

PART FIVE:

DEFEAT IN VICTORY

1. The One Big Union.

The post-war hopes of Australian socialists and militant trade unionists were concentrated in two utopian fantasies, which at first seemed complementary, but were later found to be contradictory: the one big union as conceived by the fertile but doctrinaire mind of Daniel De Leon, whom many thought of as the most original socialist thinker since Marx; and the Soviets of Workers' Deputies which had been created by the Russian revolutions. Hopes were high, but between the conception and the creation fell the shadow of a working class which was far from ready to transform minority dreaming into mass reality.

The idea of industrial unionism, and to a lesser extent of the one big union, had attracted some interest and support among trade unionists before the war; in the first years of the war, it had been kept alive in the organisation and agitation of the rival IWWs and in the theorising of the socialist sects. And then the turns of economic circumstance and labor politics, which had increased socialist influence and the militant spirit in the unions, and union influence in the Labor party, had made the one big union a lively issue for the unions again in 1916; but now it was trade union leaders themselves who were moving thus, and not the two IWWs trying to impose their theories on the working class from outside and in opposition to the mass organisations.

In June 1916, informal meetings of representatives of the larger, non-Labor Council organisations began to discuss "a union of unions."¹ The craft unions were invited to take part, and a brief conference was held, but the Labor Council remained sceptical: if the one big union scheme were to be accepted, Kavanagh reported, it would have to

1. ARTSA Minutes, 21/6/16.

offer the unions something better than they already had; but what the scheme seemed to mean was the absorption of the existing unions by the AWU, which would cost them the autonomy on which they had always insisted in their dealings with the Labor Council.² Nevertheless, the sponsoring unions went ahead with a further conference, which, on the motion of Claud Thompson of the ARTSA, endorsed the principle of the one big union, to which the miners' delegates added "based on industrial and allied trade lines" - a hit at the AWU's system of organisation into regional branches.³ The Labor Council was sufficiently stirred by this threat to its pre-eminence to seek a rapprochement with the non-affiliated unions, but the rival schemes for closer unionism remained in abeyance during the hectic activity of the conscription campaigns and the disastrous days of the general strike.

The obvious lesson of the strike defeat was the lack of any authoritative central organisation - as A.C. Willis said, the strike showed a one big union spirit but there was no OBU control - and, from the end of 1917, there was a new urgency and purposefulness in the plans for trade union reconstruction. As secretary of the Labor Council, Kavanagh produced a scheme for grouping the existing unions into industrial federations based on their "trade affinity" - a device which would leave the craft unions undisturbed in their exclusiveness, while creating some central authority to handle industrial disputes.⁴ But by now the militants were in a majority on the Labor Council, and, not unexpectedly, they found in favour of reorganising the unions into the one big union.⁵ Meanwhile, Willis, for the Miners' Federation, had asked the Council to convene a congress of all NSW unions to consider war and post-war problems; this was agreed to, and trade union reconstruction was put on the agenda.⁶

2. Report, NSW Labor Council, 30/6/16.

3. V.G. Childe: How Labor Governs, 173-74.

4. Report, NSW Labor Council, 31/12/17.

5. This recommendation had been made by a sub-committee consisting of J.S. Garden, E.E. Judd and A. McPherson, a former IWW.

6. Report, NSW Labor Council, 30/6/18.

The Congress was held on 5 August 1918, and again there was a militant majority.⁷ It was, said Garden in an enthusiastic report, "the most momentous ever held" in Australia - "a true Australian Parliament where the workers of the State gathered together to devise ways and means to liberate themselves."⁸ Despite opposition from some of the craft unionists and from J.H. Catts MHR (present as an AWU delegate), the Labor Council's proposal for the One Big Union⁹ was endorsed. In its statement of principles (the "Preamble") and its structure, the proposed new organisation, to be known as the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia (WIU of A), relied heavily on the IWW precedent. The ideas were those of the De Leonite WIIU¹⁰ rather than of the Chicago school: the Preamble declared for revolutionary political as well as industrial action, which it defined as "action to secure a complete change, namely, the abolition of capitalist class ownership of the means of production - whether privately or through the State - and the establishment in its place of social ownership by the whole community."¹¹ It gave pride of place to the union in the struggle for the abolition of capitalism, which it declared could only be accomplished "by the workers uniting in one class-conscious economic organisation to take and hold the means of production," but it dropped, presumably in deference to those OBU advocates who were also members of the Labor party, the WIIU's reference to the need for "a distinct revolutionary political party governed by the workers' class interests."¹² However, the equation of state ownership with private capitalist ownership made it clear that nationalisation of industry, as it had been practised, was not what the OBU wanted; as later became apparent, the idea of the majority was social ownership and workers' control.

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7. 141 delegates represented 79 unions at the Congress. For a report of proceedings, Worker, 8/8/18. *
 8. Report, NSW Labor Council, 31/12/18.
 9. Where "One Big Union" (or "CBU") is used, this signifies the official one big union, the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia.

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* The attendance figures are from the NSWLC Report, 31/12/18. Those in The Worker are slightly different.

The inspiration of the Preamble was syndicalist: reporting on the Sydney decision to a subsequent conference of Victorian unions, Garden described the OBU proposals as "the cream of the thought of men like Debs, De Leon and Trautmann, adapted to Australian conditions."¹³ But there was an important difference among the founders of the WIU of A concerning the nature and value of political action. As interpreted by E.E. Judd, its sole purpose was to "decree the abolition of the Class State with its Parliaments, and leave the conduct of the nation's production to the Central Administration [of the OBU]; thereby replacing Class Governments . . . by an Industrial Parliament, composed of men and women elected from and by those in industry."¹⁴ There was, however, sufficient latitude in the Preamble to allow Garden, Willis and other Labor Party industrialists¹⁵ to award parliament a much more considerable role in their plans for the reconstruction of society: "the shortest and easiest way to a real control by the producers lies in the socialisation of industries, and, . . . therefore, there is obvious need for a party in Parliament which shall strive for such a goal."¹⁶ The structure of the union, dividing the whole of the economy and the working class into six great departments of production, and each department into a series of divisions corresponding to particular industries, was designed to facilitate immediately the organisation of industrial conflict along "scientific" lines (by making "an industry to one the concern of all"), and to enable ultimately the administration of production by the union itself. The Congress concluded its work by appointing a committee, with Willis as President and Garden as Secretary and a good

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10. The closeness of names between the Workers' International Industrial Union (the WIIU), the successor to the De Leonite IWW Club, and the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia (the WIU of A), the official One Big Union, is confusing, but the distinction is important, and is further considered below.
 11. WIU of A: Preamble, Classification and Rules. See Appendix for text.
 12. Ibid. See Appendix V.
 13. Worker, 17/10/18.
 14. Judd: The Case for the O.B.U., 39-40.
 15. i.e. they were members of the Labor party at this time; they

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leavening of unionists of the revolutionary persuasion,¹⁷ to spread the WIU of A's message of "hope, of liberty, of freedom, of emancipation."¹⁸

In Victoria, the one big union had revived at almost the same time as in New South Wales, and with much the same results. A conference of unions in 1916 had revealed a similar division of opinion to that in the NSW Labor Council. The blueprints were rather different - the Sydney industrialists advocated the dissolution of existing unions and the re-organisation of the working class into an entirely new union, while their Victorian counterparts urged the amalgamation of the existing organisations into industrial departments, subordinated to a central council¹⁹ - but the principle was the same: a tightly centralised "class union" of all workers, rather than a loose federation of autonomous craft and sectional unions, as was advocated by their opponents. The rival proposals confronted one another at a further conference of Victorian unions in September 1918, but by this time the NSW prophets were on the job, and Garden was able to plead both the desirability of a national organisation²⁰ and the support already pledged by the Miners' Federation, the ARTSA and the NSW Labor Council; and the conference, after detailed consideration by a series of committees, accepted the NSW scheme in its entirety, name, preamble, structure and all, with one or two minor modifications (such as having an Audits Department to control the funds) suggested by Victorian caution in matters of organisation.²¹

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15. [contd.] broke away from the ALP in June 1919.
 16. Garden in Report, NSW Labor Council, 31/12/19. This was written after the break with the Labor party, but all that had changed was the opinion of Garden and his associates as to what political party was needed in parliament.
 17. Rutherford, Kilburn, Judd, McPherson, Rae and Howie in a committee of eleven.
 18. Report, NSW Labor Council, 31/12/18.
 19. The rival Victorian schemes were set out in a pamphlet, Proposed Schemes for Closer Unionism in Victoria (1918).
 20. Both Victorian schemes were seen as operating within the State.
 21. Worker, 17/10/18.

By the end of the year, the support for the OBU seemed overwhelming. In Queensland, the Industrial Council and a congress of unions had resolved in favour of the NSW proposals. The Hobart Trades Hall Council had agreed that a national one big union was of "paramount importance."²² A further conference of NSW unions, held in November 1918 and slightly more representative than the earlier one, had decided on an immediate propaganda campaign to launch the WIU of A. A committee of the South Australian Trades and Labor Council had supported the WIU of A, although there was some feeling among South Australian unions for amalgamation with the AWU.

There seemed sufficient support to press ahead, and an all-Australian conference was convened for January 1919. The nineteen delegates from all states claimed to represent "the great majority of the Unionists of Australia."²³ No-one was present from the Miners' Federation, but this was not significant as they were already committed to the scheme; however, a conspicuous absentee was the AWU - this, the largest of the Australian unions and itself an aspiring one big union, was having second thoughts about the WIU of A. The January conference formally adopted the preamble and rules of the new union, declared the weekly paper published by the NSW committee, O.B.U., to be its official organ, and appointed a provisional council to conduct its affairs.²⁴ The tactics to be followed by this council were, however, far from clear: it was proposed that shop committees should be formed wherever possible to carry out propaganda for the WIU of A, and that arrangements should be made for existing unions to conduct ballots of their members on the question of the union joining the OBU, but at the same time it was de-

22. Worker, 10/7/19.

23. WIU of A: Preamble, &c., 31.

24. Consisting of T.E. Wilson (VRU), Pres.; B.A. Mulvogue (Builders' Laborers, Vic.), Sec.; G. Coupe (AMLEU, Vic.), Treas.; and Garden and Rutherford of NSW and F.D. Williams of S.A. as councillors.

cided that membership application forms should be printed and distributed to the shop committees, and herein lay a major point of contention.²⁵

There were in fact two angles of fire directed against the WIU of A: a radical critique from the socialists and the syndicalists on the left, and a moderate and often self-interested critique from the politicians, the craft unionists and the AWU bureaucracy on the right.

Although the OBU leaders had borrowed heavily from IWW theories in their plans for the WIU of A, the old-time followers of the IWW (in either of its shapes) were far from unanimous in their enthusiasm. With the reformation of the Detroit IWW (the progenitor of the Sydney IWW Club) as the Workers' International Industrial Union, a group of Sydney members of the Australian Socialist Party had applied for and received a charter from the American headquarters to form an Australian administration of the WIIU; the IWW Club had also reformed itself as the WIIU, and nothing - neither the advice from America, nor the persistent demands of the Melbourne branch of the WIIU - could persuade these old rivals to sink their differences. However, the war-time struggles had brought together radicals of most diverse affiliations, and had succeeded in watering down the revolutionary purity of parts of the left wing; thus, E.E. Judd and some of his comrades from the Socialist Labor Party, as well as a number of the active members of the ASP were now deeply involved in the official One Big Union.

A handful of SLP diehards, who would have no truck with this attempt to graft their creed onto the existing trade union movement,

25. WIU of A: Preamble, &c., 30-31.

tried vainly to hold the WIIU together, but the storm of industrial politics in New South Wales had passed them by, and, on 23 January 1921, a forlorn group of five - all that was left of the old IWW Club - met to put the final seal on their failure. Sadly, they resolved to hand over the "priceless . . . historical documents of the original administration in Australia of the Workers' International Industrial Union" to the Mitchell Library in Sydney, and to divide their remaining assets (3/1, cash in hand) equally between the Socialist Labor Party and the Melbourne administration of the WIIU.²⁶

On the other hand, the militants of the Sydney branch of the ASP, after their formation of a WIIU, had moved closer towards a purely industrialist position, and at their 1918 annual conference had declared for the WIIU rather than an international socialist party as the primary instrument of the revolution.²⁷ And when the trade union congress adopted the framework of the WIIU for its One Big Union, the ASP's weekly paper declared enthusiastically that the congress decisions were "on paper . . . as near perfect as one could reasonably expect any scheme to be in its initial stage;" it remained only for the OBU propagandists to educate the working class up to the level of their conception.²⁸ But by the end of the year, the ASP had changed its mind again,²⁹ and had decided that the task of reconstructing the trade union movement could safely be left to the OBU, while they got on with the job of developing the class struggle on the political field; and they allowed their section of the WIIU to lapse.³⁰

26. Minutes, National Executive Committee IWW [later WIIU], 5/12/20, 23/1/21.

27. Int. Soc., 13/4/18.

28. Ibid., 24/8/18.

29. Under the influence, it was said, of one Moses Baritz, a member of the British Socialist Party, who had recently arrived in Australia.

30. Int. Soc., 11/1/19, 15/3/19.

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However, their Melbourne comrades, who had taken over the Australian Administration of the WIIU, were not so sanguine.³¹ There were, they felt, a number of important faults in the one big union: it was being built from the top down instead of the bottom up; its structure was based on trade rather than industrial sections, and therefore it made no provision for workshop branches; and it proposed to concentrate power in the hands of its leading committees.³² Essentially, all these objections derived from the one concept of a self-acting working class, creating its own institutions independently of the existing organisations, through which it would be able to "take and hold" the instruments of production. Clinging tight to this, the Melbourne WIIU carried on from where the Sydney groups left off, and began to recruit members in competition with the existing unions. By mid-1919, it had finally repudiated the link with the revolutionary parties (although not formally abandoning political action), its spokesman describing the ASP and the SLP alike as "a dead hand upon the industrial nucleus of [the] necessary economic organisation."³³

The WIIU themes of building from below and the organisation of the workers for "job control" were tested at two points, and found wanting - on one occasion because of the impracticality of the theorists, on the other because of external circumstance.

In September 1919, construction workers on the Eildon Weir site in Victoria went on strike; their union was the AWU, and their officials were not sympathetic. The Melbourne WIIU had spread its

31. cf. M. Feinberg (Melb. WIIU) in Int. Soc., 17/1/20.

32. J.A. Dawson in *ibid.*, 28/9/18. The second of these objections was met by amendments made to the original constitution at the January 1919 trade union congress, and from this time there was a greater emphasis in official OBU publications on workshop organisation. cf. report of NSW conference of 29-30 March 1919 in O.B.U., 1/5/1919.

33. J.A. Dawson, Int. Soc., 3/5/19.

message widely among unskilled laborers, and the men now wanted to leave the AWU and join the WIIU. This was an important opportunity: for the first time, the WIIU had the chance of becoming something more than a propaganda unit for the one big union, but it failed to live up to the occasion; the WIIU officials were sound on theory, but not so good in practice; the AWU was able to isolate the strikers and starve them off the job, and the WIIU was beaten and discredited.³⁴

The other defeat was not of the WIIU itself, but of the theory of "job control." The Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union (AMIEU) had succeeded, by industrial action, in establishing in Queensland the principle of preference to unionists, which was later incorporated in its award, along with a provision that all labor for the various meatworks should be supplied by the union itself. This, together with the establishment of Boards of Control (or shop committees) which set the speed and other conditions of work on behalf of the men, constituted job control; and it was widely publicised by the WIIU as an example of the successful application of their principles.³⁵

34. OBU Herald, Nov.-Dec. 1919.

35. See A.D. Dodds: How One Big Union Works: An Australian Example. [Dodds was a full-time organiser for the WIIU during 1919, until he was expelled for "disruption."] The AMIEU covered all workers in the meat industry except (in Queensland) engineers and engine-drivers, who belonged to their craft unions but who worked together with the AMIEU in a "trinity" which acted in common in relations with the employers. The AMIEU was regarded as a prototype one big union, and the establishment of job control by this trinity of unions was regarded as the first step towards realisation of the WIIU aim: "to OWN and CONTROL the industry." (Ibid., 21.) Another WIIU pamphlet, Job Control, by "Joe the Bear," discussed the experience of the AMIEU in Adelaide. There the union was not satisfied with the "trinity" arrangement; engine-drivers were already members of the AMIEU, and the engineers were discussing joining up too, while retaining their membership of the ASE so that they could continue to enjoy its benefit arrangements. ["Joe the Bear" was a pseudonym for M. Sawtell, one of the defendants in the 1916 Perth conspiracy trial, who was in 1919 credited with taking the Adelaide branch of the ASP out of the political party and into the neo-IWW International Industrial Workers.]

However, a determined challenge late in 1918, by the employers at Ross River and Alligator Creek in North Queensland, broke the hold of the union on the industry; the unionists were locked out, "free labor" was introduced, and the Queensland Arbitration Court was persuaded to eliminate the preference clause from the AMIEU award. The meatworkers, with the cordial support of the Queensland Railways Union, discussed the abandonment of arbitration in favour of direct action, but this was regarded by most of the labor movement as an undesirable challenge to the Ryan government, and the executive of the Labor party condemned their attitude, alleging IWW influence in these two unions.³⁶ The AMIEU made one more attempt to restore its position: in June 1919, the unionists struck, claiming that none of their members should be dismissed while "scabs" from the previous dispute were still employed; there were demonstrations in Townsville, during which shots were exchanged between the strikers and the police,³⁷ the Railways Union tried unsuccessfully to stop police reinforcements reaching the north, and the strike was beaten. Late in the year, an Alligator Creek meatworker wrote to the Sydney Relief Committee for the IWW Twelve that the AMIEU which, to 1918, had had "practically Job Control" had been "practically annihilated both financially and industrially" in the upheavals of 1918 and 1919.³⁸

Between them, these two examples did much to convince those unionists who were sympathetic to the ideas of industrial unionism (except of course for the minority of inveterate ideologues) that the future of the one big union lay with the WIU of A. The abortive Eildon

36. Qld. Worker, 13/3/19.

37. See Report of Royal Commission . . . into the Circumstances surrounding the Incidents which took place at the Lock-up at Townsville . . ., more particularly into the alleged use of firearms. . . QPP, 1919. The inquiry found that the police were justified in the use of force, as this was the only means of preventing a riot.

38. Letter of J. Crawford, n.d. but probably late 1919, in papers of Relief Committee. The S.A. branch of the AMIEU was similarly broken, in the course of a strike in the Government Produce Depot - Worker, 15/1/20, 22/1/20.

episode had demonstrated once more the impossibility of "dual unionism," of attempting to build a rival union, in the Australian situation;³⁹ while Alligator Creek was further proof that even the most determined and united industrial action by a section of workers could be made nugatory by divisions within the labor movement, by governmental action, or by an unfavourable economic environment. More than ever, the answer to these dilemmas seemed to be the unification of existing unions into one organisation with sufficient cohesion and power to impose its will on employers and politicians alike.

It was, however, the AWU and the Labor party which put the insurmountable obstacles in the way of the One Big Union - the AWU because its officials feared that their union would be submerged and their positions of power in the labor movement destroyed, and the politicians because they feared the consequences of revolutionary trade unionism for their electoral prospects.

The AWU bureaucracy, according to E.H. Lane, one of its most persistent critics, regarded the OBU as "an unscrupulous poacher on its preserves and a revolutionary menace to the 'sane' moderate Labour movement,"⁴⁰ but at just what point they came to this conclusion is obscure. The November 1918 conferences of unions in New South Wales had made quite clear the predominance of the militants in the move for the OBU; the left wing was challenging the bureaucracy within the AWU itself;⁴¹ in December, the Industrial Vigilance Council adopted the OBU objective:⁴² in all probability, these were the factors which caused the AWU officials to decide not only that they would not be able to take advantage of this movement to enlarge their own empire, but also that the WIU of A threatened their very existence. In any event, they went unrepresented at the interstate con-

39. That is, the attempt by the left wing to build rival unions in the face of the opposition of employers, governments, the arbitration courts and the existing unions. The opposite situation is far from impossible.

40. Lane: Dawn to Dusk, 208.

ference in January which launched the WIU of A nationally. But this view was not universal in the AWU: commenting on this conference, H.E. Boote said that many AWU members had hoped that their union would become the centre of the One Big Union; however, the AWU's rules did not commit the union to social reconstruction, and its constitution meant that unions which did amalgamate with it retained their craft characteristics; the hope now was that the AWU Convention would support the new WIU of A.⁴³ The Convention was not in fact held: it met just as the influenza epidemic hit Sydney, and dispersed immediately - indeed, with undue haste, the critics suggested. And, by April, the AWU leaders were in open opposition to the WIU of A.

The first sign of the break came with a statement from John Storey on 22 March 1919, accusing "Judd, Garden and Co." of attempting not only to white-wash the trade unions and the Labor party, but to impose the OBU objective on the party at the coming state conference. He claimed to speak for both Federal and State parliamentarians, and warned that those of his persuasion would organise against the attempts of the One Big Unionists to capture the conference. Curiously, Boote in The Worker came out strongly against Storey, who could scarcely have taken this stand without the approval of the AWU officials.⁴⁴ The storm broke a few weeks later. Prompted by "attempts . . . to create antagonism between the AWU and the OBU," the NSW executive of the WIU of A wrote to AWU General Secretary E. Grayndler claiming that Garden had been systematically misrepresented by the daily press, and that the WIU of A really had no intention of

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41. In the 1918-19 ballot for NSW Vice-President of the union, a militant, J.M. Cullinan, had polled 4124 votes against J. Bailey's 4844, and scores of motions had been submitted for the 1919 Convention supporting the OBU.
42. Rules and Constitution of the Industrial Vigilance Council of ALP of NSW, revised and adopted January 24, 1919. (A note by V. Molesworth, a member of the Council, says that these were never issued, as the IVC was disbanded because of disagreements over its adoption of this Preamble.)

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recruiting individual members, or of holding ballots among unionists (specifically the AWU) without the consent of the union concerned.⁴⁵ A month later, the union replied with a declaration of war. The Executive Council had now met, the officers said in a "manifesto" to AWU members, and had unanimously decided against the WIU of A: its preamble was practically identical with that of the IWW, which meant "madness, direct action, sabotage, dissension, disruption, and destruction of the Union Movement." However, the AWU was not against the one big union as such - "but only upon Australian lines," that is, if it adhered (as the AWU did) to political action and arbitration; and, to this end, "the door of the A.W.U. is open to such of those existing unions who decide for themselves that their industrial interests can be better served by their inclusion in our organisation."⁴⁶

After this, it was clear that the 1919 Labor party conference would be a lively occasion. Already the Victorian conference had rejected a bid by the socialist secretary of the Builders' Laborers⁴⁷ to have the party adopt the OBU preamble, in favour of Maurice Blackburn's motion that the party's objective should be "the peaceful overthrow of the capitalistic system. . . Collective ownership of the collectively used means of production. . . Democratic control of industry."⁴⁸ Now the same issue was to be debated in New South Wales.

The conference met amid great excitement; both factions had been organising hard, and the atmosphere was embittered by the circulation (by the AWU-parliamentary faction) of an anonymous leaflet entitled "The Pommie Takes Command - A Warning to Australian Workers," a reference to the British origins of Willis, Garden and other promin-

43. Worker, 23/1/19.

44. Leading AWU men were well entrenched in both State and Federal parliamentary parties, and Storey's statement had an air of confidence that would have been quite misplaced if he had not been sure of AWU support.

45. Worker, 17/4/19.

46. Ibid., 15/5/19.

ent One Big Unionists. The debate which revealed the strength of the factions was on a motion of A.C. Willis to provide for direct election of the party executive by members of local leagues and affiliated unions; this would, he claimed, eliminate all cliques in the party - including the Industrial Vigilance Council.⁴⁹ On Willis's side were the industrialists, against him were the politicians and the AWU; the motion was defeated on a division, amid considerable uproar, by 113 votes to 109.

But the real issue was the party's objective, and, for those who were calling into question the limited statement about "the collective ownership of monopolies" which had fulfilled this function since 1905, what was involved was not just what the party should declare itself to be - in today's terms, what image it should project of itself - but how it should act, immediately, to change society.⁵⁰ Drawing on his Guild Socialist background,⁵¹ Willis moved

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47. B.A. Mulvogue, secretary of the WIU of A.
 48. Report, Victorian ALP Conference, 1919, 30-33.
 49. It would also have ensured the dominance of the large unions (including the AWU) over the party machine, so long as the members of these unions could be persuaded to vote. That the AWU officials would not support this move possibly indicated their uncertainty about how their own members would vote.
 50. In this sense, the challenge to the traditional view of the party was more fundamental even than that mounted by the leaders of the Triple Alliance at the 1919 conference of the British Labor Party, which was held a few weeks later. Cf. R. Milliband: *Parliamentary Socialism*, 68 ff.
 51. It is interesting to note the several other expressions of this theory in the work of Willis, who was possibly the outstanding figure in the NSW labor movement in these years. From 1918, he had been urging the Miners' Federation to invest some of its resources in a coal-mine, which would be managed by the union; and earlier in 1919 he had persuaded the NSW executive of the ALP (of which he was then Vice-President) to adopt a policy for the mining industry akin to that put by the British Miners' Federation to the Sankey Commission in March of that year: nationalisation of the mines, and management by a joint committee consisting of three elected miners' representatives and three government appointees. He had also persuaded his union to publish and distribute an Australian edition of G.D.H. Cole's pam-

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that the party's objective should become "the establishment of a State of social democracy, in which the entire means of wealth production shall be owned and controlled by the community of workers industrially organised." But it was not enough that this should be the objective: everything on the party's platform which assumed the continued existence of capitalism (and therefore provided a refuge for the uneasy socialists of the parliamentary Labor parties) should be discarded, and the new objective should be made the "sole issue" at the coming elections. In this way, if the party won, there could be no doubt that it had a mandate to carry through the social revolution.

The debate was not prolonged. John Storey, for the parliamentary party, described Willis's proposal as a revolutionary platitude: Australia was already the most advanced country socially in the world, and there was no practical prospect of doing anything about capitalism for at least a quarter of a century;⁵² meanwhile, there were plenty of immediate reforms to occupy the party's time and to attract the electorate. A.W. Blakeley MHR, for the AWU officials, supported Storey and condemned those who were opposed to political action - by which he meant those who were against parliamentary reformism. Arthur Rae, a lone dissenter in the AWU phalanx, supported the change, saying that it was about time that the Labor platform could be distinguished from that of the Liberals "without a microscope." Few other delegates spoke. The miners' leader threw out a final challenge to the moderates: "You have either to justify yourselves, or

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51. [contd.] phlet, "Workers' Control in Industry." Willis was a vigorous and practical socialist, sharing the strengths of the British Guildsmen and their essential weakness - the concentration on the management of particular units of production to the neglect of the control of the state and the overall management of the economy. He was also a skilled politician, as his handling of the 1916 strike had demonstrated, although apt to be betrayed by his ideological preconceptions into tactical errors.
52. A quarter of a century later, Labor parliamentarians still held much the same view.

else the new movement is coming in to take your place, whether you like it or not." The division was taken, and the motion was lost, by 127 votes to 112. The next day, as a rowdy dispute over a minor point of procedure reached a tumultuous climax, the cry went up, "One out, all out," and the militant delegates departed from the conference.⁵³

The immediate consequence of the split was a rapid polarisation of the movement in New South Wales. The OBU conference which followed soon after the party conference revealed the serious effect of the break with the Labor party and the AWU: this time, there was less than a third of the number of delegates who had attended the first Congress, and the sharp decline was far from wholly attributable to the influenza epidemic, which was by now nearing its end. The new alignments were reflected by the conference decision that ballots should be carried out by October among members of the existing trade unions on joining the OBU, regardless of their organisations' attitudes;⁵⁴ and the movement's journal reported, over the rest of the year, the raids made by WIU of A organisers⁵⁵ on the established trade unions, and especially on the new enemy, the AWU. Grayndler and Blakeley responded by denouncing the "blowfly, maggot-creating, white ant" tactics of the WIU of A leaders, and by exhorting their members to stand firm.⁵⁶

53. Report, NSW ALP Conference (1919), *Worker*, 12/6/19, 19/6/19. That the issue was seen as very much a matter of principle, which, as Arthur Rae had suggested some months earlier, would "make or break" the party in NSW and gravely affect its future in the Commonwealth (*Labor News*, 29/3/19), is confirmed by the unanimity of the conference on immediate radical policies - condemnation of the Allied intervention in Russia; a protest against the gaoling of the Soviet consul in Australia (Peter Simonoff), and against the deportation of radicals without trial; support for the striking seamen.

54. OBU, July 1919.

55. Including E.E. Judd, so appointed by this conference.

56. *Worker*, 24/7/19.

Meanwhile, Willis had led his followers into the formation of the Socialist Party of Australia, and then to a meeting in August with the other socialist groups⁵⁷ to consider forming a united party; but the conference was unable to agree on a name (the other groups wanted "Revolutionary Socialist Party," which the Willis group thought bad tactics), or on the new party's relations with the WIU of A, and the Labor party rebels formed themselves into the Industrial Socialist Labor Party and began to recruit members and to seek trade union affiliates.⁵⁸

The rebels, however, with characteristic revolutionary optimism, had over-estimated their support: two hundred delegates from local leagues and trade unions had attended their first conference, but most of these were already members of the militant minority, and they failed to bring their branches and unions with them;⁵⁹ and there was only one defector from the ranks of the parliamentary parties - P.J. Brookfield MLA, who represented the Broken Hill electorate of Sturt.⁶⁰ This lack of substantial political support was thrust home by the failure of the ISLP in the December 1919 Federal elections, and the new party did not survive for long. Early in the New Year, the political projection of the WIU of A (as the One Big Unionists had conceived their party) disintegrated, most (including Garden and Rae, but not Willis) amalgamating with the Socialist Labor Party, while the remainder waited their chance to re-enter the Labor party.⁶¹

57. The ASP, the SLP and the Social Democratic League, which had been formed in 1917 by a group of breakaways from the ASP, who wanted to practise the VSP tactic of "boring from within" the Labor party.

58. For an account of the initial conference of the breakaways, Worker, 7/8/19. Report of the unity discussions, Int. Soc., 16/8/19, 13/9/19. The SLP was indignant that the Willis group should have pirated its name, while the ASP condemned them as "political buccaneers" who were accomodating themselves to a program of "palliatives." There was, however, an important point in the disagreement over the party's relation with the unions: the Willis group favoured trade union affiliation,

[contd.]

(The election defeat of the ISLP was an early expression of what has been a continuing theme in Australian labor history: the failure of revolutionaries who have won positions of strength in the trade union movement to attract any considerable political support - and this without jeopardising their positions in the industrial organisations.⁶² The explanation lies partly in the strong traditional links between the Labor party and the unions, which have managed to survive the most bitter conflicts between the two wings of the movement, largely because the party's constitution has been sufficiently flexible in one regard to enable these conflicts to be expressed and fought out, and sufficiently rigid in another to ensure that the parliamentary parties have not been able to escape indefinitely taking action on matters about which the unions have felt really strongly; but perhaps more importantly in the continuing ability of Australian capitalism to meet sufficient of the immediate demands of the working class to prevent any substantial swing away from the party which has traditionally been committed to their piecemeal satisfaction.)

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58. [contd.] while the ASP, anticipating a later Communist attitude, said that a revolutionary trade union should advise its members to join the revolutionary party as individuals - the support of unionists, to be worth anything, must be conscious.
59. Worker, 7/8/19.
60. M.P. Considine MHR refused to campaign against Brookfield on the official labor platform in the March 1920 NSW election, but he was not expelled on this account - as indeed he had not been even when he was imprisoned for three weeks in July 1919 for describing King George V as "a German." In July 1920, Considine was invited by the NSW executive to explain his attitude to the OBU; later in the year, he resigned from the parliamentary party.
61. Rev. Soc., 1/1/20, 3/2/20.
62. More recently, this statement would need to be qualified by the considerable Communist success, from time to time, in winning support for various extra-parliamentary political movements, but the general comment still holds good for electoral support.

The WIU of A remained on the outer for most of 1920, but the pressure of events was gradually forcing the warring factions of the industrial movement to reconcile their differences.

The most important factor - apart from the relatively successful actions for common economic objectives during 1919-20⁶³ - was the failure of either side to achieve a clear victory. Throughout the year, the AWU and the NSW Labor party tried hard to remove the left-wing leadership of the Labor Council. The high point of their effort was a conference of unions, convened by the Labor party on 30 August 1920, to consider ways and means of getting rid of Garden and his followers; but only 50 of the hundred-odd unions which were affiliated to the Council attended the conference, and among these there was a substantial minority which condemned political interference in the Council's affairs.⁶⁴ The Council was, however, weakened by the disaffiliation of a number of unions which objected to the revolutionary tone of its pronouncements. Garden condemned the attempt of the AWU to impose its will on the Council,⁶⁵ and declared the sponsors of this move to be "traitors to the working class movement" who had proved themselves unwilling to allow their own rank and file to judge the issue.⁶⁶ But his counterattack against the AWU made little headway: an attempt to take the 44-hour week campaign out of the hands of the AWU officials by means of an unofficial Council-backed "AWU Disputes Committee" was a failure,⁶⁷ and the raids on the AWU membership, while they had a considerable propaganda effect, produced little practical result.

But the propaganda inroads were sufficient to worry the AWU leaders: nearly a quarter of the 40-odd delegates to the 1920 Convention

63. *Infra*, 331 ff.

64. *Worker*, 2/9/20. The vote to organise against Garden and his executive was 58/22.

65. *Labor Council Manifesto, Int. Soc.*, 17/7/20.

66. *NSW Labor Council Report*, 31/12/20.

67. *Worker*, 29/7/20.

proved to be in favour of the WIU of A, and they launched a savage attack on the AWU bureaucracy which was checked but not ended by the dissolution in July 1920 of the Western [NSW] Branch of the union, for long a centre of militant opposition.⁶⁸ Even more importantly, the AWU leaders were beginning to feel a threat to their treasury. (It was claimed, for example, that the Central Branch had lost 9000 members in three years,⁶⁹ and that, at one Queensland mining centre, only a handful of the AWU members had taken out their 1920-21 membership tickets, the majority wanting to join the OBU.⁷⁰) And, beyond this, even though there was little to suggest it at the 1920 Conference of the NSW Labor party, the AWU officials had overplayed their hand in the party. Their nominees were defeated in the Caucus ballot for places in the ~~Stor~~^e Cabinet,⁷¹ and an attempt by J. Bailey MLA, the principal AWU spokesman in the NSW Caucus, to get rid of two anti-AWU Ministers (J. Dooley and T.D. Mutch) by saddling them with charges of corruption failed miserably when a Royal Commission found that the allegations were quite without substance.⁷² Unable to crush the WIU of A, and more particularly the Labor Council, worried by a possible loss of membership and a nagging rank and file opposition, and facing a possible split with their parliamentary allies, the AWU officials had, by the end of 1920, sound reasons for wanting a reconciliation with the One Big Unionists.

The WIU of A leaders were similarly placed. Despite the apparent success of the movement,⁷³ they had in fact achieved little. From Victoria and Queensland, there had been professions of support, but

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68. An indication of the rift in the AWU on this issue was the equal vote (7/7) on the executive; the motion was carried on the casting vote of President Blakeley. See statement of J. Cullinan, former sec. of Western Branch, Int. Soc., 11/9/20.
69. OBU Herald, 22/3/20: "the militants are leaving the A.W.U."
70. Int. Comm., 12/2/21.
71. Lang: I Remember, 127, 172.
72. Worker, 18/11/20, 23/12/20.
73. e.g. the circulation of the official paper, O.B.U., had reached 32,000 in October 1919.

little practical action.⁷⁴ In South Australia, the unions had finally voted against sinking their separate identities in the OBU.⁷⁵ The January 1920 conference had found only thirteen unions - the Miners' Federation and twelve small craft unions - committed to the scheme.⁷⁶ And the negotiations of the major unions during the 1920 AWU Convention had revealed that several of the most important - notably the Seamen's Union (which in August balloted in favour of a Transport Workers' Federation rather than the OBU) and the ARTSA (which in September joined with similar unions in the other states in the Australian Railways Union) were no longer prepared to merge in the WIU of A. Two other important unions - the Ironworkers and the Watersiders did decide in favour of the OBU during the year, but, without the support of kindred unions, little could be done, and when the time finally came to set up the WIU of A, the Mining Department was the only one which was officially launched.⁷⁷

All this pointed to the impossibility of proceeding without the AWU: given the affiliation of the majority of mass unions, the craft unions might be expected to fall into line (or could in any case be forced into line), but without this - and the AWU was the key - there was little prospect of success. Looking at the question quite practically, A.C. Willis had evidently drawn this conclusion by the middle of the year, when he disavowed yet another declaration by Garden of the WIU of A's intention of poaching on the AWU preserves.⁷⁸ But at almost the same time there were the first indications that a new ideology might cause a change in the tactics of the WIU of A,⁷⁹ and

74. Mulvogue, a prominent OBU supporter in Victoria, had for example taken a leading part in the formation of a Building Trades Federation, which WIU critics described as "sabotage" of the OBU. OBU Herald, Feb. 1920.

75. Worker, 27/5/20.

76. Ibid., 29/1/20.

77. The Mining Department embraced the coal-miners' federation and the Barrier AMA.

78. Worker, 8/7/20.

79. e.g. A. Thomas, an organiser for the WIU of A, lecturing before

by September the most active of the One Big Unionists (except for Willis, who clung to his guild socialism) had formed themselves into a Communist Party which took over from the Bolsheviks and the Third International a new strategy: the development of revolutionary mass action by the "politicalisation" of strikes and other mass struggles, under the direction of a tightly centralised revolutionary elite.⁸⁰ An important part of this concept was participation in the existing mass organisations of the labor movement, no matter how far these might be from revolutionary programs and theories, in order to convert them to the revolutionary purpose, and this, together with the evident failure of the WIU of A as it had been conceived in syndicalist terms, sufficed to suggest a reorientation of the One Big Union and a new approach to the problem of the AWU.

79. [contd.] the Sydney branch of the ASP, had conceded that the OBU was not a sufficient weapon for working-class emancipation, and that it was not realistic to think of industrial unionism as forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old. (Int. Soc., 24/7/20.) Earlier, at a conference of unions held by the WIU of A in Melbourne in May, fraternal delegates from the WIIU had been refused admission - perhaps an indication of impatience with this criticism from the left, but carrying the implication of the future ideological disagreement.

80. Infra, 351.

2. The Year of Strikes.

The years 1919-20 were not in any case conducive to trade union disunity. The immediate post-war period was one of sharply rising prices and relatively stable employment, a situation which invited trade union action for wage increases; and the threat of deteriorating living standards, added to the wartime discontents, exploded in the most costly series of strikes Australia had yet experienced. In 1919, some 6.3 million man-days were lost in industrial disputes, for a total wage loss of nearly £4 million; in 1920, the figures were 1.9 million and £1.2 million.¹ In times such as these, when an often successful trade union offensive accompanied the short-lived post-war boom, the unions tended to draw together. It is the defensive actions which accompany an economic downswing, and the re-cremations which follow defeat, which have contributed most to divisions within the trade union movement.

The principal contributors to this remarkable performance were the several maritime unions and the Broken Hill section of the Mining Department of the WIU of A;² the issues were wages, hours and working conditions.

The seamen, particularly, were carrying a considerable cargo of grievances. They had made an important contribution to the war effort, and had been almost the only Australian union which had made no wages claim in the war years, but they had not benefited from the gratuity awarded to those whose active service had been in uniform. The Navigation Act, which had been passed by the Fisher Government to regulate shipboard conditions, had never been proclaimed. The insistence of the shipowners that their coastal coal-ships run to tight schedules had resulted in several sinkings with considerable loss of

1. Labour Report No. 10, 140-41; No. 11, 150-51.

2. i.e. the former Amalgamated Miners' Association.

life. An award in 1911 had established an eight-hour day for all seamen, but the men still had grievances over holidays, conditions of work, and especially wages. In December 1918, Mr Justice Higgins had awarded an 11% increase - but the men had asked for a 50% rise, which they felt was well justified by the high and rising profits of the shipping companies. On top of this, the influenza epidemic had hit Australia - and, if a seaman got sick while at sea, he was put ashore at the first port, without wages, and had to find his way to his home port at his own expense. Their case was a strong one.³

A measure of the growing militancy of the seamen was the election early in 1918 as Federal Secretary of the union of Tom Walsh, a militant and socialist of long standing.⁴ Walsh lost little time in starting the fight for higher-wages; the unsatisfactory arbitration case was quickly followed by a successful demand of the Union S.S. Company for a wage increase to compensate men for the influenza risk,⁵ and a request to the Shipowners' Federation for a conference on wages and conditions aboard ship. This automatically involved the Commonwealth government, since the Commonwealth had become a large shipowner during the war. The conference was granted, was postponed because of the epidemic, and finally met in April 1919; the seamen's claims were flatly rejected - on the government's initiative, it was felt, as several of the private companies were already paying the higher wage. "The Government have thrown down the challenge. .," said Walsh, "and the trade unions will not hesitate to take it up. If the Government are going to fight the trade unions, very well, let it be war, and we shall see who wins."⁶

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3. cf. T.J. Smith MLA, NSWPD lxxvi 880; T. Walsh in Brisbane Standard, 23/6/19, qd. W. Finlayson MHR, CPD lxxxviii 10391-92.
 4. Walsh had recently married Adela Pankhurst, the Victorian peace propagandist and socialist.
 5. Worker, 9/1/19, 30/1/19.
 6. Walsh, loc. cit.

On 9 May 1919, the Queensland seamen struck work; the Federal Council of the union recommended a general tie-up, and all eastern ports except Adelaide agreed. The union's demands resolved themselves into a minimum wage of £14 a month for able-bodied seamen, an 8 hour day at sea and a 6 hour day in port, decent living quarters and food, and adequate compensation for illness or death.⁷

The union conferred with the government and the shipowners on May 29, and it was apparent that there was some disagreement between the federal leaders and the officials of the Sydney branch over whether or not the strike should be called off and the dispute referred to arbitration. The union agreed to recommend that a ballot be held on the resumption of work; but the Melbourne and Brisbane branches refused to hear of this, and, after Walsh had addressed them, the Sydney branch concurred; the Sydney officials resigned and were replaced by militants. Reviewing the situation, Mr Justice Higgins declared that the main cause of the strike was "the teachings of overseas theorists" (Walsh, like Willis and Garden, was British born), and urged that no concessions be granted under threat of direct action.⁸ As the strike dragged on, coal stocks ran low in the eastern states, rail and tram services were cut, and thousands of factory workers were thrown out of employment.⁹ Food was short in North Queensland, and the Ryan government asked the Commonwealth to allow it to run ships on the Queensland coast on the union's terms, but the Commonwealth refused.¹⁰

Finally, the Melbourne Trades Hall Council, alarmed by the serious consequences of the strike for Victorian workers, stepped in and invited the "key" unions (the miners, carters and railwaymen as well as the seamen) to join it in attempting a settlement. But before these

7. Worker, 22/5/19.

8. Ibid., 5/6/19, 19/6/19.

9. Over 20,000 in Melbourne alone. Labour Report No.10, 142-43.

10. W. Finlayson and W.A. Watt MSHR, CPD lxxxviii 10184-85.

unions could meet, the Federal government had arrested Walsh on a charge of inciting to strike; he was first fined £100, and then, having repeated the offence as publicly as possible, another £200 plus three months' gaol. After discussions with the government, the combined unions agreed to recommend to the seamen that they resume work on the basis of the government's undertaking that an immediate conference would be held at which the government would do its best to get a settlement, any outstanding issues to be referred to arbitration; privately, the government indicated that most of the men's claims would be met. Meetings of seamen in all ports, however, refused to go back to work unless Walsh was released. The government rejected this demand, and Walsh himself urged the men to accept the promised improvements - but again they refused.¹¹

Now it became a battle of prestige. The government, anxious to preserve face, was determined not to release Walsh until the strike was over, and to cling to the Arbitration Court as the final arbiter. The seamen wanted to establish that they had scored a victory for direct action over arbitration, and to humble the government by forcing the release of Walsh. The combined unions, having the government's assurance of a reasonable settlement, wanted to end the strike while it could still be won, and before it got out of hand. At last, late in August, under further pressure from their own and the combined unions, the seamen accepted the government's proposals and returned to work;¹² the conference met, the men were granted a 35/- per month wage rise, an 8 hour day, and two weeks' holiday a year,¹³ and Walsh was released - as "an act of leniency" - soon after.¹⁴ It took

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11. Worker, 31/7/19, 7/8/19. The Socialist (8/8/19) attacked the unions for recommending resumption; it was "weakness . . . rather than wickedness," but it meant surrender. Le Cornu, president of the Seamen's Union, replied (Soc., 5/9/19) that the unions had got as much as possible out of the government.
 12. Worker, 28/8/19.
 13. Labour Report No.10, 142-43.
 14. Worker, 2/10/19.

another strike of Sydney seamen before all the companies agreed to accept the conditions of settlement, but finally the economic victory was complete. The political honours were about even - the government had preserved the decencies, but everyone knew that the seamen had won.

Elsewhere in the maritime industry, the Waterside Workers' Federation was fighting an unsuccessful running war for the abolition of the shipowners' Labor Bureaux, through which 1917 "loyalists" and returned servicemen were still being given preference in employment over unionists;¹⁵ while marine stewards, cooks and engineers succeeded, by a judicious mixture of direct action and arbitration, in forcing wage rises.¹⁶ It was a disturbed year on the waterfront, in which the maritime unions, because of the early reluctance of the government and the shipowners to confer, were generally supported by the rest of the labor movement, both political and industrial. On the part of the maritime unions, the 1919-20 strikes were a conscious turn towards direct action, but this was moderated by the influence of the other unions, which eventually brought the parties to confer and compromise.

Broken Hill, notorious for the length of its industrial disputes, surpassed all its previous records with the strike of miners which began on 20 May 1919 and ended, four months after a formal settlement was reached, on November 11 the following year.

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15. For a discussion of the issues, see Report of Royal Commission on Industrial Troubles on Melbourne Wharfs: (1919, G.J. Dethridge Commissioner), CPP 1920-21 IV 687 ff.
16. Worker, Jan.-Feb. 1920, passim. In the marine engineers' strike, the Commonwealth used what was at that time the unusual device of freezing the union's funds, a measure which the NSW Labor Council described as "one of the gravest attacks on Unionism ever made in Australia."* (NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/20.) This technique has since become standard practice.

* Should read: " . . one of the gravest attacks upon Unionism . ."

The trouble began when the carpenters employed in the mines stopped work on 22 April 1919, after giving the fourteen days' notice required by the NSW Arbitration Act, in support of a wages claim. Employed on timbering, they were key men in the industry, and the Mine Managers' Association threatened a general lockout if work were not resumed.¹⁷ A week later, they were joined by the members of the Engine-Drivers' and Firemen's Association, who were objecting to working with some of their fellows who had left the Association to join up with the Miners' Federation.¹⁸

The demarcation dispute did not last long: despite their adherence to the One Big Union, the miners agreed to recognise the EDFA, and preparations were made to resume work. However, the mine managers announced that, as the carpenters were still on strike, it would not be possible to re-employ all the men at once. The miners and the engine-drivers looked on this as a lockout, and, as the three-year agreement which had ended the 1916 strike was due to expire in a few weeks, they drafted a log of claims which they submitted to the companies. When this was rejected, the miners, by a big majority, called a strike.¹⁹ The demands were those which had been incorporated in the log of claims: abolition of contract work and a minimum wage of £1 a day; abolition of the night shift; and, because of the prevalence of phthisis and other industrial diseases, a 6-hour day and a five-day week, and adequate compensation for illness and death.²⁰

17. Worker, 1/5/19.

18. Int. Soc., 31/5/19.

19. Labour Report No. 10, 135-36.

20. P.J. Brookfield and J. Wright MSLA, Worker, 29/5/19. The Barrier strike provided an interesting example of the sectarian socialist attitude to economic demands and industrial action. E. Wetherell, a leading member of the ASP in Broken Hill, said that, if realised, these demands would mean "an economic gain and a social advance." W.J. Thomas, a leading ASP theorist, replied that Wetherell's comment revealed his "colossal ignorance" of economics, for, even if the demands were won, they would not improve the workers' lot. More diplomatically, the International Socialist,

[contd.]

There was a fatalistic air about the union's approach to the strike. It was apparent that the companies were in a good tactical position - they had large stocks of ore at grass, and, with the end of the war, the European metal market had collapsed. There was little prospect of an early compromise, and both sides settled down for a long fight - the companies by allowing the water to rise in the mines, and the men by demanding that the government open up public works in the area to provide alternative employment, and by appealing to their fellow-unionists for financial support.²¹

The companies said that they could not afford to meet the men's claims, but would nevertheless facilitate a hearing in the Arbitration Court. But the miners would not hear of the Court; they had had experience of its delays, and they pointed to the £26 million which the companies had paid out in dividends since the opening of the field as evidence of the mine-owners' ability to grant the log.²² By now, there were 7000 men out of work, and the distress was acute; strike pay was sometimes down as low as 4/6 a week for single men, and 6/9 for married men with families,²³ and the mining union, which had been providing the funds, had to warn its Barrier members that the money would probably not last out, even at that rate, before Christmas.²⁴

The two craft unions had soon had enough. In mid-June, they asked Mr Justice Higgins to call a compulsory conference, after which the engine-drivers decided to go back to work, pending a Court hearing.

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20. [contd.] in an editorial note, agreed with Thomas's theoretical point, but said that the working class would inevitably be forced into strikes to defend its economic position, and that the paper did not want to weaken the workers' morale, and therefore would not publish any more discussion of this sort during the strike. Int. Soc., 22/11/19.
21. Brookfield and Wright, loc. cit.; J.J. O'Reilly (an AMA organiser), Worker, 12/6/19.
22. O'Reilly, loc. cit.
23. Int. Soc., 6/9/19.
24. Worker, 25/9/19.

The miners condemned this as a breach of the agreement they had reached with the EDFA the previous month, and resolved to stay out until their terms were met.²⁵ Three months later, the carpenters voted by a small majority to resume work. But still the miners were recalcitrant - as were the owners, even when J.M. Baddely, the president of the mining union, threatened to extend the strike, declaring that it would be better for the industry to cease operations altogether than to continue under the existing conditions. Still trying to keep clear of the Arbitration Court, the union proposed a special tribunal on the industry, with power to investigate the companies' finances; but the companies would have none of this.^{25a}

Six months later - when the strike had already been going for a year, and the men had lost close to £1¹/₂ million in wages - the Melbourne Trades Hall Council intervened²⁶ and arranged a further conference which, it was hoped, would lead to a settlement; but the companies would not budge on the hours demand, and the miners again rejected their terms.²⁷ Finally, it was left to the new NSW Labor government to initiate the settlement. On government instructions, Mr Justice Edmunds, President of the Board of Trade, convened a compulsory conference. Both parties agreed in advance to accept his findings, but when these included a substantial reduction in hours, the owners reneged.²⁸ The following month, by agreement, the dispute was referred to a tribunal consisting of five representatives of the men and five of the owners, presided over by a chairman chosen by the NSW Premier and the Prime Minister (they chose Mr Justice Edmunds again), and by September an acceptable compromise had been reached: the hours of work should be 44, whistle to whistle, provided that adequate provision was made for compensation for the dis-

25. Labour Report No. 10, 135-36.

25a. Worker, 2/10/19.

26. The Melbourne THC acted as a de facto headquarters for the trade union movement because of its proximity to the seat of government.

27. Worker, 8/4/20, 22/4/20.

28. Ibid., 10/6/20.

abled, but if not they should be 35. The minimum wage was set at 15/- a day - considerably less than the miners had claimed, but nevertheless a rise of 2/-.²⁹ But even this settlement did not end the troubles of the Barrier men. The metal market was still depressed, and the owners were in no hurry to open the mines. There were further arguments over the interpretation of Mr Justice Edmunds's findings, and it was not until mid-November - almost 18 months after the outbreak of the strike - that the men began to go back to work; a month later, it was still reported that the majority were unemployed and that distress was widespread.³⁰ By now, the miners were feeling the pinch of the international economic crisis, and it was not until the economy began to pick up that anything like full employment was again known in Broken Hill. For all the remarkable solidarity of the men, it had been a tremendously costly strike - the men's loss in wages was of the order of £2½ million, and the union was said to have spent £100,000 on strike pay³¹ - and there was little to show for it, unless it was confirmation of the lesson that the one big unionists were accustomed to draw from all sectional disputes, that the only solution was industrial unionism, so that "an injury to one" could in reality become "an injury to all."

But perhaps the most significant industrial issue of these immediate post-war years was the movement, headed by the craft unions, for the 44-hour week. Little had been done since the beginning of the century to alter working hours, except for the generally successful move to compress the 48-hour week into 5½ days, thus enabling workers to enjoy the "Saturday half-holiday." The shorter working week had often been canvassed as a way of providing jobs for the

29. Worker, 30/9/20.

30. Int. Soc., 11/12/20.

31. Labour Report No. 11, 141-43.

unemployed, but the times when this argument was most appropriate³² were also the times when it was most difficult to do anything about it. The miners had won the 44-hour week by direct action during the war; now, with employment at a high level in the skilled trades, the craft unions took up the running.

From the beginning of 1920, the NSW and Victorian unions began to mount a campaign for a working week of five days, each of 8.8 hours. As with the original eight hours campaign, the building trades were in the lead: in Melbourne in January and in Sydney in March, carpenters, bricklayers and several other sections of building workers resolved to refuse work on Saturday mornings, thus returning to the tactic which had been successful in the earlier struggle.³³ The Employers' Federation decided to resist, and the Master Builders threatened a lockout, while in New South Wales the Arbitration Court varied the bricklayers' award to reduce their wages by four hours' pay, and fined the union £100 for participating in an illegal strike.³⁴

Building was for the moment booming, the building tradesmen were in a good bargaining position, and the unions ignored the employers' response. On 10 April 1920, a congress of NSW unions met to plan their action. The OBU advocates were concerned to demonstrate the efficacy of their prescriptions, and the unions were grouped according to their industries and urged to go ahead, industry by industry, with the boycott of Saturday work.³⁵ The general strategy decided on by the congress was to support action by the skilled workers, since there was considerable unemployment among laborers but a good demand for tradesmen.

32. This does not mean that I think that the argument was valid.

33. Worker, 5/2/20, 1/4/20.

34. Ibid., 8/4/20, 29/4/20; NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/20.

35. For the manifesto of the congress, Int. Soc., 24/4/20. The committee appointed to lead the campaign comprised O. Schrieber and J.S. Garden, both prominent in the OBU; J. Kilburn and W.P. Earsman, both prominent socialists; and G. Bodkin of the Railway Industry Branch of the AWU.

Before this issue could be resolved, the AWU, which, despite its continuing warfare with the OBU men, was represented on the 44-hour committee, was involved in a strike (the first for many years) to secure this advance for all its members. The AWU leaders had repeatedly declared their adherence to arbitration and their abhorrence of direct action, and the war-time ballot of members had overwhelmingly supported this position, but now they were forced to recant. The congestion of business in the Federal Arbitration Court,³⁶ and the rapidity and generosity with which the Queensland Court had been dealing with trade union claims since its reconstitution in 1916, had led the AWU to adopt a new arbitration tactic. Early in 1920, the Queensland section of the union had applied for a determination for that state alone, and Mr Justice McCawley, although he realised that to grant this would enable the union to play the State Court off against the Federal Court, awarded a substantial rise in wages, preference to unionists, and the 44-hour week.³⁷ At the opening of the 1920 shearing season, Mr Justice Higgins's award, under which the rest of the union was operating, still had six months to run; but rank and file pressure within the union was considerable, and, no matter how much the officials might discount it, the danger of losing members to the WIU of A was always present, so that the AWU executive had little choice but to declare for the general application of the 44-hour week throughout the industry.³⁸

By negotiation with the pastoralists' organisations, the union was able to extend the shorter hours to all states except New South Wales, and even here only a section of the state was holding out.³⁹ An

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36. The AWU claimed that this was due to the Prime Minister's sabotage of the Court, arising out of his hostility to Mr Justice Higgins's refusal to deregister the Waterside Workers' Federation in 1917. Worker, 28/10/20.
37. The significance of this state-federal interplay is discussed by M. Perlman: Judges in Industry, 70 ff.
38. cf. statement of E. Grayndler, Gen. Sec. AWU, Worker, 15/7/20. Perlman suggests (op. cit., 68-69), on the evidence of a letter

[contd.]

effective two months' withdrawal of labor from the shearing sheds in Central New South Wales finally brought the Graziers' Association into line, and the shorter hours were universally conceded.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the building trades throughout the eastern states were continuing their Saturday morning boycott; there had been some lock-outs and some resumptions of work, but the campaign was still alive. In Victoria, the Printing Industry Employees' Union had fought a twelve-weeks' strike for the 44 hours; they had won a wage increase, but no reduction in working time.⁴¹ And, early in September, four of the seven NSW metal trades unions had decided to inaugurate the Saturday morning stop-work. Some metal trades employers locked out their men, and the dispute was referred to a compulsory conference at which agreement was reached that work should be resumed pending the results of an inquiry into working hours which the government undertook to inaugurate immediately.⁴² Mr Justice Beeby, who had just been appointed to the NSW Arbitration Court and made President of the Board of Trade, conducted a remarkably quick investigation, and recommended that the government should legislate to introduce the 44-hour week, immediately for the building trades and in six months' time for the metal trades. The time difference was justified by the judge by the greater reorganisation involved for workshops and foundries; but the Labor Council had a different explanation. "Why the difference?" asked J.S. Garden in his 1920 report. ". . . The Building Trades kept to their determination to take the 44-hour week. Because of that the Judge says: Give it to them at once. Because the Iron Trades were not so determined in their stand they have to wait six months. A wonderful lesson. . ."⁴³

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38. [contd.] signed "Shed Hand" which appeared in the SMH, 23/7/20, that this demand came primarily from the shed hands, and was not welcomed by the shearers; this seems likely, although there is no supporting evidence in the discussion in The Worker.
39. Worker, 22/7/20, 26/8/20.
40. Ibid., 16/9/20.
41. Labour Report No. 11, 147.
42. Amalgamated Engineering Union 25th Anniversary Souvenir, 91.
43. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/20.

Despite (or, as the Labor Council would have argued, because of) the widespread direct action, it was through "constitutional" processes that most workers finally won the shorter working week. When the Timber Workers' Union applied to the Federal Court for a reduction of hours, Mr Justice Higgins invited the employers' organisations and the Trades Hall to make submissions, and his award of 44 hours in this case was, in effect, and was treated as, an invitation to other federal unions to make a similar application, and the shorter working week was extended to the metal trades in May 1921. While the NSW government, following the Beeby findings, legislated in December 1920 to enable the proclamation of the 44-hour week in certain industries.⁴⁴ The process which had been started by the determined industrial action of the NSW coal and metal miners in 1916 was completed by the mixture of direct action and legal process adopted by the AWU and the skilled crafts in 1920; this combination of industrial strength and legal argument has since been a recurrent pattern in Australian industrial relations.

The concentration on working hours was in part due to the fact that many unions had come, in this period of rapidly rising prices, to accept the well-established Marxian dictum that there was little permanent gain to be had from wage increases, but that significant improvement could be won on the hours front,⁴⁵ that they had "awakened

44. For a discussion of legislation and arbitration as determinants of standard working hours, see J.H. Portus: The Development of Australian Trade Union Law, 257-59.

45. Although this was disputed by contemporary Australian adherents of Marx's theories on two grounds: that the successful move for 44 hours was conditional on the immediately favourable tactical situation and therefore might not last long (in this they were right in the short run, but - as a glance at the history of the eight-hour movement could have told them - wrong in the long run); and that the reduced working hours would immediately be countered by employers' pressure for a greater intensity of labor (this was a more substantial point, and, insofar as intensity of labor was regarded as synonymous with hourly output, it was clearly correct, but this overlooked the effect of mechanisation on productivity). Int. Soc., 24/4/20; Reve. Soc., 6/11/20.

to the fatality [sic]⁴⁶ of chasing the living wage [which] is like the endless chain - the faster you run, the quicker the chain goes, and you are progressing not one inch."⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the wages discontent was widespread and persistent, and it was accompanied by the never-ending argument about whether wage rises followed or preceded price increases. (The answer in these years - as in any period of price inflation - was both; money wages lagged behind the cost of living, and, when adjustments were made, they were as far as possible passed on to the consumer.) The NSW Board of Trade, which had been set up in 1918 to inquire into these questions, fixed on £3 a week as a "living wage" for a family of four; the Labor Council thought this an "outrageous judgement" and "an insult to the working class."⁴⁸ The next year, the Board found for £3.17.0; this was a considerable increase, but it was more than justified by the rise in the cost of living since the end of the war, and the unions did not find it easy to have the necessary adjustments made to their awards. In 1920, when the NSW Statistician found that there had been an increase in commodity prices by nearly one-third, the Board of Trade declared for an 8/- rise in the "living wage" - just over 10%.

Various remedies were canvassed in the unions, from a boycott of the products of "profiteers," and a ban on the export of consumer goods like that operated for a time in 1915-16, to organising the one big union for the overthrow of capitalism, but none met with general support.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the discontent was there, and rising along with the price level, and something had to be done about it. John Storey, in his policy speech for the 1920 NSW election, promised legislation against profiteers, but his attempt to invest the Board of

46. This is clearly a misprint for "futility," but the error is a happy one.

47. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/19.

48. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/18.

49. cf. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/20.

Trade with power to investigate commodity prices and to commandeer supplies of goods was defeated in the Legislative Council. Hughes made a three-pronged attack on the problem, and the industrial unrest which went with it, in his policy speech for the 1919 Federal elections: he promised a Royal Commission into the basic wage, he foreshadowed amendments to the Commonwealth arbitration law, and he asked the people to support, in a referendum which was voted upon at the same time as the elections, a constitutional amendment which would give the Commonwealth powers to deal with monopolies and a general power over trade and commerce and industrial matters.⁵⁰ In the event, the referendum was defeated, both Labor and Nationalist parties being divided in their attitudes and advice. The arbitration law was amended to provide for a Commonwealth conciliation mechanism and a series of special tribunals with power to make determinations for particular industries; this so changed the Federal arbitration structure and so cut across the power of the existing Court that Mr Justice Higgins immediately submitted his resignation.⁵¹

But the real shock was the Basic Wage Commission, under the chairmanship of A.B. Piddington, which was directed to inquire into the present cost of living for a family of five, and means of adjusting the basic wage to meet changes in the cost of living. Pointing out that the Federal basic wage had never rested on a proper inquiry into what constituted an adequate living standard, and what this would cost to maintain, the Commission proceeded to make such an investigation, and came up with the astonishing finding that, to keep a man, his wife and three children on an acceptable standard at current

50. The proposed changes were similar to, but rather less extensive than those sought by the Fisher government pre-war, and those canvassed but abandoned in 1915.

51. Labor movement reactions to this varied. The Federal parliamentary party and the AWU and other pro-arbitration unions regarded the changes as evidence of Hughes's determination to get rid of a judge who had, in his 12 years as President of the Court, proved himself a friend of the workers. Left-wing opinion was reflected by The Socialist's comment (13/8/20): "Arbitration Tricksters Quarrel."

prices, £5.16.0 a week was necessary - 31/- more than the NSW Board of Trade had declared, almost at the same time. Answering the second question, the Commission recommended quarterly adjustments of the wage to meet changes in the cost of living.⁵²

The Prime Minister was horrified. To implement these findings would add something like £100 million a year to the Commonwealth's annual wages bill, he said, and this was unthinkable. Anticipating this reaction, the Commission had considered other possibilities, and had proposed that the basic wage be fixed at £4 - a living wage for a man and his wife - and that the Commonwealth raise, by what would now be called a pay-roll tax, sufficient funds to pay child endowment at the rate of 12/- per child; this would clearly cost far less, but even so the Prime Minister felt that it would need a deal of thought.⁵³

The Piddington Commission provided the unions with an ideal peg on which to hang their agitation for higher wages, but the immediate post-war militancy and optimism was already passing. The best that the federal unions could do, at their conference held on 4 December 1920 to discuss the government's refusal to implement the Commission's findings, was to pass what The Socialist justly described as a "miserably weak" resolution, calling on unions to make the Piddington figures the basis of future applications to the Court, but proposing no stronger action.⁵⁴ The brief boom had passed its peak; the economy was moving into recession, unemployment was rising, the employers' counter-attack was developing, and once more the unions were swung from industrial action back into politics.

52. Report of Royal Commission on the Basic Wage, CPP 1920-21 IV 529 ff. On the wages-prices spiral, the Commission recognised that, if their findings were implemented, prices would rise, but argued that only part of the wage increase would be passed on, so that, with regular quarterly adjustments, this would have a diminishing effect.

53. Worker, 2/22/20.

54. Socialist, 10/12/20.

3. The Formation of the Communist Party.

An important part of the new turn to politics was the creation of a new kind of revolutionary party, based on a new international model. The Russian revolution of March 1917 had been received with enthusiasm by the Australian labor movement: it meant both the downfall of a notorious tyranny, and the first breach in the insane destruction of the European war, and the whole of the labor press, from The Worker to Direct Action, rejoiced in the triumph of the Russian democracy. The November revolution for a time went almost unnoticed: on the same day that the news of the storming of the Winter Palace reached Australia, the Prime Minister announced the second conscription referendum, and the local news was of more vital concern to Australian radicals, who in any case knew little of the factional disputes of the Russian left. But two essential facts soon became clear, and ensured an equally wide support for the new revolution - the workers had taken over the factories, and the Soviets had issued their call to the governments and the peoples to end the war;¹ and there was an intense curiosity about the new developments.²

Almost the only people in Australia who knew what was happening were the Russian emigres. These were radicals to a man, mostly refugees from 1905, and deeply involved in the fierce debates of the Russian labor movement.³ With the Bolshevik victory, and the appointment in January 1918 of Peter Simonoff, a former Broken Hill miner and now secretary of the Russian Association in Brisbane,⁴ as Russian

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1. cf. Int. Soc., 1/12/17.
 2. e.g. the VSP decided to send an observer to revolutionary Russia; A.W. Foster was chosen, but the Commonwealth refused a passport. VSP Minutes, 14/1/18.
 3. A Union of Russian Immigrants (the "Russian Association") had been formed in 1911; it published three papers - Echo of Australia (1912-13); Izvestia (1913 to its suppression in 1915); and Workers' Life (1915 to its suppression in 1918). The organization changed its name in 1919 to the Union of Russian Workers, which published a new paper, Knowledge and Unity.
 4. Simonoff was sentenced to six months' gaol for breaches of the War Precautions regulations forbidding foreigners to speak at

[contd.]

Consul-General in Australia, the local Bolsheviks began to preach the truths of the revolution to Australian socialists. The picture was far from clear, but everyone agreed that the Russian workers were attempting, in Upton Sinclair's words, "humanity's first experiment in industrial self-government."⁵ Each group, however, saw in this a justification of its own position. The inheritors of the IWW pointed the lesson of direct action; the ASP emphasised the Marxian orthodoxy of the Bolsheviks; the SLP made great play with an apocryphal⁶ story concerning Lenin's admiration for Daniel De Leon.

In the early months, the most widely publicised of the pronouncements of the Soviet government (apart from its plea for peace) was the decree of 16 November 1917 on the control of industry by the workers engaged therein - control "over production, the purchase and sale of products and raw materials and their preservation [?conservation], as also the financial management of such undertakings," to be "exercised in each establishment concerned through the elected organisations of [the] work people. . ."⁷ The most widely circulated eyewitness accounts emphasised the new place and pride of the Russian workers in the process of production.⁸ All this convinced Australian socialists and syndicalists alike that, in essentials, the Bolsheviks were fulfilling the hopes of the working-class movements, and their concern with the revolution was twofold: to protect it against capitalist intervention, and to find out how it had been done.

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4. [contd.] public meetings in November 1918. There were strong protests from all sections of the labor movement, but he was not released until July 1919. He opened a consulate in Sydney, but this was closed when he returned to Russia in August 1921.
 5. U. Sinclair: A Plea for Russia (Melb., n.d., probably 1919).
 6. cf. D.K. McKee: Daniel De Leon: A Reappraisal, Labor History, Vol. 1, No. 3, 269.
 7. Gd. M. Blackburn: Bolshevism: What the Russian Workers Are Doing (Melb., n.d., probably late 1918), 13.
 8. See Russia: Report of the Bullitt Mission as delivered to the U.S.A. Senate Committee, September, 1919; Jacques Sadoul: Inside Soviet Russia; Professor [W.T.] Goode: In Russia; Arthur Ran-

[contd.]

Australians could do little about the first of these, except to demonstrate their solidarity, often by passing resolutions, sometimes by the public display of the symbol of the international revolution, the Red Flag;⁹ but as more and more information emerged from Moscow, the second became a more practical question.

One conclusion that was drawn early by many Australian socialists was the importance of implanting revolutionary theories firmly in the mass labor movement; in Melbourne, late in 1917, W.P. Earsman, Guido Baracchi and several members of the VSP formed a Labor College under the aegis of the Victorian Railways Union, which began to hold classes in economics, philosophy and industrial strategy,¹⁰ and in 1919 Earsman took this movement to Sydney, where it found a home with the Labor Council.¹¹ But there were still as many versions of just what the unionists were to be taught as there were socialist and syndicalist sects and splinter groups.

The end-of-the-war confusion on the left was, by late 1919, even worse confounded. The ASP had moved further away from industrialist theories, and had begun a bitter argument with the De Leonite WIIU, in the course of which the De Leonite organisation in Sydney disappeared, and the ASP branch in Melbourne abandoned the party to concentrate on industrial propaganda through the WIIU. The remnants of the IWW in Sydney had formed themselves into the Industrial Labor Party, but this had split when a group of its members conceded the possibility of co-operation with other elements — even politicians — in the campaign for the release of the Twelve, and broke away to form the International Industrial Workers. This organisation did not prosper in

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8. [contd.] some: Six Weeks in Russia. (All these were published by William Andrade, Melbourne, in 1919 and early 1920.)
9. There were no Australian troops involved in the interventionary armies; the most the Australian government did was to prevent revolutionary emigres returning to Russia, and to ban the flying of the Red Flag and gaol offenders.
10. Socialist, 25/1/18.
11. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/19.

Sydney, but in Melbourne it gathered in a group of former IWWs who had reformed as the OBU Propaganda League, and in Adelaide it captured the local branch of the ASP for the pure anti-political faith. In Queensland, a series of OBU Propaganda Leagues brought together the militant industrialists. The VSP was again torn between those who saw it as a "ginger group" inside the Labor party, and those who wanted it to break the link. The 1919 breakaways from the NSW Labor party - the Industrial Socialist Labor Party - had disintegrated. Some remained outside the political organisations; others joined the SLP; while Brookfield and the Barrier organisations which had followed him maintained an independent existence, later to emerge as another Industrial Labor Party: between them, however, these groups controlled the important WIU of A (the One Big Union). The SLP held to its lonely path, steadfastly refusing all the attempts of the ASP to inveigle it into an amalgamation, but steadily losing members in the process. Between them, these organisations had at most two thousand members, and the combined circulation of all their papers would have been between five and ten thousand copies,¹² but - so far as their theories permitted - they enjoyed an influence beyond their numbers. The VSP was entrenched in the Melbourne Trades Hall Council and the Victorian Labor party. The industrialists were in control of the miners' and seamen's unions, the NSW Labor Council and the Brisbane Industrial Council; they were influential in the railways and waterfront unions and in many craft unions, and had even made inroads into the AWU; and from these vantage points they had won a foothold in the Labor party. Into this tangle of organisations, theories and tactical conceptions there was dropped, late in 1919, the "New Communist Manifesto" - the declaration of principles and policy of the inaugural congress of the Third International, convened by the Bolsheviks and held in Moscow in March 1919.¹³

12. Except that, for a very short time, the circulation of the OBU Herald (the organ of the WIU) reached over 10,000.

13. This was first issued in Australia by the VSP in December 1919,

[contd.]

The question, according to the International, was this: ". . . shall the whole of working humanity become the feudal bond-servants of the victorious Entente bourgeoisie, which, under the name of a League of Nations, aided by an 'international' army and an 'international' navy, here plunders and murders, there throws a crumb, but everywhere enchains the proletariat, with the single aim of maintaining its own rule? Or will the working class take into its own hands the disorganised and shattered economic life and make certain its reconstruction on a Socialist basis?"¹⁴ The Manifesto spent some time in suggesting the methods by which the implied solution might be realised. First of all, it was political action which was envisaged - but of a new kind, mass action, the spontaneous action of workingmen which, because of the direction given to it by the revolutionary vanguard, would bring the workers into conflict with the bourgeois state and would therefore take on a political character, until finally, in the crisis into which capitalism would inevitably plunge, the bourgeois state would be destroyed and the proletarian state - the dictatorship of the proletariat be established in its stead. Inherent in this concept of revolutionary mass action were three further concepts: the subordination of all immediate interests to the struggle for power, but participation in all immediate struggles in order to give them this orientation, and the creation of a centralised, disciplined party which would direct its activity to these ends. And further, involved in this new tactic was the repudiation of the sectarian isolation of the old left-wing (the ASP), the anti-political dogma of the syndicalists (the IWW and its offshoots), and the parliamentary

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13. [contd.] under the title "The New Communist Manifesto of 'The Third Internationale' (Bolshevist and Left Wing Socialists);" a more complete version, "Manifesto of the Communist International," was issued by the Communist Party of Australia in 1921.
14. Manifesto of the Communist International, 6.

illusions of the "centre" socialists (the VSP).¹⁵ The new party had a hazardous course to steer.

For revolutionaries throughout the world, the ideas of the Bolsheviks acquired great prestige - not only as an explanation of the victory of their Russian comrades, but as a magic formula for their own success. The sufficient condition for the social revolution became the pronouncement of the appropriate Leninist incantations. So in Australia the ASP, at its conference in December 1919, declared its allegiance to the Third International, and announced "its immediate aim [to be] the dictatorship of the proletariat, with all political power in the hands of the working class." In its manifesto, Australia and the World Revolution, it denied that any improvement in the condition of the working class was possible under capitalism, repudiated all "immediate demands," affirmed that its attitude towards "all other political organisations, whether alleged socialist or avowed defenders of the present social order, is one of scathing criticism and militant opposition," and declared its immediate purpose to be "agitation . . . to arouse the workers, education to enlighten them, and organisation to marshal them for the conquest of state power."¹⁶ The ASP, from the beginning of 1920, turned itself to this considerable task.

Meanwhile, in Melbourne, a Communist group had been formed by syndicalists like Baracchi, then editor of the IIW paper Industrial Solidarity, Russian emigres, and the left wing of the VSP, and during twelve months this group made a determined effort to capture the Socialist Party for the Third International. From September 1919, the

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15. Although this was implicit in the C.I. Manifesto, it was spelled out in detail in a series of documents emerging from the International and the Bolsheviks, of which the most important were Lenin's State and Revolution and 'Left Wing' Communism (published in Australia in 1920 and 1921); To the I.W.W.: A Special Message from The Communist International (1920); and the various "Theses" of the C.I., especially the Theses on Tactics (1921).
16. Australia and the World Revolution (ASP, 1920), passim, esp. 12, 16, 20.

VSP was involved in discussion about the possibility of amalgamating the socialist and industrialist organisations throughout Australia into one united party, and this debate inevitably raised the question of the nature of the party. An attempt to change the name of the VSP to "Communist Party" was defeated, but later a Communist motion for the reorganisation of the party on the lines of "direct action [in both] political and industrial fields and no compromise (recognising only revolutionary politics)" was carried; however, at a later meeting, when the moderates had rallied their forces, this was reversed by the successful motion of R.S. Ross, the retiring party secretary,¹⁷ "that the Party continue on its present lines of action."¹⁸ The Communists did not give up easily: they sought to reinforce their faction with new recruits, but the moderates more than matched them at this. Simonoff, the Bolshevick Consul, joined in with a trenchant attack on Ross and his followers entitled "The Eunuchs of Also-Marxism."¹⁹ But finally the Communists were defeated; the local branch of the party in which they had concentrated was expelled, their spokesmen were removed from the party executive, and their members were declared to be ineligible to belong to the VSP.²⁰

As well as providing a new creed for the socialist sects, the Bolshevick concept of mass action provided those revolutionaries who were embedded in the mass organisations - the trade unions particularly - with a new approach to, and a justification for, the organisation and direction of their activity. For these men, centred in the NSW Labor Council and the One Big Union movement, what was important was not so much the doctrine as the creation of a cohesive organisation which could "direct and control through its members every industrial dispute

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17. Ross's views were cogently put in his pamphlet, *Revolution in Russia and Australia*; the burden of his argument was that the methods of the Russian revolution were determined by the Tsarist autocracy and were inapplicable to the Australian democracy.
 18. VSP Minutes, 14/1/20, 28/1/20.
 19. *Industrial Solidarity* [Melbourne], Feb. 1920.
 20. VSP Minutes, 22/11/20, 25/10/20, 8/11/20.

and disturbance of the workers, keeping always in mind the same end - social revolution - and trying to utilise every spontaneous action of the workers for that one end."²¹ The Labor Council militants, together with Tom Glynn and a number of other ex-IWWs, formed a secret Communist group in August or September 1920, in close co-operation with the Melbourne group, and issued their own manifesto. This was not unlike the ASP's December 1919 declaration, but there were two significant differences: a more definite emphasis was placed on participation in mass industrial struggles (as in the passage quoted above), and there was no denunciation of other political organisations.

These points did not seem at the outset particularly important to the members of the ASP, who first adopted the anonymously-issued manifesto, and then invited its sponsors to join them in a conference to launch the Communist Party on 30 October 1920. The "united" party, however, lasted only six weeks; the ASP withdrew its representatives from the newly constituted executive, alleging personal ambitions on the part of the "Trades Hall" group,²² and declared themselves to be the Communist Party. There were now two parties, with separate headquarters, executives and weekly newspapers, each claiming allegiance to the International.²³

The magic of the word "communist" was sufficient in itself to stimulate the formation of groups in the other capital cities, on the NSW coalfields, and in North Queensland, in which all the existing radical groups except the VSP and the SLP participated.²⁴ But the argument

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21. Manifesto of the Central Executive of the Australian Communist Party, Int. Soc., 2/10/20.
 22. ASP nominees were defeated for the positions of secretary of the new party (W.P. Barsman was appointed) and editor of the paper (Tom Glynn was appointed).
 23. Australian Communist, 24/12/20. This was the paper of the "Trades Hall" C.P.; later (13/5/21) it became simply "The Communist." The ASP or "Goulburn Street" C.P. changed its "International Socialist" to "International Communist" from the beginning of 1921.
 24. Apart from its usual objections to amalgamation with the other socialist bodies, the SLP was opposed to the CP acceptance of the inevitability of violence, and to its advocacy of secret

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between the "Trades Hall" and the "Goulburn Street" parties remained a stumbling-block. The phenomenon of a number of small groups, each claiming to be the one true disciple of Bolshevism, was not confined to Australia, and, from its inaugural congress, the International demanded that these groups unite;²⁵ and, in the local situation, the Trades Hall party was in the stronger position, since it was not so intent on doctrinal rectitude and could therefore legitimately claim to be more interested than its Goulburn Street rival in amalgamating the two organisations.²⁶ At least, this was how the Communists outside Sydney saw the issue, and most of them declared for the Trades Hall.²⁷

The argument was obscure and often unpleasantly personal, with accusations of self-seeking, fact-twisting and misuse of funds tossed recklessly from side to side. But there were substantial points at issue - the two already noted, and the proper attitude of Communists towards industrial unionism. The Goulburn Street party accused Garden and Earsman of being "opportunistic" in their approach to the trade union movement and the Labor party, of sacrificing revolutionary principles in order to win positions in the unions or to reach agreement with such reactionary organisations as the AWU,²⁸ and were in turn condemned as "sectarians" with no real understanding of communist tactics.²⁹ Goulburn Street also accused the Trades Hall party of admitting to membership people who were syndicalists rather than communists, and here they were on more secure ground. The International, in its appeal to the IWW, had made clear its points of difference with

24. [contd.] ("illegal") organisation, both of which it claimed opened the way for provocateurs. (Rev. Soc., 6/11/20.) But this intransigence cost the SLP many members - e.g. the whole of its Balmain branch, which included most of the leading members of the SLP's WIIU, defected to the CP. (Ibid., 2/4/21.)

25. Provided, of course, that they accepted the essential tactical proposition of the Bolsheviks: the class struggle, leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat, to be accomplished through Soviets.

26. The Goulburn Street party finally reached the point of insisting [contd.]

the syndicalists - specifically the need for political action and the establishment of a "workers' state" - as well as its agreement on the need for "an industrial administrative body, which will be something like the General Executive Board of the I.W.W.,"³⁰ to organise production,³¹ and Glynn had accepted most of these points. But, in the Australian Communist of which he was editor, Glynn argued that such a conjunction of events as that which had occurred in Russia might never happen elsewhere, and that therefore industrial unionism was the appropriate means of bringing about the collapse of Australian capitalism; and such ideas were anathema to the old ASP.^{31a}

The International, however, was more flexible. Despite the doctrinal differences, it was anxious not to cut itself off from any potential adherents, except the "patriotic" socialists and the "centrists" (who in any case were not really potential adherents); it recognised differences in principle between its position and that of the syndicalists, but regarded the IWWs as sincere revolutionaries, while it insisted (perhaps disingenuously) that there was nothing to keep the "left" communists and other Comintern supporters apart.

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26. [contd.] that the Trades Hall group be liquidated and that its members apply individually for admission to their party. Aust. Comm., 24/6/21.
27. An exception was J.B. Miles, then sec. of the Brisbane branch and later Gen. Sec. of the party, who declared for Goulburn Street, but was unable to carry his branch with him and was expelled from the Trades Hall party. Supplement to Int. Comm., 24/9/21.
28. cf. Int. Comm., 12/2/21, 16/4/21, 9/7/21.
29. cf. Aust. Comm., 22/4/21.
30. To the I.W.W.: A Special Message from the Communist International, 8.
31. Aust. Comm., 31/12/20. Glynn, together with J.B. King, later in the year broke away from the CP to form the Industrial Union Propaganda League, a pure industrialist organisation, and began (1/12/21) to republish Direct Action. There was a temporary rapprochement, following a Unity Conference in Feb. 1922, when the CP agreed to recognise the IUPL as the Australian section of the Red International of Labor Unions, provided that it subordinated itself to the party, but this did not last long - the ideological gap was too wide - and Glynn and King finally left the CP in March 1922.
- 31a. Inst. Soc. 10/7/20.

Accordingly, it demanded (as it was doing in other countries) that the parties unite, and went so far as to send a secret emissary to Australia to try to bring this about - but without success.³² Even when it threatened non-recognition of any Australian group - a powerful weapon when the title "Section of the Third International" was a decoration to be worn with pride - the Goulburn Street party stood on its dignity and refused amalgamation.

Finally, it was the Trades Hall group which won the day.³³ Their central organisation was not as strong as that of their rival, but they had the support of the majority of Communists outside Sydney, and, above all, they had far more influence in the mass labor movement; and purity of doctrine could not compete with the capacity to influence events - besides which, they were closer to the current line of the International. To this accident of the formation of the Communist Party by trade union militants who were in positions of strength in the industrial movement, the party owes much of the character it still has - that of an organisation whose power is on the industrial rather than the political side of the movement, and whose major function is to act as a militant fraction within the unions.

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32. This was Paul Freeman, who had been deported from Australia in 1919, and had crossed the Pacific four times on the Sonoma, the U.S. authorities twice refusing to let him land, before watersiders and seamen forced his transfer to a detention camp by refusing to work the ship. Deported again, after a secret hearing, he went to Moscow, where he acted as representative of the ASP-CP to the International. Freeman returned to Australia secretly in March 1920 to organise delegates to the inaugural congress of the Red International of Labor Unions; while in Australia, he was known as "Comrade Miller." He was killed in a train accident shortly after his return to Russia, along with Artem-Sergayeff, a former emigre in Brisbane, who had become a leader of the Russian miners' union.
33. The turning point was the new line adopted by the 3rd Congress of the C.I., which, under the slogan "Right down into the masses," declared that the post-war revolutionary impetus had come to a stop, and urged a policy of increased communist activity in every kind of working-class organisation, especially the unions. The Goulburn Street party refused to attend a further conference; its largest (the Sydney) branch broke away and joined the Trades Hall party. Communist, 24/2/22, 30/6/22.

4. Trade Unions and Politics: The Socialist Objective.

Specifically, the formation of the Communist Party was a response to the Bolshevik victory and the belief among Australian revolutionaries that the inevitable and rapid spread of the world revolution would require, for its local fulfilment, the development of a Bolshevik-type organisation in Australia. In more general terms, it was part of the working-class and trade union turn back to politics which accompanied the rapid deterioration of the economy from the second half of 1920. As The Proletarian¹ said, in April 1921: "The workers now lie in the slough of a great industrial depression, slack is the demand for their labor power, and, in these conditions, vain the hope of an improvement in their lot by the methods of the everyday struggle. . . . The conditions are now ripe for the workers to pass beyond the narrow confines of [this] struggle to the broad field of revolutionary political action. . . ." The general argument was sound; all that was wrong with it was the identification of the minority of working-class activists with the class as a whole, and the assumption that the political action, when it came, would be revolutionary.

The Australian recession was at the same time a consequence of post-war readjustment and a projection of world crisis. Employment of ex-servicemen had been accomplished with only pockets of dislocation, but the re-entry of manufactured imports into the Australian market created difficulties for many industries which had been developed or expanded during the war. At the same time, Australia's export earnings were hit by the collapse of the metal market, the failure to regain pre-war coal markets, and the fall of world prices for primary products; while the difficulty of raising funds in London restricted

1. This, the first Communist (in the modern sense) journal to be published in Australia, commenced publication in Melbourne in June 1920; it was edited by Guido Baracchi, who had previously been editor of the IIW's Industrial Solidarity.

employment opportunities for unskilled workers. The consequences were, from late 1920, rapidly rising unemployment, growing employer resistance to trade union demands, and the beginnings of an employer counter-offensive.

It was not that they were against trade unionism, the employers explained; on the contrary, they welcomed craft unionism, but it was their desire (a not unfamiliar motif) to "help the sober, decent worker" to get rid of Bolshevism, IWW-ism, sabotage, go-slow and job control - and in the process to bring hours and wages back to a level which was more acceptable to themselves. If there was no other way to do it, then industry would have to be stopped.²

The first fruit of this policy was the shipping lockout. Late in 1920, the marine stewards had struck for an eight-hour day,³ and inevitably this had involved the seamen. The shipowners chose to make this a trial of strength, and, even when the stewards conceded defeat, they refused to allow the seamen to man the ships until their union agreed to relinquish the gains it had made by direct action in 1919 and the hated practice of "job control" - which meant that the union had to agree to a reduction in the size of crews and a corresponding increase in the work load.⁴

At the same time, metal miners were hard hit by the reluctance of the Broken Hill companies to reopen their mines, and by the closure of copper mines in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania; while, with unemployment mounting, there was a drift of labor to the coal-fields and a general introduction of short time.⁵

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2. An anonymous employers' spokesman, qd. Aust. Comm., 18/2/21, from the Sydney Daily Telegraph.
 3. 800 of the union's 1100 members voted for the strike; their secretary was A. Moate, a member of the VSP.
 4. Proletarian, Feb. 1921.
 5. The coal miners had faced this problem as early as 1919, and had tried to overcome it by the rigid application of the "darg" - i.e. the voluntary restriction of each man's daily output - so that what work there was could be equitably shared. In the unfavourable tactical situation of 1921, the miners' leaders were anxious to

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On the wages front, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court rejected a trade union application for the implementation of the findings of the Piddington Commission;⁶ while, towards the end of 1921, the NSW Board of Trade found for a reduction in the NSW basic wage of 3/- a week, which was an over-compensation for falling prices, since the previous year's increase had fallen considerably short of the price rise; and there was general employer resistance to the 44-hour week.⁷ What was threatened, the trade unions felt, was "an unprecedented reduction of the standard of living and the social status of the workers,"⁸ and they reacted accordingly.

A powerful front of unions - the Labor Councils and the federal unions of land transport and maritime workers - met the shipping lock-out with a revolutionary challenge to the employers and the government. "Carefully deliberating on the disabilities and limitations of the working class movement in this country," they declared, "and anticipating the threadbare argument that the working class are not ready, we state emphatically, to safeguard the Movement from disaster, the time for battle is now." But there must be no repetition of the "1917 fiasco;" the unions must form a Council of Action, empowered "to order a cessation of work, or to take any action deemed necessary," and "to organise the forces to take charge^{of} and regulate food necessary for the working class to live."⁹ The bluff¹⁰ was, for the moment, successful; the Commonwealth government relented on its previous unwillingness to appoint a tribunal to consider the shipping dispute, and within five days the trouble was over.¹¹

5. [contd.] avoid strikes, and tried to keep the men at work while their demands were being considered by the coal tribunal which had been set up under Hughes's Industrial Peace Act. For this, they were described as "jelly-fish" (Int. Comm., 20/8/21); however, there is little doubt that a coal strike would have been disastrous.

6. Baker: The Commonwealth Basic Wage, 17-18.

7. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/21.

8. Ibid.

9. Report of All-Australian Industrial Conference, 17-23 February 1921, qd. *ibid.*

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On another level, the unions returned to their attempts to build the One Big Union. Substantial left-wing pressure at the 1921 AWU Convention strengthened the desire of the AWU officials for a rapprochement with the WIU of A, and, in March 1921, new negotiations were opened between the AWU, the miners, the AMIEU, the WIU of A and the recently formed Australian Railways Union.¹² There was some Communist criticism of this move - the AWU was committed to parliamentary action and to arbitration,¹³ and was mainly concerned to divert the discontent of its rank and file¹⁴ - but this came from Glynn and his fellow syndicalists; Garden had had a "change of mind,"¹⁵ and now believed that the AWU could "take its place at the head of the rural workers and pastoral departments of the O.B.U. . . without . . . losing any of its identity, or any loss of status by the officials,"¹⁶ while the miners' leaders had long been convinced of the impossibility of building the One Big Union from the bottom up. The conference decided on the formation of an Australasian Workers' Union, with a preamble and structure like that of the WIU of A, but with two new features which drew heavy fire from the left: a "White Australia" membership clause, and a provision for tight central control over industrial action. However, the majority of the Trades Hall Communists were now convinced of the necessity of working within (and therefore with) the AWU and other "reactionary" unions, which they justified by Lenin's pronouncement that the desire "to create . . . brand-new

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9. [contd.] The idea of the "Council of Action" was borrowed from a similar organisation, formed by the British trade unions and Labor Party in August 1920 to take action in the event of British intervention in the Soviet-Polish war. Commenting on the obvious similarity with the Russian Soviets, The Proletarian (March 1921) warned: "Revolutionary situations without doubt produce Soviets; Soviets, on the other hand, cannot produce revolutionary situations."
10. The word "bluff" is used deliberately: it seems unlikely that the implications of this challenge could have been seriously meant.
11. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/21.
12. The Seamen's Union and the Waterside Workers' Federation were reported also to support the conference.

[contd.]

clean little 'workers' unions'" was "ridiculous and childish nonsense;" and, as the Australasian Workers' Union was born, the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia passed quietly away.¹⁷

These preoccupations reflected, in considerable measure, the industrialist dissatisfaction with the performance of labor in politics. In the last months of the war, the trend in by-elections had been towards the Labor party, but two new and virtually unknown factors were involved in the post-war elections - the emergence of an independent party claiming to represent the farming interest, and the ex-service vote. The Federal Labor party was taking no chances; in its policy for the December 1919 election,¹⁸ it offered the workers social services and the farmers rural credits and insurance against natural disasters, and did its best to top the big Nationalist bid for ex-service support. The resulting program of "palliatives" was described by The Socialist as "a barren and spiritless production," and indeed it did little to revive the flagging trade union enthusiasm for the party. The Labor vote fell slightly from its 1917 level; however, the entrance of the Country Party onto the electoral stage took votes

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13. In a ballot at the end of 1920, in which about 20% of the members had voted, the AWU had supported continued adherence to arbitration by 16,000 votes to 10,000.
14. cf. Aust. Comm., 18/2/21.
15. Report of All-Australia T.U.C., June 1921.
16. Daily Telegraph, 2/2/21, qd. Int. Comm., 12/2/21.
17. cf. Aust. Comm., 18/3/21, which called on the WIU of A to urge its supporters to reject the new organisation. The quote from Lenin is from "'Left Wing' Communism," a work to which Garden referred freely in justifying his position (e.g. *ibid.*, 22/4/21). This clear disagreement may have prompted Glynn's resignation as editor (announced 25/3/21). Criticism of the "reactionary" provisions of the Australasian Workers' Union constitution continued (e.g. *ibid.*, 3/6/21), but the accepted position was that Communists should work for amendment from inside rather than standing outside to "sling muck." (*Ibid.*, 1/7/21.) This was the real point at issue between the Goulburn street and the Trades Hall Communists, and represented the decisive victory of the "boring from within" tactic - or, as it was now known, "permeation" - over the earlier "dual unionism," or "building from

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from the Nationalists rather than from Labor, which enabled the party to show a net gain of five seats over the previous election.²⁰ The hopes of the politicians had been high, the campaign had been energetic, and the disappointment was correspondingly great: the workers were not sufficiently intelligent to realise their servitude, said H.E. Boote bad-temperedly - they "didn't want a Labor victory,"²¹ while the Revolutionary Socialist commented resignedly that "the sheep have voted for their slaughter."²² On the left, it seemed that the party had brought defeat on itself by its own timidity;²³ however, it was the performance of Labor governments in New South Wales and Queensland, rather than the deficient election promises of the Federal party, that most disturbed trade unionists.

A major issue between the NSW unions and the parliamentary party was the continued imprisonment of the IWW Twelve. Despite the adverse decision of the Street Commission,²⁴ the militants had kept the question alive in the party,²⁵ while, outside the official structure, a representative committee continued to raise sufficient funds to support the dependents of the three married prisoners.²⁶ Now, with an election impending, the Labor Council, by seeking pledges from candidates to support unconditional release, made the issue "the pre-eminent one before the elections."²⁷ The Labor party replied that it was

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17. [contd.] below," of the WIU of A, which the Goulburn Street CP still advocated - e.g. the propaganda tour of Donald Grant and D. Sinclair through Queensland late in 1920, which turned into a slanging match with the AWU. (Qld. Worker, 27/2/21.)
18. Worker, 9/10/19. T.J. Ryan, who had been invited by the Commonwealth Conference of the ALP to enter Federal politics, was campaign director. It was anticipated that Ryan would, after a short time, replace Tudor as leader, but he died in July 1921, aged only 45, before this could be realised. For Manifesto, see Worker, Socialist, 14/11/19. [13/11/19.]
20. The ALP won one metropolitan and six country seats, and lost two metropolitan. It also lost Swan (WA, country), which it had been very lucky to pick up in the Sep. 1918 by-election which followed the death of Sir John Forrest. The split conservative vote was the immediate cause of the introduction of preferential voting. [contd.]

prepared to order a further investigation in order "to allay public suspicion," but that to go further might "cost Labor its otherwise assured victory . . . because it [would give] the unthinking electors the idea that Labor is opposed to law, order and justice, whereas quite the opposite is the fact."²⁸ When the results were known, the parliamentary party found that it could only take office with the support of two independent labor members who were pledged to unconditional release; and they, along with a section of Caucus, pressed the new Premier, John Storey, hard.²⁹

Knowing that the NSW bench was opposed to a further inquiry, Storey after some delay turned to "a junior judge/ from a junior state"³⁰ - Mr Justice Ewing of the Tasmanian Supreme Court. The Commission was issued on 15 June 1920, and the report was tabled six weeks later. The findings of Mr Justice Ewing were much more to the taste of the defence than had been those of Mr Justice Street. Six of the Twelve were declared to have been improperly convicted; four were declared to have been properly convicted of seditious conspiracy, but not of the other charges, and to have been sufficiently punished; J.B. King's sentence of five years' imprisonment for seditious conspiracy, cumulative on the three he was already serving for forgery, was deemed excessive; Charles Reeve alone was declared to have been properly convicted of arson conspiracy, and his sentence was deemed

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21. Worker, 18/12/19.
 22. Rev. Soc., 1/1/20.
 23. cf. Rev. Soc., 13/12/19.
 24. Supra, 237-38.
 25. e.g. resolution of 1919 NSW Conference for a further inquiry, Worker, 19/6/19.
 26. Minutes of Relief Committee of the Dependents of the IWW Men. Nearly £1000 was raised between 1918 and 1920 - sufficient to pay each of the three families £2 a week.
 27. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/20.
 28. W. Carey, Sec. NSW ALP, Sydney Sun, 12/3/20.
 29. The independents were P.J. Brookfield, who had left the party following the 1919 split, and P.J. Minahan, whose Labor endorsement had been withdrawn when he signed the pledge. The anti-Labor parties won 45 seats to the ALP's 42, and there was one other labor independent. A Nationalist was elected speaker.
 30. G. Fuller, NSW PD lxxix 125

reasonable.³¹ Mr Justice Ewing had little evidence before him that had not been available to the previous inquiry, but what there was helped him to describe the principal Crown witnesses, Scully and the brothers Goldstein, as "liars and perjurers, . . . men who, whenever it served their own ends, and irrespective of the consequences to other persons, would not hesitate to lie, whether upon oath or otherwise."³² He concluded that there was indeed a conspiracy to burn down buildings in Sydney, in which some members of the IWW (and the informers) were implicated, but that the evidence connecting the prisoners (except for Reeve) with this conspiracy was insufficient, or insufficiently reliable, to support their conviction. Beyond this, he thought it likely that there had been an attempt to manufacture evidence against the prisoners - but this he attributed to the three informers. Mr Justice Street had already found against a police conspiracy to secure convictions, and Mr Justice Ewing was not prepared to overrule his brother judge - and so rejected the only feasible explanation of the manufactured evidence.³³

On 4 August 1920, the gates of Long Bay gaol opened for ten of the IWW Twelve. It is not recorded, but it seems unlikely that the prisoners, and those who had gathered to meet them, were singing the formerly popular IWW song:

Oh pollicie, we can't use you, dear,
 To lead us into clover;
 This fight is ours, and, as for you,
 Clear out and get run over!

The continued imprisonment of King and Reeve was the only blight on the celebrations. It was a delicate question for the government:

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31. Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry . . . into the Matter of the Trial and Conviction and Sentences Imposed on Charles Reeve and Others. NSWPP 1920 Vol. I.
 32. Ibid., 1.
 33. See note 33 at end of section, *infra* 387.

Storey, under heavy pressure, would undoubtedly have liked to let them out, but he could not plead the Ewing Report, as he had been able to do with the others. In November 1920, the government reached a private understanding with the Defence Committee that Reeve and King should be released, on condition that they left the country. Unfortunately for the prisoners, the Commonwealth government, despite representations from New South Wales, refused to issue the necessary passports; showing a delicacy of feeling that had not otherwise been apparent,³⁴ they declined to be responsible for unloading such dangerous criminals on the Mother Country. Finally, in August 1921, King was quietly released by executive pardon, and, three months later, Reeve, the last of the Twelve, was freed.

The Twelve had anything from one to eleven years of their lives for which to thank political action, and the politicians were not slow to point the moral: "The men would still be in jail, with no prospect whatever of liberation, had the Labor Party been defeated at the polls," said The Worker. ". . . Labor's victory in New South Wales was the culminating point in the agitation for the release. That is something to be made a note of by all sorts of people who never gave it a thought, and by a number of others who don't want to give it a thought. . ."³⁵ Justice depended on who was administering it, and that in turn depended on which party formed the government of the day - and the cause of political action was vindicated. But such a comment was already out of date: there was little remaining belief in the anti-political dogmas of the IWW, and what the militants were now asserting was that the kind of political diet the Labor party was offering did not satisfy their revolutionary appetites.

34. e.g. the deportations of Paul Freeman and Tom Barker.

35. Worker, 12/8/20.

This was one issue the industrialists won; generally, they were not so successful. The Storey government had, the new Premier said, been returned with "only half a mandate," and it would have to "go slow, shaping such a course as it considers the people as a whole want it to steer at the present time . . . by degrees, with the consent of the electors, to reconstruct the social system gradually, and make conditions happier and better for the workers."³⁶ With its emphasis on community interests, this was hardly calculated to appeal to the industrial wing; and in fact Storey applied his "go slow" policy with some thoroughness. The new parliament met fleetingly in April, recessed until September, sat until November (accomplishing "next to nothing")³⁷ and then proposed to go into recess for a further six months. It was true that the government lacked a stable majority in the lower house, and faced a hostile Legislative Council, but this was scarcely an adequate excuse to offer the unionists - better that the government should go down fighting than that it should hang on, impotent. The NSW executive (since 1919 dominated by the AWU machine, which had its own grievance against the parliamentary party over the latter's refusal to elect the AWU nominees to Cabinet) demanded that the government convoke parliament and get on with its program - abolition of the Legislative Council, abolition of the "loyalist" bureaux on the waterfront, re-registration of the unions "victimized" in 1917, legislation for the 44-hour week. Parliament did in fact meet before the planned date; in Storey's absence, James Dooley - a reputed left-winger, but regarded as an enemy by the AWU faction - was Acting Premier; the government got through legislation to implement the Board of Trade finding on the 44-hour week, and to get the deregistered unions back into the arbitration process, but even this did little to relieve the trade

36. Worker, 22/4/20. My emphasis.

37. Ibid., 9/12/20.

union pressure. The rapprochement between the AWU and the Labor Council militants was well advanced, and both groups maintained a consistent attack throughout 1921. The steady pressure forced the appointment of J.J.^{G.} McGirr as Minister for Labor in the Cabinet reshuffle which followed the death of Storey in October 1921; significantly, McGirr refused to gazette the Board of Trade's declaration for a reduction in the basic wage, which prompted the Labor Council "for the first time in four years to carry a resolution of approval of a Labor Cabinet Minister;" soon after this, McGirr was replaced by E.J. Kavanagh, who had long been regarded unfavourably by the left wing.³⁸ The motivations of the trade union critics of the NSW parliamentary Labor party were not always above suspicion; but there can be no doubt of the violence of their persistent hostility.

A similar, though more confused and less acute, conflict of interests was also developing within the Queensland party - more confused because the AWU operated less as a monolithic machine than it did in New South Wales, but less acute because the forces were less evenly balanced, and the AWU quickly established its hegemony.

The successful AWU move at the 1916 Labor-in-Politics Convention for direct trade union representation on the party executive was an indication of the union's dissatisfaction with its place in the party machine;³⁹ however, the record of the Ryan government for the time smoothed over the rift, and although President W. Demaine's address to the 1918 Convention drew attention to the differences between the parliamentary party and the rest of the movement,⁴⁰ there was little open evidence of conflict, in the face of an imminent election. The

38. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/21.

39. For report of Convention, see Qld. Worker, 4-11-16-23/3/16.

40. Qld. Worker, 31/1/18.

Convention awarded the AWU strong representation on the new executive; the union's position in the parliamentary party was strengthened by the 1918 elections;⁴¹ and its hold on the parliamentary party was made absolute by the resignation of T.J. Ryan to enter Federal politics,⁴² and his replacement as Premier by E.G. Theodore, the strong man of the AWU. By the 1920 Convention, all was sweetness between the AWU and the Labor party. The delegates elected W.J. Rioridan, the state president of the union, as president of the party; the retiring president declared that the one big union could only come about through the AWU; a move for an industrial socialist objective was turned down in favour of the adoption of the existing Federal objective; The Worker reported that, contrary to expectations, there were practically no divisions in the Convention "on the big questions of method and control."⁴³

There was, however, a subterranean opposition from the militant-led Brisbane Industrial Council and Queensland Railways Union, and from rank and file critics in the AWU. A left-wing majority at the 1919 Annual Delegates' Meeting of the Queensland AWU summoned Theodore, as Minister for Works, to answer for his failure to cope with growing unemployment, and instructed him to introduce a Right-to-Work Bill. This the government did, but since the only practical measure it contained was the establishment of state employment bureaux, it achieved little; and unemployment remained an issue between unionists and the parliamentary party - particularly when inability to borrow in London⁴⁴ caused retrenchment in railway construction, as well as

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41. The government gained seven country seats but lost four metropolitan seats, which favoured the AWU vis-a-vis the city unions.
42. Ryan was asked to enter Federal politics by the Queensland executive among other Labor organisations. As he was never an AWU man, it seems likely that this was not the straight-forward tribute to his political capacity that it was generally said to be.
43. Report of Convention, Qld Worker, 1-8-15-22/7/20.
44. This was regarded, probably with justice, as a "financial blockade," imposed by London financial houses because of their dis-

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resistance to wage demands (in 1922, wage cuts) for government employees. The QRU was indeed at odds with the government on most questions. Its attempts to stop police reinforcements from reaching Townsville during the July 1919 meat strike were unsuccessful,⁴⁵ and those of its members who refused duty were suspended from the service. The suspensions were subsequently lifted, but the bitterness remained, as was evidenced by the QRU's strongly-worded criticism of the 1920 Labor Convention, on the grounds that it had declined to discuss a large number of questions submitted by affiliated unions - which the QRU "attributed solely to the fact that a majority of delegates were members of the Parliamentary Labor Party." The remedy, the union suggested, was for delegates to be elected "solely from the ranks of the workers"⁴⁶ - a proposal which was received just as coldly in Queensland as it had been in New South Wales.⁴⁷

The argument was the same as in New South Wales, but the AWU made all the difference to its outcome. In Queensland, the AWU's big membership in the pastoral, mining and sugar industries ensured its supremacy, whereas in New South Wales its strength was matched by that of the mining, metal, transport and maritime unions, and it was a declining force. In the one case, what the AWU said went; in the

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44. [contd.] approval of some Queensland legislation - particularly the establishment of a state insurance office. Using the slide from financier to Jew which was part of the Labor mythology of those years, the Qld. Worker asked: "Who is to Govern Queensland? The London Money Jews or the Representatives of the People?" Qld. Worker, 22/7/20, 19/8/20, 2/9/20.
45. The reinforcements in fact arrived too late: the excited Townsville crowds had raided an arms store, and were threatening to release the two arrested union officials, Carney and Kelly of the AMIEU, by force; the police officer in charge offered to release the men on bail if the commandeered arms were first surrendered, and, when this was refused, released them anyway. By the time the reinforcements reached Townsville, the town was quiet. Carney and Kelly were later found not guilty of inciting the striking meatworkers to turn loose the cattle at Alligator Creek - the cause of all the trouble.

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other, it was forced into a shifting sequence of factional alliances, and its influence, though considerable, was subject to its need for allies. Everywhere the ANU bureaucracy was more and more identifying itself with parliamentary preferment; in Queensland, this meant that the left-wing industrialist criticism of the political machine could only be a permanently protesting minority, but, in New South Wales, the industrial critics could on occasions - especially if they could drive a wedge between the ANU and a substantial section of the parliamentary party - make their demands effective.

Together, the lingering anti-political overtones of One Big Unionism, the overt trade union dissatisfaction with Labor policies, the new Communist challenge, and the continuing failure of the Labor party at elections, were quite sufficient to convince active Labor men that the time was overdue for a review of the party's objective and platform and its relations with the industrial wing.

At the 1919 Commonwealth Conference, the Victorian delegates had urged the adoption of a more forthright objective, such as that recently adopted by their state conference, calling for the "peaceful overthrow" of capitalism and the establishment of collective ownership and democratic control of industry; in an uneasy compromise, the conference had accepted this formulation, but retained in pride of place the old declaration in favour of "the cultivation of an Australian sentiment, maintenance of a white Australia, and the devel-

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46. Resolution of State Council, QRU, 25/8/20. Qd. A.A. Morrison: "Militant Labor in Queensland, 1912-27." J & P, RAHS, Vol. 38, 218.
47. The Convention also rejected a QRU motion to censure the government for its actions during the meat strike. Qld. Worker, 22/7/20.

opment in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community."⁴⁸

Then, early in 1920, the Melbourne Trades Hall Council had embarked on an extended discussion of the "future organisation of labor," and had resolved for a guild-socialist kind of solution - an immediate demand for the joint control of socially-owned industry by boards representative of the government, the community, and the workers directly involved.⁴⁹ From the Trades Hall, this new objective had gone to the 1920 Victorian Labor conference, which had adopted it.⁵⁰

But the Victorians were not satisfied. The NSW split and the loss of the miners, the seamen and a number of smaller unions,⁵¹ and the disappointing results of the Federal and NSW elections, had convinced them that more decisive action was necessary. The Federal officials - both Victorians⁵² - called their executive together, and the executive decided on a national congress of trade unions, to meet with it to "formulate a forward industrial policy, with a view to its adoption and execution by the Australian Labor party with the support of the unionists and Labor sympathisers of Australia." The movement had lost its momentum; it needed an infusion of industrial energy; somewhere there had to be found the "genius and statecraft" which would restore its earlier elan.⁵³

Some of the unions which the Labor leaders were especially anxious to win back - notably the miners - were at first suspicious of the conference because of its ALP origin, but finally they were persuaded to attend, and it was officially claimed that, when the conference assembled on 20 June 1921, the 210 delegates represented all of Australia's 700,000 trade unionists.⁵⁴ The largest single group came from

48. For Victorian conference, Worker, 24/4/19. At the Commonwealth conference, T.J. Ryan led the opposition to changing the objective, claiming that it might be an embarrassment at the coming elections, to which E.J. Holloway, then asst. sec., Melbourne THC, replied that the party was losing support because the existing objective was outdated. In the clause about "an Australian national sentiment," one change was made - "white Australia" was

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the AWU, but, untypically, it spoke with several voices: the differences in viewpoint between (and even within) the several state branches were considerable. The decisive voices, in fact, were those of the leaders of the mining union.

Opening the Congress, E.J. Holloway told the delegates that the ALP was well aware that "the mass was not satisfied with the programme and objective" of the party, and he invited particularly discussion of the demands for workers' control of industry which had arisen in the British and European labor movements, and the solutions propounded by the Communist International.⁵⁵

The first question before the Congress was the objective, but the miners' representatives took little part in this debate, taking it for granted that socialism was to be the goal of the movement and being more interested in how it was to be accomplished and administered, and it was a Victorian⁵⁶ who moved "that the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange be the objective of the Labor Party."⁵⁷ Even the AWU officials were now prepared to concede the

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48. [contd.] substituted for the old reference to maintaining "racial purity" - an attempt to re-define the original racism of Australian labor in cultural-economic terms. *Worker*, 26/6/19.
49. Labor Call, 5/2/20, 1/4/20. This Victorian Labor weekly carried a great deal of material on guild socialism - particularly on the Builders' Guild, recently established in England.
50. Proletarian, August 1920.
51. The Federal officers had earlier intervened in the NSW dispute and tried to smooth things over, much to the annoyance of the new AWU-dominated NSW executive.
52. E.J. Holloway, president, who, as secretary of the Melbourne THC, had moved the guild socialist motion, and A. Stewart, sec.
53. J.H. Catts MHR, statement for Federal executive, *Qld. Worker*, 28/10/20.
54. This was almost certainly an exaggeration, but every major union was represented by a substantial delegation. cf. J.T. Lang's comment (I Remember, 139): "It was a gathering of all the militants. The moderate unions were not very interested."
55. Official Report of the All Australian Trades Union Conference, 3.
56. E.F. Russell (Agricultural Implement Makers' Union), a prominent one big unionist, supporter of the VSP, and member of the Victorian Labor party executive.
57. Report, 5.

necessity of a radical change. One⁵⁸ did say that the "thing" before the conference "does not matter a damn," and that the delegates ought to get down to practical questions, such as launching an effective daily newspaper in the Labor interest, but the President of the union⁵⁹ more shrewdly conceded the objective, saying that the important question was the means by which it was to be implemented (on which he held out no hopes of agreement). There was no effective opposition to the motion, and it was carried on the voices.

The major debates were those on the reports of the "ways and means" committee and the committee on industrial organisation. Although J.H. Scullin (AWU, Vic.) moved the adoption of the first of these, it was clear from the discussion that A.C. Willis (the miners' secretary) was the moving spirit in the committee; and it was J.M. Baddely who moved the industrial report.⁶⁰

The conference was decisively radical in the policies and militant in the tactics it advocated; the moderate minority - consisting partly of traditional ALP men and partly of old-time craft unionists - was overwhelmed. But the majority was anything but homogeneous. It included left-wing ALP men (largely from Victoria, and either members of or influenced by the VSP); two groups of Communists (the larger faction headed by J.S. Garden, and a smaller group led by Jacob Johnson of the Seamen's Union); the industrialists, whose spokesmen were Willis and Baddely; and, for most purposes and despite the several parliamentarians among its delegates, the AWU.⁶¹

58. Senator J. Barnes (AWU, Vic.), Report, 6.

59. A.W. Blakeley MHR, Report, 7.

60. Baddely was the President of the mining union.

61. An analysis of the voting figures on various resolutions which revealed the political affiliations of the delegates suggests that of the 150 or 160 delegates who were present at any one time, the industrialists accounted for perhaps 50 votes, the ALP left for 40, the AWU for 30, the Garden communists for 20, and the Johnson communists* (who should perhaps be called the Walsh communists, for Tom Walsh, whose sister-in-law Sylvia Pankhurst led a small "left-communist" faction in Great Britain which was the inspiration for the line advanced by Johnson). There were

* Should read: ". . . the Johnson communists
for perhaps five . . ."

As the conference proceeded, both the aims and the sources of inspiration of these groups became clear. The ALP politicians and the AWU leaders wanted to consolidate trade union support behind the party, and were prepared to accept (at least in words) a socialist objective and a militant program to implement it. They had few ideas of their own, played little part in the debate, and were content to let the industrialists and the Communists make the running, trying only to stop them getting out of hand. The ALP left, sympathetic to guild socialism, wanted to graft onto the party a socialist policy, which they believed could be achieved by parliamentary means, providing the active support of the industrial organisations could be secured. The industrialists, influenced by the near-syndicalist wing of British trade unionism embodied in the Triple Alliance, wanted social ownership of industry and workers' control; they accepted the necessity of parliamentary action to achieve these ends, and were quite content for the Labor party to adopt this program, while holding over the party's head the threat that, if it failed to meet their requirements, they would set up in competition. The Garden communists, in line with Comintern policy, wanted to "permeate" the Labor party and the unions and win them for a revolutionary repudiation of bourgeois democracy and for the dictatorship of the proletariat; to achieve this, they were prepared to compromise, accepting as much of their program as they could get, and staying inside the mass organisations to work for

61. [contd.] perhaps ten or fifteen delegates who took a consistently right wing position. Proletarian (July 1921) identified a right wing of "orthodox Laborites" who did not mind much what the party's policy was, so long as it was not too extreme; a centre of "advanced Laborites* and Socialists" who believed that capitalism could be overthrown by parliamentary means; and a left wing consisting largely of Communists from NSW. It was (ibid., August 1921) "the first big Labor Congress . . . in which a Communist wing made itself felt." Garden (ibid.) referred to the "overwhelming majority" of the "moderates" and to the wide differences of opinion within the militant "vanguard."

* Should read: " . . . 'advanced' Laborites . . ."

more. The Johnson communists opposed any compromise with "reformist" politics and trade unionism: "we know full well that we can get nothing under the present situation, and no-one has done more to show that this is so than the seamen."⁶²

The major sources of unionist dissatisfaction with the ALP - the failure of Labor governments to cope with increasing unemployment and declining living standards by radical social reconstruction, and the unsympathetic administration of nationalised industries - were clearly revealed by the debates. Delegates condemned the "betrayal" of working-class interests by the parliamentary parties, and the refusal of the party - on the grounds that it would cost votes - to campaign for socialism; while the miners' leaders made it quite clear that they had no intention of accepting nationalisation "under the Parliamentary methods that exist today."⁶³ The demand for more far-reaching social change was formulated in the report of the "ways and means" committee: nationalisation of banking and the principal industries, control of the nationalised industries by boards on which both the workers directly involved and the community at large would be represented, and the establishment by these boards of a Supreme Economic Council which would plan and co-ordinate the whole of the national economy. There was general agreement among the conference majority for this: it represented as much of the Bolshevik experiment as was acceptable to all but the traditionalists of the movement.⁶⁴ The difficulty arose over implementation.

62. J. Johnson, Report, 29.

63. Baddely, Report, 5.

64. As well as guild socialism, there had been much discussion of workers' control as practised in Russia (news of the practical abandonment of this had not yet reached Australia); see, e.g., the diagrammatic presentation of the "plan of economic organisation of Soviet Russia" (Proletarian, September 1920).

The industrialists were satisfied that parliamentary means would suffice for the nationalisation of industry. As Willis said: "If you cannot get political power without resorting to violence, it is no good asking people to vote. Instead . . . we should be here discussing . . . the formation of a Red Army"⁶⁵ - but he was confident that sufficient political support could be won. However, once the control of industry had been handed over to the Supreme Economic Council, parliament would, the industrialists believed, be redundant; and they wanted the industrial organisations, through a Council of Action elected from the Congress, to take direct responsibility for implementing its decisions, "irrespective of the Federal [Labor] Party or any other."⁶⁶ But here they ran into opposition from the politicians and the AWU, who demanded that this question be handed over to the party.⁶⁷ Faced with certain defeat, the industrialists compromised. They agreed that, although the Council of Action would have sole responsibility for giving effect to the decisions on industrial matters, it should co-operate with the party on socialisation. However, they had already made it clear that this qualified support would be conditional on the party's acceptance of the new program,⁶⁸ and they succeeded in getting agreement for the reconvoation of the Congress if the party failed to act.

It was possible for the industrialists, despite their suspicions, to reach this compromise because there was agreement on the central point - the use of parliamentary means. The difference with the Communists went much more to the heart of the matter. Confronted with the committee's declaration in favour of using both industrial and

65. Report, 13.

66. Baddely, Report, 18.

67. This, as Holloway pointed out (Report, 19), was the only course consistent with the terms on which the Congress had been convened.

68. cf. Baddely: "If [the platform of the Labor party] had not been amended, you would have found the coal-miners running candidates [for Parliament] on the OBU lines." Report, 19.

parliamentary means, M.P. Considine MHR⁶⁹ condemned the report as "a Menshevik platform [which] stands for bourgeois control by [sic - of?] the workers on the political field, and bogus control by the workers on the industrial field."⁷⁰ He and Garden moved an addendum to the report of the "ways and means" committee, declaring that the parliamentary system should be used "only as a temporary weapon to systematically expose the true nature and hamper the operations of Capitalism and . . . as a medium of working class propaganda and education."⁷¹ This, as Willis and others were quick to point out, implied an insurrectionary move to seize power, as the Bolsheviks had done, and this they were not prepared to accept. Despite the threat of the Communists to oppose the adoption of the report if their point were not conceded, Considine's motion was defeated by 123 votes to 41. The threat turned out to be a bluff. The Communists were primarily concerned to preserve the unity of the conference and the positions they had already won,⁷² and, when the final vote was taken on the socialisation report, they supported it. The parliamentarians were not, however, to be left to rest in peace: as well as the sword of reconvoation which was hung over their heads, the report called on the party to make socialisation a fighting plank of its platform, demanded that all parliamentarians be "active propagandists" for the new objective, and urged the party to open its doors to "all schools of working class thought" - a move which was originally designed to secure the readmission of the expelled industrialists, but was later extended to provide for the affiliation of the Communist Party to the AIP.⁷³

69. AMA, Broken Hill.

70. Report, 10.

71. Ibid., 11. A similar move early in the conference precipitated an interesting exchange on Considine's own position. Voice: "You are in Parliament." Considine: "I am in Parliament to give expression to the revolutionary views I hold." Senator Barnes: "No one in Russia has a vote." Considine: "Only the toilers. That is the difference between your programme and mine."

72. Thus Garden (Aust. Comm., 8/7/21) spoke of the early suspicion felt by most delegates for the Communists, which the latter had had to work hard to overcome.

73. Report, 20. Motion of A. McPherson, one of the Communist group.

To the industrialists, it seemed that the economic organisations of the working class were necessarily the prime movers in social reconstruction, ^e whether they were to act through the Labor party or on their own account; so, after drafting their blue-print for the new social order, they turned to a consideration of the structure of their own organisation, and here they adopted the Australasian Workers' Union.⁷⁴ Baddely denied that the miners were syndicalists; their concept of nationalisation, followed by control by the workers through the Supreme Economic Council, was a long way from pure syndicalism, which foresaw the direct ownership and administration of industry by the one big union itself.⁷⁵ But nationalisation alone meant no more than the substitution of "state capitalism" for the private employer,⁷⁶ and the industrial organisation was necessary so that the workers would be in a position to look after their own interests, to determine working conditions and to direct production.

Encouraged by the near unanimity of the Congress, and deeply convinced that the crisis engulfing capitalism presaged great revolutionary changes, many of the delegates shared Willis's optimistic belief that they could, if they so desired, bring about the downfall of Australian capitalism in two or three months, and Garden's equally optimistic forecast, but the real state of mind of the mass of unionists was perhaps revealed more accurately in the repeated stress on discipline as one of the main advantages of the One Big Union, put most frankly in the comment that "an autocracy must be set up to force the working class to stick to anything that was in their interests."⁷⁷ The Congress majority knew that their ideas were in advance of those of a large part of the working class, but they were confident that, given the right program and organisation, they could carry through their decisions.

74. Supra, 361.

75. Report, 5.

76. D. Clyne (Storemen and Packers, NSW), Report, 7.

77. P. Rasmussen (a Communist supporter), Report, 17.

On the whole, the Communists regarded the Melbourne Congress as a considerable advance. It had thrown a "theoretically incorrect light" on the questions before it, and had shown a "bias toward reform methods," but it had done much to unify the industrial movement, had opened up important avenues for revolutionary propaganda, and had shown "how far even the moderate section were moving to the left."⁷⁸ Reflecting the Communist conviction that their strength and that of the industrialists must be used to keep the political movement in line, the NSW Labor Council resolved "to form an industrial group that will be able to exercise decisive influence over parties claiming to represent the working class."⁷⁹ The stated intention of this "Organised Workers' Group"⁸⁰ was the direct nomination of candidates for parliament by the industrial movement;⁸¹ but it was in effect a whip held over the head of the Commonwealth Labor Conference, which was about to open,⁸² and it went out of existence when the recommendation of that conference for the readmission of the various breakaway groups was put into effect.

In the view of Garden⁸³ and the majority of the Trades Hall Communists, the road to revolution was through the mass organisations of the working class - they even spoke of the possibility of a "fusion" with the industrialists and the labor left wing⁸⁴ - but, for other revolutionaries, this involved an unacceptable compromise. The International Communist declared that the effect of the Melbourne Congress would be to "take the sting out of the working class movement by attempting to get it to rely upon the A.L.P. for the solution of its problems

78. J.S. Garden: "All Australian Union Congress," Proletarian, August 1921.
 79. NSW Labor Council Report, 31/12/21.
 80. Formed at a conference of 54 NSW unions, presided over by Willis.
 81. Int. Comm., 15/10/21, 29/10/21.
 82. cf. Direct Action, 1/12/21.
 83. Garden had, earlier in the year, been re-elected sec. of the Labor Council by 79 votes to 40, against an AWU man. Worker, 3/2/21.
 84. Garden in Aust. Comm., 8/7/21.

instead of ^{on}its own power of mass action," and that Garden and his supporters had become "apologists" for the ALP;⁸⁵ the Revolutionary Socialist said that the purpose of the Congress had been to breathe new life into "the discredited A.L.P.;"⁸⁶ while, for Tom Glynn and his fellow syndicalists in the CP, the association of the majority of their party with the AWU and the ALP was adequate justification for their breaking away to form the Industrial Union Propaganda League.⁸⁷

There was indeed some basis for this criticism in the approach of the Labor left wing to the decisions of the Congress: these were, said R.S. Ross, the "lines we must travel" - for, if not, the movement must "accept the so-called Communist method of civil war for dictatorship."⁸⁸ But, to the hard-headed politicians of the NSW Labor executive, this danger seemed remote: they were more concerned with the possible loss of their machine to the revolutionaries than with the prospect of losing their followers to the revolution. The executive, forced by this threat to call off their war with the parliamentary party, reached agreement that the NSW party should oppose the adoption of the Melbourne decisions; and they found ready allies in the Queensland party. Both groups were frightened that a radical swing by the ALP would "help the Nationalists by providing them with a new election catch-cry."⁸⁹

As the original invitation of the Federal executive to the unions had promised, the decisions of the Melbourne Congress were submitted to a Commonwealth Conference of the ALP. The conference met in Bris-

85. Int. Comm., 25/6/21, 9/7/21.

86. Rev. Soc., 2/7/21.

87. Direct Action, 1/12/21.

88. Rev. Soc., 6/8/21.

89. Lang: I Remember, 141.

bane on 10 October 1921,⁹⁰ and proceeded immediately to discuss the objective. The adoption of the Melbourne objective was moved by W.J. Riordan MLC, President of the Queensland branch of the AWU. The opposition was led by E.G. Theodore MLA, and J.H. Catts MHR (from New South Wales); their argument was that the wholesale nationalisation of industry was impracticable, that the concept of workers' control rather than "community" control involved the abolition of parliamentary institutions, that the most the party should aspire to was the nationalisation of such industries as were guilty of "exploitation."⁹¹ Surprisingly, they were joined in opposition by Maurice Blackburn, from Victoria, who spoke strongly in favour of the existing objective, which incorporated the formulation he had sponsored at the Victorian conference two years earlier. But all the amendments were defeated, and the Labor party committed itself, by 22 votes to 10, to "the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange."

The conference then passed to ways and means. It was again Riordan who moved the adoption of the Melbourne decision that "industrial and parliamentary machinery" be utilised to achieve the objective. And again Theodore led the attack - if they adopted the Melbourne proposals, they might as well call themselves the Communist Party; it would inevitably lead to a split, and "the end of the Labor Movement." An amendment to qualify the proposed methods by the adjective "constitutional" was hotly debated and finally carried by 21 votes to 10.

The Melbourne decision for "the nationalisation of banking and all principal industries" was adopted, after an amendment moved by Maurice Blackburn to confine this to industries which had reached the monopolistic stage had been defeated. The decision for the control of nationalised industries by boards representative of the workers and the community was carried, Blackburn moving unsuccessfully for complete industrial self-government.

90. Report of 1921 Commonwealth Labor Conference, Worker, 20-27/10/21.

91. "Exploitation" was being used in the sense of "sweating," or of "profiteering" by monopoly practices or market manipulation.

Following the objective, the most significant debate was that on the proposal for "the establishment of an elective Supreme Economic Council by all nationalised industries," moved by J.H. Scullin, the mover of the original "ways and means" motion at the Melbourne Congress. Theodore reserved his most bitter attack for this occasion: the proposal was a dogmatic projection of Russian and IWW doctrines, which would mean the abandonment of parliament; the movement should stick to its well-tried methods, by which it was already proceeding as fast as the workers would permit. Scullin denied that this proposal for a Supreme Economic Council had been dictated by any outside revolutionary movement: experience had shown that there must be self-government in nationalised industries - the workers must share in the responsibility for their success. "All over the world the capitalist system [is] breaking down," he warned. "If something [is] not done, chaos [will] eventuate, bringing about that revolution by force which [we are] trying to avoid." His motion was carried, by 21 votes to 12.⁹²

During this debate, E.H. Lane, who had joined the conference as a proxy for an absent Tasmanian delegate, had commented, after a heated exchange with Theodore, that he doubted whether it was worth while taking the Queensland Premier seriously;⁹³ but Theodore's resources were far from exhausted. The recommendation of the Melbourne Congress had been that these proposals should be the fighting platform - that is, that they should constitute the party's electoral program. This was hitting the politicians where it hurt most, and the NSW and Queensland parliamentarians were successful in having the question referred

92. On the motion for the socialist objective, five Victorian delegates, three Queensland, six S.A., six W.A. and two Tasmanian had voted in favour; six NSW, three Queensland and one Victorian (Blackburn) against. On this motion, the right wing gained three votes from W.A. and one from Queensland, but lost one from Queensland and Blackburn (who opposed the motion but had been mandated to vote for it). Lane was added to the left wing, as a proxy for Tasmania.

93. Lane: Dawn to Dusk, 257.

to a committee, on which the right wing secured a majority. With only one dissenter, R.S. Ross,⁹⁴ this committee recommended that socialisation should become the party's "objective," that the "methods" already agreed upon by the conference should be regarded as an amplification of the objective, and that the "fighting platform" should be headed by that trusty stand-by, "the cultivation of an Australian sentiment. . ."⁹⁵ It was a brilliant coup, rescuing the parliamentarians from what had seemed inevitable defeat.

There was an outcry from the left wing. Blackburn moved to amend the report so that socialisation would become "the first plank of the fighting platform;" the adoption of the new policy was a waste of time, he said, "if it was to be relegated to the obscurity of a pious objective." Lane, seconding, said that, if socialisation were not on the fighting platform, "it would be pigeon-holed, apologised for, or flagrantly ignored by delegates sitting at this conference who were either Labor members or aspiring Labor politicians."⁹⁶ The Theodore report provided those reluctant delegates who had been mandated by their state organisations to support the Melbourne decisions with an escape route; the amendment was defeated, and the report adopted.

Finally, the conference adopted a resolution moved by Blackburn as a qualification to the new objective, declaring that the purpose of collective ownership was to prevent "exploitation" (a return to the stand of Theodore and Catts at the beginning of the conference), and that the party "does not seek to abolish private ownership even of any of the instruments of production where such instrument is utilised by its owner in a socially useful manner and without exploitation." But

94. Lane, op. cit., 258.

95. Scullin had earlier secured the re-affirmation of this policy. It was not contrary to a spirit of internationalism, he said, but rather a counter to imperialism.

96. Lane, op. cit., 258-59. This motion seems inconsistent with Blackburn's position on other questions; however, all the accounts

[contd.]

the motion was carried only by 15 votes to 13, and the chairman ruled that, as it was not supported by an absolute majority of the registered delegates, it could not be included in the platform; it therefore remained an "interpretation."⁹⁷

But, even without the "Blackburn interpretation," it was apparent that the aspiring revolutionaries had lost the day. The Melbourne Congress had been called so that the dissident industrial organisations could tell the party that purported to speak for them, that claimed their allegiance and their loyalty, what they expected of it; the unions had spoken forthrightly, and, to an unexpected degree, in unison; and now the highest authority in the party had, by a neat piece of conjuring, changed their socialist tiger into a sacred cow. In part, it was the machine which beat them: the Federal conference, for a short while in the hands of the unions, had reverted to the politicians, whose first interest was in attaining office. This process had been facilitated by the split in New South Wales, which had left some of the most powerful unions outside the party; and the power of the politicians had been consolidated by the patching of the breach between the AWU and the parliamentary parties. The unions did not have the numbers at the Commonwealth conference, and the mandates the delegates had been given could not block every chance of escape. But beyond this was something even more far-reaching: the industrialists were leaders without an army - at least one that was prepared to fight for them on the political field. Support for militant industrial action was one thing, support for revolutionary politics another. The

96. [contd.] agree that he moved it. A possible explanation is that, having adopted a guild socialist position, Blackburn had regarded the majority proposals as leading to over-centralisation, but disapproved even more strongly of the right wing's evident intention of burying socialism altogether.

97. Lang, op. cit., 142.

one depended on a mass discontent with existing circumstances, but equally on the belief that the immediate circumstances could be changed for the better; the other depended upon the savage anger that can arise from frustration and despair. And not even in the unhappy condition of 1921 did the mass of Australian workers accept that a future in the world as they knew it was without hope. The revolutionary formulae were available in great abundance, and they were not without merit; what was missing was the revolutionary ferment which alone could transform them from words into actions, and, finally, into institutions.⁹⁸

98. cf. the oblique warning of Proletarian (August 1921) to those Communists who were optimistic about the outcome of the Melbourne Trades Union Congress: ". . . it is well to remember that it is possible for an action to be [a] perfectly safe line of tactics for a fairly developed, sound revolutionary movement, which, on the other hand, would be a disastrous line of tactics for a poorly developed and weak revolutionary movement, and that we, in Australia, have quite a task before us in the work of building a movement before it reaches a stage* where it can be described as a fairly developed and sound revolutionary movement."

* Should read: ". . . reaches the stage . . ."

Note 33 (see page 365, supra).

The IWW cases were a part of an historical process, involving the attitude of the labor movement to the war and the conflicts which this precipitated within the movement, and the IWW Twelve in a sense became counters in this game - that is, their continued imprisonment became a part of the general labor antipathy to the Nationalists and of the power struggle within the labor movement itself. From this point of view, what is important to the historian is not whether the men were guilty, but whether the labor movement believed them to be. As I have suggested, the answer to this is that, despite some initial belief in the movement that some at least of the men were guilty, a general conviction soon developed that the government and the police were in bad faith in the matter, and that the cases were a frame-up; and this conviction is sufficient to explain why the labor movement acted as it did. But even historians are human, and this leaves human curiosity unsatisfied. Judge Altgeld spent many years considering and re-considering the case of the "Chicago Martyrs" before he declared them to be innocent; in Maxwell Anderson's verse-drama of the Sacco and Vanzetti case, "Winterset," the presiding judge is driven to insanity by his nagging suspicion that his verdict was determined by prejudice rather than by the evidence; American labor historians are still disputing the rights and wrongs of the execution of Joe Hill (although Barrie Stavis's dissection of the case in the preface to his play, "The Man Who Never Died," seems to me conclusive). So it is with the IWW Twelve. Had I but space enough and time, I would be delighted to include in this thesis an analysis of the IWW cases and the part played therein by the NSW police and the informers; lacking these, I am reconciled to making these elsewhere. But, for the record, my personal belief is this. There were some IWW members and supporters who advocated the "propaganda of the deed." How well organized they were, and whether they did anything about their beliefs, except talk, I do not know; understandably, they left no written record. But I am satisfied that so much of the evidence produced against the IWW Twelve was manufactured that it is impossible to accept any of it. The probability seems to me to be that a few of the Twelve (but, curiously enough, not Charles Reeve, the only one whom Mr Justice Ewing found to be guilty of arson) were guilty of acts of arson - that the case was, as one man with personal knowledge of the period described it to me, "a frame-up of guilty men." Mr Justice Ewing's finding that the frame-up was the work of the informers seems strained; a much more credible solution is that the police organized it, and there is considerable evidence (historical rather than legal, in regard to this case and to general police corruption at the time) to support this view. It also seems likely to me that the fact that all was not well with the police case was known to the Crown Law officials and to one or two Ministers in the NSW government. The evidence as to whether the initiative for the

arrests and prosecutions came from the police or the government is not conclusive; my belief is that the government let it be known that a prosecution at this time - just before the first Conscription referendum - would not be unwelcome. The reconstruction of the IWW arrests, trials and inquiries is a case history in political duplicity, police corruption and judicial prejudice - and in the ease with which "establishment" opinion blinds itself to, or finds rationalisations for, these evils.

5. The Working Class in 1921.

The war and immediate post-war years saw the beginnings of a major change in the Australian economy and in the composition of the working class. Before the war, Australia had depended largely on Europe for manufactured goods, and particularly for the products of heavy industry; with the war, the sources of supply had largely dried up, and local industries began to emerge to fill the gap. The war conditions imposed severe restraints on this development: as yet (except for agricultural machinery) there was no substantial machine-building industry in Australia; while voluntary enlistment caused a heavy drain on manpower. But the opening of the Newcastle steelworks provided a heavy industry base for Australian manufacturing, and it was calculated that by 1919 some four hundred new items were in production, ranging from typewriter ribbons to aircraft engines.¹ The value of all manufacturing production, which had risen steadily through the war years, jumped dramatically immediately after the war, so that secondary industry, which had hitherto accounted for about a quarter of the total value of all goods produced in Australia, now accounted for about one third.² A decisive break was being made with Australia's pastoral and agricultural beginnings.

This change was reflected in the census of 1921: for the first time, those engaged in secondary industry clearly outstripped in numbers those engaged in primary production. This was largely due to the sharp decline in gold and other metal mining, but there was also a fall in employment in the pastoral industry. Overall, since 1911, the "industrial" section of the population had grown by nearly 160,000 (27.6% compared with a population increase of 22%); the most striking change

1. Scott, op. cit., 546-49.
2. Commonwealth Year Book 1925, 1036.

had occurred in New South Wales, which had emerged as the leading industrial state, with nearly a third of its breadwinners engaged in industry, and supplying nearly two-fifths of all breadwinners in this category, and this was primarily due to the rapid growth in heavy industry - the metal trades and the supply of power. Nearly 25% more workers were employed in factories, the average size of which was steadily increasing, and which had twice as much power at their disposal as before the war; employment in Transport (especially in the railways) had risen sharply, and the number of coal miners had increased by nearly one-third - almost all in New South Wales.³

If the comparison is made with 1901,⁴ the trend is even more obvious. In 1921, the working class was composed thus:

3. Appendix I.

4. cf. table, "The Australian Working Class, 1901," supra, 17.

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COMMENT ON TABLE:

As for 1901 (p. 17 supra), the figures in this table include "white collar" workers as well as industrial workers and craftsmen.



THE AUSTRALIAN WORKING CLASS, 1921^a

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	TOTAL ^b
MANUFACTURING ^c	144	134	40	32	16	9	375
incl. heavy ind.	(40)	(27)	(8)	(9)	(4)	(3)	(91)
light ind.	(104)	(107)	(32)	(23)	(12)	(6)	(284)
TRANSPORT & COMMUN.	73	47	25	18	13	5	180
incl. rail	(25)	(20)	(12)	(7)	(6)	(1)	(71)
road	(17)	(12)	(4)	(4)	(2)	(1)	(40)
maritime	(20)	(9)	(6)	(5)	(3)	(2)	(45)
BUILDING TRADES	31	21	8	7	3	2	72
CONSTRUCTION	11	6	4	3	1	2	27
MINING	29 ^d	6	7	2	6	3	53
incl. coal	*	*	*	*	*	*	(26)
gold	*	*	*	*	*	*	(10)
other metal	*	*	*	*	*	*	(9)
PASTORAL	35	9	24	4	3 ^e	1	78
AGRICULTURAL	35	36	18	16	11	9	125
DISTRIBUTION	89	66	28	22	14	6	225
PROFESSIONAL	54	42	20	11	10	5	143
DOMESTIC	66	49	24	17	11	6	173
OTHER	75	57	31	17	8	9	197
<u>TOTAL</u>	642	473	229	149	96	57	1648

(All figures to nearest '000.)

SOURCE: Commonwealth Census, 1921.

NOTES TO TABLE:

(a) As with the 1901 table, and for the same reasons, the figures in this table do not correspond with the figures of "breadwinners" in Appendix I.

(b) The total of the "total" column is 2000 larger than the sum of the state totals to allow for workers in Federal Territories.

(c) "Manufacturing" and other categories are defined as in the 1901 table.

(d) Figures not available.

(e) Since these figures are from the census, Aborigines are not included.

In these two decades, while the number of employees engaged in manufacturing had increased by over 80% (heavy industry increasing substantially faster than light industry), those engaged in distribution and in professional occupations had almost doubled, and those engaged in transport and communication had grown by two-thirds, workers in the pastoral industry and in agriculture had risen by only about one third, while those engaged in mining had been cut in half. The centre of gravity of the working class, especially in New South Wales, was swinging steadily away from primary industry (with the major exception of coal) to the metal trades, manufacturing and transport.

As with the population statistics, so with the labor movement: the war and post-war years saw the consolidation of a new pattern of Australian unionism, which was to prevail until the 1950s. From the loose federations of craft unions (the Labor Councils) and the massive organisations of pastoral workers and metal miners, the dominant positions in the trade union movement passed to the coal miners, the railwaymen, seamen and watersiders, the engineers and ironworkers. This was not a straight-forward process; on the contrary, there was much jockeying for position, and a continual change in alignments and alliances, but the general direction is clear.

The characteristic feature of Australian unionism during these years was the creation of fewer and bigger unions. The major job of enrolling workers into the unions had already been done in the eight or ten years before the war, so that by 1914 over half of all adult male employees, and about one in ten of all females, were unionists.⁵ The main concern now was the perfection of organisation by the amalgamation of unions within the same industry, the federation of kindred unions in

5. Labour Report No. 6, 11. The degree of unionisation was high by international standards: cf. the ratio of unionists to population in 1914: UK - 8.92%; USA - 2.48%; Germany - 3.20%; France - 2.60%; Australia - 10.59%.

the various states, and the creation of stronger central organisations - the process generally known as "closer unionism" - so that, while there was a significant decrease in the number of separate unions between 1914 and 1921, there was a substantial rise in the number of interstate unions, and the proportion of unionists covered by such unions increased from 68.0% to 80.8%, while the proportion of unionists who belonged to unions with a total membership of 10,000 or more grew from 33.6% to 48.0%.⁶

To describe this process fully would require a detailed examination of the histories of a considerable number of individual unions and central union organisations, which is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, it is possible to separate out the main themes:

(1) In a number of occupations there were rival unions, competing for members, and attempts were made, often by the central bodies, to bring the rivals together. However, as well as the vested interest of the union officials in their positions, there was often an ideological basis for the division, one of the dual unions being more militant than the other, and the members dividing according to their attitudes to trade union tactics.⁷

(2) The depreciation of the old skills, the increasing size and complexity of modern industry and the better organisation of the employers suggested the desirability, expressed in the quasi-syndicalist propaganda for industrial unionism, of the various crafts employed in the same industry, or of the workers in allied industries, joining in the one organisation; but the results were generally disappointing.⁸

6. Appendix I.

7. e.g. there were two unions each of carpenters and engineers. The former were amalgamated in 1920, but all efforts to unite the engineers failed, and there are still two unions.

8. e.g. in the metal and printing trades and in transport and the efforts of the "all grades" railways unions to absorb the skilled craftsmen. Almost the only successful example was the AMIEU.

Occasionally, the enthusiasts for industrial unionism, growing tired of the procrastination of the craft unions, tried to short-circuit the process by forming industrial unions in opposition to the existing organisations, but such ventures soon proved over-optimistic.⁹ The reasons for the failure were not hard to see: the established officials were obstructive, while the members in many cases clung to their craft exclusiveness, not so much now as an assertion of pride of craft, but rather as a defence against the encroaching machine.¹⁰

(3) The movement for the federation of kindred unions was more successful. Where some national organisation already existed (for example, engineers, printers, watersiders), the federal bodies were given full-time officials and enhanced powers; where none existed (for example, railway workers), one was created. Often, an important element in this was the desire to become registered with the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, and so eligible for a federal award, but this advantage (which largely derived from the accident of Mr Justice Higgins being President of the Court, as critics of federation were quick to point out) was not the only factor. For a union like the Miners' Federation which was in no sense committed to arbitration, although quite prepared to make use of the system if it seemed likely to be of some immediate value to the miners, the object of federation was to increase the union's industrial strength, whether this was to be used through arbitration or by direct action, the implied threat of which in any case always had to underlie any recourse to the law.

(4) Empire building was an important factor in closer unionism, especially with the AWU; this union was well represented in the par-

9. e.g. a section of Queensland building workers. Int. Soc., 29/1/16.

10. e.g. moulders voted against the admission of machine moulders to their union as late as 1919.

liamentary labor parties, and every accession of members (and their yearly dues) reinforced its position, both within the Labor party and as an electoral machine. The profit, however, was not all on the side of the AWU bureaucracy: for many unionists, the advantages of linking themselves up with the largest and most influential of all the Australian unions seemed overwhelming, and there were a substantial number who argued that the whole trade union movement should march under the AWU banner. There were special advantages for unskilled workers who moved freely from general laboring or mining to seasonal pastoral and agricultural employment; for such men, the amalgamation of other mass unions with the AWU saved them the necessity of buying a ticket in a new union each time they moved on to a new kind of job. In this way, the AWU - despite its loss of members in the pastoral industry - maintained its position, increasing its total membership, although at the expense of its cohesiveness as a political and industrial machine.

(5) The rivalry between craft and mass unions dominated all discussion of the re-modelling of the central trade union organisations. The structure of the various metropolitan and provincial Labor Councils,¹¹ from 1913 loosely linked in the Federal Grand Council of Labor, was unsatisfactory to the mass unions for several reasons: firstly, firstly, the constitutions of these organisations were weighted in favour of the smaller craft unions; secondly, the major unions were organised on a federal basis, and the Labor Councils were not equipped to handle federal disputes, while the Grand Council had no power to do so except at the request of its state constituents; thirdly, the craft unions were generally concerned to prevent strikes, while the mass

11. There were, in 1914, 26 central organisations of this kind throughout Australia, to which were affiliated 668 trade unions and trade union branches. Labour Report No. 8, 16.

unions wanted central organisations which could (if necessary) wage industrial warfare more effectively. Accordingly, the unions of miners, railwaymen, seamen and wharf laborers and the AWU generally remained outside the Labor Councils, on occasions attempting to form their own central organisations.¹² The anti-conscription trade union conference of June 1916 and the All Australian Congress of June 1921, at both of which the unions were represented directly rather than through the Labor Councils, demonstrated that this could be a useful form of organisation for immediate purposes, but left nothing permanent behind it. The Council of Action, set up by the 1921 Congress, did not long survive the circumvention of the socialist objective by the Commonwealth Labor Conference, while the Australasian Workers' Union came to grief on the refusal of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to grant it registration.¹³ Six years later, however, these conferences provided the model for the formation of a permanent Australian Council of Trade Unions.

12. This division was less acute in Victoria and South Australia, where the mass unions were smaller and comparatively less important.

13. This refusal was occasioned by the terms of the application submitted by Senator J. Barnes, then President of the AWU and the newly appointed secretary of the Australasian Workers' Union (for which position he had defeated A.C. Willis). The application went beyond those occupations covered by the unions which had agreed to join the new union (the AWU, which had balloted by 19,000 to 4000 to link up, the miners, and the watersiders), and thus invited, from unions whose fields of operation were invaded, a plea to deny registration, which the Court granted. Lane (op. cit., 271-72) suggests that this was a conscious move by the AWU bureaucracy to sabotage the OBU, which had been forced on them by their members; however, it seems more likely that it was an unsuccessful attempt at wholesale cannibalism.

After two decades of growing control of the labor movement, both industrial and political, by parliamentarians, the major change of the war years was the reassertion, by the mass unions, of trade union independence of and control over the political party, and through this the parliamentary parties. Stemming from the 1916 conscription crisis, this change had gone furthest in New South Wales, with the formation of the Industrial Section and the establishment of its hegemony over the party apparatus. In South Australia, where, as in New South Wales, a large section of the parliamentarians had gone over to conscription, control of the party machine had also passed almost exclusively to the industrialists. In Victoria, where the defections had been very few, the unionists had improved their position, but the politicians were still influential, although more influenced by socialist ideas than elsewhere.¹⁴ Only in Queensland, where a new Labor government was in power, and there had developed a close working agreement between the AWU and the parliamentary party, were the politicians still on top. In all these states, the new position of the trade unions was formalised by increased trade union representation at conferences and on the party executive.

The resurgence of mass union influence brought with it a revival of socialism in the labor party. Lacking a disaffected middle-class intelligentsia, which European Marxists had seen as providing a revolutionary vanguard for the mass labor movement, the unions of unskilled workers had been the major source of socialism in the Australian movement, and, understandably, this had a strong syndicalist orientation. But, so far as there was any mass support in the industrial

14. This continuing radical tone of the Victorian party was in large measure due to the fact that it had not yet been called on to govern. In the November 1917 election, Labor had won 19 of 65 seats in the Legislative Assembly; in October 1920, they had increased this to 21. But, then and for many years, the distribution of seats in Victoria was loaded heavily in favour of the country voters who (unlike their counterparts in NSW and Queensland) were fairly strongly anti-Labor.

movement for this ideology, it was because socialism served to define an independent working-class position; the expectation of any practical outcome was largely confined to the leaders of the mass unions, who had been elected to their positions because of their militancy rather than their socialism, and there was little sign of mass interest in the 1921 debate on the socialist objective, and less sign of any mass revolutionary upsurge.

The ascendancy of the industrialists was in any case unstable, and this for two reasons: because the requirements (or what the politicians conceived to be the requirements) of the electoral situation drove them towards a modification of the militant stand forced on the party by the industrialists, and because there were conflicts of interest and intention within the trade union front itself.

The electoral experience of the Labor party has always been that any substantial split in the parliamentary party is followed immediately by a loss of votes, as the defectors carry with them a section of regular Labor voters and the uncommitted voters swing away from weakness; however, the movement away has almost always been followed by a gradual drift back of habitual Labor voters. Even though the breakaway group may have been driven out because of its refusal to go along with a radical policy, the survivors have normally tried to moderate the party's policies so as not to frighten away those who are drifting back,¹⁵ thus reinforcing the inherent tendency of Labor parliamentarians to temper their program to non-working-class groups in an attempt to create the image of a community rather than a class party.¹⁶ So it was after the conscription split. The immediate effect

15. This tendency has operated in contemporary Australian politics, in relation to the Democratic Labor Party; however, the continued independent existence of that party (the usual pattern has been for the breakaway group to merge with the conservatives) has offset this.

16. The opposite tendency did not operate - i.e. there was no indication of any modification of the party's policy in a radical dir-

[contd.]

was the severe Labor defeats in the Federal and NSW elections in the first half of 1917; but subsequent elections showed a steady movement back, even though its lack of speed caused continuing concern.

But the movement was sufficient to encourage the parliamentarians to urge - if possible to enforce - the virtues of moderation on their militant industrialist comrades. The 1919 split and the establishment of AWU control - although it was accompanied by tensions between the AWU and the parliamentary party - ensured that moderate policies were followed in New South Wales. The divisions within the Queensland AWU, and the establishment by the Theodore group of its dominance, had a similar result. Between them, these groups, with the tacit support¹⁷ of substantial sections of the party in other states, were able, in the absence of any great mass concern, to divert the decisions of the trade union congress into safe obscurity; and when the Council of Action, in November 1921, at the instance of A.C. Willis, accepted the verdict of the Brisbane ALP conference,¹⁸ the fate of the socialist objective (if indeed it had ever had any other prospect than this) was sealed.

In July 1918 a bewildered reader wrote to one of the many revolutionary papers of the day: "Is it not heart-breaking to see the multitude of little cliques, each at the throat of the other? One wonders where the hell the working-class are getting to."¹⁹ His alarm was not without foundation: the atmosphere on the far left was, to say the least, foggy. The worker who was not satisfied with the Labor party could at that time, or within the next thirty months, join the

16. [contd.] -action in order to win back left-wing breakaways, the major reason for this undoubtedly being that they never presented an electoral threat.

17. "Tacit" because the party elsewhere was committed to the radical course.

18. Rev. Spc, 5/11/21.

19. Solidarity, 27/7/18.

VSP, the ASP, the QSL, the SDL, the SLP, the ISIP or one (but not both) of the two CPs; if his inclination was anti-political, there were the ILP, the IIW, the OBUPL and the IUPL; and, if he wanted to reorganise the trade unions, there were the WIIU and the WIU of A. And, for reading, he could choose between O.B.U. and One Big Union Herald; The People, The Proletariat and Proletarian Review; Solidarity and Industrial Solidarity; Socialist, International Socialist and Revolutionary Socialist; Australian Communist and International Communist; and even a revived Direct Action - as well, of course, as official papers like the Australian, Queensland and West-Australian Workers and Labor News and Labor Call. And unhappily - as Dwight Macdonald said of American radicals at a later period - "the smaller the sect, the more grandiosely optimistic its propaganda usually was."²⁰

Much of this proliferation of organisations was the product of the doctrinal in-fighting of the socialist sects, and the personal rivalry and enmity which this engendered; but, among the bitter squabbles over the precise dividing lines to be drawn between the dozen Industrial Departments of a non-existent One Big Union, there were some questions of practical significance. The most important of these were the proper attitude of revolutionaries to the mass labor party and the existing trade unions, the rival merits of political and industrial action, the perennial arguments between the advocates of physical force and moral force, and, in the trade union field, the fundamental tactical difference between "dual unionism" and "boring from within." Despite these disputes, there were wide areas of agreement - all had opposed the war, all stressed the importance of indus-

20. D. Macdonald: *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, 284.

trial unionism, all urged the immediate necessity of the social revolution; but there was little or no agreement about how these objectives were to be realised, and there was a continual traffic in membership as the impatient sectaries passed from one organisation to another in the hope of finding quick fulfilment for their revolutionary ambitions.

Finally, the shining example of the Bolsheviks and the practical success of the Communists in permeating the mass organisations attracted the bulk of the revolutionaries into the Communist Party, leaving the Socialist Labor Party, the Workers' International Industrial Union, the Victorian Socialist Party and a revived Industrial Workers of the World as small and dwindling sects in which the social revolution no longer existed in organisation or in propaganda, in strikes or in votes, but only in the minds of a handful of aging and dispirited sectarians.

For these were the lessons that the revolutionaries had learned from these years: that spontaneity is no substitute for organisation, and that purity of doctrine is cold comfort beside the rewards of practical success. In the agitation against conscription and the war and for the release of the Twelve, for the One Big Union and the socialist objective, socialists and syndicalists alike had discovered that the organisations of the mass labor movement were not irredeemably damned - not because of the few who led them, but because of the mass who inhabited them - and that, given the right circumstances and the right levers, they could be moved. And, during the great strike struggles, the revolutionaries had discovered both the potential strengths and the existing weaknesses of the industrial organisations. And, in the course of fighting these battles and making these discoveries, the most vigorous and least dogmatic of the revolutionaries had found themselves, almost without knowing it, in positions of great influence within the labor movement, and their revolutionary dreaming seemed to take on a

new reality. They had not yet learnt the final limitation on the action of Australian radicals: that at most they could provide the slogans, tactics, forms of organisation within which the mass of the working class would prosecute its immediate demands. But they were learning the hardest of all the revolutionary lessons: how to work for amelioration without compromising the revolutionary objective, how to pursue the revolutionary objective without inhibiting immediate advance. It was this ability to combine the urgent questions of the day with ultimate social reconstruction which had ensured the success of the Russian revolutionaries, and it was to their theories that Australian revolutionaries turned, in the post-war years, to provide their practical experience with a new ideological gloss.

This, then, was the working class and the labor movement in 1921. To end here is to end at a high point in the history of the movement. A great deal had changed; both the working class and the labor movement were very different in 1921 from what they had been at the beginning of the century; but nothing was finalised by 1921. The 44-hour week was lost, not to be regained for many years. Unemployment persisted, and real wages were, for a time, driven down. The One Big Union disintegrated in the struggle for position and power, and the socialist objective was sacrificed to the presumed requirements of electoral success. The Labor party continued on its moderate, faction-ridden way, with the parliamentarians usually in control, sometimes supported, sometimes opposed by the declining power of the AWU, generally counting on the moderate craft unions but continually challenged by the growing mass unions of the new industrialised economy. Beyond the Labor party remained the Communist Party, its firm adherence to the strategy of the Comintern and the interests of the Soviet state ensuring continued life, but at the same time continued political isolation, while its flexibility of tactics within an uncompromising

assault on capitalism guaranteed its place in the economic organisations of the working class.

This labor movement was a unique social institution: above all, it was a movement in which large numbers of people, joined in voluntary organisations, acted in a way that was historically significant. In its political aspect, the movement was subject to the self-interest of politicians, the adoption by Labor governments of a supra-class posture, the conflict of class interests within the political machine; but it could not escape its own history, and the demands for the satisfaction of working-class interests and for revolutionary solutions were continually renewed. In its industrial aspect, it was subject to the interest of many trade union leaders in political careers, the conflict of sectional and craft organisations and interests, the ebb and flow of mass working-class sentiment; but the industrial organisations were essentially class organisations, and to this starting-point they continually returned. The institutions of the labor movement were the means by which workingmen were challenging the right of elites to determine their fate, and, for these institutions, it could legitimately be claimed that they were, however laboriously and imperfectly, "forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old." For, so long as there are workingmen to feel discontent with their economic situation and their social status, with their alienation from the instruments of production and the goods which they produce, so long will there be a movement to ameliorate their condition and to right their wrongs. And so long as this movement creates its own institutions, objectives, programs, leaders, so long will there be conflict of interests, compromise, corruption - and men within it who protest.

APPENDIX I:

- a) Factories and Factory Employment.
- b) Trade Unions and Trade Unionists.
- c) Trade Union Structure.
- d) Wages, Prices, Real Wages.
- e) Unemployment.
- f) Strikes.

FACTORIES AND FACTORY EMPLOYMENT.

	No. of facs.	Total workers '000s	Ave per fac.	Facs. emp. over 100		Total H.P. employed '000s
				% total facs.	% total workers	
1885	8632	105	12.2	* ^a	*	*
1890	8903	133	15.0	*	*	*
1895	8247	134	16.2	*	*	57 ^b
1901 ^c	11143	198	17.7	*	*	74 ^b
1906	11581	229	19.7	3.4	35.5	212
1911	14455	312	21.6	3.6	38.4	344
1916 ^d	15010	317	21.1	3.6	42.7	530
1921	17113	387	22.6	3.8	42.9	742

SOURCES:

Coghlan: The Seven Colonies of Australasia (1901-1902)
Commonwealth Year Book, Nos. 1, 6, 11, 15.

NOTES:

- (a) Figures not available.
- (b) Figures for NSW and Victoria only.
- (c) Before 1901, the figures for the numbers of factories are inadequate because different definitions were employed in the different colonies.
- (d) The 1916 figure represented a fall from the 1913 peak.

Year	1900	1905	1910	1915	1920	1925	1930
*	*	*	4.25	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00
*	*	*	5.35	6.00	7.00	8.00	9.00
TR	*	*	6.35	7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00
AT	*	*	7.75	8.50	9.50	10.50	11.50
ME	8.25	9.00	10.00	11.00	12.00	13.00	14.00
AE	9.25	10.00	11.00	12.00	13.00	14.00	15.00
CE	10.25	11.00	12.00	13.00	14.00	15.00	16.00
ET	11.25	12.00	13.00	14.00	15.00	16.00	17.00

(1900-1905) figures are based on the number of members in the early years of the movement.

figures for 1900-1905

figures for 1905-1910

figures for 1910-1915, the figures for 1915-1920 are based on the number of members in the early years of the movement.

COMMENT ON TABLE:

The Commonwealth Statistician (of Commonwealth Labour Report No. 2) states that the early figures in this series are very inadequate, but that they improve progressively to 1911, and that from 1912 they may be taken as accurate. For claims as to the membership in individual unions in the '90s, see pp 27 and 29 supra.

TRADE UNIONS AND TRADE UNIONISTS.

	^a Total no. of unions	Separate organi- sations	No. for which m'ship avail.	M'ship of these '000s	Estim. total m'ship '000s	% incr. m'ship (5 yrs)	Unionists ^b as %age bread- winners
1891	124	* ^c	72	31.9	54.9	-	4.0
1896	134	*	83	34.1	55.1	0.4	-
1901	198	*	139	68.2	97.2	76.4	5.9
1906	302	*	253	147.0	175.5	80.6	-
1907	323	*	286	172.3	194.6	-	-
1908	378	*	334	212.5	240.5	-	-
1909	419	*	375	244.7	300.2	-	-
1910	482	*	442	277.0	302.1	-	-
1911	573	*	542	355.0	364.7	107.8	18.2
1912	621	408	621	433.2	-	-	-
1913	710	432	710	497.9	-	-	-
1914	712	430	712	523.3	-	-	-
1915	713	415	713	528.0	-	-	-
1916	705	392	705	546.6	-	49.3	-
1917	747	389	747	564.2	-	-	-
1918	767	394	767	581.8	-	-	-
1919	771	394	771	627.7	-	-	-
1920	796	388	796	684.5	-	-	-
1921	796	382	796	703.0	-	28.6	30.3

SOURCE: Commonwealth Labour Reports Nos. 2, 12.

NOTES:

(a) The "total number of unions" includes all unions operating within only one state, together with all state branches of interstate unions. The next column, "Separate Organisations," adjusts this by eliminating state branches and counting interstate unions as one unit.

(b) Breadwinners include employers and self-employed, who are not normally eligible for union membership.

(c) Not available.

TRADE UNION STRUCTURE.(i) Percentage of unionists in unions of avrious sizes.

	To 1000	1000-5000	5000-10,000	10,000 +
1912	14.1	32.4	23.0	30.5
1913	15.3	24.9	24.4	35.4
1914	14.9	27.5	23.9	33.7
1915	13.1	28.5	23.1	35.3
1916	12.5	26.4	20.8	40.3
1917	12.8	23.1	25.6	38.5
1918	12.5	25.1	17.7	44.7
1919	11.3	26.9	15.2	46.6
1920	10.4	28.8	14.9	45.9
1921	10.1	25.5	16.4	48.0

(ii) Interstate Unions.

	No. of separate unions	No. of interstate unions	M ^t ship of interstate unions	% unionists in interstate unions
1912	408	72	280	64.6
1913	432	78	352	70.8
1914	430	79	356	68.0
1915	415	81	380	71.9
1916	392	81	412	75.4
1917	389	94	456	80.8
1918	394	95	469	80.6
1919	394	95	498	79.3
1920	388	99	543	79.4
1921	382	101,	568	80.8

SOURCE: Commonwealth Labour Report, Nos. 9, 13.

WAGES, PRICES, REAL WAGES.

	Money wages	Cost of living ^a	Real wages	Real wages (adjusted for unemployment)
1891	848	973	872	830
1896	816	823	991	928
1901	848	880	964	945
1906	866	902	960	940
1907	893	897	996	986
1908	900	951	946	934
1909	923	948	974	963
1910	955	970	985	974
1911	1000	1000	1000	1000
1912	1051	1101	955	946
1913	1076	1104	975	970
1914	1081	1140	948	912
1915	1092	1278	854	813
1916	1144	1324	864	854
1917	1226	1318	930	907
1918	1270	1362	932	921
1919	1370	1510	907	889
1920	1627	1785	911	894
1921	1826	1697	1076	1002

SOURCES: Commonwealth Labour Reports, Nos. 2, 14.

NOTES:

(a) Cost of living for 1891 and 1896 for Sydney only; from 1901, for Commonwealth.

UNEMPLOYMENT.^a

	No. unions reporting	M ['] ship '000s	Unemployed '000s	%age	%age unemployed in census
1891	25	6	0.6	9.3	7.5
1896	25	4	0.5	10.8	-
1901	39	9	0.6	6.6	6.5 ^b
1906	47	11	0.8	6.7	-
1907	51	13	0.8	5.7	-
1908	68	19	1.1	6.0	-
1909	84	21	1.2	5.8	-
1910	109	33	1.9	5.6	-
1911	160	68	3.2	4.7	4.5
1912	464	224	12.4	5.5	-
1913	465	251	16.1	6.5	-
1914	439	251	22.3	8.3	-
1915	465	273	25.7	9.3	-
1916	470	292	16.8	5.8	-
1917	459	297	20.3	7.1	-
1918	475	309	17.5	5.8	-
1919	459	317	20.5	6.6	-
1920	450	351	22.1	6.5	-
1921	436	370	40.5	11.2	6.8 ^c

SOURCES: Labour Reports Nos. 2, 14.

NOTES:

(a) Unemployment figures are derived from trade union returns; these were very scrappy for the early years, but, according to the Commonwealth Statistician, are reasonably complete from 1912. They do not include strikers.

(b) NSW and Victoria only.

(c) 1921 was a year of sudden shifts in the employment level; the big discrepancy between the Labour Report figure (which is an average for the year) and the Census figure may be because the Census was taken at a good time of the year.

STRIKES.

	No. of in- dustrial disputes	Workers involved '000s	Mandays lost '000s	Wages lost £000s	Strikers as % of total employees
1913	208	50.3	623.5	287.7	4.2
1914	337	71.0	1090.4	551.2	5.1
1915	358	81.3	583.2	299.6	6.9
1916	508	170.7	1678.9	967.6	14.8
1917	444	174.0	4599.7	2594.8	15.0
1918	298	56.4	580.9	372.3	4.8
1919	460	157.6	6308.2	3951.9	12.5
1920	554	155.6	1872.1	1223.7	12.2
1921	624	165.1	956.6	757.0	12.5

SOURCE: Commonwealth Labour Reports, Nos. 2-12.

APPENDIX II:

- a) The 1905 Objective of the A.L.P.
- b) The 1919 Objective of the A.L.P.
- c) The 1921 Objective of the A.L.P.

THE 1905 OBJECTIVE OF THE A.L.P.¹

1. The New South Wales motion:²

(a) The cultivation of an Australian sentiment based upon the maintenance of racial purity and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community.

(b) The securing of the full results of their industry to all producers by the collective ownership of monopolies and the extension of the industrial and economic functions of the State and municipality.

2. The Queensland motion:

The securing of the results of their industry to all producers by the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, to be attained through the extension of the industrial and economic functions of the State and local governing bodies.

1. Report, Third Commonwealth Political Labor Conference, 1905.

2. The NSW objective was adopted by 23 votes to 11.

THE 1919 OBJECTIVE OF THE A.L.P.¹

1. The cultivation of an Australian sentiment, maintenance of a white Australia, and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community.
2. The emancipation of human labor from all forms of exploitation and the obtaining for all workers of the full reward for their industry by the collective ownership and the democratic control of the collectively used agencies of production, distribution and exchange.
3. The maintenance and extension of relations with the labor organisations of all countries.
4. The prevention of war through the settlement of international disputes by a tribunal clothed with powers sufficient to enforce its awards.

1. As adopted by the 1919 Commonwealth Labor Conference on the motion of the Victorian delegates, following the adoption of a similar objective by the 1919 Victorian Labor conference. Worker, 26/6/19.

THE 1921 OBJECTIVE OF THE A.L.P.

1. The motion of the All-Australian Trades Union Conference on the objective. (1)

That the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange be the objective of the Labor Party.²

2. "Report of the Committee appointed [by the AATUC] to devise Ways and Means of bringing about the Objective - Socialisation of Industry, Production, Distribution and Exchange." (3)

1. That for the purpose of achieving the Objective, industrial and Parliamentary machinery shall be utilised.⁴

2. That, in recognition of the fact that this is an era of social production, this Conference declares that craft organisation, as a working class weapon, is obsolete, and pledges itself, and all its future representatives, to organisation of the workers along the lines of industry, as shall be decided by the Organisation Committee of this Conference.^{4a}

3. The nationalisation of banking and all principal industries, and the municipalisation of such services and supplies as can best be operated in limited areas; adult franchise and extended powers to be granted municipalities for this purpose.⁵

4. The government of nationalised industries by boards, upon which the workers in the industry and the community shall have representation.⁶

5. The establishment of an elective Supreme Economic Council by all nationalised industries.⁷

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1. Official Report of the All-Australian Trades Union Conference, 1921.
 2. Adopted by the Commonwealth Labor Conference, 1921, by 22 votes to 10. Worker, 20/10/21.
 3. Report, AATUC.
 4. Adopted unanimously by C'wealth Labor Conference, after an amendment to have the clause read "constitutional industrial and Parliamentary machinery" had been carried 21-10.
 4a. Adopted by C'wealth Labor Conference 19-6.

[contd.]

6. The setting up of Labor Research and Information Bureaux and of Labor Educational Institutions, in which the workers shall be trained in the management of nationalised industries.⁸

7. That the foregoing be sent to the Australian and New Zealand Labor Parties, as a recommendation that it be the fighting plank of the platform, believing that only by the abolition of the capitalist system can working class emancipation be achieved.⁹

8. That all Parliamentary representatives be required to function as active propagandists of the Objective and methods of the Movement.¹⁰

9. That this Congress expresses the earnest hope that, just as all schools of working class thought have been usefully represented at this Congress, to the advantage of the movement as a whole, the Labor Party immediately endeavour to unite politically all the said elements in the common fight, and that all men, who have been officially disconnected with the A.L.P., but who have continued fighting for working class interests, be included, if they desire, in the A.L.P. without loss of continuity of membership.¹¹

5. Adopted by C'wealth Labor Conference, after an amendment (moved M. Blackburn) that nationalisation should only apply to industries which had reached a monopolistic stage was lost 17-8. Worker, 27/10/21.
6. Adopted by C'wealth Labor Conference, after an amendment (moved M. Blackburn) for complete self-government in industry was lost 20-11.
7. Adopted by C'wealth Labor Conference 21-12.
8. Adopted by C'wealth Labor Conference.
9. Referred to committee consisting of J.M. Power MLC and J.H. Catts MHR (NSW); E.G. Theodore MLA (Qld); A.T. Panton MLC (WA); R.S. Ross (proxy for J. Curtin, WA); H. Kneebone (SA). See infra.
10. Adopted by C'wealth Labor Conference.
11. Amended by C'wealth Labor Conference to read: "That this Conference affirms the desirability of making an endeavour to unite politically all the elements in the coming fight, and that all the men who have been connected with the A.L.P., and who have continued to fight for the working class be included, if they so desire, in the A.L.P. without loss of continuity of membership, and that we recommend to the State Conferences to give effect to the proposal."

3. Report of the Committee of the 1921 Commonwealth Labor Conference on the A.L.P. Platform. (12)

OBJECTIVE: The socialisation of industry, production, distribution, and exchange.

METHODS: Socialisation of industry by

- (a) The constitutional utilisation of industrial and Parliamentary machinery;
- (b) The organisation of workers along the line of industry;
- (c) Nationalisation of banking and all principal industries;
- (d) The municipalisation of such services as can be operated in limited areas;
- (e) Government of nationalised industries by boards, upon which the workers in the industries and the community shall have representation;
- (f) The establishment of an elective Supreme Economic Council by all nationalised industries;
- (g) The setting up of Labor research and Labor information bureaux and of Labor educational institutions in which the workers shall be trained in the management of nationalised industries.

FIGHTING PLATFORM.

The cultivation of an Australian sentiment, the maintenance of a white Australia and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community.

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12. Adopted by the Conference on the motion of E.G. Theodore. Worker, 27/10/21.

4. The Blackburn Interpretation.¹³

That this Conference declares:

(a) That the Australian Labor Party proposes collective ownership for the purpose of preventing exploitation, and to whatever extent may be necessary for that purpose.

(b) That wherever private ownership is a means of exploitation it is opposed by the party, but

(c) That the Party does not seek to abolish private ownership even of any of the instruments of production where such instrument is utilised by its owner in a socially useful manner and without exploitation.

13. Adopted by the Commonwealth Labor Conference. Worker, 27/10/21.

APPENDIX III:

The Electoral Strength of the Labor Party, 1903-1922.

LABOR VOTERS IN THE SENATE ELECTIONS, 1903-1922.¹

		1903	1906	1910	1913	1914	1917	1919	1922
NSW	L/V ²	34.7	41.0	50.2	44.2	56.2	43.5	43.1	44.0
	V/E ³	47.2	51.7	61.4	69.3	64.9	70.7	66.5	54.5
Vic	L/V	25.6	32.7	48.4	49.4	54.1	44.6	42.7	49.0
	V/E	51.2	56.7	66.6	75.5	79.2	83.9	76.2	56.2
Qld	L/V	53.4	42.0	50.3	54.2	57.0	46.9	45.7	44.0
	V/E	54.8	45.9	61.2	77.3	75.1	89.0	84.9	82.7
SA	L/V	51.4	46.5	53.6	52.0	56.1	42.8	38.9	48.5
	V/E	32.7	36.5	53.2	80.1	80.1	71.9	66.4	53.2
WA	L/V	59.4	55.6	54.0	54.6	53.6	32.1	39.5	41.6
	V/E	28.4	36.2	62.2	73.5	71.5	77.8	63.1	46.7
Tas	L/V	28.0	45.9	55.1	46.2	49.7	40.5	40.8	43.3
	V/E	45.0	54.2	58.5	75.3	77.6	76.0	58.7	45.6
AUSTRALIA:									
	L/V	36.0	39.5	50.3	48.7	55.1	43.7	42.8	46.5
	V/E	46.9	50.2	62.2	73.7	72.6	77.7	58.9	58.0

NOTES:

1. This table is an attempt to calculate the number of voters who supported the Labor party, rather than the number of votes the party received. For the elections from 1903 to 1917 inclusive, each voter had as many votes as there were vacancies, and the percentages for these years express the ratio of the average of the votes received by the Labor candidates to the total formal vote. Preferential voting was introduced for the 1919 election; the 1919 and 1922 percentages express the ratio of the total first preference votes received by the Labor candidates to the total formal vote. The figures given in this table do not agree with those given by L.F. Crisp (The Australian Federal Labour Party 1901-1951, 325); this is presumably because the basis of calculation is different. Thus, the big difference in the figure given above for 1903, and that given by Crisp (30.6%) could be accounted for by the fact that there was only one Labor candidate for the Senate in New South Wales, although there were three vacancies.

2. L/V = Labor voters as % of total formal votes.

3. V/E = Ballot papers issued as % of voters enrolled. (Throughout this period, voting was not compulsory.)

APPENDIX IV:

- a) Voting in the 1914 and 1917 Elections and the 1916 and 1917 Referenda.
- b) The Behaviour of Electorates in the 1914 Election and the 1916 and 1917 Referenda.
- c) The 1914-1916 "Swing."

THE 1914 & 1917 ELECTIONS AND THE 1916 & 1917 REFERENDA.(a) Labor and "No" Votes as % of Formal Votes.

	1914 Elec	1916 Ref	14/16 +/-	1917 Elec	14/17 +/-	16/17 +/-	1917 Ref	16/17 +/-	17/17 +/-
NSW	56.2	57.1	+ 0.9	44.1	-12.1	-13.0	58.8	+ 1.7	+14.7
Vic	54.1	48.1	- 6.0	44.8	- 9.3	- 3.3	50.2	+ 2.1	+ 5.4
Qld	57.0	52.3	- 4.7	46.9	-10.1	- 5.4	56.0	+ 3.7	+ 9.1
SA	56.1	57.6	+ 1.5	42.8	-13.3	-14.8	55.1	- 2.5	+12.3
WA	53.6	30.3	-23.3	32.1	-21.5	+ 1.8	35.6	+ 5.3	+ 3.5
Tas	49.7	43.8	- 5.9	40.5	- 9.2	- 3.3	49.8	+ 6.0	+ 9.3
Fed		37.3					41.8	+ 4.5	
AUST	55.1	51.6	- 3.5	43.9	-11.2	- 7.7	53.8	+ 2.2	+ 9.9

(b) Votes Cast as % of Voters Enrolled ("Turnout").

NSW	64.9	81.3	+16.4	70.7	+ 5.8	-10.6	80.9	- 0.4	+10.2
Vic	79.2	84.5	+ 5.3	83.9	+ 4.2	- 0.6	84.1	- 0.4	+ 0.2
Qld	75.1	84.7	+ 9.6	89.0	+13.9	+ 4.3	82.0	- 2.7	- 7.0
SA	80.1	80.4	+ 0.3	71.9	- 8.2	- 8.5	75.7	- 4.7	+ 3.8
WA	71.5	83.9	+12.4	77.8	+ 6.3	- 6.1	83.5	- 0.4	+ 5.7
Tas	77.6	81.8	+ 4.2	76.0	- 1.6	- 5.8	73.8	- 8.0	- 2.2
Fed		75.9					74.4	- 1.5	
AUST	72.6	82.8	+10.2	77.7	+ 5.1	- 5.1	81.3	- 1.5	+ 3.6

SOURCES: Reports of Commonwealth Electoral Officer.

NOTES:

1. 1914 and 1917 election percentages derived from Senate voting figures: average of votes for Labor candidates as % of total formal vote. Votes for socialist candidates in NSW and Victoria in 1917 included in Labor vote; votes for independent candidates in Queensland and Tasmania excluded from Labor vote.

2. The "+/-" columns show, reading from the left, the changes from the 1914 election to the 1916 referendum; from the 1914 election to the 1917 election; from the 1916 referendum to the 1917 election; from the 1916 referendum to the 1917 referendum; from the 1917 election to the 1917 referendum.

THE BEHAVIOUR OF ELECTORATES IN THE 1914 ELECTION AND THE REFERENDA.

	No (1916) No (1917)			Yes (1916) No (1917)			Yes (1916) Yes (1917)			TOTAL
	Lab 1914	Lib 1914	Tot	Lab 1914	Lib 1914	Tot	Lab 1914	Lib 1914	Tot	
NSW/M ^a	6	1	7	-	-	-	-	4	4	11
NSW/C ^b	8	7	15	-	-	-	-	1	1	16
Vic/M	6	-	6	1	-	1	-	3	3	10
Vic/C	3 ^c	-	3	-	2	2	2	4 ^d	6	11
Qld/M	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
Qld/C	5 ^e	1	6	-	1	1	-	1	1	8
SA/M	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	3
SA/C	1	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
WA/M	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	2
WA/C	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	3
Tas	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	1	4	5
<u>TOTAL</u>										
Metro.	15	1	16	2	-	2	2	8	10	28
Country	17	11	28	-	3	3	3	8	11	42
Tas	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	1	4	5
AUST	32	12	44	2	4	6	8	17	25	75

NOTES:

- (a) Metropolitan.
- (b) Country.
- (c) Includes Grampians, lost to Liberals at by-election in 1915.
- (d) Includes Gippsland, held by Independent, Senate majority Liberal.
- (e) Includes Wide Bay, lost to Liberals in by-election in 1915.

THE 1914-1916 "SWING" - VICTORIAN METROPOLITAN SEATS.¹

	Labor vote 1914 %	"No" vote 1916 %	Swing	Pred- icted "No" %	Pred- icted swing (2)	Difference actual and predicted swings +/-
Balaclava	41.6	35.1	- 6.5	35.5	- 6.1	+ 0.4
Batman ³	72.3	63.7	- 8.6	61.2	-11.1	- 2.5
Bourke ³	65.9	56.4	- 9.5	55.8	-10.1	- 0.6
Fawkner ³	59.3	49.6	- 9.7	50.2	- 9.1	+ 0.6
Henty	37.5	31.8	- 5.7	32.0	- 5.5	+ 0.2
Kooyong ⁴	40.6	33.0	- 7.6	34.7	- 5.9	+ 1.7
Maribyrnong ³	64.3	53.6	-10.7	54.5	- 9.8	+ 0.9
Melbourne ³	69.3	59.0	-10.3	58.7	-10.6	- 0.3
Melb. Ports ³	80.8	65.3	-15.5	68.3	-12.5	+ 3.0
Yarra ³	81.3	70.2	-11.1	68.7	-12.6	- 1.5
	<u>61.3</u>	<u>51.7</u>	<u>- 9.6</u>	<u>51.9</u>	<u>- 9.4</u>	<u>+ 0.2</u>

NOTES:

1. This group of electorates is taken as an example of the result of applying the "chi-square" test to determine what swing of Labor voters to "Yes" and Liberal voters to "No" comes closest to explaining the net swing in each group of electorates. The "fit" - that is, the approximation of the predicted swing to the actual swing - is closer with this group than most.

2. Predicted swing and predicted "No" vote calculated on the basis of a swing of 15.6% of Labor voters to "Yes," 0.6% of Liberal voters to "No."

3. Sitting Labor member anti-conscriptionist.

4. Includes Independent Labor vote with Labor.

APPENDIX V:

- a) Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World
[Detroit].
- b) Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World
[Chicago].
- c) Preamble of the Workers' International Industrial
Union.
- d) Preamble of the Workers' Industrial Union of Aust-
ralia.

PREAMBLE OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD [DETROIT].¹

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace as long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organisation of the working class, without affiliation with and political party.

The rapid gathering of wealth and the centering of the management of industry into fewer and fewer hands make trades unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class, because the trades unions foster a state of things which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping to defeat one another in wage wars. The trades unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These sad conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organisation formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry or in all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Therefore, without endorsing or desiring endorsement of any political party, we unite under the following constitution.

1. As adopted by the inaugural Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World in Chicago in 1905, and by the I.W.W. Club in Sydney in October 1907.

PREAMBLE OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD [CHICAGO].¹

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people, and the few who make up the employing class have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organise as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping to defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organisation formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto: "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword: "Abolition of the wages system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with Capitalism. The army of production must be organised, not only for the every-day struggle with capitalism, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organising industrially, we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

1. As adopted by the Fourth Convention of the I.W.W. in 1908, and by the Adelaide Local of the I.W.W. in May 1911.

PREAMBLE OF THE WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL UNION.¹

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people, and the few who make up the employing class have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the toilers come together on the political field under the banner of a distinct revolutionary political party governed by the workers' class interests, and on the industrial field under the banner of One Great Industrial Union to take and hold all means of production and distribution, and to run them for the benefit of all wealth producers.

The rapid gathering of wealth and the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands make the trades union unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class, because the trade unions foster a state of things which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping to defeat one another in wage wars. The trades unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These sad conditions must be changed, the interests of the working class upheld, and while the capitalist rule still prevails, all possible relief for the workers must be secured. That can only be done by an organisation aiming steadily at the complete overthrow of the capitalist wage system, and formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lock-out is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

1. In Revolutionary Industrial Unionism (Literature and Education Bureau, WIIU, Melbourne, 1918.)

PREAMBLE OF THE WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL UNION OF AUSTRALIA.¹

We hold that there is a class struggle in society, and that the struggle is caused by the capitalist class owning the means of production, to which the working class must have access in order to live. The working class produce all value. The greater the share which the capitalist class appropriates, the less remains for the working class; therefore, the interests of these two classes are in constant conflict.

There can be no peace as long as want and hunger are found among millions of working people, and the few who constitute the employing class have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes the struggle must continue until Capitalism is abolished. Capitalism can only be abolished by the workers uniting in one class-conscious, economic organisation to take and hold the means of production by revolutionary, industrial and political action. "Revolutionary action" means action to secure a complete change, namely, the abolition of capitalist class ownership of the means of production - whether privately or through the State - and the establishment in its place of social ownership by the whole community. Long experience has proved the hopeless futility of existing political and industrial methods, which aim at mending and rendering tolerable, and thereby perpetuating, Capitalism, instead of ending it.

The rapid accumulation of wealth and concentration of the ownership of industries into fewer and fewer hands make the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class, because craft unionism fosters conditions which allow the employer to pit one set of workers against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby defeating each in turn.

These conditions can be changed, and the interests of the working class advanced, only by an organisation so constituted that all its

1. As adopted by the All Australian Trades Union Conference, Melbourne, January 1919.

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members in any one industry, or in all industries, shall take concerted action when deemed necessary, thereby making an injury to one the concern of all.

We hold that, as the working class creates and operates the socially-operated machinery of production, it should direct production and determine working conditions.

APPENDIX VI:

- a) Platform of the Australian Peace Alliance, 1916.
- b) Resolution of the Australian Labor Party, 1917-18.
- c) Resolution of the NSW Labor Council, 1918.
- d) The ALP Recruiting Ballot, 1918.

PLATFORM OF THE AUSTRALIAN PEACE ALLIANCE.¹

- (a) The establishment of an effective and permanent international arbitration court elected on a democratic basis, including women delegates.
- (b) The setting up of adequate machinery (including enfranchisement of women) for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy.
- (c) The general reduction of armaments and the nationalisation of their manufacture.
- (d) The organisation of the trades unions and the workers' associations with a definite view of ending war.
- (e) The education of children in the principles of peace and arbitration.
- (f) The appointment of a Minister for Peace and the appropriation of a considerable sum on public money for the dissemination of peace ideas.
- (g) The termination of the present war at the earliest possible moment, and the following principles to govern the terms of peace:-
- (i) No Province or Territory in any part of the world shall be transferred from one Government to another without the consent by plebiscite of the population of such province.
 - (ii) No treaty, arrangement or undertaking involving the nations in armed support of any Power or combination of Powers shall be entered upon in the name of Great Britain without the confirmation of a national referendum. Adequate machinery for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy shall be created.
 - (iii) The foreign policy of Great Britain shall not be aimed at creating Alliances for the purpose of maintaining the "Balance of Power" but shall be directed to the establishment of a concert of Europe and the setting up of an international council, whose deliberations and decisions shall be public.

1. As amended and adopted by the interstate conference of the Alliance, Easter, 1916.

(iv) Great Britain shall propose as part of the peace settlement a plan for the drastic reduction of armaments by the consent of all the belligerent Powers, and to facilitate that policy shall attempt to secure the general nationalisation of the manufacture of armaments and the prohibition of the export of armaments by one country to another.

(v) The universal abolition of Continental conscription and of compulsory military training.

(vi) No war shall be declared without a national referendum.

RESOLUTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY, 1917-18.¹

That, as the Governments of Europe, founded on class rule, and adopting the methods of secret diplomacy, have failed utterly to preserve peace or to bring the present war within measurable distance of a conclusion, and whereas the existing capitalistic systems of production for profit compels every nation constantly to seek new markets to exploit, inevitably leading to a periodic clash of rival interests, we contend that only by an organised system of production for use, under democratic control, can a recurrence of such calamities be permanently avoided.

The present system, by fostering commercial rivalry, territorial greed and dynastic ambitions, has created an atmosphere of mutual fear and distrust among the Great Powers, which was the immediate cause of the present colossal struggle.

While the people suffer and die in millions, thousands of the ruling and privileged classes are amassing huge fortunes out of war profits; apparently existing Governments are making no sincere efforts to obtain a speedy peace, but are devoting their whole endeavours to the continuance of a disastrous struggle. We are, therefore, convinced that peace can only be accomplished by the united efforts of the workers of all countries involved.

We, therefore, rejoice over the revolution in Russia, and congratulate the people of that country upon their efforts to abolish despotic power and class privileges, and urge the workers of every land where similar conditions exist to follow their example with the same magnificent courage and determination.

We are of opinion that a complete military victory by the Allies over the Central European Powers, if possible, can only be accomplished by the further sacrifice of millions of human lives; the infliction

1. As endorsed by the NSW, Victorian, SA and Queensland and the Commonwealth Conferences of the Labor party in 1917-18. Qd. M.P. Considine MHR (CPD lxxxiii 3075). Considine's reading of this statement provoked the following exchange: Boyd (Nat.): "You stole that from the Bolsheviks." Considine: "And a very good source to get it from."

of incalculable misery and suffering upon the survivors; the creation of an intolerable burden of debt to the further impoverishment of the workers who must bear such burdens, and the practical destruction of civilisation among the white races of the world.

We, therefore, urge that immediate negotiations be initiated for an International Conference, for the purpose of arranging equitable terms of peace, on which Conference the working class organisations shall have adequate representation, and the inclusion of women delegates, and we further urge that the British self-governing Dominions, and Ireland, shall be granted separate representation thereon.

We submit that in framing the terms of a lasting peace, the following principles should be observed:-

1. The right of small nations (including Ireland) to independence.
2. That the European countries occupied by invading armies during the present war should be immediately evacuated.
3. That disputed provinces or territories shall choose their own forms of government, or shall be attached to such adjacent countries as the majority of their inhabitants may by plebiscite decide on the democratic principle that all just government must rest on the consent of the governed. The free exercise of such choice under conditions of political equality to be secured by the appointment of an International Commission of Control.

NOTE.- This course (with such safeguards for the rights of minorities in communities of mixed races as the Conference might devise) would secure a final settlement of the rival claims for Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, Transylvania, and other territories similarly circumstanced.

4. That prior to the disbandment of the combatant armies and the merchant navies employed in the war, they shall be utilised by an organised system of volunteer service for restoring the devastated territories at the expense of the invading powers, which shall also com-

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pensate the widows and dependents of all non-combatants, including seamen, who have lost their lives as a result of hostilities.

5. That where an amicable arrangement cannot be reached by the Peace Conference in regard to captured colonies and dependencies, such territories shall be placed provisionally under international control.

6. That the freedom of the seas be secured on the lines laid down by President Wilson, of America, in his speech at Washington in May, 1916, where he advocated:- "A universal association of the nations to maintain the inviolate security of the highway of the seas for the common and unhindered use of all the nations of the world."

7. The abolition of trading in armaments, and the prohibition of the private manufacture thereof.

8. The abolition of conscription in all countries simultaneously.

9. The control of foreign relations under a democratic system, based upon publicity, in lieu of the present methods of secret diplomacy.

10. That the existing machinery for international arbitration be extended to embrace a concert of Europe, ultimately merging into a world-wide Parliament, as advocated by President Wilson, in a recent message to the American Congress.

RESOLUTION OF THE N.S.W. LABOR COUNCIL, 1918.¹

That this Council, after careful consideration of the war, and the issues involved, and being fully seized with the momentous nature of such issues, declares:-

1. That careful consideration should be given to the question pressed by Lords Morley, Brassey, Loreburn (ex-Chancellors of England), Farrer, Beauchamp, and Landsdowne, namely: "Is it worthwhile indefinitely to prolong the awful struggle, with its lamentable sacrifice of life, and the waste of resources not easily to be replaced?"

2. That we deeply regret that the Federal Government ignored the Peace Proposals of the P.L.L. Conference last June, and this Council's endorsement in January last of the preamble of those proposals, and demand "That the Allied Governments immediately initiate negotiations for peace."

3. That the secret treaties of the Allied Governments, as published in the press - disclosing designs of territorial aggrandisement; the placing of an army of approximately 80,000 armed men in Ireland; the Allied Governments' attitude towards the working-class Government in Russia; Mr Hughes's speech before the manufacturers of this city, in which he thanked God that Germany had plunged the world into this war; and the fact that all anti-Labor forces are in favour of the war and its continuance, justify grave doubts regarding the contention that the Allied Governments are fighting solely for liberty, justice and democracy.

4. That the Allied statesmen's rejection of Chancellor von Hollweg's Peace offer (December 12/16), President Wilson's "Appeal to Belligerents" (December 22/16), and January 24/17), the Pope's appeal

1. Moved by E.E. Judd, and carried on 23 May 1918, after a debate which lasted over several meeting-nights, by 101 votes to 75. NSW Labor Council Report, 30/6/18.

(August 2/17), Germany's Peace offer (December 25/17), and the Allied Governments' refusal of passports to Labor Leaders to attend the Stockholm Peace Conference (August, 1917), and the failure of the Allied statesmen to initiate Peace negotiations enable the German militarists to persuade the German workers that the Allied Governments are more concerned about rendering Germany impotent as a competitor in the world markets than in securing an early and just peace.

5. That the economic resolutions of the Paris Conference, the demand for the annexation of the German colonies, the declaration in favour of "crushing Germany," and other imperialistic utterances of bellicose statesmen and publicists have strengthened, and are still strengthening, the German ruling class, and have prolonged, and are still prolonging, the war.

6. That as all modern wars are caused by the conflicting interests of different sections of the capitalist class, a "conclusive" or "permanent Peace" is not possible under capitalism.

7. That the secret conference of English, French,^{and} German financiers in Switzerland last September, for the purpose of devising means to control labor after the war, proves that they place their class interests and the safeguarding of Capitalism above the welfare of suffering humanity.

8. That the Federal Government's further attempt to introduce conscription since that secret conference, and its refusal to grant Mr. Foster a passport to Russia, have an evil significance - especially when combined with the wholesale suppression of Labor-Socialist literature and free speech, and the censorship, which is far worse than the English censorship.

9. That the promises of the Nationalist Governments at the Recruiting Conference should be carried out as acts of justice; we refuse to accept them as bribes for lives.

10. That the bleeding of the manhood of the white races to death, thereby forcing many millions of women to endure a life of celibacy

and hard and uncongenial work, is a crime against civilisation.

11. That the peoples of the belligerent nations are war-weary and long for Peace.

12. That the greatest service we can render the men at the Front, their loved ones at home, and humanity in general is to do all in our power to stop the war.

Therefore, whilst fully expecting anti-Labor forces to misrepresent and calumniate our action, we refuse to take part in any recruiting campaign, and call upon the workers of this and all other belligerent countries to urge their respective Governments to immediately secure an armistice on all Fronts, and initiate negotiations for Peace.

THE A.L.P. RECRUITING BALLOT, 1918.¹

Further participation in recruiting shall be subject to the following conditions:-

(a) That a clear and authoritative statement be made on behalf of the Allies, asserting their readiness to enter into peace negotiations, upon a basis of no annexations and no penal indemnities.

(b) That Australia's requirements in man-power be ascertained and met with respect to:-

(1) Home Defence

(2) Industrial Requirements.

An immediate inquiry, upon which the Australian Labor Party should be adequately and officially represented, shall be held, and its decisions immediately given effect to.

Do you approve of this resolution?

YES

NO

1. The question submitted to a referendum of ALP members pursuant to the decision of the Commonwealth Labor Conference, June 1918.

APPENDIX VII.

The Manifesto of the Australian Communists, October 1920.

THE MANIFESTO OF THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNISTS, OCTOBER 1920.¹

(2)

The Communist Party of Australia, together with the Communist International, accepts the scientific theory that the Capitalist System of production and distribution has outlived its usefulness and become reactionary and destructive for humanity. We realise that this system has in its development and maturity done great service to humanity by bringing about extensive and efficient social production and distribution of necessities, and by introducing wonderful labor saving devices. [But the system itself is fundamentally a gross contradiction, in that it produces for profit, not for use; owing to this fundamental contradiction its work has become one of destruction. It has divided the community into bitterly antagonistic classes, nations and empires, all engaged in hidden and open warfare. It has created two classes, one monopolising and holding, by any and every means of cunning, skill, deceit, and even terrorism, all the means of subsistence, and the other deprived of everything, sometimes even of bare subsistence, degraded and kept in the most humiliating slavery; the one producing nothing and commanding everything produced by the other, the other producing everything and commanding nothing, but always being kept on the verge of starvation.

The Communist Party, recognising this abnormal contradiction as the basic principle of the Capitalist system, sets itself to abolish the system entirely, to overthrow the class monopoly and to abolish the private ownership of the means of production and distribution. Its aim is to make the toiling masses the owners of the means of their production and to establish production of necessities for direct use by the producers themselves instead of the existing production

1. Manifesto issued by "The C.E. of the Australian Communist Party" (without benefit of name or address), as printed in *International Socialist*, 2/10/20. This manifesto was drafted and distributed by the "Trades Hall" communists; it was adopted in an amended form by the "Unity" conference between the Trades Hall communists and the Australian Socialist Party on October 30, 1920. The amendments made by that conference are shown in the notes at the end of this document.

for profit.]³

This contradiction, fundamental in the capitalist system, is most apparent during a crisis caused by over production. Then there is no shortage of necessities but an overplus, that is to say, the producers have produced more for the monopolist class for their profits than that class can dispose of. When this point is reached, the wheels of production are stopped, and the producers, in addition to being deprived of their own production are deprived of even their ordinary miserable means of subsistence and are thrown into a state of absolute starvation.

In such a case the producing classes unconsciously feel that they are unjustly deprived of their right to the amassed products of their own labor. Sometimes they are driven by starvation and this sense of injustice into spontaneous revolt, such as local and general strikes; but because of their lack of organisation and their ignorance of the real cause of their degradation and starvation while the monopolist classes are solidly organised into [a "State"]⁴ with weapons to hand for oppression and coercion, they are invariably suppressed and beaten, fooled or trapped, and finally brought back again into the same slavery, when the monopolists are ready to set the wheels of production going again.

Since the possessing class, in spite of its insignificant numbers compared with the workers, is through its organisation able to keep the great masses in subjection, we Communists contend that if the workers are well organised for the express purpose of the overthrow of the capitalist system, they can do so during one of these periodical crises; and then can establish a system of production of necessities not for profit but [for use by the producers direct].⁵ Then would they turn the overplus or plenty of products to the happiness of all and not to the starvation of those who have produced that plenty.

The Communist Party is essentially a fighting organisation and not a debating club. While it is strengthening itself more and more by further and further educating its own members, and by educating and recruiting new members and branches, it takes an active part in the every-day struggle of the working class. [In this way it demonstrates to the toiling masses the futility of fighting for or even* securing better conditions under the capitalist system],⁶ and ever directs them to the same one purpose of overthrowing this system by organised mass action.

We Communists assert the futility of waiting for the achievement of our ideal by legislation through existing legislative institutions, as these institutions are expressly a part and parcel of the capitalist system [and therefore cannot be utilised for the purpose of abolishing that system].⁷ The overthrow of the system means equally the overthrow of all the political [machine]⁸ of the system, parliament and police, army and navy, etc. The new machine which will be established by the organised force of the workers in mass action, for the protection of the new order in the establishment of its new economic and social system will be the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. This is only a temporary phase in the new order, and will only exist for [the complete establishment of that new order against the inevitable attempts of the now possessing classes who will then be deprived of their property, to reconquer that property back again into their private ownership].⁹

COMMUNIST PROGRAMME.

For that purpose the Communist Party is —

- (1) arranging [educational economic classes]¹⁰ under its own auspices or under those of other labor organisations;
- (2) holding wherever possible, public meetings for necessary propaganda, as [its ideal]¹¹ is to spread the communistic idea as widely

* Sic - ever?

amongst the masses as possible, recognising that social revolution will be only possible with an intelligent following of the communist party by the masses at large;

(3) for the same reason and for the education and recruiting of new members, distributing communistic revolutionary literature;

(4) forming groups of its members in every mill, factory, workshop and field, so that it is always in a position to direct and control through its members every industrial dispute and disturbance of the workers, keeping always in mind the same end - social revolution - and trying to utilise every spontaneous action of the workers for that one end;

(5) directing its members to take an active and wherever possible, a leading part in every craft or industrial union, and endeavouring to have its members elected into the executive bodies of these organisations so that these organisations also are directed in their activities towards the same one end of complete social revolution;

(6) endeavouring and actively working to replace the existing craft unions by more up to date efficient industrial unions, which would be more advantageous for social revolutionary mass action;¹²

(7) so controlling its members, that each and every one of them acts strictly according to Communistic principles;

(8) taking an active part in the election for the existing legislative bodies, whenever it may be for the advantage of the complete social revolution to demonstrate inside those institutions that such institutions are expressly for the buttressing of the existing capitalistic system and that therefore they are working absolutely and always in opposition to the interests of the toiling masses, and to demonstrate that whenever these institutions legislate in the interests of the workers, they are doing so not because they sincerely desire to do so, but always because of a danger of revolt from those whom they are exploiting, and always with the purpose of preserving the existing capitalist system;¹³

(9) issuing from time to time, necessary and timely manifestos and calls to the masses for a particular action at a particular time;

(10) inviting all ^{the} intelligent workers, men and women, to study communistic ideas, to understand them properly and to try to establish communistic groups wherever possible, strictly on the principles outlined in this programme, be it in a friendly circle, a factory, a workshop, a craft union, or an industrial union;

[(11) inviting all such workers to unite themselves by groups which would be subject to the district, state and national executives, which would join the Third International with its Central Executive and Headquarters in Moscow, in the heart of the First Proletarian Republic.

At the first opportunity the Central Executive will call a conference of delegates from all locals and groups to consolidate our forces and activities.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT

"The communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

"Working men of all countries, unite!"¹⁴

THE AMENDMENTS:

2. ADD: "To the working class of Australia the Communist Party at the moment of its formation issues this preliminary statement of principles and policy. We hold it as a fundamental principle that it is only by the mass movement of the working class as a whole that our emancipation can be won, and therefore urge the workers to the careful study of this appeal to prepare for their part in the coming international communist revolution."

3. SUBSTITUTE: "But the capitalist system itself presents the fundamental contradiction of social production and individual or private ownership both of the means of production and the products.

"From this fact arise the two classes of modern society - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie, by virtue of its possession of the State power, established and maintains itself to-day as the dominant class, and is thereby enabled to shelter behind the empty phrases of popular democracy.

"By monopolising and holding by any and every means of cunning, deceit and terrorism, all the means of subsistence, the dominant class perpetuates the existing form of society, while the proletariat, deprived of everything, sometimes even of bare subsistence, is subjected to degradation and the most humiliating slavery. Thus does modern society present itself as a system wherein one class produces all things and owns nothing, while the other class owns everything and produces nothing.

"The Communist Party, recognising this contradiction, sets itself to abolish the system, to overthrow this class monopoly, and to abolish the private ownership of the means of production. Its aim is to establish a system of social ownership of the means of production, thereby making the ownership coincide with the social ownership of production."***

4. READ: "the State."

5. READ: "for social use."

6. READ: "In this way it demonstrates the futility of fighting for an improved capitalist system, and ever directs them to the same one purpose of overthrowing the system by organised mass action."

7. OMIT.

8. READ: "machinery."

9. READ: "the complete annihilation of the bourgeoisie as a class, and, the economic basis of class antagonism and of the State having

*** Sic - "the social utilisation of the means of production"?

ceased to exist, then, in the words of Engels, State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. Then will Communist society inscribe upon its banner, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

10. READ: "communist study classes."

11. READ: "its aim."

12. ADD: "as well as an important factor in the communist reconstruction of society."

13. ADD: "While the Communist Party endorses parliamentarism for revolutionary purposes, it does not exclude from its ranks those holding contrary views, providing that they submit to party discipline."

14. OMIT. The amended manifesto concludes: "THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA AWAITS YOUR SUPPORT."***

NOTE:

*** The amended text is taken from "The Communist Party of Australia. Manifesto to the Workers of Australia." Issued by the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Australia, 115 Goulburn Street, Sydney, N.S.W. [4 pp., Sydney, n.d.]

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