

Student Essay on Working Man's Paradise

Working Man's Paradise by Linda Pastan

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Essay

"Was Australia a working man's Paradise""

In the late 19th century, and the early 20th century, Australia was not a working man's paradise. Australia was not a working man's paradise during this period of time because of the economic depression that Australia was affected by in the 1890's. During this period of time, Australian workers were working under harsh employers, who were exploiting the fact that there was a job shortage, and that there were a lot of people willing to take an employee's place. Australian's also began to think of federation, looking inward, rather than outward.

The depression of the 1890s was a shaping experience for the Australian colonies. Thousands were without work for the first time in ages. Conditions were hard and the hours were long, for those Australians that were lucky enough to have a job, dangerous circumstances as well as little pay. Working conditions were very poor. The average labourer worked 10 hours a day. There was no minimum wage and exploitation was frequent. People lived in shanty towns in fear of losing the roof over their heads, it was a horrible time for Australia, and although the social impact of this experience was very large, there were also political implications. Australian's began to lose faith in the governments they were under, and began thinking about federation. People thought that it was rather ironic that technological advances that were leading to the industrial revolution still wasn't saving Australia from all the human suffering.

The owners of industry were gradually starting succumb to greed as an answer to the unemployment that everyone was suffering from. This led to the beginnings of the labour movement in Australia in an effort to enforce better working conditions as well as employment opportunities for the workers. One expression of this was the birth of the Labor Party in Queensland in 1891. Another effort to enforce better working conditions was the formation of unions and the attempt to use strikes to force industry owners to come to the bargaining table. The 1890's was a time when workers were arguing for better rights, and a time when some colonies started to think about federating. How could this period of time be a working man's paradise when everyone was arguing for better working rights"