s back, says we’re off to Vietnam
Tugging his forelocks for good old Uncle Sam
The seamen wouldn’t work on the war ship ‘Bonaroo’
And the wharfies held the line when they sacked the ship’s crew

The struggle’s moved on, mass sackings overnight
The union’s survival is the heart of the fight
We’ll defy your threats, your thugs and court
We’re standing united, no wharfie can be bought!

History’s on our side, we’ll see this battle through
There’s too much at stake for the profits of the few
Our fathers, before us, stood on every picket line
Keep their mem’ries alive and we’ll win every time.

They’ve been right ev’ry time and they’re right again now
But the strength of one isn’t much of a power
So united they stand against all odds
Fighting for us all against the little tin gods

Patrick has docks around Australia. This includes
Brisbane, where the following three poems seem to originate – if the e-mail address is anything to go by. I discovered John Tomlinson’s poems at the ‘Support Australia’s Wharfies’ web message board in Melbourne at <http://www.insideheweb.com/messageboard/msb.cgi?mb63212>.

These poems (John Tomlinson ©1998) give this union struggle, in many ways a very old struggle, a modern beat or rap. They remind me of Rock Against Racism performances by John Cooper Clark or maybe the Making History recording of Linton Kwesi Johnson.

What sort of Practice?

World best practice so they say.
Wharfies working without pay.

While wharfies picket one more day
Patricks seeks another stay.

World best practice so they say
Taking all the jobs away.

World best practice it is new
Coming to a job near you.

World best practice made for you
Coming soon to your job too.

Picket Line

Oh we’re relaxed and comfortable
Yes we’re doing fine
We are relaxed and comfortable out on the picket line.
I know you said you’d govern
You’d govern for all of us
We’d be relaxed and comfortable
And there’d be no fuss.
Well we are relaxed and comfortable
And so say all of us:
Yes, we’re relaxed and comfortable
We’re feeling mighty fine
We are relaxed and comfortable
Out on the picket line.
The rain might fall the wind might blow,
hard times come and hard times go,
there might be hail there might be snow,
but we’re relaxed and comfortable
Out on the picket line.
’Cause in our hearts we’re smiling
And we know we’ll see sunshine.
Yes we will see sunshine
At the ending of this struggle
When we lay our banners down
We’ll be relaxed and comfortable
There’ll be no need to frown.
Because we stand together
And together we will win.
We won’t scab or lie or cheat
So in the end you face defeat.
Together we will win.
We don’t need guard dogs
Nor come in the dead of night
We struggle for each other
And we try to do what’s right.
Oh we don’t need to lie and cheat
We don’t need to steal.
We try to tell it like it is
We try to make it real,
And in our trust of others
We have forged a force of steel.
You might look in wonderment
You might smile and sneer
But the picket line is stronger now
The end is coming near.
We don’t lie to judges
We don’t lie to you
We don’t lie to each other
We will build a world anew.
We are relaxed and comfortable
I say we’re doing fine
We are relaxed and comfortable
Out here on the picket line.
Standing shoulder to shoulder
Supporting one another:
brothers, sisters, children, wives,
fathers, daughter, mother.
Yes, we are relaxed and comfortable
Out here we’re doing fine.
Yes, we are relaxed and comfortable
Out on the picket line.
Oh you can stick best practice,
And you stick your hate.
We’re never voting for yer
Once we’re back inside the gate.
A VIEW OF THE JUDICIARY comes from one of the most prolific of the songwriters to have taken up the pen in the MUA cause, John Warner. His song ‘Justice Delayed’ (below) won immediate acclaim. Written prior to the Federal Court and High Court decisions, it’s a powerful vehicle for the basic demand of the wharfies: reinstatement.

Justice Delayed

John Warner 25 May ©1998

Tune: ‘Mixture of Muckin’ o’ George’s Eye and Bonnie Dunkie/Billy of Tea

Justice delayed is justice denied,
Four judges have ruled that the right’s on our side,
Now give us our jobs back and fling the gates wide,
For justice delayed is justice denied.

We’ve maintained the peace as we stood for our right,
They brought in the dogs and armed thugs for the fight.
They went to the courts and the courts ruled our way,
Why are we still standing outside today?

It’s comic to hear businessmen crying poor,
They can’t pay fair wages yet they pay for the law,
The law goes against them, as rightly it ought,
And still they have money to try the next court.

They say they can’t pay us, the company’s broke,
And we’d all be laughing except it’s no joke.
They’re still paying scabs on the big hired bus,
But they’ve stripped all the assets, there’s no cash for us.

We’re sick of injunctions, we’re sick of the wait,
While scabs wreck equipment we see through the gate.
Our trust in the law’s wearing weary and thin,
It’s time to do justice and let us back in.

The Fighting MUA

Tune: the Wild Colonial Boy

There was a foolish stevedore
And Patrick was his name
It was owned by a scab named Corrigan
To our great nation’s shame
He was a liar and a cheat
A puppet some may say
But never could he bluff or beat
The fighting MUA

It was in the night that Patricks came
Like burglars at their trade
With guard dogs, scabs and Canberra spies
Coming to their aid
While Peter Reith and his little mate
Fanned the flames all day
In London, Cooktown and Dubai
They’d smash the MUA

Chorus
So come away my Comrades
On the wharf we’ve got no stains
We’ll scorn to live in slavery
Bound down by iron chains
We’ll link our arms and stand and fight
Forever we shall try
We’ll fight beside our fighting mates
The fighting MUA

The judge in England said he could not
Countenance this lot
A nasty scheme was all worked out
A filthy dirty plot
And comrades from around the world
Will now come to our aid
To fight and organise
Beside the fighting MUA.

North American ones I had studied for years. I also hoped to get songs as they were being written. After Patrick sacked their workforce in a quasi military operation on 7 April 1998 that second wish came true. From that time it seemed each week brought a new harvest of songs about the MUA’s fight for reinstatement.

Maurie Mulhern, author of the play One Word We describing the life of Pete Seeger, wrote this song after hearing one of Peter Reith’s diatribes against waterside workers in February. “After a bout of road rage” as he describes the muse that compelled him to write. He has since sung it many times on the various Patrick pickets, and he sang it at the Sydney May Day rally. The wharfies love the song and of course it has particular interest for a whole new generation who began to turn up to the extraordinary ‘community pickets’.

A NUMBER OF MY FAVOURITE UNION SONGS COME FROM

the Kentucky mines in the 1930s. Songs from Sara Ogan Gunning, Aunt Molly Jackson, Jim Garland and Florence Reece. I changed a few words of ‘Which Side Are You On?’ and came up with the song on the right.

JOHN DENGATE, ONE OF AUSTRALIA’S MOST REVERED

songwriters and a parapod without peer, phoned Chris Kempster with a new song he’d written to the tune of ‘Abide With Me’ (see next page). Legend has it that the hymn was sung by the band as they went down with theTitanic, and it seems that Minister Reith may be caught in a similar kind of undertow as a result of his inability to unhitch himself from Patrick, so when Chris sent me the words I was only too happy to include it in my growing collection. Almost immediately I heard the song sung to great effect at the special Peter Reith picket in Wentworth Falls. Five hundred Blue Mountains residents came along to face the drizzle and an even grimmer Reith (the Grim Reiter as one banner had it!).

S CABS HAVE LONG BEEN THE TARGET AND SUBJECT OF UNION

songs. Jack London penned the most famous description of scabs:

When God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad, the vampire, He had some awful substance left with which he made a scab... the modern strikebreaker sells his birthright, his country, his wife, his children, and his fellow men for an unfilled promise from his employer, trust, or corporation.

Industrial Workers of the World organizer, songwriter and martyr Joe Hill wrote about scabs in songs such as ‘Casey

Join the MUA

Come all of you good wharfies
Good news to you I’ll tell
Of how that good old MUA
Has come in here to dwell

Chorus
Join the MUA
Come and join the MUA
Join the MUA
Come and join the MUA

My daddy was a seafarer
And I’m a sailor’s son
I’m sticking to the MUA
Till every battle’s won

On wharfies around Australia
There are no neutrals left
You’ll either be a union man
Or a thug for the NFF

Oh, workers can you stand it?
Oh, tell me how you can
Will you be a lousy scab
Or will you be a man?

When Patrick sacked the wharfies
They thought it was a joke
But worldwide solidarity
Is causing them to choke

Don’t scab for the bosses
Don’t listen to their lies
Use working folks haven’t got a chance
Unless we organise
I Can’t Abide

John Dengate ©1998

I can’t abide the government’s front bench, send them away to the Germans or the French
I can’t abide Costello’s shallow sneer – won’t someone make the bastard disappear?
I can’t abide that bloody awful Kemp, bring back the gallows, the hangman and the hemp
Take Peter Reith and dump him in the tide. Him I particularly can’t abide
Poor little John deserves our sympathy, born neath the star of mediocrity
Pat his wee head and send him off to bed, then hide the key lest he abide with me
I can’t abide the government’s ministry, Senator Vanstone’s worse than dysentery
Send her away without the least delay – don’t pour the tea lest she abide with me
Sink them the swine, an iceberg would be fine. Far, far away in distant Hudson Bay
As they go down they’ll warble while they drown, flat and off-key, they’ll be despised by me
I can’t abide the government’s front bench, send them away to the Germans or the French
Take Peter Reith and dump him in the tide. Him I particularly can’t abide

The Slimy Patrick’s Scab

Geoff Francis & Peter Hicks ©1998

Tune: works well with ‘The Sydney Market Boys’ – or try your own!

There’s vampire bats and sewer rats, there’s public lice and crabs,
But the lowest form of life on Earth is the slimy Patrick’s scab.
There’s vampire bats and sewer rats, there’s public lice and crabs,
But the lowest form of life on Earth is the slimy Patrick’s scab.
An hour before the sun comes up, he crawls out of his pit,
You wouldn’t get too close to him for the smell of slime and... other little bits,
Beneath the cloak of darkness he sets off, all clad in black,
To serve his wretched masters goes the slimy Patrick’s scab.

And when his treachery is done, on his knees he crawls back home,
His kids don’t want to know him, so he eats his tea alone.
They haven’t been to school for days, they’re ashamed that he’s their dad,
“Tell me, what’s your father do?” “He’s a slimy Patrick’s scab.”

He’s not dared step inside a pub or an RSL for days,
‘Cos when you’re a slimy Patrick’s scab the world don’t seem too safe.
He sits at home and counts his hoard to find out what he’s worth,
But what value would you put upon the lowest slime on Earth?

Alas, accidents do happen, in the wharves and on the shore –
A crash, a smash, a flash, a splash – and our scab’s a scab no more,
Nobody mourns his passing, no-one’s even slightly sad,
Upon his grave these words inscribed – “Here lies a Patrick’s scab.”

So he walks up to the pearly gates where the heavenly bell he rings,
Says he, “I’ve worked hard all my life, you’ll surely let me in.
“I’ve always done the boss’s will, to have served him makes me proud,
“So please give me my halo now, and my little fluffy cloud.”

Saint Peter slowly shakes his head and looks him in the face,
“What makes you think that I’ve got room for scabs inside this place?
“You’ve robbed your neighbour of his job and his children of their food,
“You’ve stabbed your brothers in the back and betrayed your sisters too.
“My angels would lay down their harps, do you think that I’m that mad?”
And to burn in hell forever he despatched the Patrick’s scab.

There’s vampire bats...